



# ETUCE Newsletter

October 2014 Issue 1



## ETUCE Committee – Preparing the ETUCE Special Conference

On 13 to 14 October 2014, the members of the ETUCE Committee met in Brussels for their autumn meeting. With a minute's silence the Committee commemorated the deceased colleagues and fellow unionists, Monica Rodrigues, ATL, UK and Agnes Breda, UNSA-Education, France, and staff member of the EI head office in Brussels, whose engagement for education and the teacher union movement outlasts their departure.



Resuming the meeting, the ETUCE President, welcomed the new ETUCE Committee members Helen Van den Berg, CNVO, replacing Cees Kuiper, for the country seat of The Netherlands and Kamuran Karaca, Egitem-Sen, replacing Mehmet Bozgeyik for the country seat of Turkey.

In preparation of the ETUCE Special Conference in Vienna on 26 – 27 November 2014, the Committee members took the decision to submit the [Resolution Shaping the Teaching Profession of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#) for adoption to the ETUCE Special Conference. It also decided on establishing an **EI/ETUCE Central and Eastern European Network (CEENET)** for a 2 year trial period, in accordance with the By-Laws Art. 9.2 (IV) and to recommend to the EI Executive Board that it moves Kazakhstan, Kirgistan and Tajikistan from the EI Asia-Pacific Region to the European Region-ETUCE. The ETUCE Committee deems the set-up of an administrative and practical network necessary in order to promote better cooperation between the CEE countries and especially the Russian-speaking countries. This network is to ensure better opportunities for participation and access to resources as well as to facilitate enhanced activity and participation with EI/ETUCE. The ETUCE Secretariat is to support the network establishment with the extended use and provision of services in Russian, e.g. more extensive translation of meeting documents and the provision of the ETUCE website and newsletter in Russian. The launch of the CEENET is foreseen on 25 November 2014, in the frame of the ETUCE Special Conference.

In the wake, Vice-president, Branimir Strukelj, initiated a discussion on the membership fee calculation and payment to EI. As the payment of dues underlies the decision of EI Congress, the topic has been postponed to the Congress meeting in July 2015 in Ottawa.

Continuing on financial issues, the ETUCE Committee approved the ETUCE Action Plan on European Economic Governance (European Semester), which foresees to increase teacher union's impact and visibility in the European Semester process. In order to ensure a timely exchange between the ETUCE member organisations and the ETUCE Secretariat on country specific recommendations from the European Commission in the field of education, the ETUCE member organisations are invited to designate a contact person to the ETUCE Secretariat on this issue.

From the Standing Committees for Higher Education and Research and for Equality, the Committee members adopted the *Appeal from the European Higher Education and Research Unions to Defend Europe's Scientific, Humanities and Academic Potential* and the *Recommendations on Mainstreaming Diversity and Tackling Inequalities*. It also adopted the *Practical Guidelines for Teacher Unions for the Further Implementation and Reinforcement of Teacher Union Actions on Gender Equality in Times of Austerity*, which call on member organisations to strengthen their actions on gender equality as a common goal for both women and men, also in times of economic crisis.

### **Education and other public services - an increasingly controversial issue in TTIP**

The 7<sup>th</sup> round of the TTIP negotiations between the EU and the US closed on 3 October 2014. Education and other public services are becoming an increasingly controversial topic in the context of TTIP. During the joint press conference both the US and the EU chief negotiators, addressed specifically the issue of public services and claimed that public services would not be affected by TTIP. The EU's chief negotiator, Ignacio Bercero, pointed out that especially trade unions have voiced their concerns around public services. Taking this as a sign of success, ETUCE continues to lobby for the carve-out of education in particular and public services in general.



The 7<sup>th</sup> round of TTIP negotiations seems to have devoted significant time to the discussion of the respective services offers as both sides disagree on the scheduling of the services offers. The US was disappointed with the EU's offer and its hybrid approach of the negative list on national treatment and positive list on market access. Nevertheless, the comments from the European Commission show willingness to eventually adopt the negative list approach.

ETUCE stresses that the negative list approach poses significant problems, which is of particular concern for public services like education. Especially, the ratchet clause, which automatically binds any autonomous liberalisation, presents significant risk to public services. Regulatory cooperation was also discussed during the last round. According to the US chief negotiator, Dan Mullaney, the

end goal is to address “unnecessary burdens”. New regulations may potentially also be subject to regulatory cooperation before their adoptions. ETUCE has repeatedly insisted that regulation is and must continue to be the responsibility of democratically elected governments.

Further to this, ETUI has recently published a policy brief on [The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: exaggerated hopes from the liberalising agenda?](#) The Policy Brief assesses that the economic benefits of TTIP will be extremely small. Therefore, it suggests that the EU should concentrate on wider policies that restore growth and investment. ETUI suggests that the EU should support an alternative globalisation agenda and should oppose the inclusion of the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS).

### **EDUCATION, TRAINING and YOUTH FORUM 2014**

The third *Education, Training and Youth Forum* of the European Commission took place on 9-10 October 2014 and brought together stakeholders and social partners to discuss on challenges of implementing and on identifying the future priorities of the [Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training \(ET2020\)](#).



Martin Rømer, ETUCE European Director, brought the needs of the European teachers and researchers to the attention of participants of the forum during a panel discussion. “If we want quality in education, we have to tackle the forthcoming challenges: investment in education and investment in teachers’, he said, and added: ‘it is necessary to have a holistic view on education and training.

[Read the ETUCE Press release](#)

### **General strike in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) off the agenda for now**

A strike in FYROM's education sector announced by ETUCE's Macedonian member organisation SONK on 29 September 2014 was averted at the very last moment. Following ETUCE's written intervention at the Macedonian Ministry of Education and ETUCE's ad hoc meeting with SONK in Skopje, the Ministry had suddenly agreed to return to the negotiation table only on the very day before the expected strike.



At this meeting the Ministry declared its readiness to resume a constructive social dialogue with SONK and to resolve a number of outstanding issues including those connected with teacher evaluation as well as with working conditions in early childhood education and culture. SONK's council made a decision that concrete results have to be achieved by the end of 2014. In the event of failed negotiations, SONK will discuss a new date for the general strike in the education sector. ETUCE continues to monitor the development of the coming weeks and months.

### **Successful Round Table Meeting in Vilnius**

On 1 October 2014 the ETUCE held the 4th Round Table Meeting in Vilnius to promote social dialogue in the education sector. The meeting was conducted at a very opportune and important time as the trade unions and the Ministry of Education and Science are currently in comprehensive negotiations about reforms of the education financing model, the employment structure and teachers' salaries. The meeting was



attended by the Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science, external experts on social dialogue in the Baltic Region, and representatives from the Lithuanian social partners. Lithuania has suffered from severe austerity measures in recent years which have had serious consequences for the teaching profession and affected all aspects of education. The Round Table was a great success in that it not only highlighted the problems of the present condition but also set out a way forward for education and teachers in Lithuania. It was noted from both the employers and the trade unions that dialogue is essential and that the trade unions must stand together with a strong and coherent voice. The following Round Table meeting takes place in Podgorica on 17 October 2014.

### **Positioning School Leadership in the Agenda for School Reforms**

Members of the European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL) network met in Nice on 25 -26 September 2014 to discuss the implementation of priorities for the development of school leadership to validate reflection tools for school leadership policy design and to share good practices. The meeting gathered teacher trade unions, experts on school leadership, ministries' representatives, employers' organisations, school principals and head teachers as well as teacher educators.



Network coordinator, Kathy Kikis-Papadakis, highlighted in her introductory remarks how EPNoSL and peer learning activities have enhanced collaboration between target groups and policy makers. The aim of EPNoSL is to provide a better educational experience for young people and to improve

the working environment of teachers. Teaching is central to improve school outcomes and performances, and school leaders play a key role in driving the change.

The event stimulated knowledge exchange between participants and was directed at enhancing school leadership for equity and learning. Touching upon the concept of distributed school leadership on several occasions, the participants recognised that teachers' professional development is essential for the improvement of the school environment, together with professional development programmes for school leaders, inclusive leadership and student engagement.

To know more, read [ETUCE Policy Paper on School Leadership](#) and visit the [EPNoSL website](#).

### **Annual Eurydice report on teachers' and school heads' salaries**

This year's edition of the annual Eurydice report on teachers' and school heads' salaries and allowances shows that about half of the 33 surveyed European countries have applied salary cuts or salary freezes for public employees during the period 2009-2014. In these countries, teachers' purchasing power in 2014 is still below the 2009 level. Furthermore, the report finds that the basic salaries for new teachers in primary and lower secondary education are lower than GDP per capita in around 75% of the countries investigated. This also holds for the majority of countries when looking at upper secondary education. The report also shows, that in 16 of the 33 European countries featured in the report, teachers' salaries have increased compared to the previous school year (2012-2013). The increase in salaries is the outcome of salary reforms and adjustments to the cost of living.



The ETUCE is deeply concerned about the severe cuts in education expenditure that have taken place in many European countries in recent years. The ETUCE believes that the only sustainable way out of the crisis is not to introduce cuts in education but to invest in education and to ensure quality education for all.

Read the Report: [EN](#)