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

**ETUCE Gender Equality Project**

**2013-2014**

**Project Report**

*Promoting Gender Equality within  
Teacher Trade Unions and in the  
Teaching Profession*

*Implementing and Reinforcing  
Teacher Trade Union Actions on  
Gender Equality in Times of Austerity*

**Practical Guidelines**

*What can Teacher Unions do?*



Egalement disponible en français sous le titre :

*« La promotion de l'égalité des genres au sein des syndicats d'enseignants et de la profession enseignante – Mise en œuvre et renforcement des actions des syndicats d'enseignants en période d'austérité »*

*Guide pratique*

*Quel rôle les syndicats peuvent-ils jouer ?*

Auch auf Deutsch verfügbar, unter dem Titel:

*« Förderung der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern in Bildungs- gewerkschaften und im Lehrberuf*

*Umsetzung und Verstärkung der Maßnahmen von Bildungsgewerk- schaften zur Gleichberchtigung der Geschlechter in Zeiten der Sparpolitik »*

*Praktische Richtlinien*

*Was können Bildungsgewerkschaften unternehmen?*

Igualmente disponible en español con el título:

*« Promover la igualdad de género en los sindicatos de la educación y en la profesión docente - Aplicar y reforzar las acciones de los sindicatos de la educación sobre la igualdad de género en tiempos de austeridad »*

*Directrices prácticas*

*¿Qué papel pueden desempeñar los sindicatos?*

также доступны на русском языке под названием:

*Содействие достижению гендерного равенства в профсоюзах учителей и в учительской профессии - Реализация и укрепление деятельности профсоюзов работников образования в области гендерного равенства в условиях жесткой экономики*

*Практическое руководство*

*Что профсоюзы учителей могут сделать?*

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## 1 Preamble

Gender equality has been a key principle of the EU since the Treaty of Rome in 1957, where the principle of equal pay for men and women was already recognised. Using the legal basis provided by the Treaties, the Union has adopted thirteen directives on gender equality since the 1970s. These directives covered, among other things, equal treatment concerning access to work, training, promotions and working conditions, including equal pay and social security benefits, as well as guaranteed rights to parental leave.

In 2013 and 2014, ETUCE has been working on the project *Promoting gender equality within teacher trade unions and in the teaching profession. Implementing and reinforcing teacher trade union actions on gender equality in times of austerity.*

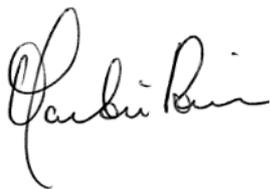
The education sector has a particular role to play and a major impact on society as a whole. School systems have the capacity to contribute to reproducing or to transforming gender relations. The interactions between girls and boys, female and male teachers shape gender relations and gender roles every day. This is why gender equality matters particularly in the education sector.

Moreover, education has a twofold impact on gender relations in society. It is a sector of the labour market where women and men develop careers. Gender roles may lead to stereotypical education outcomes and career choices (e.g. career paths, working arrangements, family, etc.).

This project therefore continued the work that ETUCE and its member organisations have achieved in this field. It further supported the implementation of the ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality as well as the recommendations of the ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality through the ETUCE member organisations.

The *Practical Guidelines for Teacher Unions for the further Implementation and Reinforcement of Teacher Union Actions on Gender Equality in Times of Austerity* adopted by the ETUCE Committee in October 2014 are disseminated in English, French, German, Spanish and Russian to the ETUCE member organisations with a view to reach the affiliated individual teachers and other education staff.

Brussels, 28 October 2014



Martin Rømer,  
European Director, ETUCE





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## 2 Project Overview

This ETUCE Gender Equality Project (1 November 2013 to 31 October 2014) has sought to promote gender equality within teacher unions and in the teaching profession. The principal aim has been to implement and reinforce teacher union actions on gender equality in times of austerity.

### 2.1 Background

Women are under-represented at all levels of management and decision-making in Europe, especially at the highest level of decision-making positions and processes. This can be observed within the private and the public sector, in politics, and also in internal trade union structures. On average, a mere 17.8% of board members of the largest publicly listed companies in the EU are women<sup>1</sup>. The [ETUC 8 March Survey 2014](#) showed that women constitute almost half of the ETUC membership. Nevertheless, women are in minority for all positions of power in internal trade union structures. However, the gender balance differs greatly between different decision-making bodies of the ETUC. While great progress was achieved in gender balancing, the Congress (40% women delegates in 2011) and the secretariat (fully balanced), further effort is needed at the level of the Executive Committee and the Steering Committee<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, the gender pay gap between men and women in Europe remains extremely wide, that is to say that, across the entire economy, women are still paid on average around 16% less than men per hour of work<sup>3</sup>. Further, women tend to work more unpaid

hours than men at home<sup>4</sup>. Among others, these findings indicate that women do not enjoy equal rights and chances, but that gender inequalities persist in Europe.

### Effects of Austerity

Austerity has a major negative impact on gender equality in Europe. Cuts in the public sector affect women in particular as women constitute on average 69.2% of public sector workers in the EU<sup>5</sup>. The public sector – including education – seems to have lost its protective role for women as its lay-offs push women towards precarious employment with limited income security, work-life balance options and pension benefits and worsen the overall quality of women's working conditions. For example, one of the major changes that austerity has brought along in the public sector is the increase of working hours.

### EU Instruments

The midterm review of the strategy for equality between women and men shows that many different actions took place in Europe in the past years to promote gender equality, e.g. increased EU funding to member states to invest in childcare facilities and to promote women's participation in the labour market, [EU directive on parental leave](#), [annual European Equal Pay Day](#), etc. However, improvements in gender equality are only developing slowly and gradually in Europe. In some member states, a reversal of gender equality policies can be observed in the context of the economic crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> [European Commission: DG Justice 2014](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ETUC 2014](#)

<sup>3</sup> [European Commission: DG Justice 2014](#)

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<sup>4</sup> [OECD 2014](#)

<sup>5</sup> [European Women's Lobby 2012](#)



## European trade unions

The [evaluation of the framework of actions on gender equality by the European Social Partners](#) showed that an increased degree of ownership vis-à-vis the broader objectives was noticed since the implementation of the framework. Also, a shift from national level initiatives to enterprise-level initiatives took place. The ETUC also observed that the priorities laid out in the framework were often tackled in an interconnected way.

The current economic crisis risks to further undermine the slow progress made concerning women representation in trade union's decision-making bodies ([ETUC 2007 Charter of Gender Mainstreaming in Trade Unions](#)). This is particularly likely to happen if inadequate policy actions are undertaken to tackle gender gaps. The [ETUC Action Programme on Gender Equality](#) (2012) highlights that actions are necessary at internal trade union level. Although 45% of ETUC members are women, their representation in trade unions' decision-making bodies and positions is far from proportionate and progress is very slow.

## Trade Union Actions in the Education Sector

EI's global campaign, [Unite for Quality Education](#), addresses this issue as it aims to ensure that the provision of quality education for all remains at the top of the agenda for a sustainable, peaceful and prosperous future. Having access to free quality education, is especially significant for girls and women, not

only because education facilitates the realisation of human rights, but also because the educational achievements of women can have a direct impact within the family and across society.

Although women are the majority of members in teacher unions in most regions, they are underrepresented in union leadership. EI acknowledges this fact in the [2011 Resolution on Gender Equality](#) which states that unions are responsible for ensuring the full participation of women in union structures at all levels.

At European level, ETUCE conducted several projects and developed various sets of recommendations to promote gender equality within teacher unions and in the teaching profession. An [Action Plan on gender equality within teacher trade unions' structures and in the teaching profession](#) was developed in 2009, and a set of [guidelines on how teacher unions can contribute to mitigating and tackling gender stereotypes in education and gender segregation in the labour market](#) in 2012.

Moreover, one of ETUCE's constitutional bodies, the Standing Committee for Equality, developed [recommendations in the areas of women teachers' economic empowerment, overcoming gender stereotypes in and through education, and the reconciliation of work and family life](#) in 2011-2012. In 2013, the recommendations were followed by [guidelines which recommend concrete actions to ETUCE member organisations](#).

## 2.2 Objectives of the ETUCE Equality Project 2013 2014

Striving for quality education, the project has aimed to implement and reinforce teacher union actions on gender equality in particular in times of austerity. It has sought to continue to improve national teacher unions' understanding of gender equality issues and to promote teacher union action on ensuring gender equality within the unions' own structures and in the education profession

especially in times of the economic crisis. This project therefore continued the work that ETUCE and its member organisations have achieved in this field. It wished to further support the implementation of the [ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality](#) as well as the recommendations of the [ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality](#) through the ETUCE member organisations.

### The specific objectives were:

- ✓ 1. Aiming at quality education, continue to raise awareness amongst ETUCE member organisations on gender equality issues in teacher unions and in the teaching profession as well as on major EU priorities, policies and instruments in the field by establishing an online platform on equality issues (SharePoint group)
- ✓ 2. Analyse the actual gender equality situation and the impact of the crisis thereon in the education sector and within national teacher unions' structures in the EU/EFTA and candidate countries.
- ✓ 3. Support teacher unions in further implementing and monitoring the [ETUC-UNICE/UEAPME-CEEP framework of actions on gender equality](#) and the [ETUC Charter of Gender Mainstreaming in trade unions](#) in the education sector at national, regional and local levels.
- ✓ 4. Assess the implementation of the [ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality](#) and supporting the ETUCE member organisation in carrying out further actions on gender equality in the particular context of austerity

## 2.3 Methodology

The project has been planned and carried out by an advisory group. The advisory group members have supported the initiative with their expertise and knowledge and actively contributed to the project seminar and to the project closing conference. Moreover, a project expert accompanied the project and assisted the advisory group in setting up the

online survey and carrying out the analysis of the collected data. The online platform (SharePoint-group) for representatives from ETUCE member organisations who are responsible for gender equality issues served as an online network for dissemination of the project developments and results.

## 2.4 Dissemination Strategy

The reports from the project seminar and the closing conference, including the practical guidelines have been disseminated with USB-keys (1000 copies) and on the websites of the project partners as well as via the new online platform on gender equality issues. The reports of the project seminar and the closing conference are available in English and

French. The main outcome, the guidelines and project report are made available in English, French, German, Spanish and Russian. The project results are disseminated to all ETUCE member organisations and their affiliated teachers and other education stakeholders via electronic means.

## 2.5 The Gender Project Advisory Group



Kounka  
Damianova,  
Bulgaria



Rossella  
Benedetti, Italy



Dorota  
Obidniak,  
Poland



Trudy  
Kerperien, the  
Netherlands



H el ene H emet,  
France



Maire Mulcahy,  
Ireland



Ann-Christin  
Hartmann,  
Sweden



Teacher union representatives from seven countries work together in the project's advisory group. They come from Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, France, Ireland, and Sweden.

## 3 Project Activities

To fulfil the objectives within the project period, several activities had been planned during the one year project period. These activities included an online survey, a seminar and a project closing conference. ETUCE developed a set of practical guidelines supporting the ETUCE member organisation in carrying out further actions on gender equality in teacher unions and the teaching

profession in the particular context of austerity.

The first activity planned was the online survey among the ETUCE member organisations which aimed to analyse the actual impact of the crisis on gender equality in the education sector and within national teacher unions' structures.

Building on the results of the online survey, the 50 participants of the Utrecht seminar had the opportunity to examine different national approaches (good practices) regarding the promotion of gender equality within teacher unions and in the teaching profession in times of austerity.

### 3.1 Online Survey

#### Project Expert

**Angelika Striedinger**, Research associate and PhD student at the University of Vienna, gave an overview on the preliminary results of the online survey.



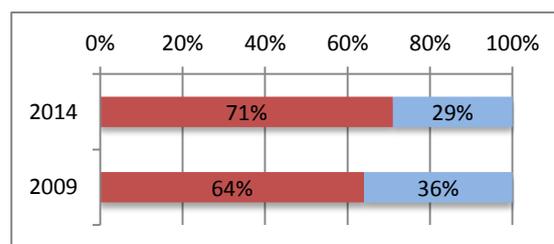
Angie's research centres on organisation sociology, academic careers, and gender. She has worked on issues related to gender inequality and organisations, both in the framework of her academic education and research, and in the context of student representation, for over a decade. Through her work in the European School Student Union (OBESSU) in 2001, and in the European Student Union from 2004 to 2006, she gained insight into the European education landscape. From 2009 to 2012, she worked in EI on equality issues, co-organizing EI's first World Women's Conference, writing EI's 2011 Quadrennial Report on the Status of Women, and preparing the EI Gender Equality Action Plan.

The [online survey](#) is a tool for ETUCE and its member organisations to compare the data collected in 2009 to the present situation and to observe (crisis-related) developments in teacher unions. In order to ensure comparability, the survey was set up in line

The final project event took place in the two-days closing conference in Sofia 80 participants from national teacher unions. Representatives from EFEE and other stakeholder groups had been invited to this event and given the opportunity to qualify the analysis.

with the design of the 2009 survey. The survey shows that women are underrepresented in all positions of leadership in ETUCE member organisations. They are underrepresented especially concerning the highest decision-making bodies. With regard to congress delegates, the survey shows that women are not represented in correlation to their membership. The percentage of women decreased among congress delegates, even though women membership generally increased. This is to say the gender gap widened among congress delegates in the past years.

**Chart: Membership (Women: red; Men: blue)**

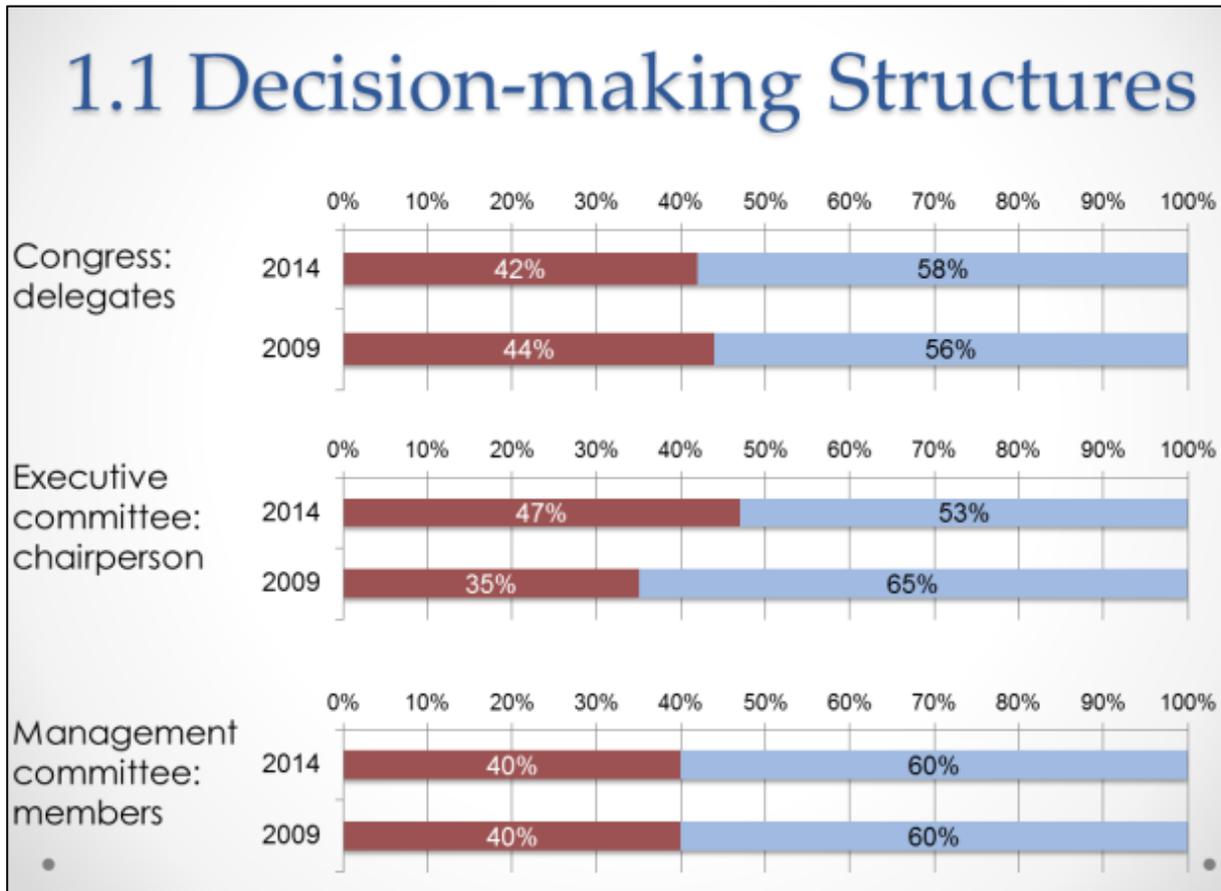


The comparison to the 2009 data further shows that, concerning the executive and management committees, women are better represented in 2014. Their percentage increased among chairpersons and deputy chairpersons and stayed the same among the management committee members. A massive increase can be noted with regard to deputy general secretaries and presidents. However, on the whole, the gender gap still remains.

Looking at equality structures, policies and activities, today more unions have equality departments than in 2009 (almost 60%). The majority of equality staff has been and still is female. In most unions the equality structures are financed through the trade union budget.

austerity measures have gendered effects (70 %). The main problem areas identified are the reconciliation of work and family duties and the increase of violence against women.

Chart: Membership (Women: red; Men: blue)



In comparison to 2009, more unions have a written policy dealing explicitly with gender equality in the union’s own structures (42% compared to 37% in 2009). Almost two-third takes measures to improve gender equality in the union’s decision-making structures. Most unions value proportional representation of women in decision-making structures higher than a gender parity of 50:50.

### The effect of the economic crisis and austerity

The large majority of teacher unions responded that the economic crisis and

Most unions indicated that male and female education staff are equally affected by the budget cuts, but female staff is more affected by job loss and reduction to part-time than male staff. The majority of unions stated that the gender pay gap has remained the same or has even increased.

Teacher unions answered that it has become more difficult to reconcile work and family life for employees in education, while at the same time they also noted improvements in the provision of childcare facilities.

Concerning action on overcoming gender stereotypes in education (curricula, gender training for staff, school policies), many improvements were listed, especially for overcoming female gender stereotypes. Still, girls are more likely to be introduced to work in STEM-related areas than boys are to become acquainted to social and care work.

On the subject of violence against women, over 80 % of teacher unions said that incidences of violence against women increased.

Although unions say that the crisis and austerity measures have gendered effects only a fraction of the unions specifically focus in their crisis-related activities on the gender dimension. Also in specific crisis-related policies, the gender dimension is rarely considered (in 10 % of cases). However, one third of unions include a gender dimension in

their crisis-related lobbying activities and campaigns.

### The Online Survey

- 140 questions were divided into two parts
- Part 1 on representation of women in teacher unions
- Part 2 on effects of the economic crisis and crisis-related developments in the field of gender equality
- 41 of the 129 ETUCE member organisations responded
- 21 unions had responded to the survey in 2009 and allow for direct comparison
- In 2014, women continue to represent the majority of union members with 71 %

## 3.2 Project Seminar, Utrecht



### Seminar Objectives

- promote teacher union action on gender equality
- raise awareness on gender equality issues and on major EU priorities, policies and instruments
- present and discuss the preliminary results of the online survey
- examine different teacher union approaches regarding the promotion of gender equality

The seminar's aim has been to present and discuss the preliminary results of the online survey and to examine different teacher union approaches regarding the promotion of gender equality.



The discussion on the survey results in the working groups and in the plenary suggested several actions for teacher unions at national and European level.

Teacher unions should **support teachers** by using formal and informal networks. Many teacher unions today organise seminars and conferences on general gender equality issues in education as well as on specific expressions of inequality, such as violence against women.

Teachers should be encouraged to **fight against the replication of gender stereotypes**. This is particularly important at times when younger, female members do not seem to see the need to stand up for more gender equality anymore.

Trade union actions aiming at increasing the number of women members in decision-making bodies were discussed. In order to **raise the number of women in decision-making bodies**, teacher unions could organise preparatory courses with the goal to train and encourage young union leaders. On this topic, the participants also examined whether women find less support in elections because they sometimes have limited possibilities to present themselves in union activities before

the elections. This might be true especially for women who could not take on assignment roles beforehand because of their care responsibilities in the family.

The situation of women in teacher unions needs to be monitored within each union. If such structures do not exist, it makes sense to establish a permanent equality committee that has among its objectives monitoring the status of women in the union and proposing solutions. ETUCE should further see to the task of raising its member organisations' awareness on possible solutions to increase the participation of women in decision-making bodies.

At national and European level, teacher unions need to **monitor** the situation of women and report about it to their members and the wider public. They should demand for equality responsibilities in their governments and education institutions.



**Social dialogue** is the most important strategy for improving the situation of women. Bargaining for better working conditions is necessary because of the gender pay gap and because of the glass ceiling in women's careers. With regard to paternal leave, the time given should be the same for mothers and fathers in order to show that both parents have a shared responsibility in caring for their children.

Teacher unions should use the results from ETUCE studies and projects in their national social dialogues. Challenges and obstacles for unions connected to applying ETUCE policy need to be addressed.

Teacher unions need to be **aware of governments' actions** to worsen the working conditions of teachers in many European countries. They also need to keep track of the actions of groups that go against the notion of equality in schools. Especially in times of crisis, when budget cuts and cuts in maternity leave and holidays are on the agenda of governments, international solidarity between teacher unions is crucial to fight back.

### 3.2.1 Gender Equality in Times of Economic Crisis

The economic crisis and austerity politics have a major negative impact on gender equality in Europe. Although the first sectors that were affected by the financial and economic crisis were male-dominated sectors, such as construction and manufacturing, the situation shaped by austerity politics nowadays severely affects female employment and sectors where women are most occupied.



Cuts in the public sector affect women in particular as women constitute on average 69.2% of public sector workers in the EU<sup>6</sup>. The public sector – including education – seems to

have lost its protective role for women as its lay-offs push women towards precarious employment with limited income security, work-life balance options and pension benefits, and worsen the overall quality of women's working conditions. This is to say the economic crisis continues to have a negative impact on gender equality and on women's rights.

*"ETUC firmly believes in the role of education, research and training. Teachers have the capacity to change society: they are in contact with young people and can inspire the younger generation for change."*

Rosanna Ruscito. Member of the ETUC Women's Committee

Unfortunately, there is little evidence that the governments, the European Commission and the European Council are taking into account the gender dimension of the crisis in their policy response. Some of these policies are even worsening the situation (participation rates, working hours, precariousness, etc.).

Some solid trends were not affected by the crisis. Women's participation in the labour market, as well as their level of education, continues to rise. Part-time work, parental leave and domestic work continue to remain "female" phenomena. The gender segregation in higher education and business is very high and the glass ceiling remains in place.

Regarding higher education and research, the participants underlined the importance of implementing gender equality policies with a view to improve the work-life balance, to tackle the 'glass ceiling', to improve the efficiency of education systems, to tackle gender segregation in higher education and to sustain and increase the EU's research capacity.

<sup>6</sup> [European Women's Lobby 2012](#)

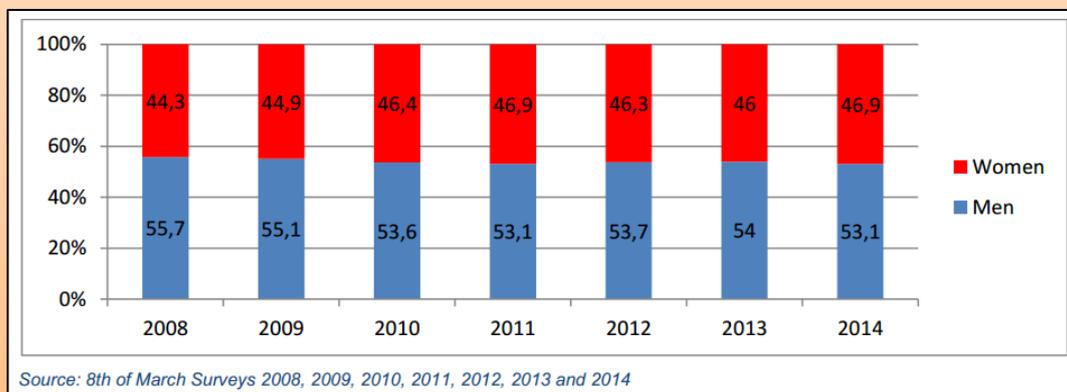
### 3.2.2 Results of the ETUC 8 March Survey 2014

Since 2008, the [ETUC 8 March Survey](#) analyses each year the gender distribution in the decision making structures of the ETUC and its affiliated organisations. The survey is a tool that is intended to improve gender equality at all levels of decision-making, especially at the highest levels. It is conducted among national confederations, trade union federations at European level, and sectoral national unions.

The ETUC 8 March Survey 2014 showed that women constitute almost half of the ETUC membership (44.5 %). Over the last years, women have slowed down the process of a declining membership that unions in a

majority of European countries face. Nevertheless, women are in minority for all positions of power in internal trade union structures. Only three union presidents are women compared to 32 men, and 4 General Secretaries out of 15 are women.

Among ETUC's sectoral trade unions, ETUCE is the trade union federation with the highest percentage of women members. Although overall union membership is decreasing, an increase in young women members can be noted. However, women are still not in high level decision making positions in general.



### 3.3 Project Closing Conference, Sofia



#### Closing Conference Objectives

- Find out what teacher unions can do to promote gender equality in times of economic crisis and budget cuts in education
- Discuss and amend practical guidelines
- Exchange different approaches regarding the concrete implementation of the guidelines at national, regional and local level
- Discuss how the social partners can contribute to gender equality in the teaching profession

The closing conference was the last activity that the ETUCE Secretariat organised in the framework of this initiative. Its main objective was to discuss and amend the practical guidelines that had been drafted on the basis of the results from the online survey and the debate in the Utrecht seminar. Moreover, the participants had the opportunity to exchange different approaches in terms of concrete implementation of these guidelines at national, regional and local level.

In the following section, some of the main contributions are listed.

The participants stated that the **teachers own ability to understand gender equality should be more appreciated**. For this, it is crucial to protect the academic freedom of education staff and to put a halt to the decline of the status of the teaching profession in society. Women teachers should set an example for younger generations to follow.

Solidarity in this interconnected world is crucial in order to achieve strong international organisations working together on gender equality, pulling in the same direction. Gender equality should be seen as a priority of ETUCE and its member organisations.

### 3.3.1 Gender Stereotypes, Media Power

Gender equality initiatives which tackle and challenge hidden stereotypes should be adopted as an important issue in the curriculum. One of the biggest problems is the way younger generations are socialised.

Gender equality values can hardly be found in the curriculum. The low visibility of gender equality in the education sector leads to young people producing gender stereotypes from early childhood on and reinforces attitudes in favour of gender inequality. Education staff can change attitudes by focusing their knowledge on what gender means or what sexualisation means and this could be adapted to all education grades.

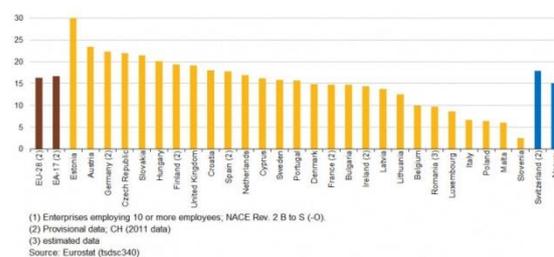
It is important to arouse the curiosity of both, boys and girls, in all subjects of the curriculum to avoid the division by sex in the different subjects.

In addition, **younger generations build their stereotypes values** and beliefs based on what the media presents. The impact of the media on the matter counts; e.g. 80% of the experts appearing in media debates are men. In a more interconnected world it is more necessary than ever to have gender balance in the media.

### 3.3.2 Pay Gap/Pension Gap

Pay inequality continues to be a systemic practice in all employment sectors.

It is more than ever necessary to agree on the measures which unions and the social partners should pursue so as to eradicate the gender gap in salaries in the immediate future.



(1) Enterprises employing 10 or more employees, NACE Rev. 2 B to S (-0)  
 (2) Provisional data, CH (2011 data)  
 (3) estimated data  
 Source: Eurostat (tdisc340)

Source: Eurostat

According to data from the European Institute for Gender Equality the Gender Pay Gap difference was 16% in 2011. This mirrors in pensions, where in 2009, the gender gap was 39%.

This historically unfair treatment of women and men can be fixed in all organisations and education authorities through social dialogue and collective bargaining. In order to achieve agreements on this issue between the social partners at both national and European level, it is essential to underline the argument with high quality data.

### 3.3.3 Work Life Balance

“We would like to, but we don’t have the money” this is the catchcry that teachers heard frequently from employers. **Better arguments and better data resources are needed to prove that work life balance is good for everybody**. It is not easy to change women’s and men’s roles in society.

“Without data an argument remains an opinion and opinion never wins an argument”

Concerning the amount of working hours, teachers spend many hours in school and in many countries work-related stress is increasing in the profession. At the same time, it is imperative that both women and men have time for their union activities without discrimination against women.

### 3.3.4 Maternity Leave

Motherhood is still a cause of pay inequality in our society, even if the breastfeeding period in women’s working life accounts for only 3%.

Expectations → motherhood/fatherhood → the different roles that society promotes for men and women

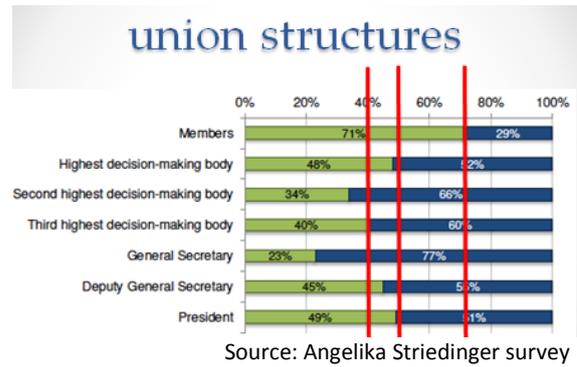
Most economists believe the gap between women’s and men’s wages does not stem primarily from employers paying women less than men for the same job. It occurs mostly because men and women take different jobs and follow different career paths. Part of this difference may be a result of discrimination in hiring and promoting practices. Much, though, is a result of the constraints of motherhood.

The gap concerning women’s participation in the labour force between the Europe 2020 targets and reality on the labour market is due to the predomination of part-time work.

### 3.3.5 Gender and Decision-Making Positions

Across the EU, women are underrepresented in positions of responsibility in all fields. The reasons for the under-representation of women in power and decision-making are multi-faceted and complex. Particularly at the highest levels, women are still largely outnumbered by men in leadership positions in politics and business, as well as in other fields. Here the trade unions should ask one question: why do women not vote for women in leadership positions? The reasons could be multiple. However it is clear that the majority of leadership positions are taken by men and societal expectations tend to match this. Teacher unions can work towards changing the values that member organisations expect

their leaders to incorporate so as to be free of stereotypes.



### 3.3.6 Women in Higher Education

Women have to demonstrate more competence to reach the same position as men. In general, women’s university career often focuses on a traditional career choice, like nursing or teaching; as men’s university career choice tends to be in engineering or science. **Young women therefore should take the initiative and also study new and other fields of knowledge.** Women in higher education should open their training fields and prove that women are equally capable of achieving in what might be stereotyped as a traditional male sphere of competence.

In most teacher unions, gender equality issues are not seen as a priority because in the higher decision-making positions gender equality is not considered to be a critical issue. Therefore there are not enough financial and/or staff resources and equality work is embedded in other units as a minor priority.

There is also a lack of information and statistics about gender equality. This affects all sectors and teacher unions. In most decision-making meetings gender equality is understood as a side issue. However, ensuring the inclusion of female expertise as well as men qualified on gender equality issues to be more involved in high-level meetings is crucial.

It is therefore essential that teacher unions find a way to achieve gender equality and to

overcome still persisting out-dated union structures. The difference between the membership numbers, (71% women) and the top positions in teacher unions that are mostly filled by men is significant.

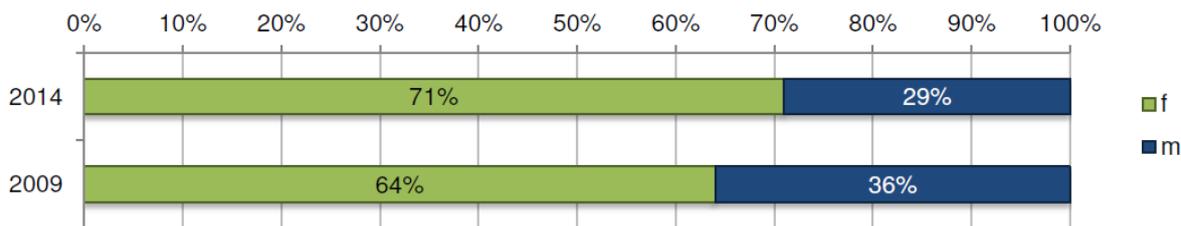
According to the online survey results, ETUCE’s member organisations have on average 71% female and 29% male individual members. Among the 19 unions that provided this data in both surveys, the percentage of female members rose from 64% in 2009 to 71% in 2014. Women thus increasingly represent the majority of union members.

At the last meeting of the highest decision-making body, 48% of the delegates were women. This represents almost gender parity,

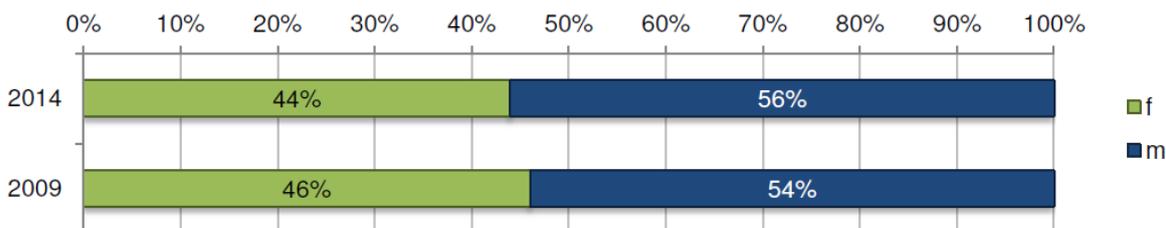
but it is significantly lower than the percentage of female union members. From this perspective, female union members are thus underrepresented in the unions’ highest decision-making bodies (gap: 23%).

**What can teacher unions do?**

- Backlash against / disinterest in feminism
  - Gender knowledge, awareness
- Difficulties in reconciliation union/care duties
  - Arrangements for reconciliation
- Personality traits: confidence, assertiveness
  - Leadership training



Gender ratio in union membership 2009-2014



Gender ratio among delegates at the last meeting of the highest decision-making body, 2009-2014

## 4 Good Experiences in Promoting Gender Equality in Teacher Unions

The seminar and the closing conference gave the member organisation representatives the opportunity to showcase their good practices and experiences that prove that teacher unions are making progress in the field of

gender equality. There are many different actions. They however focus mainly on training courses, balancing gender quotas in the unions and on increasing the number of women in leadership positions.

	<p>Germany: Trainings</p> <p>“GEW initiated a generational turnover by creating a mentoring programme in the national women’s committee.”</p>
	<p>The Netherlands: Trainings</p> <p>AOb established the AOb Academy, a very intensive 60 days training course for high potentials and preferably young members. The course deals with collective agreements, working conditions, legal issues but also with educational topics and personal skills. It is taught by trainers from AOb and external trainers.</p>
	<p>Turkey: Gender Quotas</p> <p>In all decision-making bodies, Eğitim Sen has a responsible for gender equality and a 30% quota for women. Eğitim Sen has introduced a 40 % quota for women delegates at the union’s congress.</p>
	<p>France: Work Balance</p> <p>“Since his election in 2012, the General Secretary has adopted a clear policy intending to involve more women and young people in all the union activities. In order to put this policy into practice, he issued a call for applications among the 22 trade unions of the Federation, highlighting that it was possible to “reconcile activism and private life”. More specifically, he encourages meeting schedules which allow everyone to attend without compromising their personal life. Furthermore, teleworking is widespread, and videoconferencing and teleconferencing happen frequently.”</p>
	<p>UIL Scuola has had good experiences with ‘train-the-trainer activities’. UIL Scuola organises seminars and conferences for members, teachers and parents on equality issues.</p>

	<p>UK: Structural Proceedings</p> <p>“In 2011 NUT monitored the gender of Conference speakers; there was a significant gender imbalance of speakers: Male 41 / Female 28. NUT recognised that its arrangements for handing in speaker’s cards was out of date and should be reviewed. (...) At the 2013 Conference were put in place and whilst presenting some administrative challenges, they delivered the desired results: Female 56 / Male 47”</p>
	<p>Sweden: Structural Proceedings</p> <p>During the past 5 years Läraryörbundet has developed the working models used in its highest decision making bodies. The aim has been to find forms that promote women’s participation in discussions and decision-making. This has been done by implementing forms that foster dialogue among the many rather than debates from a platform.</p>
	<p>Switzerland</p> <p>A public financing programme aimed to incite early childhood care facilities. This led to about 25.600 new places for preschool children and about 19.500 places for schoolchildren over the last 10 years</p>
	<p>Poland</p> <p>ZNP established a Committee for Equal Opportunities in 2009. The committee promotes gender equality by organising training sessions at union level, promoting different terminology, publishing educational material about discrimination, and pointing towards existing reports on discrimination in education. ZNP also cooperates with NGOs to promote gender equality.</p>

## 5 Crisis Gendered Effects on Teacher Unions

During the project activities the participants also discussed the increasing number of challenges regarding gender equality in society. These are, of course, reflected in the education sector. First, violence against women is increasing in Europe. Second, gender equality policies are set aside from

political priorities due to budget cuts. Third, gender stereotypes prevail in society and so in the education sector. These are some of the reasons that oblige teacher unions to stay alert and to not back down from the achievements made so far.

	<p><b>Cyprus</b> Violence against women has become more visible in the past five years. There has been an increase in the number of reported incidents of rape and sexual harassment. According to a study conducted in the northern part of Cyprus, the percentage of women who have been subjected to psychological violence is 86,3% and the percentage of those subjected to physical violence is 74,7%.</p>
	<p><b>Ireland: Gender Quotas</b> “Proposing a discussion to the Annual Convention on quotas and thresholds for the representation of women in decision-making bodies is confronted with little support - if not outright opposition - to any corrective measures to reverse underrepresentation of females.”</p>
	<p><b>Lithuania</b> In Lithuania, gender equality policies are set out in the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2010-2014. A considerable number of measures are targeted towards improving the situation for women and men in the labour market. One of the priorities is to reduce the gender pay gap, which includes actions to increase salaries in female-dominated sectors such as education, arts and culture and social work.</p>
	<p><b>Norway</b> A green paper on equality was launched in 2011, which was in many ways alarming regarding the younger generation’s attitude towards gender equality, but also pointing out negative developments in the education sector. It was alarming to observe very traditionally gendered choices students make when deciding about their future work place: nurses for girls and engineering for boys</p>
	<p><b>Slovenia</b> Support systems have increased, as well as public awareness about violence against women. More help is offered to victims.</p>

## 6 Next Challenges: Promoting Gender Equality in Teacher Unions

Teacher unions need to work in two gender equality dimensions: at national level and international/European level:



**European level:** ETUCE encourages the promotion of solidarity between teacher unions, especially in times of crisis. This solidarity has become more necessary than ever with the impact of the economic crisis and budget cuts that the most of European countries are experiencing in the education sector. The cuts affect directly and indirectly the working conditions of education staff in many European countries.

Cuts in maternity leave, holidays and pensions have impacted strongly on the education sector. ETUCE therefore advocates for the increased implementation of parental leave schemes in support of shared responsibility of both parents when it comes to caring for children and other family members in order to support work-life balance.

The gender pay gap should play a more pronounced role on the agenda of the European Sectorial Social Dialogue, in particular as regards equal pay for work of equal value, and other issues, such as the so-called glass ceiling in women's careers.

**National and regional level:** teacher unions need to maintain the fight against the

replication of gender stereotypes, e.g. build up students' self-esteem and show that gender equality is a common goal for both women and men.

Focus on practical actions and solutions and work towards continuous progress, e.g. set up a union teacher training scheme that includes training on equal opportunities or train-the-trainer activities; organise union work in such a way that women and men with caring tasks can participate in union activities, e.g. funded child care facilities at union meetings.



In line with these efforts, teacher unions should promote a positive image of the teaching profession and highlight that it is an important profession which requires substantial qualification and training.

The education sector has a particular role and a major impact on other sectors and on society as a whole. School systems have the capacity to reproduce or transform gender relations. The interactions between girls and boys, female and male teachers shape gender relations and gender roles every day. This is why gender equality matters particularly in the education sector.

## 7 Outcomes: Adopted Practical Guidelines for Teacher Unions

### Practical Guidelines for Teacher Unions for the Further Implementation and Reinforcement of Teacher Union Actions on Gender Equality in Times of Austerity

*Adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 13 – 14 October 2014*

#### 1. Introduction

These practical guidelines have been developed within the project *Promoting gender equality within teacher trade unions and in the teaching profession II – Implementing and reinforcing teacher trade union actions on gender equality in times of austerity*. They build on the project activities (teacher union online survey and a seminar) to which the ETUCE member organisations actively contributed. The guidelines address primarily teacher unions in Europe and their affiliated teachers and education employees on how to implement and reinforce teacher union actions on gender equality in times of economic recession.

This initiative was developed by the ETUCE Secretariat following up on the ETUCE – EI European Region Conference, which clearly identified the need for further work on the impact of the crisis on teachers' working conditions. The project and guidelines also stand in the light of the EI/ETUCE campaign [Unite for Quality Education – Better Education for a better world](#) in 2013/2014. In addition, they support the [EU Strategy for Equality between women and men 2010-2015](#) which also highlights the under-representativity of women in decision-making bodies, and wish to contribute the specific education sector's point of view to the implementation of the strategy

In continuation of the work achieved by ETUCE in the area of equal opportunities and gender equality in particular, these guidelines support the further implementation of *the EI and ETUCE Action Plans on Gender Equality*, *the ETUCE Guidelines on how teacher unions can contribute to mitigating and tackling gender stereotypes in education and gender segregation in the labour market* as well as the [recommendations of the ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality](#) through the ETUCE member organisations. They also take account of the various [European Social Partner Agreements](#)<sup>7</sup> in this field.

The main objective has been to implement and reinforce teacher union actions on gender equality in particular in times of austerity with the aim of continuing to improve national teacher trade unions' understanding of gender equality issues and to promote teacher union action on ensuring gender equality within teacher union structures and in the teaching profession especially in the economic crisis.

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<sup>7</sup> Social dialogue and gender equality in the European Union, [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---dialogue/documents/publication/wcms\\_213793.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---dialogue/documents/publication/wcms_213793.pdf);

CEMR/EPSU Guidelines to drawing up gender equality action plans in local and regional government, <http://www.epsu.org/a/3541>;

Framework of Actions on Gender Equity (2005), <http://www.epsu.org/a/1813>

Framework Agreement on Inclusive Labour Markets (2010), [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/2010againstpoverty/export/sites/default/downloads/Events/event\\_123\\_Framework\\_agreement\\_ILM\\_25.03.10.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/2010againstpoverty/export/sites/default/downloads/Events/event_123_Framework_agreement_ILM_25.03.10.pdf);

The document reflects the work of ETUCE and its member organisations on gender equality in times of economic recession on which to develop further actions at European, national, regional and local level.

With a view to bringing about a sustainable change that has a lasting impact on the school environment, actions determining and strengthening the fundamental values in school (e.g. mutual respect, democratic citizenship) should start at an early age and involve all stakeholders in education, social partners, school leaders, teachers, students and parents alike. For this, continuous public investment in education is needed at all levels to ensure high quality education, including reconciliation of work and family life, as prerequisite for gender equality in education institutions, the teaching profession and teacher unions.

## 2. Situation in the ETUCE member organisations

The [online survey](#) carried out in the frame of the project helped ETUCE and its member organisations to compare the data collected in 2009 to the present situation and to observe (crisis-related) developments in teacher unions. The study report featuring the results in detail is available on the ETUCE website<sup>8</sup> and the SharePoint group of this project.

Some of the most prominent results are listed here in comparison to 2009:

- Women continue to be under-represented in all positions of leadership in ETUCE member organisations, especially with regard to the highest decision-making bodies.
- The percentage of women decreased among the delegates to the highest decision-making bodies of ETUCE member organisations, even though the percentage of women among union members generally increased.
- In executive and management committees, women are better represented in 2014
- The unions are more active in the field of gender equality: More unions have equality departments that look at equality structures, policies and activities, and more unions have a written policy dealing explicitly with gender equality in the union's own structures.
- The majority of staff assigned to the promotion of equal opportunities has been and still is female.
- Almost two-third take measures to improve gender equality in the union's decision-making structures.
- The great majority of teacher unions replied that the economic crisis and austerity measures have gendered effects.
- The main problem areas identified are the reconciliation of work and family duties and the increase of violence against women. Improvements can be seen mostly with regard to overcoming female gender stereotypes and the provision of childcare facilities.
- The majority of unions stated that the gender pay gap stayed the same or even increased.
- It has become more difficult to reconcile work and private life for employees in education.
- Many improvements on actions to overcome gender stereotypes in education (curricula, gender training for staff, school policies) were brought forward in the survey.
- Activities in schools to overcome gender stereotypes are focused more on female than on male stereotypes: Girls are more likely to be introduced to work in STEM<sup>9</sup>-related areas than boys are to become acquainted with social and care work.
- Although unions say that the crisis and austerity measures have gendered effects only a fraction of the unions specifically focus in their crisis-related activities on the gender dimension and the gender dimension is rarely considered in specific crisis-related policies.
- One third of unions include a gender dimension in their crisis-related lobbying activities and campaigns.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.csee-etu.org](http://www.csee-etu.org)

<sup>9</sup> The academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

### 3. Aim

These practical guidelines provide teacher unions in Europe and their affiliated teachers and education employees with concrete recommendations on how to promote gender equality within teacher trade unions and in the teaching profession which is particularly a challenge in times of economic recession. They wish to continue to call teacher unions' attention to gender equality issues within the unions and in the teaching profession itself as well as to raise further awareness on major EU priorities, policies and instruments in the field. They aim to assist teacher unions and their affiliated teachers and education employees in developing concrete strategies to implement and reinforce teacher union actions on gender equality. Striving for quality education, these guidelines essentially seek to help teacher unions to enhance and maintain decent and quality working conditions in the education sector also in times of crisis, and a good learning environment for all pupils and students.

This document does not provide a master plan for every country. Instead these guidelines should be understood as a supporting tool to be assessed and adjusted to meet the conditions at national/union level as regards gender equality within the union and in the teaching profession.

### 4. Guidelines

Following the discussions in the project seminar, the guidelines address the competences needed to tackle the challenges of gender equality in the teaching profession as well as ways to promote gender equality in teacher unions and in the education sector, which is particularly demanding in times of austerity. Two main levels for specific teacher union action have been identified (European and national teacher union level).

#### **At European level it is important to**

- ✓ Further raise ETUCE member organisations' awareness on possible solutions to increase the participation of women in decision-making bodies;
- ✓ Monitor the representation of women in the ETUCE statutory and advisory bodies and report to the member organisations and promote gender balance in delegations to all ETUCE conferences;
- ✓ Address the challenges and obstacles for member organisations in applying ETUCE policy and enhance the awareness amongst ETUCE member organisations on the promotion of gender equality in teacher unions and in the teaching profession, e.g. through a platform for sharing good practices and/or EU – funded initiatives in operation in schools and in unions. In this regard, for example, translating documents and campaign material and circulating statistical data to all affiliates has proven to be a successful strategy in the past.
- ✓ Promote international solidarity between teacher unions especially at times of crisis, to reprimand in unison actions taken by various governments that worsen directly and indirectly the working conditions of teachers in many European countries;
- ✓ Explicitly discuss the gendered dimension of the economic crisis and governments' austerity measures, spread information and provide campaign material.
- ✓ Fight against budget cuts, cuts in maternity leave, holidays and pensions and advocate for the increased implementation of parental leave schemes in support of shared responsibility of both parents when it comes to caring for children and other family members;
- ✓ Foster further collaboration with other relevant stakeholders in the area of gender equality and education with the aim to further support teachers by making use of both formal and informal networks;
- ✓ Continue lobbying for teachers' interests towards the European institutions advocating a positive and more attractive image of the teaching profession. It is an important profession which requires extensive study, substantial qualification and training and professional development;

- ✓ Ensure that the topic of gender equality remains on the agenda for the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in order to improve the situation of education workers, e.g. as regards bargaining for better working conditions with a view to eliminate the gender pay gap, and as regards equal pay for work of equal value, and to address issues such as the so-called glass ceiling in women's careers.

### **At national and regional teacher union level it is important to**

- ✓ Make teachers aware and encourage teachers to fight and maintain the fight against the replication of gender stereotypes, e.g. build up students' self-esteem, especially the self-esteem and self-dignity of girls and women; and show that gender equality is a common goal for both women and men;
- ✓ Restore and increase the provision of guidance counsellors to schools and ensure that they are trained in the promotion of gender equality
- ✓ Ensure that aspects of equal opportunities and gender issues are part of initial teacher training, continuous professional development and of the national curriculum, so that gender equality is mainstreamed and forms part of accreditation of teachers and students:
- ✓ Establish a rule in the Rules and Constitution of each union which obliges the union to promote gender equality, to create a plan for its promotion and to report on a regular basis as to progress or lack of progress on same;
- ✓ Identify and address in particular the needs and interests of young (female) education staff to bring about a sustainable change in the organisation culture of teacher unions in future, e.g. via training and engaging young women in leadership positions.
- ✓ Continue the work on equal opportunities and publish arguments for gender equality that teachers can use in the classroom and when speaking with colleagues making gender equality an issue for all and addressing the specific needs of women and men as well as of boys and girls;
- ✓ Focus on practical actions and solutions and work towards continuous progress, e.g. set up a union teacher training scheme that includes training on equal opportunities or train-the-trainer activities; organise union work in such a way that women with caring tasks can participate in union activities, e.g. funded child care facilities at union meetings;
- ✓ Monitor the situation of women in the union and report the findings to the affiliated members and the wider public. This data can serve, e.g. to issue a demand for equality officers in the national/regional governments and education institutions.
- ✓ Establish a permanent equality committee at national and local level that reports on a regular basis to the union board, i.e. through a board staff member in charge of equal opportunities. This committee should have among its objectives monitoring the status of women in the union, ensuring comprehensive gender-disaggregated data collection, for example surveys that profile the salary of members by gender, proposing solutions and sharing good practices;
- ✓ Disseminate studies on equal opportunities and provide input to reports on education to make the data available to affiliates and other stakeholders working on this topic;
- ✓ Use the results from ETUCE studies and projects in the national social dialogue systems;
- ✓ Ensure that the topic of gender equality is part of the agenda for the national social dialogue in order to improve the situation of education workers, e.g. as regards bargaining for better working conditions with a view to eliminating the gender pay gap and to address issues such as the so-called glass ceiling in women's careers and making gender equality an issue for all, both women and men;
- ✓ Propose and negotiate for measures which will increase the number of permanent full-time positions;
- ✓ Identify other relevant stakeholders in the area of gender equality and education and foster further collaboration with, e.g. join campaigns of non-governmental organisations that promote, for example, equal relations in the family;
- ✓ Be alert of different governments' actions that directly and/ or indirectly deteriorate the working conditions of teachers in many European countries and promote further solidarity with other ETUCE



member organisations to combat the cuts in education. This includes amongst others, cuts in maternity leave, holidays, pensions and parental leave schemes;

- ✓ Stay informed about the actions of groups promoting all forms of extremism and intolerance that undermine the notion of equality in schools in order to be able to take preventative actions on time;
- ✓ Continue advocating broadly a positive and worthwhile image of the teaching profession.



## 8 Acronyms

AOb	Algemene Onderwijsbond (Dutch Education Union)
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
CISL	Italian Confederation of Trade Unions
Eğitim Sen	Education and Science Workers' Union of Turkey
EI	Education International
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education
EFEE	European Federation of Education Employers
Läraryrörbundet	Swedish Teachers' Union
STEM	The academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
OBESSU	Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMC Working Group	Open Method of Coordination Working Group
VET	Vocational Education and Training
SEB	Bulgarian Education Union
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UIL Scuola	Labour Union for Education (Italy)
UNSA Education	Federation of Education Professions (France)
ZNP	Polish Teacher Union

## 9 Annex

### Equality Experts



***Striedinger, Angelika***

*Research associate and PhD student at the Vienna University*

### Speakers



***Benedetti, Rossella***

*Vice-chair of the ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality*



***Blower, Christine***

*ETUCE President*



***Damianova, Kounka***

*Chair of the ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality*



***Dresscher, Walter***

*Vice-President of ETUCE  
President, AOb (The Netherlands)*



***Fairfoul, Helen***

*Chief Executive, Universities and Colleges Employers  
Association (U.K) (EFEE)*



***Franke-Zöllmer, Gitta***

*Chair of the ETUCE Women's Committee*



***Humbert, Anne Laure***

*Gender Expert at EIGE*



***Krasteva Monova, Vanya***

*Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Bulgaria*



***Kroumova Takeva, Yanka***

*President, SEB (Bulgaria)*



***Muijres, José***

*Bureau Member, AOb (The Netherlands)*



***Petrov, Julian***

*President, PODKREPA (Bulgaria)*



***Rømer, Martin***

*European Director, ETUCE*



***Ruscito, Rosanna***

*Substitute member to the ETUC Women's Committee  
Presidium*

*ETUC National Secretary, CISL (Italy)*









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