

Teacher unions ask further consultation on the New Skills Agenda for Europe

10 June 2016

Today, the European Commission published its Communication to the European Union institutions entitled [NEW SKILLS AGENDA FOR EUROPE- Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness](#).

In our [previous position](#) sent to the Commission we underlined the importance of teachers and social dialogue with the teacher trade unions on improving skills provision.

Thus, we strongly welcome that the Communication puts emphasis on the role of the teachers, underlining that:

- Increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession would stimulate talented young people to pursue their career;
- Quality and responsiveness of education and training and teaching standards should be equally high in Europe;
- More emphasis should be put on recruitment and retention of teachers, their working conditions and professional development.

We welcome that the role of social partners is underlined in working together with the Commission and governments on the suggested objectives of the Skills Agenda. For example, we also experience that teaching key competences is not fully integrated in many national and school curricula. Teacher trade unions, therefore, can give a highly valuable contribution in the revision of the Key Competences Framework foreseen in the initiative, which we believe could focus on the implementation rather than renewing the agreed competences.

“We welcome the emphasis of the initiative on investment in public education and training”, said Mr Martin Romer, European director of ETUCE related to the initiative. He added that *“However, public investment should be sustainable and predictable, and the use of private funds, for example the use of the Investment Plan for Europe, should be avoided in public education and training”*. ETUCE shares the belief of the European Commission that education is the main driver for Europe’s economic and societal development, and to tackle growing inequalities across Europe. *“This principle”,* Mr Romer concluded, *“should be properly reflected in the System of National Accounts where investment in education should be recorded as investment rather than expenditure.”*

Concerning supporting integration of migrants, imminent financial investment is necessary to recruit teachers, involve retired teachers and to recognize the qualifications of migrant and refugee teachers.

In our previous position we underlined that partnership between the VET sector and companies are important from the perspective of apprenticeship and work-based learning but not in other sectors. The suggestion of the Commission on boosting *“business-education partnerships, involving all sectors and levels of education and training”* is therefore not welcomed by us. We request the European Commission to be cautious on this idea as companies’ involvement in every sector of education will have an impact, among others, on the societal aim of education, sustainable financing, and the autonomy of the higher educational institutions.

We note that positive long-term effects of good quality early childhood education is indeed significant for people’s future ability and motivation to learn but several member states suffer increasing privatization and introduction or increase of fees of attendance in early childhood education. Actions following the Commission’s initiative should pay special attention on this problem.

On these views and further actions related to the initiative we ask the Commission for further discussion with ETUCE and its member organizations.



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.

e-mail: secretariat@csee-etuce.org
Phone : +32 (0)2 224 06 92

Please do not reply to this e-mail
To unsubscribe from this email,
please follow this [link](#)

To support the work of ETUCE,
please [forward this message](#) to
your friends and colleagues.

To subscribe to this email visit
the [ETUCE homepage](#)