

**EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION**  
STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS TO  
REPRESENT TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL NEEDS  
IN SOCIAL DIALOGUE

FINAL CONFERENCE  
Brussels, 19–20 September 2018

# REPORT

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# 1. Introduction

The Conference, organised within the framework of the 2-year long (2016-2018) ETUCE [project](#) "*Education Trade Unions for the Teaching Profession. Strengthening the capacity of education trade unions to represent teachers' professional needs in social dialogue*" took place in Brussels on 19-20 September 2018. The project seeks to build the capacity of education trade unions to represent teachers' professional needs and to enhance teachers' professional issues as a crucial matter of social dialogue in the education sector. This comes at a time when teachers are faced with challenges, both at EU and transnational level, in relation to changes in the labour market, teaching profession, and social dialogue. The project continues the work that ETUCE and its member organisations have achieved in identifying challenges in the teaching profession in times of crisis and in strengthening their involvement in the European Semester.

Following a series of workshops organised for ETUCE member organisations (in [Warsaw](#), [Berlin](#), and [Rome](#)) and a survey conducted among member organisations, the final project conference provided the opportunity to discuss the final outcomes of the project activities and practical guidelines supporting ETUCE member organisations in representing teachers' professional needs within social dialogue structures.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To identify whether and how teachers' professional needs are a matter of social dialogue and the role of national and European sectoral social partners in education to negotiate on professional issues of teachers
- To train and to equip education trade union representatives with up-to-date knowledge and skills, and to favour the exchange of good practices in the representation of teachers' professional needs in social dialogue
- To develop guidelines at European and national level to activate and to support the work of ETUCE member organisations to represent effectively teachers' professional needs
- To raise awareness of EU policy making (EU2020, ET2020, etc.), to enhance knowledge and to strengthen the cooperation among national education unions
- To prepare education trade unions to address the discussion within the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education (ESSDE) on support for teachers, trainers and school leaders with a focus on improving their effective initial education, early career support, and continuous professional learning

The conference began with a public hearing for European policy-makers and stakeholders aiming to disseminate the outcomes of the project and to make education trade unions' efforts on supporting teachers' professional needs more visible. Following the public hearing, the conference for ETUCE member organisations began in the afternoon of 19 September. During the conference, representatives of ETUCE member organisation had an opportunity to discuss challenges in representing teachers' professional needs in social dialogue and share good practices. The working group sessions provided space and time for participants to discuss and validate the [Practical Guidelines](#) for Education Trade Unions on *How to represent effectively teachers' professional needs within the unions' capacity and social dialogue structures*.

Opening the public hearing, ETUCE President **Christine Blower** stressed that the focus of the Post-2020 Education Strategy should be on teachers, who rather than being recruited, retained and developed, are being recruited, wrecked and replaced. She underlined that education needs to have an improved status by 2030 if Europe is to meet its goals.

In her welcome words at the conference, European Director **Susan Flocken**, highlighted that the conference is the result of a two-year-long project, which was based on the [Resolution Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting Quality Education](#) approved at the Belgrade Conference in December 2016. The Resolution recognises the dual role of education trade unions in both providing support to teachers in relation to their terms and conditions of employment and in relation to professional matters, and stresses that education trade unions are



highly competent in both roles. Susan Flocken also stated that by shedding light on teachers' professional needs, ETUCE and its member organisations hope that this topic is given more attention by national governments and that it is moved higher up the EU agenda.

**Martin Henry**, Research Coordinator at Education International (EI) welcomed the participants by underlining El's commitment to protecting students and teachers. He recalled that EI protects teachers through its democratic structures and reiterated that teachers deserve stable contracts and adequate professional support. Mr Henry also emphasised that more importance needs to be placed on quality education and critical thinking, which can only be delivered if teachers have decent working conditions. He praised education trade unions' efforts to engage in education policy and underscored that partnership was essential to achieve progress for everyone.

## 2. Project Advisory Group

The project is led by an Advisory Group who provide guidance and field knowledge, assist in the design of the online survey activity, contribute to training workshops and the project conference as well as to the elaboration of the draft practical guidelines and evaluation of results. The Advisory Group consists of six representatives from national education trade unions for each level of education.



Ilka Hoffmann, GEW, Germany



Dita Stefenhagen, LIZDA, Latvia



Päivi Lyhykäinen, OAJ, Finland



Rossella Benedetti, UIL Scuola, Italy



Dorota Obidniak, ZNP, Poland



Tatjana Babrauskienė, FLESTU, Lithuania

**Päivi Lyhykäinen (OAJ, Finland)** highlighted that teachers across Europe share similar problems which are linked to the high expectations of society from them and the pressure put on teachers to be able to resolve all the problems that they are facing. She reiterated that many governments have difficulty understanding that teacher training should be constantly developed and updated. **Dorota Obidniak (ZNP, Poland)** added that in many countries, governments are only discussing teachers' working conditions and shifting the focus away from students and initial teacher training and continuous professional development (CPD). **All Advisory Group members** praised the project as an opportunity to share experiences about teacher training systems and education trade unions' work on representing teachers' professional needs in social dialogue.

### 3. The role of education trade unions in meeting teachers' professional needs: Presenting project outcomes

**Professor Howard Stevenson**, started his presentation by emphasising that the teaching profession needs to be attractive to retain teachers and that teachers need support in the form of relevant and energising professional development. He outlined three main goals in this regard:

- **Attract** high quality entrants into the education professions
- **Retain** education professionals in work
- **Develop** education professionals – to be the educators they want to be

However, the project's study has found that often initial teacher training and continuous professional development is of



Project research expert, Professor Howard Stevenson from the University of Nottingham, presented the outcomes of the project's research and online survey among ETUCE member organisations. Howard Stevenson is Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and Director of Research, in the School of Education at the University of Nottingham. Prior to working in universities Howard was a secondary school teacher for 15 years. His research interests relate to teachers' work, teacher professionalism, education unions, education sector labour relations and education policy with a particular interest in issues of global reform and privatisation.

poor quality, not properly evaluated and resourced, not adequate, and not valued by the employer. Moreover, trade union members reported having little to no control over identifying and meeting their own professional needs.

Howard Stevenson highlighted the significant role that education trade unions can play in improving teacher training and representing teachers' professional needs in collective bargaining and beyond.

The study identified **five key strategies ETUCE member organisations use:**

1. including professional issues in the **collective bargaining agenda**.
2. providing **professional learning opportunities** independently or in partnership with education institutions.
3. making it easy for their **members to self-organise** in order to identify and address their own professional needs.
4. **shaping the discourse** about quality education and support for the teaching profession.
5. **building alliances and developing partnerships** with a wide range of governmental and non-governmental bodies to ensure teachers' professional needs are addressed.

Howard Stevenson reiterated that supporting educators in all aspects of their work is vital if public education systems are to be able to respond effectively to the numerous challenges currently facing society in Europe and beyond. He concluded that organising collectively through education trade unions is the most effective way to bring about change and it is not just a question of collective bargaining but quality collective bargaining.



# ON SUPPORTING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL NEEDS IN MEETING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL NEEDS

19 SEPTEMBER, BRUSSELS



Live Stream <https://www.youtube.com/user/Eduinternational/live>



#ETUCE ProfNeeds



From left to right: Christian Chevalier, UNSA Education, France; Gunn Gallavara, UEN, Norway; Christine Blower, ETUCE President; Ryan Plocher, GEW Youth, Germany

## What further support do teachers need in their everyday work?

Supporting the findings of the project's study, speakers at the public hearing from education trade unions in Germany, Norway and France presented various challenges their members are facing in initial teacher training and continuous professional development.

**Ryan Plocher (GEW Youth, Germany)** outlined the main characteristics of *initial teacher training* in Germany and how it could be improved. Mr Plocher summarised the main improvements needed within the German teacher trainee scheme namely, more paid mentoring programs in schools for newly certified teachers, more lifelike examinations, part-time preparatory service, and more seminar programmes through trade unions. Mr Plocher highlighted some positive recent changes in Germany's, and more specifically, Berlin's teacher training system such as the integration of special education topics into education science seminars. Nonetheless, he regretted the lack of information exchanged between university administration and the state government, the major differences between federal states regarding initial teacher training, and the difficulty recruiting more teachers due to the length of the programme.

**Gunn Gallavara (UEN, Norway)** presented three digital projects, which Union of Education Norway (UEN) and the Norwegian Ministry of Education have coordinated, to highlight the ways in which digital tools can enhance learning and training. She underlined the importance placed on *ICT training for teachers* in Norwegian Education Policy and stressed that digital tools can help improve learning. She emphasised that these projects were all local initiatives and stressed that teachers need to take control of the ICT training if they want to stop it from

becoming privatised. Overall, positive feedback was received from all three projects, with teachers reporting that they felt more prepared and students being motivated to take part. Nonetheless, Ms Gallavara stressed that more research is needed on how to use digital tools and the consequences of using digital tools.

**Christian Chevalier (UNSA Education, France)** highlighted the importance of *CPD for teachers* due to the constant development of education, and reported that CPD expectations of teachers in France fall beneath that of other OECD countries. He criticised the top-down approach regarding CPD in France, where the state provides training for teachers only on the areas that are working with and tend to offer more training courses during the school holidays. Although Christian Chevalier acknowledged the French Education Ministry's efforts to provide an e-learning platform for teachers which can be accessed whenever they desire, and recognised the benefits of such a tool, he underscored the education trade union's right to organise trainings during school hours. Furthermore, he urged that CPD not be reduced to purely digital platforms as training courses can be a moment of reflection and relaxation for teachers, which is very much needed to protect teachers' well-being and avoid burn-out.

## 5. Challenges in representing teachers' professional needs in social dialogue and beyond

Speakers from education trade unions in the UK, Greece and Estonia provided testimonies outlining the challenges in representing teachers' professional needs through social dialogue in their countries.

From left to right: Elis Randma, EEPU, Estonia; Emmanouil Androulakis, DOE, Greece; Susan Flocken, European Director; Louise Regan, NEU-NUT, UK



**Louise Regan (NEU-NUT, UK)** emphasised that the education system in England can be characterized by the absence of social dialogue, the existence of review bodies instead of collective bargaining, and curriculum and training being imposed by ministries. Ms Regan regretted that initial teacher training in England had become more *fragmented* and that it had become *increasingly privatised*. Likewise, she observed that teacher training had become too theoretical with virtually no pedagogy being studied. Concerning CPD, English teachers, in particular women and those from ethnic minorities, report that performance and pay-related salary scales are holding them back rather than motivating them to undertake professional development. NEU-NUT provides trainings for their representatives as well as pedagogical trainings. Their goal is to tackle issues which the government chooses to ignore (e.g. sexism in schools) and to have them included in school curricula.

**Emmanouil Androulakis (DOE, Greece)** outlined the extent to which the Greek education sector had been affected by austerity measures following the global financial crisis. He indicated that the percentage of GDP being spent on education dropped by 22% during the

EUCE Conference: Strengthening the capacity of education trade unions to represent teachers' professional needs in social dialogue

Challenge #1 – Appointment of Permanent Teachers

	Retirements	Appointment of Permanent Teachers	Recruitment of Substitute Teachers
2010	3.976	1.379	
2011	1.481	133	
2012	1.480	40	9.922
2013	2.188	112	10.929
2014	1.920	0	11.600
2015	1.309	0	13.866
2016	419	0	14.007
2017	227	0	16.205
	13.000	1.664	

crisis decade. According to Mr Androulakis, the first main challenge facing Greek teachers is the issue of *precarious employment* contracts. Whereas 227 teachers retired in 2017, no permanent teachers were appointed. The second challenge is the proposed *teacher evaluation scheme*, whose intention was to dismiss teachers rather than provide them with relevant CPD. After questioning the legality of such a proposal, sending numerous letters to parliament, and organising protests, DOE managed to put a stop to this scheme.

**Elis Randma (EEMU, Estonia)** identified the biggest challenges in Estonia as the low social status of the teaching profession, the teacher shortage and the current unappealing curriculum to young people. *Retaining teachers* is a huge predicament in Estonia with a high rate of recent graduates leaving the profession after one year, many of them claiming not to have had on-the-job experience before taking up their first position. Although EEMU does not provide accredited initial training or CPD courses, they have organised summer programmes for student teachers and



newly qualified teachers with a view to equipping them with practical knowledge. The speaker concluded that overall, education trade unions in Estonia do not feel comfortable representing teachers' professional needs due to limited resources, the absence of national agreements, and the *unattractiveness of trade unions*, which are often run on a voluntary basis and lack young members.

## 6. Education trade unions' actions in supporting teachers' professional needs

Illustrating the five key education trade unions' strategies on representing teachers' professional needs that emerged from the project's research, speakers from education trade unions in Scotland, Romania, Italy, Denmark, Serbia, and Bulgaria, presented examples of their work on meeting teachers' professional needs.

**Susan Quinn (EIS, UK)** reported that the Education Institute of Scotland (EIS) considers professional learning to be key to teacher activism and an effective trade union organising tool. EIS has been *Training Learning Representatives* since 2002, in conjunction with the Scottish Government, who keep abreast of professional learning opportunities from a range of providers, assist in identifying continuous professional development needs and ways of improving opportunities, and advocate for high quality professional learning provision with employers.

**Alexandra Cornea (FSLI, Romania)** presented the case of her union which creates its own teacher training structures using European funds and cooperation with trade unions from other countries. In the framework of the project "Together for Quality in Education! Human resource development in school education through educational partnership" implemented by FSLI in partnership with the National Agency for

Quality Assurance in Education, a *National Training Centre* was established managing 8 regional centres and 16 county centres, and certifying 49 trainers to date. The National Training Centre delivers training on quality assurance in the education system, health and safety in schools, school management, communication, collective bargaining, negotiation techniques, etc. Moreover, in order to strengthen education trade unions' capacity to deliver quality teacher training, FSJI and ALMA MATER Federation (education trade union in higher education in Romania) have created a *Bipartite Social Dialogue Committee*. This committee evaluates and approves the content of the training courses that are taking place in Romania in this sector, and validates and accredits training providers and the programmes they are proposing.

**Rossella Benedetti (UIL-Scuola, Italy)**, presented her own *union's teacher training institute* Istituto per la Ricerca Accademica, Sociale Ed Educativa (IRASE), an independent non-profit institute run in conjunction with UIL-Scuola and accredited by the Ministry of Education with expertise in several areas including didactics and methodologies, didactic innovation and digital teaching and problems of individual and system evaluation. The institute's courses for teachers' CPD are open to everyone but are cheaper or free for UIL-Scuola members. UIL-Scuola actively supports this institute in the accreditation process, collaborates continuously with it and spreads its training offers among its members and exchanges views and information with its experts on recent and relevant policy developments.



**Borka Visnic (TUS, Serbia)** reported that TUS has recently *received the accreditation for three seminars* as part of regular CPD for teachers in Serbia. This accreditation is valid for a period of three years and was possible due to a new law on National Qualification Framework which allowed education trade unions to be recognised

From left to right: Rossella Benedetti, UIL-Scuola; Alexandra Cornea, FSJI, Romania; Christine Blower, ETUCE President; Susan Quinn, EIS, UK



providers for teacher training. TUS's training currently covers such topics as legal protection of employees in education, gender equality in education, and work-related stress in education and they plan to focus on professionalisation and pedagogy in the future. However, Ms Visnic noted that many stakeholders in education still consider trade unions as organisations that only deal with "hard issues", such as the material position of teachers and their working conditions. Furthermore, many teachers only consider CPD as an additional imposed obligation and burden: keeping the licence is the only reason for them to participate in the seminars.

**Stig Lund (BUPL, Denmark)** reported that although there are no formal requirements for CPD for educators in early childhood education in Denmark, employers and unions organise short training courses and workshops for these educators (e.g. language learning courses). BUPL also negotiated three collective agreements (2013, 2015, and 2018), whereby educators contribute to a "qualification fund" which allows them to undertake further study by funding course fees and books. Furthermore, BUPL funds research on the educational learning environment and evaluation, new educational job areas and structures, development of the educator profession, and strong communities for 0-18 year-olds. The union has founded its own research centre named "The Danish Centre for Research in ECE", which focuses on educational and pedagogical practices in child care centres such as nurseries and kindergartens. The speaker concluded by noting that BUPL promotes pedagogical development projects related to creativity and play, parent cooperation and children's perspectives, the educational learning environment and evaluation.

From left to right: Georgi Shoshev, PODKREPA, Bulgaria; Borka Visnic, TUS, Serbia; Susan Flocken, European Director; Stig Lund, BUPL, Denmark



**Georgi Shoshev (PODKREPA, Bulgaria)** presented a positive picture of developments in CPD in Bulgaria thanks to good working relations and negotiations between the Bulgarian Government and the education trade union PODKREPA. The Bulgarian Ministry of Education has approved *29 qualifying topics* for which PODKREPA conducts training in the framework of its association 'Education without borders – BG 2012'. Examples of training offered by PODKREPA are Office 365 skills, conflicts in a multi-ethnic environment, civic education, GDPR training, and media and public relations education. Furthermore, in order to improve teachers' professional qualifications, PODKREPA contributes financially to the teacher training association's fund, researches the professional needs of its members, and *motivates teachers* to access CPD.

## 7. How can the European Education Area 2025 address teachers' professional needs?

Speakers from the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Austrian Presidency, highlighted the crucial role of education professionals in the design and implementation of the European Education Area 2025.



**Michael Teutsch, Head of Unit of Schools and Multilingualism Unit at the DG EAC, European Commission,** praised the dedication and hard work of teachers across Europe and affirmed that teachers were at the heart of the European Education Area 2025. He stressed that *mobility* was at the core of this initiative (future Erasmus programme), emphasising that students,

apprentices, teachers and adult learners should all be able to move freely within this space with a view to promoting personal development, tolerance and quality education. Nonetheless, Michael Teutsch recognised that there were barriers within this area, such as *recognition of study periods and qualifications gained abroad* and language learning. He also reiterated that the European Education Area is a complex task and that implementation of the initiative needs to take place primarily

at national level with Europe playing a complementary role. Mr Teutsch concluded by reiterating that the *teaching profession needs to more attractive*. For this reason, the Commission has established a working group on schools investigating quality assurance and CPD.



**Tatjana Babrauskienė from the Workers' Group, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**, presented the EESC's Education Package report regarding its views on the European Education Area 2025 programme. She highlighted that according to the EESC, CPD should be about *quality not quantity*. Another problem raised by the speaker was the *public-private divide on funding*

with private schools often being in a better position to provide desired training courses to staff and public school teachers often being unable to choose relevant courses due to a lack of funds. She also drew attention to the fact that many open education courses were only available in English or other major European languages, which discriminates against small countries such as the Baltic States. Ms Babrauskienė underlined the importance of *informal learning* and that teachers should feel competent enough to provide guidance to students about validation. She concluded by reiterating that teachers needed to be aware of European reforms and be trained on how to implement them.



**Kurt Nekula, former Director General of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of EU**, explained that the Austrian government was currently working on an education master plan which would conform to the policy objectives of the European Education Area 2025. The speaker praised Austria's teacher training programme, which provides mentors for school teachers. He also affirmed that

the Austrian system fully respects the Bologna process and ensures the quality of the training courses. Nonetheless, Mr Nekula acknowledged that there was room for improvement within the Austrian education system, notably regarding lifelong

learning, CPD for teachers and *digital skills in education*, both for teachers and students. Therefore, he maintained that the European Education Area 2025 should focus on a *common understanding* of all phases of teacher training.

## 8. The role of European education social partners in enhancing the professional profile of teachers, trainers and school leaders

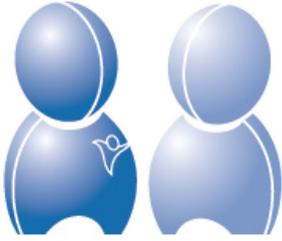
**Daniel Wisniewski, General Secretary of European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE)** and **European Director Susan Flocken** highlighted that social dialogue is an essential tool to improve the initial training and continuous professional development of teachers. They reiterated that European education *social partners play a key role in enhancing the professional profile of teachers, trainers and school leaders*.

Daniel Wisniewski noted that the role of social partners is not fully recognised on the national level and that in some countries not all employers are well defined. Despite this, EFEE has made significant progress, including extensive work carried out on occupational safety and health administration, young researchers and migration. The General Secretary confirmed the *commitment of education employers* to continue fruitful work with education trade unions and revealed EFEE's intention to focus more on vocational education and training (VET).

From left to right: Daniel Wisniewski, General Secretary, EFEE; Susan Flocken, European Director; Christine Blower, ETUCE President



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Social Dialogue  
Dialogue social

Susan Flocken noted that the EEA 2025 places many demands on teachers, including the integration of migrants and children with special needs in their classes, dealing with the challenges of modernisation and digitalisation, as well as teaching democratic citizenship and critical thinking. Taking into consideration the EU 2030 education strategies, she insisted that *social partners need to be concise, coherent and unified* in order to make sure that their voice is heard.

## 9. Outcomes

The conference participants discussed and validated the [practical guidelines](#) for education trade unions on ‘How to represent effectively teachers’ professional needs within the unions’ capacity and social dialogue structures’. These practical guidelines have been developed based on the project’s online survey results and three training workshops (in Warsaw, Berlin, and Rome) to which the ETUCE member organisations actively contributed. The final guidelines are published on the ETUCE website in five languages: English, French, German, Spanish, and Russian.

The practical guidelines provide education trade unions in Europe with concrete recommendations on how to represent teachers’ professional needs and to enhance teachers’ professional issues as a crucial matter of social dialogue in the education sector. Striving for quality education, the guidelines aim to assist education trade unions in developing *concrete strategies to implement and reinforce education trade unions actions regarding initial teacher training and CPD*.

The guidelines highlight that at national and regional level, it is crucial to not only continue advocating for more professional support for education personnel by the provision of a *wide offer of high quality* initial education, early career support, and continuous professional learning, but also exploit opportunities to *provide accredited professional training*, and conduct research and surveys on teachers’ professional needs. Other important elements for a comprehensive and attractive teacher training include appropriate replacement of teachers who participate in

further training, professional autonomy of teachers and freedom of pedagogy and didactics, a balance between theoretical and practical learning and a *high quality induction phase* for teacher students. Furthermore, it should take place during teachers' working hours ensuring *work-life balance*, and be available in different forms, e.g. school-based training, online and blended learning, team training, etc.

The practical guidelines outline concrete actions for education trade unions to improve teacher training, which need to be adapted to the individual needs of each country. These suggestions include ensuring *shared governance* of teacher training and taking further action so that employers support the participation of teachers in CPD. ETUCE member organisations also highlighted the importance of *trade union cooperation* at national and international levels and exchange of good practices regarding their actions and social dialogue on teachers' professional needs.

## 10. Acronyms

VET	Vocational Education and Training
CPD	Continuous professional development
ESSDE	European sectoral social dialogue for education
ICT	Information and communication technology
EI	Education International
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education
EFEE	European Federation of Education Employers
DG EAC	Directorate-General of the European Commission for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
GEW	Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (Germany)
VBE	Verband Bildung und Erziehung (Germany)
OAJ	Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö (Finland)
FLESTU	Federation of Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Unions
LIZDA	Latvijas Izglītības un zinātnes darbinieku arodbiedrība (Latvia)
ZNP	Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego (Poland)
UEN	Union of Education Norway
UNSA Education	La fédération UNSA des métiers de l'Éducation de la Recherche et de la Culture (France)
NEU-NUT	National Education Union, UK
DOE	Greek Primary Teachers Federation
EEPU	Estonian Education Personnel Union
EIS	Education Institute of Scotland
BUPL	Børne UngdomsPædagogernes Landsforbund (The Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators)
TUS	Teachers Union of Serbia
IRASE	Istituto per la Ricerca Accademica, Sociale Ed Educativa (Italy)









**EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION  
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION**

5, bd du Roi Albert II - 9<sup>ème</sup>  
B-1210 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel. +32-(0)2 224 06 91 / 92  
[secretariat@csee-etuice.org](mailto:secretariat@csee-etuice.org)  
[www.csee-etuice.org](http://www.csee-etuice.org)



**EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL  
INTERNACIONALE DE L'EDUCACION  
INTERNACIONAL DE LA EDUCACION**

5, bd du Roi Albert II  
1210 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel. +32-(0)2 224 06 11  
[headoffice@ei-ie.org](mailto:headoffice@ei-ie.org)  
[www.ei-ie.org](http://www.ei-ie.org)