



# ETUCE Newsletter

Special Edition

UNITE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION  
Better education for a better world



 Education International

## **Ireland: Stop casualization of the teaching and lecturing profession and No Quality without Gender Equality**

In Ireland, the deteriorating working conditions due to casualization of the teaching and lecturing profession and the persistence of a dual labour market are affecting the school community and society as whole. High levels of gender inequalities within the university and higher education sector are also a deep concern for trade unions.



Irish Teacher Unions mobilizations reported by the Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI) to end the casualization of the teaching and lecturing profession are deeply in line with the IE/ETUCE initiative Unite for Quality. In the coming weeks, Irish Teacher Unions are taking two specific actions to address the problem. First of all they will work with appointed Expert Groups on Fixed-Term and Part-Term Employment in Teaching and Lecturing in order to quickly to address some specific problems in the employment of newly qualified teachers. As second, they are engaging with teacher educators and education academics in a national seminar organised by the union for March 22nd on the issue of 'Teacher Supply and Early Career Experiences'.

In parallel, higher education teacher trade unions in Ireland are responding with actions to the unacceptable persistence of high levels of gender inequality. Within this context, the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has taken important steps on the path to Quality of Education for all. With a view to ensure "supportive and safe environments for teaching and learning that are gender sensitive and completely free of discrimination", which is one of the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 'What is needed to improve the Quality of Education in Europe?', IFUT is actively involved into initiatives on gender equality. IFUT's involvement is crucial to raise awareness of gender inequality and

the potential of positive action initiatives to address it, within the university and higher education sector in Ireland.

### **Italy: trade unions in education on the move for Quality of Education**

Italian teachers trade union, such as FLC – CGIL, CISL Scuola and UIL Scuola, are eager to turn the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on ‘What is Needed to Improve the Quality of Education in Europe?’ to specific national recommendations for better Quality of Education.

To make their voice heard and to share opinions at national as well as at European

level, Italian education trade unions will organise meetings with candidates to the European Parliament before the European elections 2014 take place in May. Alike, all the relevant national stakeholders in education will be questioned about their views on quality of education, here included the Minister of Education.



### **UK: campaigning to defend education and protect teachers**

NUT – the National Union of Teachers in the UK is preparing its action of last resort in the framework of the campaign “Stand up for education”. After having engaged in talks with parents and public, in pressures to the politicians, NUT has called for a day of national strike to defend teacher pay and conditions on 26 March. Against the background of rampant privatisations with a



downward pressure on workers’ pay and conditions, leading to an erosion of workers’ rights in the pursuit of a more affordable and profitable business model, NUT is campaigning to defend teachers’ dignity and their fundamental role in society. The government’s refusal to listen to union proposals is eventually leading to the day of strike throughout the country on March, 26. On that day NUT will stand against intolerable levels of teachers’ workload or their unacceptable long working hours, the implementation of performance related pay and the increases to pension contributions or to even longer career paths to reach retirement age.

Requests from the union of teachers are in line with the IE/ETUCE initiative Unite for Quality and are consistent with the 10 Key messages on 'What is needed to improve the Quality of Education in Europe?' approved by the ETUCE Committee on 23-24 October 2013. "Ensuring highly qualified and motivated teaching staff is the key to building quality within education teachers", key message n. 7 points out.

"Many teachers feel totally overwhelmed and it is hardly surprising that two-in-five leave the profession after their first five years in the job and morale is at an all-time low. Many thousands of good teachers are leaving the profession and education is being damaged as a result" Christine Blower, General Secretary of NUT and President of ETUCE recently stated. "This is an issue that should concern everyone. Our children deserve enthusiastic, energetic teachers not overworked and stressed ones" she continued. NUT and ETUCE member organisations won't stop to advocate for fair working conditions and adequate wages in education.

#### **Hungary: common trade union front for quality in education for all**

Against the background of troubled relations between Hungarian trade unions and the government of the country, the trade union of teachers, SEHUN, is willing to cooperate with the Hungarian trade unions in the education who signed the 10 key messages in the framework of the EI/ETUCE campaign Unite for Quality Education. Together, they can make a common front against new

governmental policy proposals in education, elaborate national common position on what is needed to improve the quality of education in Hungary and in Europe, and they can share views with relevant stakeholders in education.

The national recommendations triggered by the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 'What is Needed to Improve the Quality of Education in Europe?' anticipate a common front against privatisation in education, for the return of the compulsory education age to 18 years old, and for free public education for all.

All these demands are conditioned to the crucial request for an increase in the public budget share dedicated to education, paving the way for equal opportunities and social mobility. In this respect, the Trade Union of Employees in Higher Education (FDSZ Hungary) recommends a rise in the GDP share invested in higher education of 1.2% for 2014, from the current 0.5%.

SEHUN and FDSZ will also continue to be engaged in raising public awareness on the crucial role teachers and employees in higher education have in society, being vigilant, at the same time, on the functioning of social dialogue at any level.

### Latvia: a Protocol of Intent to strengthen the Alliance for Quality of Education

On 19 December 2013, the Latvian Educational and Scientific Workers' Trade Union, LIZDA succeeded in establishing an open National Consultative Alliance "United for Quality Education" in response to the EI/ETUCE homonym Campaign. The partners who joined LIZDA were: the Latvian National Committee of UNESCO, the Parliamentary Education, Culture and Science Committee,

the Ministry of Education and Science – MoES, the State Service on Quality Education – IKVD, the Society "Latvian Parental Movement" , the Society "Parental Forum, the Latvian Association of Education headmasters – LIVA, the National Education Center – VISC, The Society "Parents for Education", the Rectors' Council – RP, the Riga Pedagogy and Education Management Academy – RPIVA and the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments – LPS.

Despite a period of political hurdles, the partners of the Alliance signed on 7 February this year the Protocol of Intent on cooperation within the action "Unite for Quality Education" in Latvia, and agreed on a Working Plan recalling the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 'What is Needed to Improve the Quality of Education in Europe?'. The activities foreseen in the plan are ought to arrive until the end the Latvian EU Presidency in June 2015.

The basic objectives of the open Alliance, reflecting into the main tasks embedded into the Protocol, aim at: ensuring sufficient funding for public education, ensuring accessibility to quality education to everybody and quality in-service training for pedagogues.



### Romania: Roundtable on quality Education

ALMA-MATER organised together with two other ETUCE Member Organisations in Romania, FSLE and FSI Spiru Haret, a roundtable with students and parents' organisations to discuss quality education. At this occasion the [10 key messages](#) adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 24 October 2013 on 'What is needed to improve the Quality of Education in Europe?' were communicated to

the Romanian minister of education, the representative of the prime-minister of Romania and the press.



## **Slovakia: ETUCE 10 key messages turned into concrete recommendations for Quality of Education**

OZPŠaV, the Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science of Slovakia succeeded in turning the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee into concrete recommendations with regards to Slovak national specifications. These recommendations aim at creating the legislative conditions and at securing the financial resources needed to increase quality



in education. Slovak teacher unions demand an increase of the GDP share invested in education to 6%; and struggle to increase transparency, to optimise schools' network and to have a greater control of the effectiveness of funds.

Securing the State financing would also allow the adjustment of salaries as well as healthier and safer work environments for teachers and all the employees in the education sector: basic conditions for supporting the attractiveness of the teaching professions.

In order to diffuse national recommendations, the Slovak unions in education are also engaging into regular communication with all relevant stakeholders. In this respect, the first union Council meeting will guest the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport. Finally, candidates to European elections will be addressed on this subject, in line with the ETUCE campaign calling 2014 MEP candidates to pledge to Quality of Education in Europe.

## **Norway: Trade Union of Education campaigns for Quality teaching**

The Union of Education Norway (UEN) is connecting its activities to the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 'What is needed to improve the Quality of Education in Europe?', aiming at securing quality education for all and quality for the teaching profession worldwide.



Within the framework of the IE/ETUCE initiative

Unite for Quality Education, the UEN will organise a national conference on 13 - 14 March 2014 where Charlie Lennon, IE Vice-President will present the goals, expectations and challenges of the Global IE the initiative and Christine Blower, ETUCE President, will present the ETUCE campaign activities as well as UK-wide and NUT – National Union of Teachers, UK – actions. On this background the issues of privatisation, marketization and quality will be

discussed. The conference will be attended by members of UEN Executive Board and elected representatives from all regions. The 10 key messages will be translated into Norwegian language and distributed to all the conference participants, published on UEN website as well as in the UEN Bulletin. The Bulletin is distributed in approximately 22.500 copies.

The activities carried out by the Trade Union of Education in Norway in the frame of the campaign Unite for Quality Education focus on Quality teacher training, as key message n. 6 states, and started already in 2013. An advertisement campaign on newspapers and magazines was carried out, in strong connection with the negotiations on working time of school teachers and Early Childhood teachers.

### **Iceland: the 10 key messages turned into a strategy for actions**

The Icelandic teachers' union, KÍ, has transformed the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 'What is Needed to Improve the Quality of Education in Europe?' to a core topic to be diffused and discussed at many occasions and to be addressed to all targets in society.

The need to inform the general public, trade union members and politicians has led to several strategies for action. Members are informed about the need for quality of education through e-mail newsletters and memo, and the use of media ensures the reaching of the general public as well as politicians.

Eventually, an advocacy activity towards relevant policy makers, Financial and Education Ministers and Ministries and representatives of local governments and their central organisations, is also carried out to enhance Quality of Education in Iceland and Europe.



### **Albania: teacher trade unions campaign for Quality of Education**

On 7 November 2013, the Congress of the Trade Union Federation of Education and Science of Albania - FSASH opened the way for deepening Albanian teacher unions' involvement in the Unite for Quality Education campaign. The 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 'What is Needed to Improve the Quality of Education in



Europe?’ were communicated to the Ministry of Education and Sports, and to the Ministry of Welfare and Youth. It was the occasion for the Albanian trade union to demand an increase of 5% of share of the GDP invested in education (from current 3.4%) from the Albanian government.

In the forthcoming months a national Conference of the trade unions in education will be set, to discuss the quality of education in Albania and the preparation of specific national recommendations based on the 10 key messages. In the meantime, the joint Magazine of the two Albanian trade unions in education - the Independent Trade Union of Education of Albania, SPASH and FSASH, “Tribuna Sindikale”, informed teachers and the public about the focus of the initiative: the demand for a quality public education for all children in Albania.

### **Bosnia: trade unions speed up towards Quality Education, key for progress of the Bosnian society halting social unrest**

The Bosnian higher education and science trade union, HESUEBH, is struggling to raise public awareness on the need of all to access quality and free public education, as a fundamental determinant for every citizen. Harsh austerity measures imposed by the government, in conjunction with the persistent problems since the country’s civil war of 1992-1995, have also been the cause of recent social and political unrest. In this respect, the HESUBH is deeply convinced that education can make the difference in society.



The cross-cutting demand for a free public quality education is crucial throughout all the national planned activities envisaged to implement the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on ‘What is Needed to Improve the Quality of Education in Europe?’. The implementation of the activities has the essential aim of enhancing the level of science and knowledge, as the basis to achieve greater well-being for the entire Bosnian society.

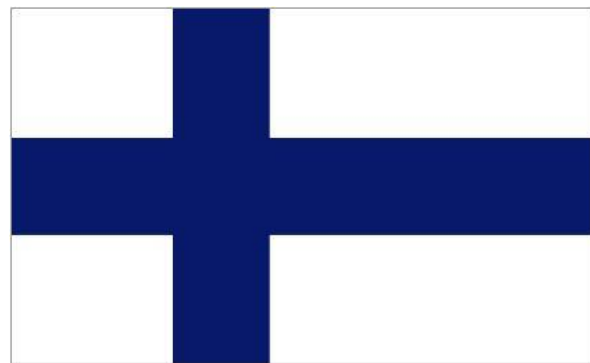
### **Montenegro: raising awareness on the need for Quality of Education**

In the framework of Unite for Quality Education campaign, the Independent Union of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Montenegro, ITUESCSM, is raising awareness the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 24 October 2013 on 'What is Needed to Improve the Quality of Education in Europe?' through its website. All local media have been informed of the initiative.



### **Finland: trade unions demand better education and call on participation to the next EU elections**

The Finnish teacher Union, OAJ, launched a so-called "Machine of future" campaign last spring. In this campaign OAJ is asking the Finnish people to give their opinions about the current state of play in education and the future of education. The campaign already received more than 50.000 answers, but still it aim to get much more answers. These answers will be used by OAJ as background information to address the EP candidates in view of the EU elections in May 2014.



The campaign aims both at addressing the Finnish politicians and at raising awareness among the citizens on the fact that investments in education and innovation are the most important instruments to exit the crisis and achieve a more sustainable future. In line with the ETUCE 10 key messages on 'What is needed to improve Quality of Education in Europe?', adopted in October 2013 in the framework of the EI/ETUCE initiative Unite for Quality Education, OAJ is strongly pointing out at the importance of having strong public education systems in the EU from early childhood education to university level and adult education. OAJ also emphasises that teachers need to have copyrights for the material they produce in the electronic study environment. OAJ further stresses the importance to educate children to live in a global and multicultural world. Eventually, they call the European Parliament and European Commission to strengthen the links and cooperation with the social partners, NGOs and the civil society.



In Finland the three main confederations SAK, STTK and AKAVA also made a joint campaign called 'Votes from Finland' aimed at raising awareness on the importance to vote for the EU elections in May. In the last EU elections only 40% voted, which is a very low ratio in Finland.

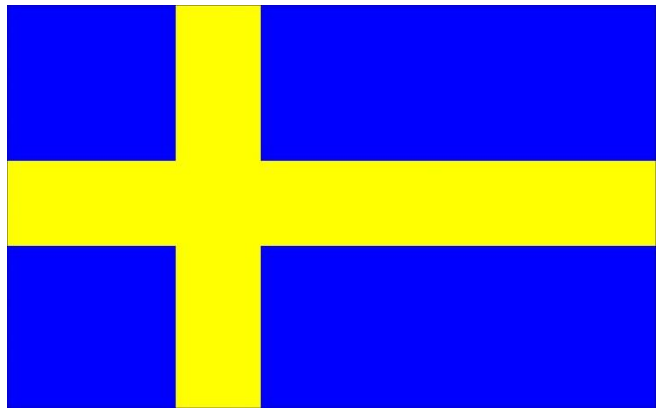
The campaign therefore tries to raise the awareness on the importance of the European decision-making level, and on how the decisions taken at European level have an impact on the daily life of the Finnish people.

To know more about the campaign "Machine of future", [click on this link](#).

To know more about the campaign "Votes from Finland", [click on this link](#).

### **Sweden: 'Everything starts with a good teacher'. Lärarförbundet electoral campaign to put 'school first' and boost quality education**

September 2014, the month of Parliamentary elections in Sweden, is approaching and Lärarförbundet, the Swedish Teachers' Union, an EI/ETUCE affiliate, is campaigning to make the voice of teachers heard in these elections. Lärarförbundet's campaign "Skolan först" (School first) asks candidates to recognize that school is the first brick on which



society is built, and to push this principle ahead in their Parliamentary elections campaign.

In line with ETUCE 10 key messages on 'What is needed to improve the Quality of Education in Europe?', "School first" campaign is addressing politicians with 5 demands:

- To focus the election on what gives quality to education and therefore to society as a whole. Supporting teachers and making the profession more attractive means to focus on students, on the entire community and on society.
- To put the debate on the attractiveness of the teaching profession on the right path. In order to attract teachers tomorrow, politicians must invest in those who are teachers today.
- To increase teacher salaries and reduce the workload. Well trained and satisfied teachers are the single most important factor for students' achievements. Without a good school, and with unsatisfied teachers, future society loses its professions: from nurses to doctors and researchers.
- And finally, to increase overall resources on education.

Only a greater number of special teachers and educators can ensure that each child and student receive the support needed to reach the top of his or her potential.

Swedish teacher trade unions' ongoing mobilisation is of utmost importance to keep up the attention on the problems and challenges that schools are facing, to bring forward solutions, and "to open politicians' eyes on the teacher crisis" said Lärarförbundet President and EI Vice-President Eva-Lis Sirén.

To follow the Skolan först campaign in Swedish follow [this link](#).

To read the full article on EI website in English follow [this link](#).

### **Spain: Education is not a commodity, education is a human right**

The Spanish teacher unions [FETE-UGT](#), [FECCOO](#) and [STES-I](#) 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-confirmed 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”](#).

### **Bulgaria: nonstop advocating Quality of Education**

SEB, the Bulgarian Union of Teachers, one of the EI/ETUCE affiliates in Bulgaria, strikes the balance of 6 months of campaign activities based on the and plans further actions in the light of the Unite for Quality Education campaign.

After the official Campaign launch on 5 October 2013, and the

adoption of ETUCE 10 key messages on ‘What is needed to improve Quality of Education in Europe?’, the teacher trade unions of Bulgaria officially opened the Campaign at national level. The national launch of the campaign activity saw welcomed the Ministry of Education, the Parliament and all the Bulgarian medias.

Since that day, many local activities have been planned to promote quality education and access to education for all, the main messages of the EI/ETUCE initiative Unite for Quality. Teachers trade unions in Bulgaria have been working in the direction of promoting an increase of funding to education; avoiding dismissals and favouring retention of teachers through quality training; stressing the importance of teachers’ role in society; strengthening social dialogue; building partnerships between various stakeholders; and increasing the transfer of expertise between elder and younger teachers.

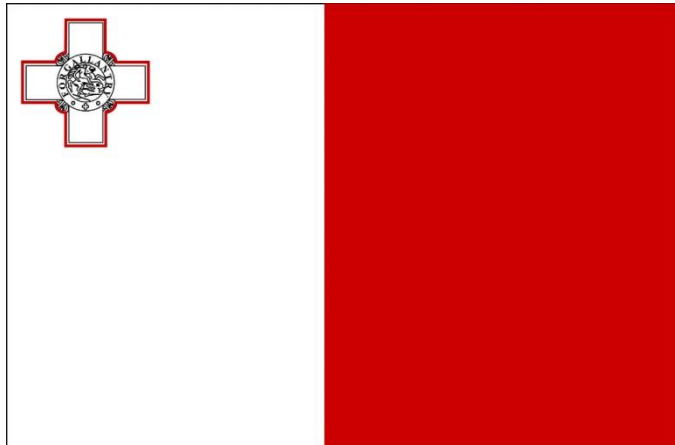
The school community as a whole will have its say on “The 3 most important conditions granting Quality of Education” at the end of the school year. In that period and under the guidance of SEB, parents, students, headmasters, teachers and representatives from public administrations will gather together in special meetings devoted to discussing this topic.



## Malta: 'Let's debate quality education'. MUT and students unite to define what it takes to ensure quality in Education

The Malta Union of Teachers (MUT), an EI/ETUCE affiliate, is engaging in a series of educational debates in cooperation with the youth organisation 'Aġenzija Żgħażaġh' to give voice to young students willing to define what makes Quality of Education.

On 2 April 2014 many young students took up the challenge and engaged in a participative, fruitful



and democratic dialogue with trade union representatives on many issues related to education. To give young people the chance to have their say in front of the Minister of Education and Employment on education-related issues such as the teaching profession and the compulsory age for education, , enables them 'to exercise their rights, to achieve more, to improve self-esteem and to contribute to a better school environment', Aġenzija Żgħażaġh believes.

The Maltese Minister for Education and Employment claimed at the debate on 2 April 2014 that 'Having such debates is important to make sure Maltese authorities are always aware what the best system for Maltese education is'.

The activity perfectly fits into the EI/ETUCE campaign 'Unite for Quality Education'. As part of the campaign 'we demand that quality education for all remains at the top of the agenda for a sustainable, peaceful and prosperous future', MUT Senior Vice-President Marco Bonnici said.

Also, a photographic competition running from January to April 2014 was launched by MUT Youth Section, under the theme 'Unite for Quality Education'.

To read the full article on EI website in English, [follow this link](#).

Finally, in the framework of the EI/ETUCE initiative seeking the pledge of MEP candidates for the ETUCE 10 key points on 'What is needed to improve Quality of Education in Europe?' in their run up to European Parliament elections, MUT has organised a debate with Maltese MEP candidates from the three main political parties on 8 May 2014. To follow up on this initiative, visit [MUT's website](#).

## **Portugal: Trade Unions' role in defining and delivering Quality of Education, FNE-CEDEFOP Study-visit on What role for social dialogue?**

EI/ETUCE affiliate from Portugal - FNE (Federação Nacional dos Sindicatos da Educação) in cooperation with CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) organised a study-visit in Porto (PT) between 24 and 28 March 2014, as part of the EI/ETUCE Campaign Unite for Quality Education.



15 Education specialists from 13 countries in Europe gathered to discuss the topic of “Social dialogue in the definition and implementation of knowledge, skills and competences”. During the 4 days, participants were given the opportunity to visit companies, colleges, centres of research and schools with the aim of understanding the Portuguese reality and share their visions regarding social dialogue in Europe and at national level.

Portugal experienced a national financial collapse in 2011, being the third Euro-zone country to receive a bail-out. In July and August 2011, the new Portuguese Government announced cuts on State spending and increase of austerity measures. According to FNE, the cuts seriously affected the functioning of schools, the quality of education and the social support to students and their respective families.

The aim of this action organised by FNE and CEDEFOP was to promote the culture of peer learning, observation, and mutual learning based on the sharing of experiences, in order to encourage discussion about education and how to develop quality approaches and transparency of education and training systems.

[Read FNE 's entire report](#)

## **FENPROF Addresses three Questions on Quality Education in view of forthcoming European Elections**

In the imminent view of the European elections taking place on 25 May 2014, and in the framework of the IE/ETUCE initiative Unite for Quality Education, FENPROF, the Portuguese National federation of Professors (Federação Nacional dos Professores) has addressed all Portuguese political parties/movements that have candidates running to the European Parliament elections, stressing the need to improve Quality of Education in Europe. The Portuguese candidates have been warmly encouraged to show their support to the 10 Key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 23-24 October 2013 on ‘What is needed to improve Quality of Education in Europe?’. They also replied to concrete questions posed by FENPROF, addressing three issues of major concern as regards granting the right to Education for all: the share of investments in education, privatisation of education and how to improve teaching and learning conditions in schools.

Six political parties/movements presenting candidates to the European Parliament (PS, CDU, Bloco de Esquerda, PCTP, MPT, MAS) replied stating their view on Education. FENPROF believes that a wide-spread of this information to affiliates and into schools is the best way to draw teachers' attention to the importance of a conscious involvement into European elections on 25 May 2014.

Sharing ETUCE initiatives and activities, FENPROF calls its affiliates to get involved into the election of a new European Parliament, reminding that the forthcoming elections are the best opportunity to say 'no' to austerity measures that dismantle social rights, and to change the course of policies for a more democratic Europe.

### **Cyprus: Fighting against discrimination is the key to build quality education**

In line with the EI/ETUCE initiative Unite for Quality Education, the Cyprus Turkish Teachers' Trade Union (KTÖS) has taken important steps to integrate the 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 'What is Needed to Improve the Quality of Education in Europe?' into its activities.



Actions at all levels have been undertaken to ensure the compliance with key message number 7 which advocates for the "protection of teachers' rights, fair working conditions and adequate wages". To this end, KTÖS is strongly fighting against the discriminatory effects amongst teachers in the public schools brought about by the so-called "emigration law" adopted in 2008 in the occupied area of Cyprus. According to this law, public employees who entered the profession after 2011 have suffered a 40% salary cut. In order to face this attempt to deteriorate working conditions, to further fragment the teaching staff and in order to demand the revocation or amendment of this law, the union is continuously organising meetings and negotiating with the government, issuing publications to raise awareness among members, and demonstrating in cooperation with other trade unions. Eventually, KTÖS is supporting the initiative of one of its members before the European Court of Human Rights against the discriminatory effects of this law.

The 10 key messages adopted by the ETUCE Committee have also been approved and included in the decisions of the V. National Education Commission held on 10-14 March 2014 in the occupied area of Cyprus. The Commission convenes every 5 years and aims at setting a roadmap for the future of the education system in the occupied area of Cyprus. The decisions taken by the 286 participants who gathered in the Commission, including

representatives of teacher trade unions, education authority employees and civil society organisations, are now taken to the highest education authorities and will be published in the Official Journal once accepted.