

ETUCE PRESS RELEASE

Teachers ask further efforts for language learning and multiculturalism

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ETUCE, the European Trade Union Committee for Education, which represents 129 national teachers' trade unions across Europe, welcomes that the Italian Presidency put special emphasis on language learning and multiculturalism in its political agenda.

The Italian Presidency conference on [Why language matter: European and national perspectives on multilingualism](#), organised on 25-26 September 2014 in Florence in the occasion of the European Day of Languages, provided an excellent opportunity for language teachers, researchers, academics, school heads, students, parents, social partners and ministries to build a strong platform aimed at improving language learning and multiculturalism in Europe.

In support of the [Conclusions of the Education Council on Multilingualism and the development of language competences](#) of 20 May 2014, ETUCE wishes to underline that language learning should improve life of all people and open job opportunities for the unemployed.

ETUCE strongly believes that language learning must contribute to common understanding and respect of each other's culture. It is an essential tool, in particular in hard times of the economic crisis, to fight against new social risks triggered by increased nationalism and extremisms, EU-scepticism and growing social inequalities. *'This is why it is of utmost importance to solve the challenge of language learning of the high number of low-skilled and unemployed people in Europe'*, said Martin Rømer, ETUCE European Director, commenting the positive outcomes of the event.

To this end, ETUCE has stressed the importance of allocating appropriate investment to improve language skills of the European citizens of any age, which has to go hand in hand with the professional development of language teachers. Teachers must motivate students and learners to learn languages and improve their language knowledge by innovative methods of teaching, using several forms of arts, media, ICT tools, and social networks. We underline that all actors in the education and training systems should put special attention on enhancing participation of all age learners and teachers in study mobility and partnership projects of Erasmus+ Programme.

On the other hand, ETUCE documentary film *'When Europe forgot its homework: Education in crisis'* - to be released by mid-October - points out at the precarious working conditions hitting in particular language teachers, who often have to commute between numerous schools on a daily or weekly basis. Although precarious teachers are often marginalised and discriminated, they stand at the core of the school environment, thus bearing the biggest responsibility for the outcomes of language learning.

For this reason, and in order to improve language learning and multiculturalism in the education and training systems, ETUCE calls the national Ministries of Education and Ministries of Employment to take urgent steps to support the work of the language teachers in Europe and to take necessary measures to halt their precarious working conditions. Finally, ETUCE asks the European Union institutions and the Italian Presidency to further encourage the Member States to improve the situation of language learning and language teaching in the EU.