



Executive Summary

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The [ETUCE Report](#) presented in 2016 is part of the ETUCE complementary strategy to the EI Global Response to Commercialisation and Privatisation in/of education. The survey was conducted and the report prepared to gather and assemble information on whether and how the increasing pressure on public budgets, together with the ideological drive towards privatisation of potentially profitable education services, are undermining the right to free quality education in Europe, teachers' working conditions, labour relations and rights, teachers' professional status and development.

The Report maps developments over the last 2 years; identifies some common trends and challenges concerning 1) funding of education and the scope and scale of private sector involvement in the provision of education services; 2) teachers' working conditions and trade union actions; and 3) social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Funding of education

- **Public investment in education:** The economic and financial crisis have had a profound impact on education. According to data collected, two trends emerged, both of which led to reduced funding for education. First, the share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) invested in education was cut in many countries. Second, after 2008, the GDP declined. As a consequence, investment in education declined in real terms. The European Semester mechanism of economic governance coordination and the continuous demand to bring down public debt have made it difficult for European countries to mobilise the financial resources for education investment. There has been a persistent negative investment trend since 2010. This is not due to one-off cuts spread across Europe. Rather, it reflects reductions mainly found in the same group of countries (Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, UK, Denmark and the Netherlands). Recently, in connection with a – still fragile – economic recovery, funding of education has slightly increased in several countries (Belgium, France, Luxemburg, Austria, and Sweden).
- **Reforms of national education systems:** Since the inception of the Europe 2020 strategy and the reinforcement of the European Semester mechanism to coordinate budgets and reforms related to Europe 2020 and Education and Training 2020 targets, reforms occurred in almost all the countries concerned. However, 61% of survey respondents reported a lack of social partners' consultation/participation. Reforms were linked with decreases in education funding and led, according to many survey respondents (40%), to increased privatisation.
- **Privatisation according to funding models:** Public grant aided education institutions are the most commonly found in the Western European region followed by publicly funded religious-based education institutions. The majority of private education institutions in the surveyed countries were not-for-profit. The total number of public education institutions exceeds private education providers.

- **Privatisation by education sector:** According to respondent unions, privatisation is most widespread in the secondary school sector, pre-primary and vocational education and training as a state of play. Trends of increasing privatisation are emerging in the sectors of primary school, vocational education and training and early childhood education.
- **Privatisation of education services in education institutions:** Privatisation of services was reported by half of respondents. It mainly affected services such as school catering, transport, security, school stationary and after school-support centres.
- **Global corporations/consultancies:** 62% of responding unions are aware of the presence of global corporation/consultancies in their countries that are influencing education policy and the delivery of education products and/or schooling. Where private corporations are not directly influencing education, they, nevertheless, exert ideological policy influence.

Teachers' working conditions and trade union action

- **Representation of education workers in private education institutions:** According to union Statutes or Constitutions, teacher unions have the possibility to organise education workers in private education institutions in almost all the countries surveyed. In CH, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, LUX, some teacher unions have formal limits on recruiting education workers in private education institutions. The rate of representation of education workers in private education institutions, however, very low almost everywhere (less than 20% of all union affiliates are working in private education institutions except in BE – Flanders COV – where those teachers' salaries are publicly funded and IE – TUI; where they constitute between 61 and 80% of affiliates).
- **Teaching profession:** Overall, the main challenges of unions to represent the teaching profession are related to: recruitment and retention of teachers (67% of respondents) and continuous professional development of teachers and their initial training (59% and 50% respectively).
- **Salaries:** Over half of the unions indicate that teacher salaries remained stable or have decreased over the last 2 years in their respective countries. After experiencing years of cuts and freezes, salaries have not yet begun to increase. In other words, salaries remain blocked and frozen in spite of the modest economic recovery.
- **Employment contracts:** In all countries surveyed, there are short-term contracts for teachers although they are in a minority (less than 20%). A large majority of teachers are still employed with permanent employment contracts. On average, between 70 and 90% of teachers have permanent contracts. The distribution of permanent contracts is, however, uneven among sectors. In addition, there are a significant number of part-time contracts.
- **Working time:** On average, teachers devote 60% of their working time to teaching; 20% to the preparation of the lessons, 17% to administrative tasks and only 3% to professional development.

One third of the time to prepare lessons and for professional development is unpaid and outside of working hours.

- **Health and Safety:** according to 75% of teacher unions, the number of teachers suffering from psychosocial risks at work increased over the last 2 years. Stress, violence and harassment are the most common risks.

Social dialogue and collective bargaining

- **Social dialogue:** Western European trade unions report that there are forms of structured and institutionalised social dialogue in their countries except for Greece – OLME and Spain – CSI-F. However, great effort is needed to make it more effective and efficient. Social dialogue has been put under pressure almost everywhere across Europe. Unions observed that when consulted, governments tend not to seriously consider positions of teacher trade unions.
- **Collective bargaining:** Overall, 90% of respondent unions negotiate collective agreements. The remaining 10% not negotiating collective agreements are teacher unions in Switzerland, Greece and Luxemburg. The percentage of education workers covered by collective agreements is very high across the region, with levels of nearly 100% in the Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark) and the lowest levels in Greece and Switzerland (less than 20%).

Further challenges related to social dialogue: in addition to the weakening of social dialogue in nearly all countries, there are other fundamental challenges. These are primarily the denial/obstruction of trade union rights, including limits on the scope of bargaining of teacher unions on rights and working conditions, and professional issues related to education and training reforms. This is particularly true in private education institutions (often religious-based schools).