



ETUCE Newsletter

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 Education International

10 July 2014 - English teachers on strike

On 10 July thousands and thousands of teachers stood up for education and public services in England and Wales, answering to the call to strike action made by the National Union of Teacher (NUT) alongside with Unison, FBU, PCS, GMB and Unite. The 5 unions called their members in education and local government to take action on the same day.



Rallies and marches were organised all over England and Wales as ETUCE reported. From the strike rally in Birmingham, Christine Blower, General Secretary of the NUT and President of the ETUCE, stood up against blind UK government education policies: “detrimental to education and the profession”, she previously said. She called teachers and parents to ‘Stand up for education!’ and continue to keep up the pressure on the UK Education Secretary Michael Goves.

This massively participated last-resort action came after another one-day strike in March, denouncing the effects of 4 years of austerity policies on teachers’ profession and morale.

However, NUT campaign ‘Protect Teachers - Defend Education’ doesn’t end on 10 July! The NUT calls its members to volunteer to lobby MPs and engage with parents at www.teachers.org.uk/voice. A parents’ leaflet explaining the reasons to strike and NUT’s vision for education is available at www.teachers.org.uk/parents.

NUT’s campaign Facebook page for latest updates: www.facebook.com/nut.campaigns

Legal dispute in Georgia over ESFTUG election results ended after four years

On 11 July 2014, a judicial decision by the Appeals Court in Tbilisi has finally resolved the legal battle over the legitimacy of the election of Maia Kobakhidze, President of the Educators and Scientists Free Trade Union of Georgia (ESFTUG). The complainants had requested to cancel the results of the teacher union’s Extraordinary National Congress in 2010. The Court now judged in favour of the defending party. It has taken almost four years until the Court ruled on the case “Martoleki and others against the Educators and Scientists Free Trade Union of Georgia (ESFTUG)”.

In short, the plaintiffs alleged that an insufficient number of delegates had been present during the vote. The evidence provided by the group of plaintiffs was not adequate to subsequently deny the legitimacy of the election results. According to ESFTUG, the legal arguments presented by the plaintiffs did not convince the Court either.



The judgement was made in due time before ESFTUG's next National Congress which will be held on 25 October of this year.

Declaration of Joint Principles ETUC/AFL-CIO: TTIP Must Work for the People, or It Won't Work at All

Ahead of EU-US trade negotiations the American and European trade unions – AFL-CIO and ETUC have issued a Declaration of Joint Principles.



“The AFL-CIO and ETUC demand a commitment from the E.U. and U.S. to achieve a “gold standard” agreement that improves living and working conditions on both sides of the Atlantic and guards against any attempt to use the agreement to lower standards or impinge on democratic decision making. The risk of the current model of trade and economic integration agreements to democratic decision making cannot be overstated. The U.S. has already lost state-to-state challenges to its anti-smoking, meat labelling, and tuna labelling policies and even now, European multinationals are using the investor-to-state system to challenge decisions to phase out nuclear energy and raise minimum wages. Simply put, these policies are part of a government’s most basic responsibility to promote the general welfare of its people.”

Carve-out of public services: “The AFL-CIO and ETUC demand an exclusion of public services from the negotiations. The negotiators must meet the demands to carve out public services, including education, health and social services, water supply, postal services and public transportation from the scope of the agreement. A positive list approach must be taken to avoid opening liberalisation to services not explicitly listed.”

[Read the Declaration of Joint Principles ETUC/AFL-CIO: TTIP Must Work for the People, or It Won't Work at All](#)

Commission Axes Maternity Leave Directive

The European Commission has announced that the proposed maternity leave directive will not be taken up again in the next legislature. The final withdrawal of the directive is foreseen for the session of the European Parliament on Tuesday 15 July 2014.

The proposal foresees to extend the minimum length of maternity leave from 14 to 18 weeks. At the moment, current legislation provides for a minimum of 14 continuous weeks' maternity leave in the European Economic Area, so the directive would have made a positive difference to millions of women and their families.

The withdrawal is particularly shocking as the bill had been a priority initiative only few years ago, that is in the Commission's work programme for 2008. Now priorities seem to have shifted due to the opposition of the Council of the European Union. While a large majority of MEPs voted in favour at its first parliamentary reading in 2010, the Council blocked the legislation because of the opposition of eight member states (Germany, UK, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Sweden).

Last week, ETUC joined forces with the European Women's Lobby to call on the members of the European Parliament and President Martin Schulz to oppose the withdrawal. ETUC demands to reiterate the Parliament's support for better maternity rights and its full commitment to work towards a compromise with the Council so that the issue can proceed to a second reading.



Maternity leave matters particularly at times when Europe struggles to recover from the crisis. Throughout the EU, parenthood continues to have a significant long-term negative impact on women's earnings and their participation in the labour market. Unless better reconciliation of professional, private and family life is supported, the EU is unlikely to meet its objective of a 75% employment rate for women and men by 2020.

ETUCE Official EU-OSHA Campaign Partner

ETUCE has joint forces with the biggest occupational safety and health campaign worldwide, the Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress Campaign coordinated by EU OSHA in more than 30 countries. As official campaign partner, ETUCE will distribute and publicise information about the campaign and participate in benchmarking events.

The 2014-2015 campaign takes up the issue of stress - the second most frequently reported work-related health problem in Europe. Work-related stress is believed to be the cause of more than half of all lost working days. Although tackling psychosocial risks and work-related stress may seem challenging, this campaign aims to demonstrate that they can be dealt with in the



same logical and systematic way as any other occupational safety and health issue.

So far, more than 60 organisations have become official partners of the 2014–15 campaign. They come from a variety of sectors across Europe and encompass employers' and workers' federations, technology platforms, non-governmental organisations and multinational companies. They are joined by campaign media partners, committed to communicating the importance of managing work-related stress and psychosocial risks.

National events have been rolled out across the continent, with recent campaign launches taking place from Finland to Greece. Leo Suomaa, the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, emphasized that good workplaces deal with this psychosocial risk through open discussions on workload distribution and how best to manage it: 'organising your workload helps you to control work-related stress,' said Suomaa.

During the campaign, benchmarking workshops will be held around Europe to give partners the opportunity to share good practice. Further upcoming events include:

- European Weeks for Safety and Health at Work: October 2014 and 2015
- Good Practice Awards Ceremony: April 2015
- Healthy Workplaces Summit: November 2015

New EURYDICE Report: Financing Schools in Europe

The report [*Financing Schools in Europe: Mechanisms, Methods and Criteria in Public Funding*](#) provides a framework for understanding the structure of funding systems of primary and general secondary education. It delivers an analysis of authority levels (central, regional and/or local level) involved and the methods and criteria used for determining the level of resources for financing school education. It covers 27 of the 28 EU Member States and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey. With the help of national diagrams on funding flows, the report explains the different mechanisms, methods and priorities when it comes to funding staff, operational goods and services and capital goods.

[Read the report](#)

[Read the highlights](#)

Fundamentally, maternity leave protects woman workers from dismissal or discrimination due to pregnancy or motherhood. It is also intrinsically linked to the application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment between women and men in the European Union. Pregnancy and maternity security are essential for achieving gender equality and the protection of women's rights.

