

Financing education: key to promote more inclusive and equal societies

19 February 2016

During the forthcoming Education Council of Wednesday, 24 February 2016, the Ministers of Education of Europe are expected to adopt the [Draft Council Resolution on promoting socio-economic development and inclusiveness in the EU through education: the contribution of education and training to the European Semester 2016](#). The Draft Resolution highlights the urgent need for investment in education, for responding to skill gaps and anticipating skills requirements, for addressing education as the area which has the greatest potential to promote social inclusion, democratic values and citizenship competences to all individuals.

The ETUCE, which represents 11 million teachers and educators affiliated to 132 teacher unions across Europe, wishes to express its appreciation for the themes addressed in the Draft Resolution. ETUCE welcomes:

- The **holistic view on education** taken by the European institutions and decision makers. A view that ensures consistency “with the Europe 2020 headline targets and governance arrangements in the framework of the European Semester, whilst fully respecting subsidiarity, education institutions’ autonomy and pedagogical freedom”, which was long-awaited and called for by ETUCE.^[1]
- That the Education Council **recognises the investment shortage in education across Europe**, confirming that education has been a far too easy target for fiscal consolidation.
- The recognition that education has a **crucial role in reducing wealth, gender, ethnic and geographical inequalities**.

Nevertheless, the solutions proposed to address the challenges identified are insufficient:

- The social and economic risks arising from the fact that **Member States do not invest sufficiently** in education are great. As recognised by the EU2020 and ET2020 Strategies, the Country Specific Recommendations of the European Semester, the Paris Declaration and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, **recruiting, supporting, empowering – thus investing in – teachers** is a key factor to reduce the equity gap in access and learning. The solutions proposed to overcome the recognised **investment gap in education** in Europe are no more than a drop in the ocean compared to the investment needs.
- As recalled in the [ETUCE Position on the Investment Plan for Europe](#), EU Member States should not be encouraged to **increasingly rely on the role of private investors** and the interests of businesses for financing education, for example by promoting public-private partnerships.
- Eventually ETUCE recalls what is stated in its recent position on *A New Skills Agenda for Europe*^[2] of the European Commission “we oppose the idea of promoting education-business partnership and we ask to respect the **autonomy of education sector** from the always changing business sector”.
- We are concerned that the Council conclusions encourages “quality-enhancing incentives”, which can be understood as **performance-based funding in education**. Teacher unions do not support this type of funding as it may create unequal funding to schools and inequality among the students and schools. Allocation of funding should be based on “needs” instead on “performance”. Education and training financing strategy should not be based on a wrong, such as the one-size-fits-all and penalising approach.

Commenting on the Draft Resolution, Martin Rømer, ETUCE European Director, highlighted that “*In no ways governments shall abdicate their democratic responsibility and accountability to the interests of businesses. Education ministers and education social partners at all levels, together with the school communities, should re-gain ownership of the reforms on education and training, and not to leave it to labour market needs and actors*”. ETUCE believes that governments and public authorities, in cooperation with social partners should take a holistic view on investment in education, and oversee the design and impact of education budget in order to guarantee that resources meet the most marginalised and those coming from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, often of migrant origin.

[1] See for example: ETUCE news: [Investing in education is investing in people: Priorities of the Annual Growth Survey 2016](#) (November 2015); ETUCE news: [Education and training monitor 2015: Investment in education and in teachers is fundamental](#) (November 2015); [ETUCE views on the Draft Joint Report on ET2020 of the European Commission \(October 2015\)](#); ETUCE news [European Semester 2015 to conclusion: time has come for a democratic switch](#) (June 2015); ETUCE position on the [Investment Plan for Europe](#) (December 2014); ETUCE Press Release: [Investing in Education is essential to achieve EU2020/ET2020 targets](#), (November 2014); [ETUCE Message to the new European Parliament, new European Commission, future Councils and the Italian Presidency on Investing on Education](#) (July 2014); ETUCE position on [future objectives of EU2020 Strategy on education and training](#) (June 2014); ETUCE Position on the [2014-2015 Country Specific Recommendations of the European Semester](#) (June 2014).

[2] [ETUCE views on the “A New Skills Agenda for Europe” of the European Commission, 17 February 2016](#)



The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 131 Teacher 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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