



*Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting
Quality Education*

Resolution

Guaranteeing Quality in the Education System Through Renewal of Education Personnel and Working with Other Education Professionals

**Adopted by the ETUCE Conference, the Regional Conference of Education International,
meeting in Belgrade, on 6 - 8 December 2016.**

The report “The Teaching Profession in Europe” published by Eurydice (2015) pointed to the increasing age of teaching professionals as one of the problems facing European governments. Currently in Spain, for example, over 20,000 education personnel are aged over 60, and if this trend continues over the next five years, the figure will reach 70,000. For this reason, there is need for reflection upon, and an assessment of the situation in order to reorganise the priorities of education policy guidelines and to establish among these “making teaching a more appealing profession”.

Faced with this situation, the ETUCE Conference advocates

Considering training of education personnel and the involvement of other education professionals as a key factor in making the teaching profession more prestigious.

Experts have acknowledged that the teaching profession is being undermined. The greater diversity of students, the increase in disruptive behaviour in the classroom, the problems of intolerance among students and the absence of other education professionals in education institutions, combined with the low social standing of education personnel and the transfer of educational responsibilities traditionally undertaken by families combine to make this profession difficult and broadly unattractive.

Furthermore, teaching requires continual updating, as education personnel are required to respond to more and more new demands and responsibilities: teaching languages, ICT, tolerance among students, adapting to diversity among students, learning difficulties, coordination with families, etc. Together with larger class sizes and a reduction in the number of education personnel in each education institution, these are turning education establishments into increasingly complex environments that are not conducive to effective teaching. As demonstrated by surveys, this has had an impact on workplace health, dissatisfaction at work, higher stress levels and work-related illnesses among education personnel.

Hence there is a need for education personnel to be able to call on the support of other professionals, to help with the task of teaching. Such work by non-teaching personnel to support education and associated services in education institutions includes: childcare personnel, caring for students with



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special educational needs, supporting and helping families, health checks for students, meals at the education institution, accommodation and libraries, cleaning, extra-curricular activities and other tasks in education institutions. All of these are of great importance for the proper functioning of education institutions, and without doubt contribute both to the success of the task of teaching and to improving the quality of Education.

Furthermore, the essential function of this group of education personnel which supports educational and related services is to facilitate, support and provide access to education institutions for all students, particularly disadvantaged children. It can be demonstrated how the provision of ancillary services has created new forms of discrimination, between the private and public sectors. Any proposal to improve the quality of education in education institutions has to take such circumstances into account, by ensuring the universal provision of such ancillary services for all students without exception.

It is also emphasised that declining motivation among teaching professionals and in education institutions owing to a lack of personnel and resources is getting worse, with the reduction in education budgets experienced over recent years in most European countries.

The ETUCE Conference calls upon the ETUCE Committee

1. To promote the improvement of employment, professional and contractual terms for all personnel supporting education, by acknowledging their work as a contributory factor to the quality of the education system, given the ongoing threat of privatisation;
2. To advocate modified teaching functions being assigned to older education personnel. The exceptional circumstances in which education personnel are currently working require good physical and psychological health. It would be appropriate that, at a certain age, teaching hours could be reduced for education personnel, which would free them up to undertake other functions in the education institution;
3. To propose the development and implementation of coordinated strategies among education trade unions in the international European framework to study and draw up proposals to slow down the privatisation of education and associated services in the public sector education institution network;
4. To support the maintenance of voluntary early retirement for education personnel by governments. This encourages the recruitment of younger education personnel, who are better adapted to the new challenges, and enhances employment in the sector;
5. To promote the restoration of education budgets, as this will have a positive impact on the quality of education, the recruitment of other education professionals and, of course, motivation of the teaching education personnel.



*ETUCE- European Region of Education International
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