

## Roundtable on digital skills for the European labour force: ETUCE advocates for high quality initial trainings for teachers and life-long learning objectives in the field of ICT

20 September 2016

Today, on 20 September 2016, various social partners are meeting with Günther H. Oettinger, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, at the Roundtable on digital skills for the European labour force. This meeting is a starting point for the creation of the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition that will be launched in December 2016. The Coalition aims at connecting Member States and relevant stakeholders from the sectors of education, employment and industry to address digital skills gaps across the economy and to ensure that individuals and the workforce in Europe are prepared for the digital jobs of the future.

Digital skills are an essential part of the new Skills Agenda for Europe adopted by the Commission on 10 June and one of the key competences outlined by the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework. ETUCE repeatedly highlighted in its resolutions and policy papers the priorities of sufficient investment in education, provision of adequate initial trainings on digital skills for teachers as part of their continuous professional development.

Martin Rømer, European Director of ETUCE, emphasised the importance of qualified teachers for the successful integration of the ICT in education: *“When people grow up, live and work in an increasingly digitalised society, it is crucial that teachers and trainers assume a leading role in shaping the use of ICT in education, from an early age on through to Vocational Education and Training, Higher Education and Research to adult learning.”*

At today’s discussion, ETUCE raised its concerns about ICT being used as a vehicle for education to be driven by profit only and to train workers exclusively for the job market without considering a life-long learning and socialization objectives. ETUCE does not support such a short-term approach and urges the Directorate General Digital Single Market (DG Connect) to cooperate with the Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) and the Directorate General Education and Culture (DG EAC) in defining the tasks and the scope of the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition.

Regarding digital learning, ETUCE called on the EU and its Member States to ensure an adequate infrastructure and sufficient funding of ICT in education institutions, good working and learning conditions, and, finally, the safety and well-being of students and education personnel.

ETUCE and its member organisations promote ICT in education as an important topic for social dialogue and collective agreements with employers as well as for negotiations with education policy-makers and other actors in the field of ICT and education. ETUCE hopes that the launch of the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition contributes to designing concrete measures to develop digital skills and competences at all levels of education and training and to provide teachers and trainers with an access to high quality initial training, as well as to protect their professional autonomy within the education institutions.



**The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)** represents 131 Education Trade Unions and 11 million teachers in all countries of Europe, 4.2 million teachers in the EU, from all levels of the education sector. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at the 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 teacher unions.

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