

WHY SHOULD EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS GET INVOLVED IN THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER?

- The European Semester is a **process** with significant implications for all aspects of education across Europe, and in all sectors of education
- Key policy **process** with the potential for considerable impact on education policy in member states
- It provides a '**policy space**' to shape the education policy discourse
- Not easy, not sufficiently embedded in social dialogue
- ...but important **opportunities** to make an impact:
 - > Shape it
 - > Make a difference



Key Challenges and Opportunities

Focus on
fiscal
policies

Considerable
impact on public
investment levels

Opportunity to
make the case for
**increased public
investment** and
against internal and
external
privatisation trends

EU2020
key
targets on
education

Reflecting on
education-related
CSRs

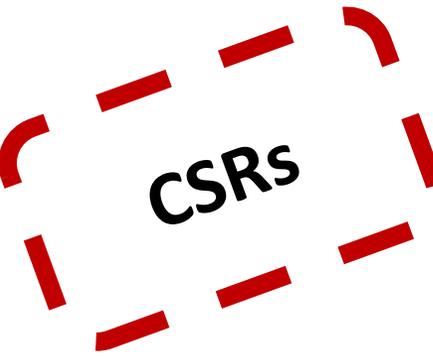
Opportunity to
make the case for
education **reforms
that are a priority
for education
unions** to become
recommendations

General
nature of
CSRs

Education related
CSRs need to reflect
the voice of
educators and the
professional
expertise of
teachers and
education workers

Opportunity for the
professional voice
of teachers to be
inserted into the
policy making





CSRs

- Take further measures to improve the labour market relevance of tertiary education, including by *providing incentives* for cooperation between universities, firms and research. Increase *performance-based funding* of public research bodies and universities... (Spain, CSR, 2016)
- *Incentivise* the cooperation between universities and the business sector (Portugal, CSR, 2016)
- Adopt and implement the planned *school reform* (Italy, Bulgaria, CSR, 2015)
- Ensure adequate *teachers' training* and teachers' continuous professional development. Improve the *attractiveness* of teaching as a profession (Czech Republic, Malta, Hungary, CSR, 2015)



Country Specific Recommendations



Country Specific Recommendations, especially education recommendations, are not crafted in dark rooms in Brussels and crudely imposed on Member States. They are the outcome of on-going dialogue between the Commission and national governments. Influencing the Semester shouldn't be seen as separate to influencing national education policy but as another space in which education trade unions can frame the narrative about public education in their country. The challenge for education trade unions is to open up this space, and to make sure that the voice of educators is clearly heard. This is what will make the European Semester more transparent and the European Union more democratic.





MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

- > **Strengthen cooperation at all levels**
 - > National/European level actions
- > **Develop social dialogue in the European Semester**



In the aftermath of the economic crisis the European Semester appeared adversarial and punitive. The Commission has since committed to a 'new start' for social dialogue in which social partners are integrally involved in policy development. What this 'new start' amounts to in reality is, as yet, unclear. But it is undoubtedly an opportunity for education trade unions to make sure that their voice is heard at all the key points in the European Semester process.



ETUCE Areas of action and activities:

- > Promotion of increased public investment
- > Promotion of a meaningful involvement of education trade unions in policy and reform making within social dialogue structures
- > Denounce internal and external privatisation trends as a result of budgetary constraints
- > Liaising and coordination with European institutions, ETUC and other ETUFs
- > Disseminate timely information and call for action
- > Sharing and collecting information from Member organisations
- > ...

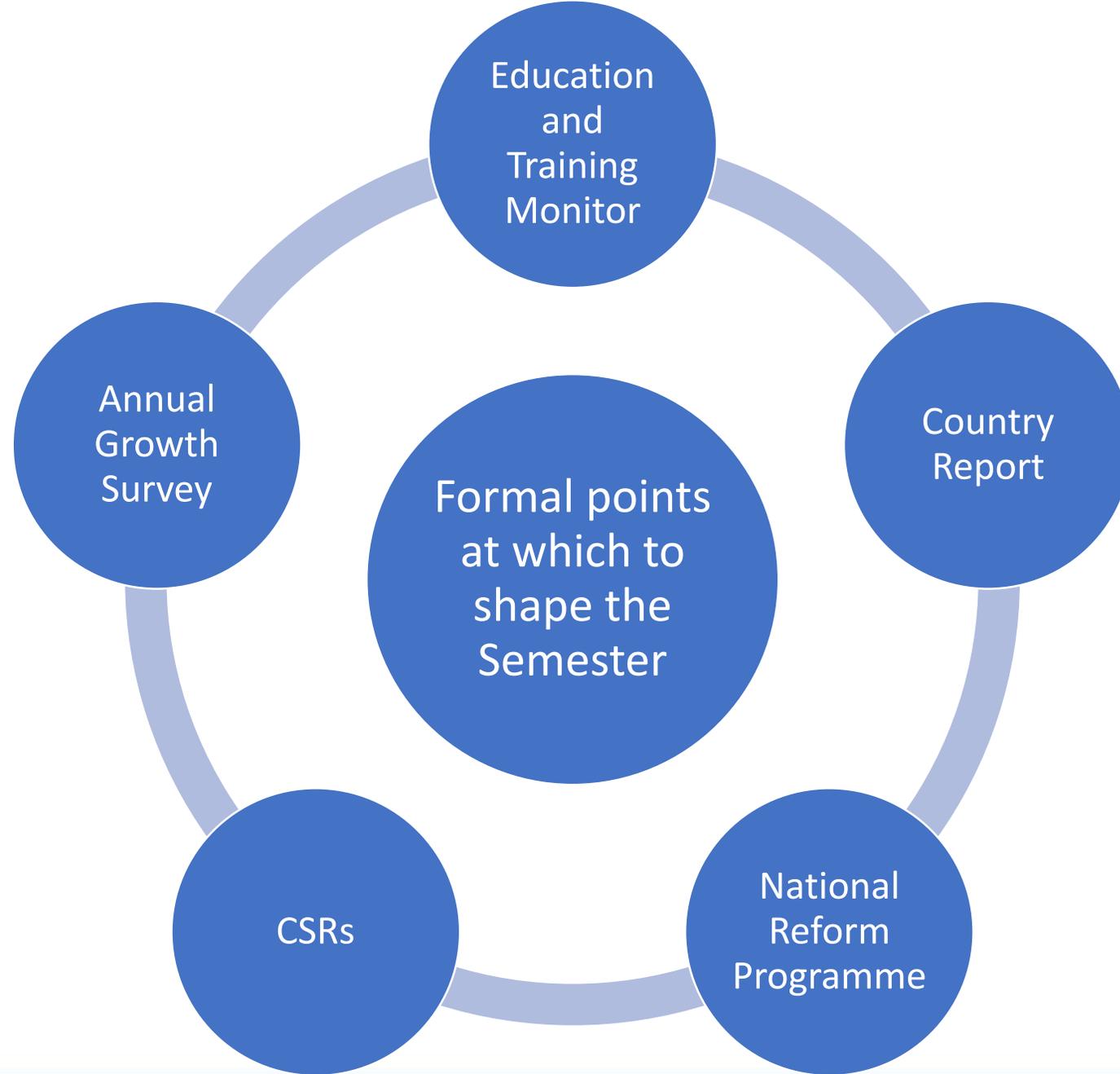


National education unions activities - Get ready:

- > Push the door open early in the process
- > Develop relationships, informal networks and channels of communications with key actors in order to communicate key messages
- > Use information provided and experiences from others to intervene proactively, to put pressure, or to adverse the messages
- > Anticipate rather than react!
- > Base your claims on sound arguments
- > Build alliances, though unusual...



Identify the right policy space and timing of action:



DEVELOPING SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER – KEY POINTS FOR EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS

- > **Shape the discourse**
- > **Have a plan**
- > **Focus on the beginning**
- > **Social dialogue: take the opportunities and make the opportunities**
- > **Allocate resources**
- > **Create alliances**
- > **Communicate internally**

