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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION  
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION



Report from the First Regional Seminar on

## Third-Party Violence in the Education Sector:

Social Partners in Education concerned about Violence  
in Schools: *"How to Prevent and Mitigate Third-Party  
Violence and Harassment in Schools"*.

*If you feel safe at your work as a teacher your students feel the same*

Warsaw, 26 April 2012



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DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.*

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## 1. Introduction

The meeting of the social partners in education on 26 April 2012 in Warsaw was the first event in the ETUCE/EFEE project: *Social Partners in Education concerned about Violence in Schools: “How to Prevent and Mitigate Third-Party Violence and Harassment in Schools”*. This project supports the implementation in the education sector of the Multi-sectoral Guidelines to Tackle Third-Party Violence and Harassment Related to Work which the European Social Partners from the education, local governments, hospital, private security and commerce sectors signed in 2010.

The Multi-Sectoral Guidelines aim to ensure that each workplace has a results-oriented policy which addresses the issue of third-party violence. They set out the practical steps that can be taken by employers, workers and their representatives/trade unions to reduce and prevent third-party violence.

This first regional seminar gathered participants from north-eastern EU/EFTA and candidate countries. The members of the project advisory group presented the three project case studies from Sweden, Poland and Spain. The results of a mini survey were provided which had been carried out amongst ETUCE and EFEE members to gather good practices on measures preventing third-party violence in schools in EU/EFTA countries. In working groups, the participants also had the opportunity to discuss their experiences on how teacher unions and employers in education deal with third-party violence.

Further project events are the second regional seminar in Brussels on 7 June 2012 and the final conference in Cyprus on 27-28 September 2012. These activities seek to increase the awareness on third-party violence amongst teachers and employers in education and to help prepare an implementation guide about how to prevent and mitigate third-party violence in the education sector.



## 2. Third-Party Violence - Definition

Third-party violence is a form of violence and harassment. The European Agency for Occupational Safety and Health (EU-OSHA) defines third party violence as “*physical violence, verbal aggression, or the threat of physical violence where the aggressor is not a work colleague, e.g. the person, customer, client or patient receiving the goods or services*”<sup>1</sup>. Violence towards a teacher from e.g. a student or parent would thus be considered to be third party violence. As such it is an occupational health and safety hazard, covered by EU legislation<sup>2</sup>.

Examining cases of third-party violence, there are two aspects to be considered; firstly, the violence aspect and secondly, the aspect of a third party. The violence aspect seems obvious to explain as aggression, which can be both, physical and/or verbal. The second aspect of a third party is a more complex concept and grounds on a legal concept: A third party is a person outside the relationship between two parties (people) that are legally bound by a contract, e.g. an employment contract.

In other words, an employer, e.g. the local education authority or a head teacher, would be considered the first party. The second party is thus the employee e.g. a teacher, educator or member of school staff. Therefore parents, pupils or members of the wider public, etc. would be considered as third party.

In the first regional seminar the participants identified the specificities of third-party violence in the education sector that distinguish the impact of third-party violence on teaching staff from its impact on personnel in other sectors. These differences explain why it is necessary to address the issue of third-party violence in the education sector in particular. Amongst these reasons, the participants found:

- ✓ The role of teaching staff - violent acts committed against teaching staff due to the simple fact that a person is a teacher, educator or works in the education field
- ✓ Tension for teaching staff as provider of education and at the same time evaluator of student’s performance
- ✓ Long-term relationship (pupils and their respective parents/family)

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<sup>1</sup> EU-OSHA (2011): “Workplace Violence and Harassment: a European Picture”, <http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/violence-harassment-TERO09010ENC>, 2009, p.132.

<sup>2</sup> The European Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work, Directive 89/391 EEC, 12 June 1989, on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1990:275:0042:0042:EN:PDF>.

- ✓ Education as a public good and a legal obligation - students cannot be banned from school as customers/clients might be from shops

The Multi-Sectoral Guidelines to Tackle Third-Party Violence and Harassment<sup>3</sup> related to work explain further that third-party violence could be one-off incidents or more systematic patterns of behaviour, by an individual or group, originating from the actions or behaviour of clients, customers, patients, service users, pupils or parents, member of the public or the service provider. It can be motivated by emotional reasons, personal dislike, prejudices on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age, sexual orientation and body image. It can constitute criminal offences aimed at the employee and his/her reputation or the property of the employer or client which may be organised or opportunistic and which require the intervention of public authorities. It can deeply affect the personality, dignity and integrity of the victims and occur at the work place, in the public space or in the private environment and is work related.

### 3. Project Background and Objectives

Data, such as EUROFOUND’s Working Conditions’ Survey<sup>4</sup>, shows that education is among the sectors with the highest risk of third-party violence, yet the number of countries and respectively schools having developed specific policies remains low.

In its 2009 report<sup>5</sup>, the European Agency for Occupational Safety and Health, lists some of the reasons for the lack of sectoral initiatives of dealing with third-party violence:

Reason	No of selected as one of the reasons
There are no appropriate tools/method for assessing and managing the issue	7
Scientific evidence is limited or lacking	6
Low prioritisation of the issue	5
Lack of awareness	5
Specific regulation on the subject is limited or lacking	5
Extra-occupational factors are considered to be the main causes of the issue	3
Lack of tripartite agreement	2
Other	2

<sup>3</sup> The document can be found in 25 EU languages at: <http://www.eurocommerce.be/content.aspx?PageId=41864>.

<sup>4</sup> More information can be found at <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/ewco/4EWCS/ef0698/chapter4.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/violence-harassment-TERO09010ENC>.

According to EU<sup>6</sup> and resulting national law, both employers and employees have obligations in the field of health and safety. This is the background on which, the European Social Partners from the education, local governments, hospital, private security and commerce sectors, represented by ETUCE, EFEE, EPSU, CEMR, UNI-EUROPA, HOSPEEM, COESS and EUROCOMMERCE, signed the Multi-sectoral Guidelines to Tackle Third-Party Violence and Harassment Related to Work<sup>7</sup> on 30 September 2010.



The Multi-Sectoral Guidelines seek to implement the cross-sectoral Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work signed by the European Social Partners in April 2007. They aim to support joint actions by employers, workers and their representatives/trade unions to prevent, reduce and mitigate third-party violence and its consequences. They seek to raise further awareness on the topic and demonstrate the commitment of social partners to work together and share experiences and good practices. Moreover, the measures should provide employers and workers and their representatives at all levels with guidelines to identify, prevent, manage and tackle problems of work related harassment and

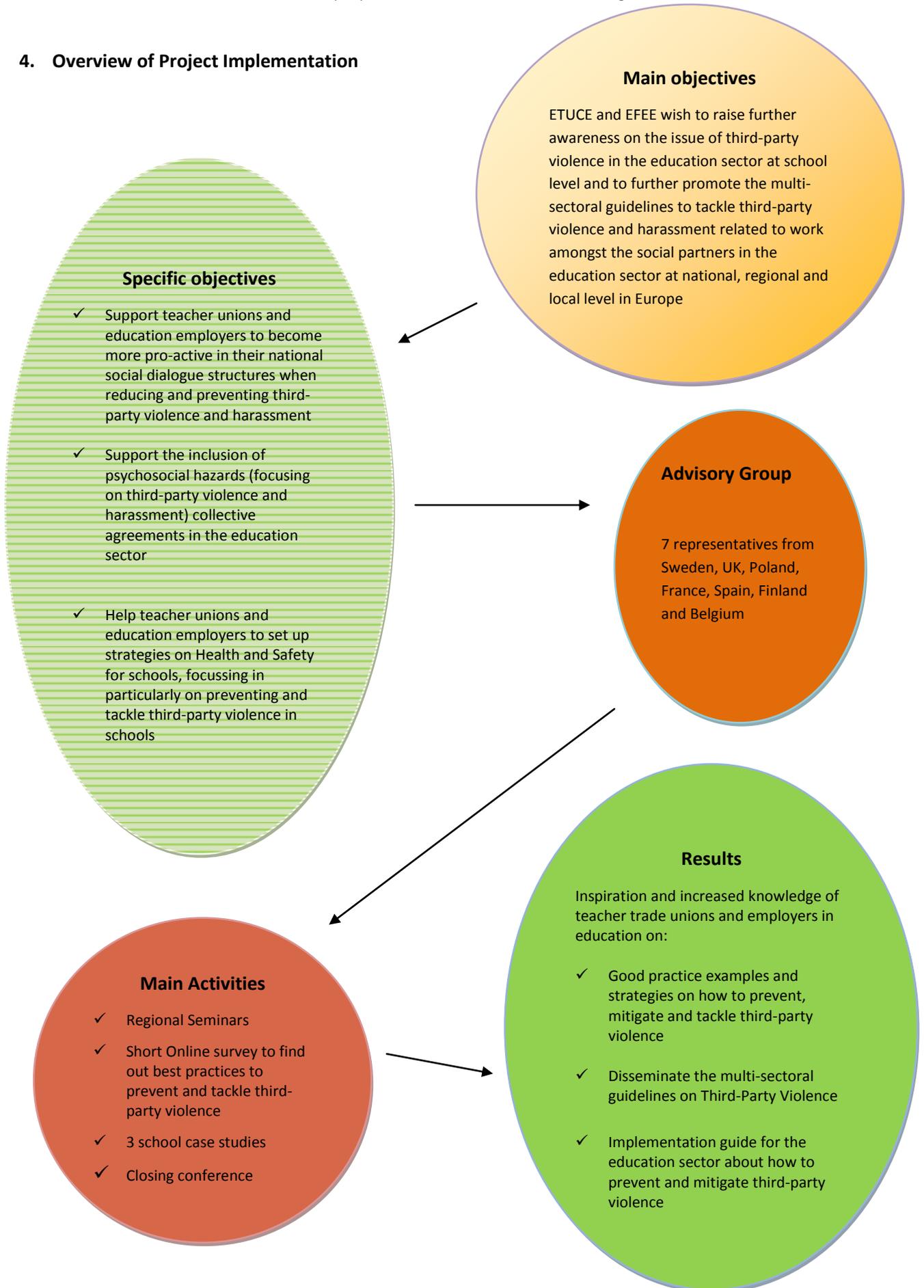


violence instigated by third parties. The ETUCE/EFEE project targets exactly these points focusing in particular on the specific challenges of third party violence and harassment in the education sector. It seeks to further disseminate and promote the guidelines in Europe and to further raise awareness on the topic in the education sector. This project will help unions and employers in education to set up strategies on third-party violence and mitigate third-party violence in the education sector.

<sup>6</sup> Directive 89/391 EEC.

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 3.

#### 4. Overview of Project Implementation



## 5. Aim and Project Objectives

The overall concrete objectives of the project are to further raise awareness on the issue of third-party violence in the education sector at school level and to further promote the multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work amongst the social partners in the education sector at national, regional and local level in Europe. The project aims to continue supporting national education stakeholders in implementing the multi-sectoral guidelines on third-party violence, the social partners' action plans in this area<sup>8</sup>, the European Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work and notably the Directive 89/391/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers in the workplace<sup>9</sup>.

### The specific objectives are to:

- ✓ identify in an online survey national and regional strategies and actions (best practices) of social partners in education on preventing and tackling third-party violence
- ✓ further support the inclusion of psychosocial hazards (focusing on third-party violence and harassment) in national and regional collective agreements in the education sector
- ✓ support teacher unions and education employers to become more pro-active in their national social dialogue structures when reducing and preventing third-party violence and harassment, in particular as regards dealing with and setting up strategies on Health & Safety in schools
- ✓ prepare the debate on this topic in the European sectoral social dialogue committee in education with the aim to compile a joint report for the education sector on the issue as stipulated in the multi-sectoral guidelines; this will help to further strengthen the relationship between the Social Partners in education at European and national level
- ✓ compile a practical implementation guide on the third-party violence guidelines for the education sector in English, French, German, Spanish and Russian with the aim to apply the guidelines at school level and to ensure the sustainability and long-term effect of the project outcome. A one-page summary in 25 EU languages (+ Russian) will also be made available.

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<sup>8</sup> See ETUCE Action Plan: [http://teachersosh.homestead.com/Publications/ETUCE\\_action\\_plan\\_HV\\_EN.pdf](http://teachersosh.homestead.com/Publications/ETUCE_action_plan_HV_EN.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 2.

## 6. Advisory Group

Meeting at regular intervals, the project's Advisory Group overlooks the project implementation. It is composed of representatives from five teacher unions and two EFEE organisations:



Monika Konczyk  
NASUWT, UK



Anders Eklund  
Läraryrket  
Sweden



Jennifer Moses  
NASUWT, UK



Patricio Perez  
FECCOO, Spain



Hélène Hemet  
UNSA  
France



Stéphane  
Vanoirbeck  
SEGEC



Pauliina  
Tervahartiala  
AFST

The advisory group members support the project with their expertise and knowledge on third-party violence, selecting and contacting schools in Sweden, Poland and Spain and their respective teachers to accomplish three case studies. Each of them has participated in one of the case studies to identify the best practice examples of how third-party violence is dealt with in schools. The advisory group also contribute actively to at least one regional seminar and to the final project conference in Cyprus on 27-28 September 2012.

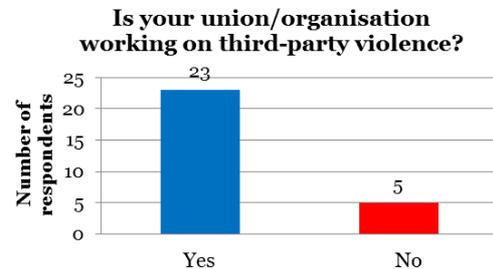
## 7. Third-Party Violence Online Survey

From 10 February to 16 April 2012 ETUCE and EFEE invited their member organisations to reply to an online survey. The aim of the survey was to raise awareness on third party violence in the education sector and to gather good practices on measures preventing third-party violence in schools in the different EU/EFTA countries.

Monika Konczyk from the advisory group presented the results from the online survey. 28 replies were received out of which 22 came from ETUCE members and 6 replies came from EFEE members. All education sectors were covered in the survey, from pre-primary to higher education. The replies represented 19

different EU/EFTA countries. 20 out of 28 unions/employer organisations replied that they have pieces of legislation in their respective countries that address third-party violence at work. The 23 unions/employer organisations that answered that they work to prevent third-party violence use the following measures in their work:

- ✓ Organised seminars that focus on the topic
- ✓ Publishing of concrete guidelines in union press
- ✓ Working groups
- ✓ Publishing of guidance on pupil behaviour policies



Asked about whether the unions/employer organisations experienced any difficulties when implementing measures to prevent third-party violence, the unions and employer organisations replied that in many cases there were no Health and Safety representatives to deal with the issue. They also experienced a lack of cooperation between the social partners to implement practical and tangible measures. Other unions/employer organisations also stressed that often third-party violence is not considered an important enough issue to be specifically addressed in existing general violence/harassment measures. Difficulties in adapting and implementing national legislation into everyday practice in schools are also issues that need to be taken into account.

Over half of the respondents deal with third-party violence at school level. Some of the good practices on dealing with and preventing third-party violence according to the unions/organisations are:

- ✓ Sharing knowledge on third-party violence prevention amongst school community
- ✓ Dialogue with pupils and parents on school rules including third-party violence
- ✓ Seminars and working groups with several social partners
- ✓ The existence of Health and Safety representatives in schools and their training on third-party violence
- ✓ Guidebook/Handbook with concrete cases to make implementation/policy easier
- ✓ Development of a common third-party violence prevention policy by the social partners

## 8. Presentation of the Case Studies

At the same time as the online survey took place, the advisory group carried out case studies in Poland, Sweden and Spain. The advisory group members visited specific schools to closely examine good practices of tackling third-party violence and their possible transferability to other national contexts. The criteria for the selection of schools for the case studies were schools that had:

- ✓ **Good practices of cooperation with unions, employers, parents and other stakeholders on the prevention of third-party violence**

- ✓ **Good practice where a school has reacted to an incident of third-party violence**
- ✓ **Good practice based on written policies/practices and/or practical implementation that deliver a safer environment for a whole school community**

The objective of the case studies was to find out about procedures and methodologies to better handle and prevent threats and violence from third-parties at the workplace, and to help individuals to obtain vaster knowledge and ability with regard to handling such kind of threats and violent situations from third-parties. The study delegation interviewed students, psychologists, headmaster, pedagogies, local authorities and teachers.

### **Poland:**

**Characteristics of the school case study:** Strong focus on violence in schools in general, including third-party violence from pupils towards teachers. The school funding in Gdansk is very low and the local authority wishes to increase the support to the schools on preventive measures of third-party violence. However, limitations in resources and funding make such initiatives very difficult.

**20 February 2012, Gdansk**

- **School: No.V**
- **Students: 300**
- **Age: 15-18**

The head master mentioned that it was difficult to discipline students being violent at school. Little support was given from the parents to deal with third-party violence.

The school has employed school psychologists and special pedagogies to consult students with problematic and violent behaviour. In the case of this school, third-party violence often takes place outside the school. Especially female teachers are exposed to third-party violence in the form of sexual harassment. The school always reports such incidents to the police. The study delegation experienced a school that indeed is having problems with third-party violence as well as several social problems in the community that influence everyday life. Even though the school has limited resources some initiatives were taken in order to deal with the third-party violence.

### **Good practices:**

- ✓ The use of specialists (psychologists and special pedagogues)
- ✓ Incidents of third-party violence including episodes of third-party violence taking place outside the school are reported to the local police
- ✓ Good cooperation with the local police and social care centres

**Characteristics of the school case study:** The school is located in one of the modern districts of Gdansk and attracts students from surrounding areas. The school has good facilities and only few difficulties with third-party violence and violence in general.

**21 February 2012, Gdansk**

- **School: No.14**
- **Students: 995**
- **Age 6-15**

School No 14 has a policy document on tackling violence and harassment with specific policies according to the students' age group. This policy document is also shared with the parents. The school's programme for preventing violence and harassment has proved successful as the school has only experienced few problems with aggressive students. The staff and head teacher feel that their good relationship with the parents and pupils and the work of three psychologists in the school help to prevent violence in general and third party violence in particular. Students with poor discipline are offered special education from the school's therapists. The pedagogical framework for these classes is agreed upon with the parents. In addition, workshops on the prevention of cyber harassment (which is a form of third-party violence) have been launched for teachers and students in this school.

#### **Good practices:**

All in all, the study delegation experienced a school that has begun to set up preventive initiatives to avoid third-party violence.

- ✓ Development of specific policy documents depending on the age group of the students
- ✓ Close relationship with parents
- ✓ Involvement of psychologists
- ✓ Special pedagogical framework to deal with prevention of violence in general and third-party violence

#### **Spain:**

##### **Characteristics of the school case study:**

Many of the students at the high school experience social and economic disadvantages which reflect the fact

that about 45% of the citizens of Chipiona lack basic qualifications. The problems that the students experience in their life outside of the school environment are reflected and transmitted into the school.

Further external influences affecting the students' behaviour were drug dealers in the school neighbourhood who use teenagers to distribute and sell drugs.

**5 May 2012, Chipiona, Cadiz**

- **School: IES Caepionis high school**
- **Students: 375**
- **Age: 12-16**

The study delegation experienced good cooperation and coordination between the school and the external institutions to address third-party violence. They found increased awareness on the issue of third-party violence among the member of the school community and its environment. Moreover, the cooperation between the various stakeholders involved in addressing the issue sends out a strong signal to the school community and its environment that third-party violence is unacceptable.

Besides meeting with the school principal, the study delegation also met with other relevant social partners such as the President of Parents' Association, local education authority and the local Police and civil guard.

### **Good practices:**

The school has taken many initiatives to prevent third-party violence incidents. One of them is to have a "Convivencia" (co-existence) class room which is attended by volunteer teachers and coordinated by the school counsellor. The school offers support to the various students every day depending on the students' needs and taking into account the behavior for which they have been sent to attend this class.

- ✓ Coexistence classroom that avoid students to be expelled from the school due to aggressive attitude and bad behaviour. Students can reflect about their behaviour
- ✓ Good coordination between the school and external institutions such as parents' association, local education authority and local and nation police services

### **Sweden:**

#### **Characteristics of the school case study:**

The municipality of Nynäshamn has been a part of a project by AFA, which is an insurance company led by the social

partners. The insurance company concluded that teachers are among the six working groups that are at the highest risk of threats. Based on the rising figures of illness and work related accidents among teachers, the insurance company involved Sunnerby school to start a project to mitigate and prevent third-party violence.

**12 March 2012, Sorunda,  
Nynäshamn**

- **School: Sunnerby school**
- **Students: 360**
- **Age: 13-16**

A sociologist observed lessons, took notes and looked in the classrooms from a different perspective than teachers do in their everyday working life in school. He observed that teachers did not follow a common set of rules and this confused and disorientated the students. He also started to work with parents, students and teachers about violence and harassment in general. Together they sought to create a school identity, to ensure everybody's safety in school and to identify which behaviour is to be considered acceptable in school. At first, the figures on violence and harassment went up because of the fact that the whole school

was much more aware of the existence of third-party violence and harassment. After only a short period the teachers felt safer at work which had a strong influence on the students. One teacher from the school said: “If you feel safe at your work as a teacher your students feel the same”.

### **Good practices:**

The school dealt with the problem of third-party violence and violence in general by involving a sociologist to look at the school from a new and different perspective. The school set up common rules and developed a school identity together with parents and students. This project has given teachers, parents and students:

- ✓ A feeling of involvement and responsibility
- ✓ Clear rules and school policy about how to deal with third-party violence
- ✓ More open-minded teachers who talk and deal with problems in general
- ✓ A more positive school community

The study delegation experienced a school that was heading in the right direction. The fact that the school was setting up procedures to maintain the positive development for the time when the sociologist will no longer accompany the school is very positive. All in all, the atmosphere at the school is much more relaxed and the teachers feel less stressed.

### **Characteristics of the school**

Fryshuset is often referred to as the largest youth centre in the world but it is actually much more than that. Above all it is

a vision based on the conviction that encouragement, confidence, responsibility and understanding are necessary to enable young people to develop their innate abilities and find their way into society. Young people mix with grown-ups in order to participate, contribute and learn.

**13 March 2012, Fryshuset,  
Stockholm**

- **School: Fryshuset school**
- **Students: 180**
- **Age: 13-16**

Fryshuset is a meeting place where people share and develop passionate interests, social commitments, sports, entertainment, culture and innovative educational programmes. It runs several schools and programmes for vocational training, seminars and conferences, courses in theatre, music, and sport as well as hosting events, concerts and parties. Fryshuset employs around 500 people and receives around 40,000 visitors every month. The mission of the school is to have happy and confident students. The school has clear rules about how they expect the students to behave. The teachers have a good understanding of the students since they spend many hours there every day, not only during normal school lessons but also during all the other different activities that Fryshuset offers. The students' lives are not that much “divided”

into school time and leisure time. The students spend a lot of their leisure time at Fryshuset playing music, theatre, sports etc.

### **Good practices:**

Fryshuset's special school structure gives teachers, students and the community at Fryshuset several clear advantages which have a preventive effect on third-party violence and on the atmosphere of the school in general.

- ✓ School time and leisure time under the same roof give the teachers opportunity to deal with and prevent problems faster
- ✓ Better understanding in the relationship between teacher and student
- ✓ Students see each other and the teachers from a broader perspective and in different roles
- ✓ Teachers are more involved in the students' everyday life

The study delegation experienced a school with a unique structure of running and leading a school. The students achieved better results in general compared to other schools. Moreover, the school seemed to have reached the goal of having happy and confident students. Because of the school structure teachers and students had a closer relationship than in other schools. Hence, teachers had a broader role than only being an authority in the classroom.

## **9. Working Group Results**

In working groups the participants also had the opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss concrete ways to implement the Multi-Sectoral Guidelines to Tackle Third-Party Violence and Harassment related to Work in the education sector. It became clear that incidents of third-party violence in education are closely linked to the role of teaching staff and the image of the teaching profession itself. Due to the particularities of the teaching profession, such as the long-term relationship of staff with students and their parents or family, the role of a teacher and tensions between being a provider of education and at the same time evaluator of student's performance, etc., the social partners need to find a sound definition of third-party violence valid for the education sector. The definition will provide a common basis on which to enact appropriately the multi-sectoral guidelines. The common definition will also help to ensure that measures, actions and strategies taken by the social partners at European, national and local level have common targets.

The discussants pointed to the need to take further steps towards establishing and further developing legislation at national level as the foundation for the work of the employers and trade unions in education on this issue. Another reason why national legislation on third-party violence is so important is, that it

ensures the recognition of third-party violence as a serious and relevant concern to be addressed for the sake of a healthy and safe school working environment.

The whole school approach was recognised by all participants as the most effective way to address third-party violence, i.e. by engaging all parties involved in the school environment (teaching and other staff, parents, students, etc.) in establishing measures for a school environment free of violence and harassment. Further measures will be drawn from the second regional seminar in June 2012.

## 10. Abbreviations

CEMR - Council of European Municipalities and Regions

COESS - Confederation of European Security Services

EFEE – European Federation of Education Employers

EFTA – European Free Trade Association

EPSU – European federation of Public Service Unions

ETUCE – European Trade Union Committee for Education

EU – European Union

UNI-EUROPA – European trade union federation representing workers in service sectors, such as private security, commerce etc.

EUROCOMMERCE -Represents the Retail, Wholesale and International Trade Representation to the EU.

HOSPEEM - European Hospital and Healthcare Employers' Association



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