

## FECCOO, FETE-UGT and STESI meeting with EP candidates in Madrid

The Spanish teacher unions [FETE-UGT](#), [FECCOO](#) and [STESI](#) invited Spanish candidates for the European elections on 25 May 2014 to a panel discussion, asking them to make education a priority, their priority.



On 28 April 2014, Martin Rømer, ETUCE European Director, took the lead in the debate on "Education in Europe, a priority". Highlighting the upcoming elections to the European Parliament as a major event to overcome the economic instability in Europe, he called upon the candidates running for election for the EP to support ETUCE and its member organisations in making quality education a priority for Europe. Martin Rømer pointed out the importance of supporting initiatives such as fair tax policies to fund public education as a vital part to exit the crisis. He also reminded the participants that the European Parliament is the only European body elected by the European citizens and that its role has been further strengthened over the past years in recognition of the fact that the European Union obtains its power by the solidarity of the citizens.

Representatives from Spanish political parties, the central socialist, PSOE, the left-wing party IU and the central right (governing) party PP presented their proposals for education in the debate in which the teacher unions put on the table the main challenges faced by the Spanish educational system at present. They denounced the cuts in the education budget, the rise in university fees and strongly objected to the last education law (LOMCE) which the present government of Spain is seeking to implement. The three unions also drew the EP candidates' attention to the precarious situation in which social dialogue and collective bargaining in the education sector in Spain are nowadays.

Carlos López Cortiñas, General Secretary of the Federation of Education of UGT, stressed the importance of reversing the current trends of privatisation of education to increase public awareness of the international education community. Francisco Garcia, General Secretary of the Federation of Education of CCOO, reminded the European Parliament candidates that investment in education should be a priority in the upcoming European legislative period.

FETE-UGT, FECCOO and STES -I asked Spanish MEPs to commit to support policies that will seek to ensure quality education, equal opportunities and social cohesion, ultimately to protect and consider education as a future investment. The three organisations re-cinformed their strong commitment to the 10 ETUCE key messages on **How to improve quality education in Europe?** adopted by the ETUCE Committee in the frame of the EI/ETUCE campaign “[United for Quality Education](#)”.

### **New ETUCE Webpage on TTIP**

ETUCE launched a new webpage where you can find information on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. What is the TTIP?, What does it cover?, Will Education be covered? Find all the answers to these questions here [>>>](#)



### **Fragmented career paths in higher education: downward spiral for quality of education in Germany and Sweden - GEW and SULF denounce**

EI/ETUCE affiliates GEW (German Education and Research Workers’ Union) and SULF (Swedish Association of University Teachers) joined in cooperation to fight for quality education and decent working conditions in higher education at the 5th Follow-up Congress on the Templin Manifesto of GEW held on 2 April 2014 in Berlin, Germany. The Follow-up Congress fully connected GEW’s campaign for decent working conditions and reliable career prospects in higher education and research (Templin Manifesto) to the EI/ETUCE initiative Unite for Quality Education.



The Congress welcomed the participation of SULF’s General Secretary Git Claesson Pipping. Her address to the Congress triggered a shared commitment to denounce the situation researchers are experiencing in both countries. The extensive use of fixed term contracts in higher education is significantly deteriorating working conditions of researchers. It is no surprise then that most researchers and higher education employees, particularly women, leave the academic system because of fragmented career paths and lack of predictability on their future.

On that same occasion, Andreas Keller, Vice-President of GEW and Vice-President of ETUCE announced closer cooperation between GEW and SULF in the future to tackle the problem and demand real changes. GEW's actions for decent working condition and reliable career prospects in higher education and research (at the core of the Templin manifesto since 2010) are led by the deep belief that this lack of options for many researchers negatively affects quality of research and teaching.

[Read the full article on GEW website](#)

[Read the full article on IE website](#)

### **Health and Safety Recommendation Adopted**

A set of health and safety recommendations was adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 14/15 April 2014. The recommendations indicate how teacher unions can work and act together in times of crisis to maintain and promote health and safe working conditions in the education sector.



The recommendations suggest a number of strategies and actions to be implemented at three different levels: European level, national level, and school level.

At European level, the recommendations focus on actions of solidarity, political influence, and the exchange of good practices. They call upon teacher unions in Europe to work together to improve national legislation on occupational health and safety and to promote social dialogue. Moreover, they advocate that the union effect should be pointed out to the European Commission: workers' health and safety improves if there is a strong worker representation in place.

Teacher unions in Europe are asked to make the link between quality education and healthy & safe schools visible. They should insist on the implementation of European directives, foster solidarity amongst colleagues, and include health and safety issues in collective bargaining. At school level, the recommendations suggest having a health and safety representative in each education institution,

The recommendations were developed in the ETUCE project Teacher trade unions in solidarity for healthy and safe workplaces in the economic crisis in 2013. In an online survey, evidence was collected that occupational health and safety has suffered because of budget cuts in education. The final conference clearly emphasised that health and safety issues are not only the individual's responsibility but are most importantly part of the organisation of work. The practical recommendations and the project's results can be found on the teachers' health and safety website.

## Secret negotiations threaten public services in 50 countries

The 6th round of secret negotiations on the Trade in Services Agreement took place in Geneva during last week. The participants (the EU, Australia, Canada, Chile, Taiwan, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, South Korea, Switzerland, Turkey and the US) call themselves the “Really Good Friends of Services” and are the strongest advocates of service liberalisation.

Simultaneously, Public Services International (PSI) launched its special report on the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) versus Public Services.



The report shows that the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) will put public services, including education, at risk. This is because the proposed agreement could make it impossible for future governments to restore public services to public control, even in cases of failure with private service delivery. It would also restrict a government’s ability to regulate key sectors e.g. university and school accreditation and degree-granting authority. As pointed out in the report, treating public services as commodities for trade creates a fundamental misconception of public services. In particular, public services are designed to provide vital social and economic necessities – such as education and health care. Public services exist because markets will not produce these outcomes. Trade negotiators state that governments maintain the “right to regulate”. However, this is only valid as long as in accordance with the trade agreement. Governments will need to be prepared to face challenges and dispute juries.

Rosa Pavanelli, General Secretary of Public Services International (PSI), says: “This is an attempt to secretly extend the most damaging parts of the infamous GATS agreement (General Agreement on Trade in Services) that previously sparked global protests. The aim of public services should not be to make profits for large multinational corporations. Ensuring that failed privatisations can never be reversed is free market ideology gone mad.” Pavanelli emphasizes that, “It is fundamentally undemocratic for parliaments to permanently hand over the people’s democratic mandate to multinational companies.”

ETUCE demands that education in particular and public services in general be excluded entirely from the negotiations of the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA). This is the same demand as in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

## Europe Day

“Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.”

The quote is from the Declaration presented by the French foreign minister Robert Schuman on 9 May 1950. The declaration proposed the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which today is seen as the first steps toward the European Union. At that time Europe was still suffering and trying to overcome the devastation from World War II and the creation of the ECSC had the very vital purpose to prevent another war between the nations of Europe.

On 9 May this year the intention of the Schuman Declaration and its achievements will be commemorated in particular in times where Europe again is struggling to find a common path and



when solidarity sometimes seems to be forgotten. European citizens and politicians are called to remember and commit to the core values that the European Union is founded upon and to be the bearers for solidarity and community. This is something that all citizens of the European Union should keep in mind on Friday and consider for the upcoming Election to the European Parliament on 25 May 2014.

## Working abroad in Europe – Recognition of professional qualifications

The European Parliamentary Research Service has summarised the recently adopted EU Directive on Recognition of professional qualifications. In November 2013 the Directive 2013/55/EU was published amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications. ETUCE together with other European level trade union organisations extensively lobbied during the modernisation of the directive. The website of the European Parliament provides also links to the

ETUCE, ETUC, EPSU, Eurocadres and CEEP statements:

<http://epthinktank.eu/2014/03/26/recognition-of-professional-qualifications-2/>

The goal of the recognition of professional qualifications is to assist workers in certain occupations to have their skills more easily accepted in another EU country. The directive also concerns teachers as they are included in the “general system overview” of the professional category.

