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ETUCE

European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

EUROPEAN REGION- ETUCE

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adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 23 October 2017

In the context of the Resolution on [Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting Quality Education](#) and the [CEE Round Table Declaration 2015](#),

Declares that:

Despite public **investment in high quality education** being considered vital both for social well-being and economic progress, the education sector in CEE countries has been affected considerably by continuous cut backs since 2008-2009, depriving children and young people;

The continuous reduction of public funding of education systems in many CEE countries resulted in a higher potential for **private provision of education** (especially in the sectors of early childhood and higher education and research); for increases in tuition fees and students' loans; and/or for shifts towards business-like management and governance practices of education institutions;

Not only such practices open the way to increasingly competitive working environments, they directly endanger the working conditions of teachers and other education personnel, including, among others, professional autonomy and employment terms; they hamper both the provision of and access to quality education for all students;

More recently, CEE education trade unions have experienced increasing trends towards **unilateral decision making by governments at the expense of social dialogue**, of social partners' autonomy and of their right to bargain collectively to establish fair working conditions. CEE education trade unions have faced unprecedented challenges to uphold and strengthen collective bargaining coverage, scope and provisions to defend education personnel's salaries and other important issues;

Despite the growing reluctance of governments to consult social partners on policy and reform-making, education trade unions in CEE countries sought alternative ways to defend the rights of teachers and other education personnel, to make their voice heard and to reflect on innovative strategies aimed at **attracting, recruiting and organising new members**;

Education trade unions in some CEE countries, face indeed huge challenges in their endeavour, given the difficulties brought about by media and government-ran anti-union campaigns and the emergence of parallel organisations that claim to represent teachers and yet aim at downgrading the role of education trade unions in society and their image in society.



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In light of the flow of **refugees** seeking security and safety among whom are many unaccompanied children and young people and in light of the intense **mobility** across Europe, education plays an essential role in developing open-minded societies; indeed, **the inclusion of migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities in society** relies on inclusive and fair education systems, supportive and supported education personnel;

Education, namely **education personnel**, shapes students' personalities by helping students become active, responsible, **democratic** and committed citizens with a sense of **critical-thinking and conflict resolution**. Through education, students understand and take ownership of **fundamental rights, appreciating diversity and showing mutual understanding**;

Education contributes to and fosters the unification and **cohesion** of society and stands at the core of an international fight against all forms of discrimination, and inequality, including gender-based inequalities, as well as xenophobic ideologies, intolerance, hatred, violence and radicalisation leading to violent extremism;

It is of utmost importance to **enhance the status and image of the teaching profession** in the CEE countries by, among other measures, increasing education personnel's **salary**, and guaranteeing **decent working and employment conditions**;

Governments in the CEE countries should commit themselves to make decisions for the improvement of education systems on the basis of effective and sustainable **social dialogue** with education trade unions;

Commits education trade unions in the CEE countries to:

1. Campaign for peace worldwide by calling governments to divert investments from military expenses to education and to support integration of refugee and migrant children and teachers;
2. Support the recognition procedures of refugee and migrant teachers to obtain the legal status of asylum seekers;
3. Advocate, including at intergovernmental institutional level, for increased **investment in education** and call governments to do everything in their power to collect sufficient public revenues to **finance fair and inclusive education systems**, including by fighting tax fraud and evasion; and to denounce any practice of tax giveaways for the wealthy and for businesses;
4. **Strengthen, maintain or restore effective social dialogue in the education sector** in CEE countries as well as to oppose any limit to the scope of bargaining in order to enhance the status of teachers who deserve decent pay, decent working conditions and permanent contracts;
5. Actively engage in **enhancing the status of the teaching profession** in the CEE countries in order to overcome the shortage of qualified education personnel; including by campaigning for the rights of teachers;
6. Raise awareness within the global education trade union movement to lobby for a convention on the teaching profession in addition to the ILO/ UNESCO

Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) & UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997)¹

7. Strongly **oppose any attempt to privatisation** in and of education which is detrimental for the teaching profession and for the working conditions of teachers and other education personnel;
8. Support education trade unions' affiliates in the provision of **democratic and citizenship education** as a tool to create safe and secure learning environments with respect for all and provide further and **continuous teacher training** on teaching migrants with the view to facilitate inclusion of migrants and refugees in education in the CEE countries;
9. Promote **gender equality** within the teaching profession and provide education trade unions' affiliates with practical tools and examples for equality improvement and development of a gender-sensitive approach in education;
10. Encourage research among member organisations on teachers' pay and—continue to campaign for pay rise;
11. **Strengthen education trade unions' membership** by organising new members through innovative tools, practices, information exchanges with other trade unions, improved flow of information with current and future members on trade union work and their rights as qualified teachers, as well as campaigns to tackle the negative image of education trade unions disseminated not at least in media;
12. Ensure the participation of education trade union members in discussions on legislation and social and economic issues impacting on teachers.
13. Contribute to **unity and solidarity within the European education trade union** movement by, inter alia, sharing information and experience, implementing projects of mutual interests and showing solidarity;
14. **Promote universal common values** of democracy, tolerance, freedom and non-discrimination with a view to prevent extremism and violent radicalisation, including by strengthening cooperation with national authorities dealing with family and social protection to develop policies, action plans and concrete programmes;
15. Lobby at national level to make provisions for the respect of teachers' rights in legislation and develop, implement and advocate for trainings, media campaigns and other tools that can help teachers tackle all forms of violence and extremism in schools (including responsible use of ICT and social media), and cooperate with relevant actors (e.g. parents, education authorities, NGOs, media) to this aim;
16. Urge governments to ensure that school curricula include principles of tolerance, and the fight against violence, extremism and discrimination in the relevant subjects;

¹ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_493315.pdf.

17. Encourage the collection of national evidence on how the above principles are put in practice in school curricula with a view to make the results available to a wider public;
18. Continue the fight for **high quality education for all** and for reducing inequalities throughout education;
19. **Raise awareness** about **this declaration** among their affiliates;

**The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 132 Education Trade Unions and 11 million teachers in 50 countries of Europe. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of Education International, the global federation of education trade unions.*