

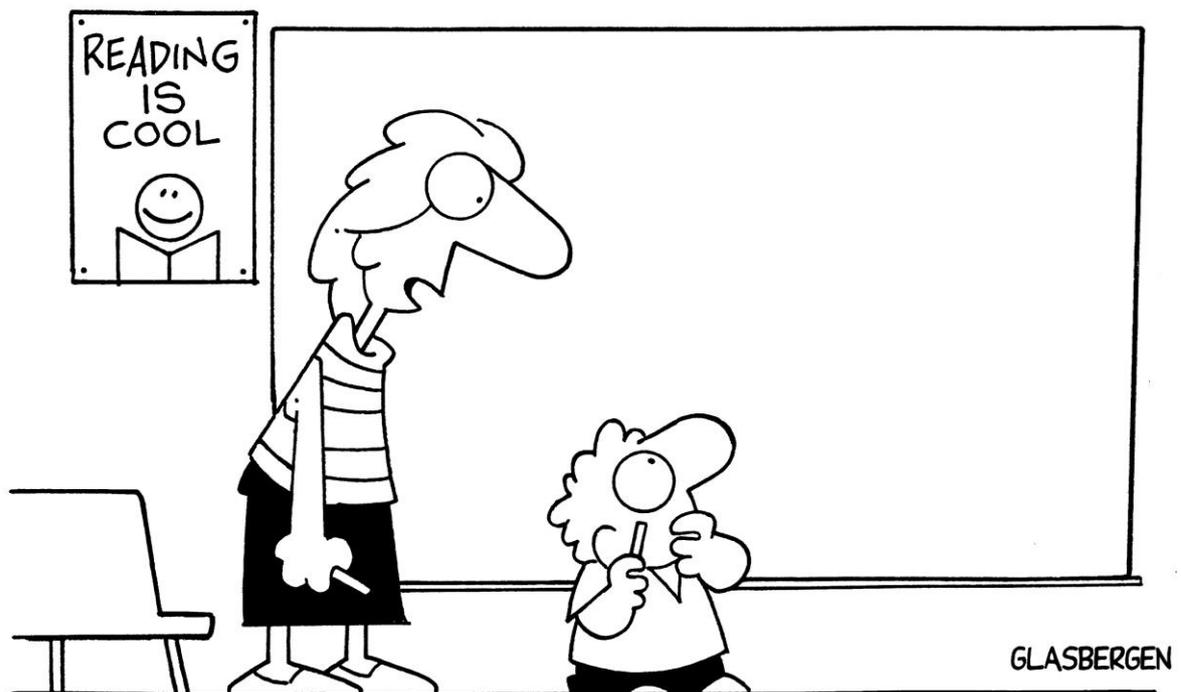
The Future of the Teaching Profession

Background Document

ETUCE Special Conference, the Regional Special Conference of Education International,
meeting in Vienna on

26-27 November 2014

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“There aren’t any icons to click. It’s a chalk board.”



*ETUCE- European Region of Education International
2014 Special Conference*



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² Temple of Apollo, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delphi#mediaviewer/File:Columns_of_the_Temple_of_Apollo_at_Delphi,_Greece.jpeg, [18 July 2014].



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Executive Summary

With the rise of modern information and communication technology (ICT) and the internet, teaching with books, blackboards and chalk seems outdated. Indeed, the technological revolution affects nearly every aspect of life in the 21st century. It influences how we “talk” with family members and friends, how we shop, how and where we work. Schools without modern media technology are considered outdated these days and the question what education and the teaching profession will be like in the future is indeed of crucial importance. Shaping the teaching profession of the 21st century is therefore an important task for the stakeholders in education and both teacher unions and education staff have a prominent role to play in this area.

Building on four pillars a) education as a human right and a public good; b) quality education as the key to knowledge creation and innovation; c) quality teaching based on high quality and innovative teacher education including the improved pedagogic use of ICT and d) teacher unions as equal partners in national and European decision making on developing education policies, the ETUCE Secretariat wishes to give the floor to its member organisations at the 2014 Special Conference to discuss the future of the teaching profession. As well as critically analysing challenges and possible shortcomings of the teaching profession in future, the aim is to delineate the teacher unions’ vision of the future of the teaching profession and to identify potential concrete approaches to addressing these questions with a view to guaranteeing the successful translation of this vision into practice. The specific topics covered in this discussion background document range from privatisation in education - *Funding and Public & Private Partnerships in Education*, to *Innovation in Education to Social Inequalities and the Teaching Profession*.

Forthcoming challenges for the teaching profession addressed in the first chapter on privatisation in education include growing teacher shortage and decreasing attractiveness of the profession, fair allocation of resources, globalisation and the need to adapt to an ever-faster changing work environment and the impact of the economic crisis and of austerity measures.

The second chapter highlights the unresolved challenges that the European Commission, national and regional education authorities, education staff, teacher unions and other stakeholders in education and technology need to confront, when implementing pedagogic use of ICT in education and training. They range from further increasing access to computers, ICT and the internet, to the fact that ICTs are changing the way services are provided and consumed, to promoting open education resources and digital applications as a means of adding value to teaching and learning, independent of space and time.

The third chapter focuses on the teacher union response to combat the impact of the growing inequalities in society and in education. It asks whether education will still provide the solution in future to combat persistent social disadvantages. The challenges concern the maintenance and promotion of social dialogue structures, minimising digital inequalities in support of an inclusive information society and the reduction of social inequalities through education in the face of the economic crisis.

Before going on to introduce the honourable guest speakers at this event, this background document is rounded off with ten open questions, which are sure to stimulate debate.



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1. Introduction

What would we see if we could foretell our future? If we had a crystal ball to see the future education systems of the children who have started school this year and who are going to leave compulsory education in 2030?

With the rise of modern information and communication technology (ICT) and the internet, teaching with books, blackboards and chalk seems outdated. Indeed, the technological revolution affects nearly every aspect of life in the 21st century. It influences how we “talk” with family members and friends, how we shop, how and where we work. In our globalised economies, faster and more efficient transportation and communication services enable people, goods, services and capital to move easily around the world. New communication tools are changing the way how we interact with governments, service suppliers and each other. These social and economic changes are transforming the demand for skills that individuals need in the 21st century³.

Students and pupils nowadays, have checked their timetable online, chatted with their mates via the various social networks and sent several tweets and WhatsApp messages to their friends around the world before they enter the classroom. Education institutions without modern media technology are considered outdated these days and the question what education and the teaching profession will be like in the future is indeed of crucial importance. Shaping the teaching profession of the 21st century, is therefore an important task for the stakeholders in education and both teacher unions and education staff have a prominent role to play in this area.

The 6th EI Congress in Cape Town in 2011 pointed out in the [Resolution on the Future of the Teaching Profession](#), *high-quality education is a fundamental human right for all students and teachers are at the heart of education. [...] Teachers inspire students to fulfil their potential.* The [Policy Paper on Education, Building the Future through Quality Education](#) that was also adopted in connection with this resolution explains further that *“education is also a key means for the transmission, analysis and application of knowledge and experience, and plays a central role in the creation of new knowledge through research and innovation. Its role is broader than the mechanistic and instrumental role that many proponents of market forces and “customer-provider” models acknowledge.”*

In this context, the ETUCE Conference adopted in Budapest in 2012 the [Resolution on the Teaching Profession](#), which emphasises the need to maintain and increase the level of public investment in education at all levels, *“to ensure that high quality education is available for all as a human right and a public good”*. In line with the [Teacher Education in Europe, An ETUCE Policy Paper](#) adopted by the ETUCE Executive Board in April 2008, this resolution also calls on European institutions and governments to *“improve the quality of teaching by developing high quality and innovative teacher education and by raising standards of teaching, especially through extending the pedagogic use of ICT, with the help of skilled and experienced teachers and also by involving teachers in research studies on the quality of teaching.”* Most importantly, it calls on national authorities to consider teacher unions as equal partners in relation to trends that affect education and to provide unions with a permanent and central role in national and European decision making on developing education policies in the framework of social dialogue and collective bargaining at national and European level.

Built on these pillars: a) education as a human right and a public good; b) quality education as key to knowledge creation and innovation; c) quality teaching based on high quality and innovative teacher

³ OECD, Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), <http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/>.



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education including the improved pedagogic use of ICT and d) teacher unions as equal partners in national and European decision making on developing education policies, the ETUCE Secretariat wishes to give the floor to its member organisations to discuss the future of the teaching profession. As well as critically analysing future challenges and possible shortcomings of the teaching profession, the aim of the debate is to delineate the teacher unions' vision of the future of the teaching profession and to identify potential concrete approaches for addressing future challenges to guarantee the successful translation of this vision into practice. The specific topics covered in the debate range from privatisation in education – *Funding and Public & Private Partnerships in Education*, to *Innovation in Education* to *Social Inequalities and the Teaching Profession*.

2. Funding and Public & Private Partnerships In Education

The first question for the debate on the future of the teaching profession concerns the growing trend in education away from public funding to privately funded partnerships. Is it indeed true that the only way forward to ensure tomorrow's education is to replace publicly funded education by public and private partnerships? Some of the forthcoming challenges for the teaching profession that a growing number of governments aim to address through this shift to private education funding are highlighted in the reports of the [2012 PISA](#) (Programme for International Student Assessment) and [2013 PIAAC](#) (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) studies.

Challenge 1: Growing teacher shortage and decreasing attractiveness of the profession

Based on the evidence that highly qualified teachers are the key to successful education systems and that teacher shortage harms the disciplinary climate⁴, the PISA report indicates the need to raise the attractiveness of the teaching profession in the future as a necessary step to achieve a positive learning climate for children from all socio-economic backgrounds. The golden solution to these drawbacks seems simple. It might make the hearts of some unionists skip while education employers hold their breath and prepare for counter arguments: increase the salaries of education staff to make the profession more attractive and to retain more teachers. Not so. The PISA report explains that paying teachers well is only part of the equation and that higher salaries can, indeed, help school systems to attract the best candidates to the teaching profession. Other practices can also entail establishing policies to improve the quality of education staff by adding to the requirements to earn a teaching licence, providing incentives for high-achieving students to enter the profession, or by offering incentives for teachers to engage in continuing professional development programmes. On the whole, it is obvious that additional demands for teachers to reach a certain level of digital skills and to perform even more tasks than at present may arise.

⁴ UNESCO: "A Teacher for Every Child: Projecting Global Teacher Needs from 2015 to 2030." (October 2013), <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs27-2013-teachers-projections.pdf>.



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Challenge 2: Allocating resources fairly

In its [10 key messages “What is needed for quality education in Europe”](#) ETUCE claims: “The optimal allocation of resources as an investment into Europe’s future is in the interest of the economy and society in Europe” and therefore demands that high quality education is given to every child, regardless of the parents’ wealth or background. Fairness in resource allocation is not only important for equity in education, it also relates to the performance of the school system as a whole. The Eurydice report [Funding of Education in Europe 2000-2012: The impact of the economic crisis](#) (2013) reveals that between 2000 and 2009 spending on financial support for students has increased steadily, “however from 2010 onwards, support schemes for pupils and students are subject to increasing restrictions in education budgets”. The PISA analysis shows that the socio-economic disparity between students who have attended pre-primary education and those who have not, widens over time. Interestingly, high-performing school systems tend to allocate resources more equitably across socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged schools. The real question here concerns the impact of privatisation of education on the fair allocation of resources⁵. If the gap between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged pupils and students is already widening, does the solution really lie in public education funding or can privatisation and commercialisation of education tools and material reduce the costs to make education accessible to all?

Challenge 3: Globalisation – Adapting to an ever-faster changing work environment

Innovation and technology are drivers for the globalisation of markets because they increase the reach and speed of communication and help to reduce production costs. As the [OECD](#) puts it, “globalisation has had a strong impact on job opportunities and the demand for skills in local labour markets. On balance, trade can play an important role in creating better jobs, increasing wages in both rich and poor countries, and improving working conditions”. However, globalisation also leads to the outsourcing of production. Low-skilled jobs are increasingly being relocated from high wage/ high cost locations to low wage/low cost locations in less developed countries. Competitive pressures and technological change mean that the modern workplace is constantly changing. Work is regularly re-organised either to support the introduction of technology or to reduce costs or improve productivity. Restructuring of work contributes to a changing demand for skills. The teaching profession therefore needs to prepare pupils and students for this ever-faster changing work environment to enable them to rapidly adapt to new structures and quickly develop new skills and maintain their acquired skills. This entails a closer link between the worlds of education and employment, between universities and business, vocational education and training and companies but also tackling youth unemployment and, in particular, overcoming the challenges related to school-to-work transitions. Linked to this is the rising skill mismatch where workers with low levels of skills are employed in jobs that require relatively high levels of skills (underskilling); or where highly qualified workers underuse their skills (overskilling). To achieve positive effects on growth and employment the OECD recommends the development of skills-related policies that complement more open trade policies. This recommendation results not at least from the point of view that in a more competitive environment, Europe can no longer afford the 'luxury' of strong welfare measures.

⁵ ETUCE Resolution on Privatisation and Educational Inequality: <http://www.csee-etu.org/images/attachments/ResolutiononPrivatisationandEducationallInequalityEN.pdf>

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The EU must cut spending on social protection and ease regulation for business if it is to compete with developing economies like China and India. Yet from the trade union point of view, does the answer not also lie in Social Europe⁶ that offers a framework for helping people to come to terms with change and its consequences⁷?

Challenge 4: The impact of the economic crisis and austerity policies

The shockwave of the economic crisis in 2008 affected countries worldwide, hitting particularly badly the economies of some European countries. As public finances in Europe are under enormous pressure, governments are seeking ways to reduce budget deficits and manage public debt without restricting sustainable growth. Indeed, the report *Education and Training in Europe 2020: Responses from the EU Member States* (2013) from Eurydice compares the efforts made by EU member states to fulfil the Europe 2020 targets in the field of education and training, which are relevant for the follow up of the European Semester. Yet the education sector is not immune to austerity measures⁸, particularly in countries where the need for short-term fiscal consolidation is greatest⁹. As the Eurydice report on Funding in Education in Europe 2000 – 2012 shows, in 2011 and/or 2012, cuts in education budgets were made in twenty countries/regions in Europe. Furthermore, the economic crisis is revealed as one of the main reasons for the merger and closure of educational institutions. A quarter of the countries have cut back or postponed renovations and reduced maintenance on education buildings as a consequence of the crisis and last but not least the funding of ICT was also affected by the cuts in education expenditure.

In the *Resolution on the Financial and Economic Crisis*, adopted by the ETUCE Conference in Budapest in 2012, the ETUCE member organisations reassert that this crisis originates primarily in the private sector, and that it is immoral and ineffective to seek solutions that imply cutting investment in public services and infrastructure. The resolution clearly rejects austerity measures as a viable path towards sustainable economic growth in Europe and calls for the adoption of a Europe-wide financial transaction tax. In line with the EI Resolution *Trade union action against neoliberal policies and austerity plans in Europe*, ETUCE defends the added value of equal access to all levels of free public education while supporting national social dialogue structures, trade union rights, social cohesion, and solidarity among generations.

However, it seems as though, with austerity policies determined by political ideologies and neoliberal tendencies, public provision of education (free of charge and available to all) and thus the teaching profession, have to give way in future to increasing privatisation of potentially profitable education services. It seems further, that European governments by and large consider public funding of education and European funds for educational infrastructures and personnel in education and training not as a means to exit the crisis and as an investment in the future of Europe, but as a financial burden.

⁶ See also chapter 4 of this background document.

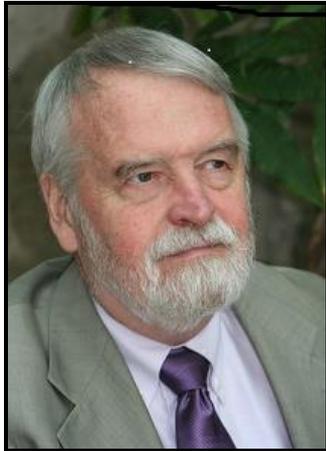
⁷ ETUC position on the European Social Model, <http://www.etuc.org/european-social-model>.

⁸ OECD: *Education at a Glance 2014*, <http://www.oecd.org/edu/Education-at-a-Glance-2014.pdf>.

⁹ Friedrich Ebert Foundation: Euro Crisis, Austerity Policy and the European Social Model. How Crisis Policies in Southern Europe Threaten the EU's Social Dimension <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/09656.pdf>.

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Addressing these challenges that lie ahead for future education systems in Europe amongst others is the first keynote speaker, distinguished Mr. John Mac Beath, Emeritus Professor from the Faculty of Education, Cambridge University, UK.

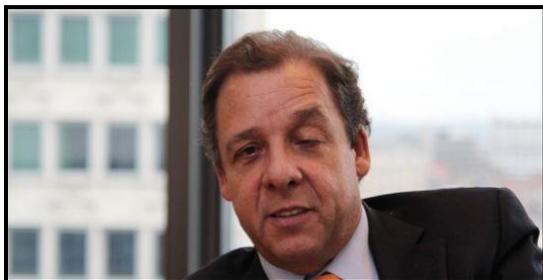


John MacBeath is Professor Emeritus at the University of Cambridge where he held the Chair of Educational Leadership from 2000 to 2010. Prior to that he was Director of the Quality in Education Centre at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. From 1997 to 2001 he was a member of the Tony Blair Government Task Force on Standards and from 1997 to 1999 a member of the Scottish Government Action Group on Standards. Other consultancies have included OECD, UNESCO and ILO, Education International, the Bertelsmann Foundation and the European Commission on a school self-evaluation, and a member of a EU working party on European indicators. He has been working as consultant to the Education Bureau in Hong Kong since 1997. He served as President of the International Congress on School Effectiveness and Improvement from 2007-2009.

He is Projects Director for the Commonwealth Centre for Education and is currently President of the International Professional Development Association. He was appointed Officer of the British Empire (OBE) for services to education in 1997 and awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Edinburgh in 2009.

Amongst his recent books are MacBeath, J. (2014) *Education and Schooling: myth, heresy and misconception*, London, Routledge and MacBeath, J. (2012) *The Future of the Teaching Profession*, Brussels, Education International.

We are also particularly honoured to welcome Mr Xavier Prats-Monné, Director-General of the Directorate General Education and Culture from the European Commission who is interested in exploring the view of the European Commission on the Future of the Teaching Profession with the high-level teacher union representatives of the ETUCE Special Conference.



Xavier Prats Monné is the Director-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission. Since 2011, as Deputy Director-General, he has been responsible for EU policies in the field of education and training and for the EU education programmes for the 2014-2020 period, including *Erasmus+* and *Marie Skłodowska Curie*.

Since August 2014, as Director-General, he is also responsible for EU policies in the field of culture, youth and sports, and for the *Creative Europe* programme. He represents the European Commission on the Governing Board of the *European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)*.

We look forward to a stimulating plenary discussion on forthcoming challenges for the teaching profession as regards the trend in funding and public & private partnerships to ensure tomorrow's education.

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3. Innovation in Education – Open Education and the Teaching Profession in 2030 – New Roles in Teaching?

The second question for the plenary discussion regards what education and the teaching profession are going to look like in future. Ultimately the debate is about the role teacher unions play in a changing education world and how teacher unions wish to position themselves in relation to the fast-advancing and demanding education change. This session is about how innovation and new information and communication technology change education and what impact ICT has got on teaching, teaching professionals, their work environment and their representatives. Scenarios like the [classroom in 2025](#) suggest that the role of schools and teachers is going to change to become more social network oriented, some show that a teacher's role is changing from the transferor of knowledge to that of a guide for students on where to find reliable study material. Some teachers even fear that technology is going to make teaching staff redundant to some extent in the future.

In the European Union, the European Commission is fervently promoting the use of ICT in education in Europe and has outlined its policy in its [Communication](#) on [Opening Up Education](#). In its statement on this communication, ETUCE has revealed an extensive overview of unresolved challenges that the European Commission, national and regional education authorities, education staff, teacher unions and other stakeholders in education and technology need to consider and address when implementing pedagogic use of ICT in education and training. Some of these are addressed here:

Challenge 5: Further increasing access to computers, ICT and the internet

There is no doubt that access to, and use of, computers both at home and at work is now widespread in OECD countries¹⁰ (PIACC)¹¹. Between 1999 and 2009, the number of internet subscriptions in OECD countries nearly tripled, and the number of mobile phone subscriptions more than tripled. In over two-thirds of OECD countries, over 70% of households have access to computers and the Internet in their homes. Internet access is also pervasive in the workplace. In most OECD countries, workers in over 95% of large businesses and those in over 85% of medium-sized businesses have access to and use the internet as part of their jobs, and workers in at least 65% of small businesses connect to the Internet for work. This proves that digital skills are a prerequisite for many employments, yet improving digital competences in adult learning and lifelong learning still do not receive sufficient attention¹². What is more, these trends are not appropriately reflected in the education sector. Recent surveys¹³ show, the number of computers per student in secondary schools is growing and laptops and whiteboards are more frequently provided, however, wide variations between countries still persist. There are also wide variations in the degree of use of the ICT equipment in education institutions in Europe. Moreover, there is an increasing discrepancy between the level of computer provision in schools and the frequency of use of ICT by students. Teacher unions, therefore, should

¹⁰ EAEA Analysis paper PIAAC - OECD Survey of Adult Skills: A Wake-up Call For Europe!, http://www.eaea.org/media/policy-advocacy/piaac/piaac-analysis_wakeup-call-for-europe.pdf?utm_source=EAEA+Newsletter&utm_campaign=76a89cc1d4-EAEA_Newsletter_1_20143_13_2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5edd03a69d-76a89cc1d4-55234913.

¹¹ The European Schoolnet has carried out a survey of schools ICT in education, including various country profiles, <http://www.eun.org/observatory/surveyofschools>.

¹² Overview and Analysis of Practices with Open Educational Resources in Adult Education in Europe, <http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pub.cfm?id=6744>.

¹³ Survey of Schools: ICT in Education, Benchmarking Access, Use and attitudes to Technology in Europe's Schools, http://www.eun.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=9be81a75-c868-4558-a777-862ecc8162a4&groupid=43887.

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ask themselves how to strengthen their leverage to increase access to computers¹⁴, ICTs and the internet in education institutions for staff and students in order to better mainstream ICT-enabled innovation in learning¹⁵.

Challenge 6: ICTs are changing the way services are provided and consumed

Computers and ICTs are changing the ways in which public and other services are provided and consumed. Familiarity with and use of ICTs has become almost a prerequisite for accessing basic public services and exercising the rights and duties of citizenship. Many governments are delivering public services, including taxation and health and other welfare services, via the Internet and this trend is likely to continue. The proportion of citizens and businesses using the Internet to interact with public authorities grew rapidly in many OECD countries between 2005 and 2010: an average of 40% of citizens and 80% of businesses in OECD countries interacted with public authorities via the Internet in 2010¹⁶. This proves to be a huge challenge for the education sector as the use of ICT in education is only in its infancy: it is mainly used for purely administrative purposes in education institutions and to a lesser extent by staff for class organisation and much less still for pedagogic uses and the preparation of students for the responsibilities of modern democratic citizenship. The question is, are education institutions best advised to ignore or exclude the rapid development of modern technology from pedagogy and to continue teaching in a well-established teaching fashion?

Challenge 7: Promoting open education and digital applications as a means of adding value to teaching and learning

In the recommendations from the project [ELFE 2](#) (eLearning Forum for Education), ETUCE stresses how important it is that each education institution has its vision for the pedagogical use of ICT and how to promote 21st century skills, the [key competences for lifelong learning](#). Along the same line of argument, ETUCE supports in its statement on *Opening Up Education* that innovation in education and training by use of digital technologies can broaden access to education and can contribute to solving the serious issue of increasing unemployment resulting from the current economic recession across the EU. Yet, ETUCE also points out that with web-related industry generating more economic growth than any other part of the European economy, education in connection with digital competences is mostly approached from an economic perspective¹⁷ ¹⁸and considered less as a human right and a necessary prerequisite for lifelong learning. This is also clear in the 2014 report from the European Joint Research Centre: [Mapping and analysing prospective technologies for learning. Results from a consultation with European stakeholders and roadmaps for policy action](#), which provides a European perspective on technologies for learning across three learning domains:

¹⁴ See also ICT in Schools, by Evaluation Support and Research Unit of the Inspectorate, Department of Education and Science, Dublin <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/ICT-in-Schools-Inspectorate-Evaluation-Studies.pdf>.

¹⁵ Mainstreaming ICT enabled Innovation in Education and Training in Europe: Policy actions for sustainability, scalability and impact at system level, <http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pub.cfm?id=6361>.

ICT-enabled innovation for learning in Europe and Asia: Exploring conditions for sustainability, scalability and impact at system level, <http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pub.cfm?id=6362>.

¹⁶ OECD, Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), <http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/>.

¹⁷ Network to foster web talent through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs): http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-335_en.htm.

¹⁸ The European Commission initiative of the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs under the Digital Agenda of the European Union: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/grand-coalition-digital-jobs-0>.

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formal education and training; workplace and work-related learning; re-skilling and up-skilling strategies for workers. It reads like a market study on the current and potential use of technologies in education and leads to strategies and actions for the effective deployment of technologies in learning. These focus in particular on better linking formal education with the outside, after-school world.

Should the role of teacher unions therefore not be to develop ways to accentuate the profound value of innovation and ICT in education and show how crucial they are for students, education staff and citizens in general because they touch upon every aspect of their lives?

Challenge 8: Learning and Teaching independently of space and time – open education resources

The trend for open education resources, especially Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) shows that there is a huge draw for people to learn and study anything anytime and without space restrictions. Students can download their course work and study without having to be physically present in an education building¹⁹. This has multiple impacts on both learning and teaching, such as on validation and assessment of studies, education quality, availability of teaching staff, high individualisation of studies as regards the choice of subjects, topics and learning amount, cost of education, education providers, change in the teacher role, etc.

Notwithstanding, MOOCs seem to swamp the internet and the overwhelming uptake of MOOCs, there are also first signs of a high drop-out rate of students from MOOCs which could lead to a reversal of the current trend. Moreover, open education resources also clearly stand for a new age of education and this again is linked to the previous chapter discussing privatisation of education. Education becomes a business model and as the Joint Research Centre states these new business models lack sustainability and at least in higher education are “still mainly dependent on institutional, philanthropic or governmental/public funding”²⁰.

Teacher unions need to carefully evaluate this trend to find out the real advantages and disadvantages of technology assisted teaching. In particular as initial steps in the form of pilot projects are being taken at primary, secondary and VET schools to apply this business education model to other education sectors. Although one can argue that social participation is essential for the successful development of ICT initiatives in education, the active involvement of the private sector and local communities has to be seen as critical. Teacher unions need to remain vigilant as regards the academic freedom of education staff, especially, in light of the growing concern about the de-professionalisation of the teaching profession, and the increasing influence of commercial companies dictating curricula, through ICT and other internet applications in education.

Mrs Dr. Riina Vuorikari, Research fellow at the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, DG Joint Research Centre from the European Commission gives us a fascinating insight and impressive preview of what open education and the teaching profession are going to look like in 2030. We look

¹⁹ Learning without Schools: A Contrarian Future", interview with Nicholas Negroponte, the founder of the MIT Media Lab and One Laptop per Child, The Futurist, March-April 2014, <http://www.wfs.org/futurist/2014-issues-futurist/march-april-2014-vol-48-no-2/learning-without-schools-contrarian-future>.

²⁰ Joint Research Centre, Mapping and analysing prospective technologies for learning. Results from a consultation with European stakeholders and roadmaps for policy action; <http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC88469.pdf>.

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forward to a futuristic debate on the challenges for the future of the teaching profession and the questions of whether new roles in teaching have to be adopted following innovation in education.



Dr. Riina Vuorikari joined the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in Seville in July 2013 where she contributes to research and policy support in the field of "ICT for Learning and Skilling". Her current work focuses on Open Education, Digital Competence and Science 2.0. Since 1999, she has worked as a Project Manager, Research Analyst and Researcher in Europe, where her main interest is dealing with issues related to the adoption of new technologies in education.

Dr. Vuorikari has degrees in education (M.Ed in 1998 in Finland) and hypermedia (DEA in 1999 in France). Her PhD, which was completed in 2009, is from the Dutch research school for Information and Knowledge Systems. She continues serving on the programme committees for conferences and for various workshops. She has also been invited to speak at events in the field of education and to be a reviewer for research journals.

4. The European Social Model under Strain - Social Inequalities and the Teaching Profession The Economic Crisis and Social Inequalities – Will the Solution Still Be in Education?

The third session invites the delegates to the ETUCE Special Conference to discuss the growing cleavage of inequalities in society and in education due to persistent social disadvantages. What is the teacher union response to combat in future the impact of social inequalities? Education has always been considered *the* solution to level out or remedy social injustice and disadvantages, and as such, the best solution to promote economic growth. The question here is, in times when globalisation is the driver of harsh competitive markets and when countries are struggling to fend off the impact of the economic and financial crisis, will education systems and the teaching profession continue to have enough leverage to provide quality education and lifelong learning as pre-requisites for economic growth?

Some of the major challenges teacher unions need to be prepared for are highlighted in the following.

Since the creation of the European Social Model in the wake of the Second World War, the European Union has brought peace and economic and social progress. With its 28 Member States it is a unique system for decision-making and cooperation. Fundamental social objectives, such as the promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions, proper social protection, social dialogue, the development of the workforce for sustainable high employment and fighting off exclusion are laid down in the [Treaty establishing the European Community](#). The [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) contains chapters on freedoms, equality and solidarity, articulating rights to fair and just working conditions, social security and social assistance, equality between men and women, and trade union rights such as collective bargaining and strike action, among others. The central principles are

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solidarity and cohesion: economic growth must serve to boost overall social wellbeing, and not disadvantage any part of society²¹.

Challenge 9 Maintaining and Promoting Social Dialogue Structures

Founding on the principle that high social standards are beneficial for economic performance, it is clear that social dialogue boosts innovation and economic growth because it improves workers' morale and gives employees more control over the tasks they perform. Thus dialogue between social partners, information and consultation between management and workforce are important aspects of the European Social Model. Workers' rights help to create a skilled and innovative workforce. However, as the ILO describes in its statement [Why the European Social Model is still relevant](#), the fiscal consolidation policies of the financial and economic crisis have led to significant changes. In many countries, labour market reforms accelerated, increasing flexibility and reducing job security. Pension reforms limit spending growth in pension systems and relative pension levels are expected to fall dramatically in future. Cutbacks in public expenditure have affected the quality and scope of public services in many places. Governments have chosen to further implement the "liberalisation of the European Social Model"²² with the result that although effective collective bargaining and social dialogue have been proven to be strong assets to mitigate and overcome the crisis, the measures taken in several countries have negatively affected these institutions²³. In addition, the effectiveness of policies in some countries that aimed to increase competitiveness by cutting labour costs are indeed questionable²⁴. Particularly in the so-called deficit countries²⁵ significant alterations to collective bargaining coverage and scope are apparent. In the resolution on Shaping the Future of the Teaching Profession, ETUCE therefore supports that "all teachers receive equal pay for work of equal value, receive rewarding salaries and pension schemes, and appropriate, healthy and safe working conditions, equivalent to standards in other professions requiring a similar level of qualifications".

Experts warn about the policy disaster for European social democracy and the trade unions in the public sector, if the path of economic austerity, despite opposition, is maintained until 2014/2015 and later bring a new upswing. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung even goes as far as to state that trade union protests against austerity policies lack force and have little prospect of success. The trade unions in Europe have been unable to do much to counteract the shift in the balance of power in favour of capital owners and those in the upper income and wealth brackets. Thus teacher unions in Europe urgently need to reflect on which activities they are committed to undertake in support of the call for the sustainable future of the teaching profession and education staff and the promotion of social dialogue albeit that employees in Europe have been affected asynchronously and unevenly: the south and the east have been harder hit than the north and the west.

²¹ ETUC position : <http://www.etuc.org/european-social-model>.

²² Friedrich Ebert Foundation: Euro Crisis, Austerity Policy and the European Social Model. How Crisis Policies in Southern Europe Threaten the EU's Social Dimension <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/09656.pdf>.

²³ Executive summary of the ILO conference: The European social model in times of economic crisis and austerity policies: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-brussels/documents/publication/wcms_236720.pdf.

²⁴ The European Social Model in times of economic crisis and austerity policies, ILO:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-brussels/documents/publication/wcms_236720.pdf.

²⁵ Restriction of the right to strike, extension mechanisms for collective bargaining were reduced, abolishment of national collective bargaining and agreements.

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Challenge 10 Minimising Digital Inequalities and supporting an inclusive information society

The challenge of competitiveness in Europe, in particular in southern Europe, is not least related to closing technological gaps. In fact, combating digital inequalities is of concern to the whole of Europe. There is evidence of a polarisation between those countries that manage to promote an inclusive information society and those who do not. In addition to the economic, social and organisational disparities, Europe struggles with the severe drawback of digital divide. This divide is defined as the *'gap between individuals, households, businesses, and geographical areas at different socioeconomic levels with regard both to their opportunities to access ICTs and their use of the Internet for a wide variety of activities'*²⁶. Research shows that the former comparatively even distribution of inequality levels has been shifting towards more equality and an aggravation of social determination of ICT usage in the member states lagging behind²⁷. Addressing the digital divide requires a multi-faceted approach as it mirrors society's inequalities. It includes such areas as: network infrastructure, ICT cost, education, income, age, gender, and use of ICT, government support regarding the promotion of technology use (through investment and funding), accessibility, language, location, and ethnicity. Studies show clearly that the higher the **level of education**, the more likely it is for a person to have access to and use ICTs. Another factor is **income**, as it illustrates the extent to which a user can afford the cost of Internet access. **Age** of the potential ICT users has a considerable impact on accessing and using ICTs. In general, Internet access and PC use tend to be three times higher for younger people (16 to 24 year olds) than for older people (55 to 74 year olds). These issues should be addressed when adopting ICT policies be it at national or education institution level, to avoid existing inequalities being worsened. It shows that next to further developing the network infrastructure, Europe needs to invest heavily in more effective and efficient education and training systems. Sound in-service and pre-service teacher education and training programmes should accompany ICT initiatives in education institutions. Education staff need to become comfortable with the technology and supported in the use of new applications in order to use ICT appropriately. ICT provides students with different learning abilities and backgrounds the opportunity to follow individualised educational programmes that cater for their specific needs.

It is clear though that education cannot solve the problems of social inequalities by itself. It is also evident that without equal access and quality learning for all, existing gaps will surely deepen. Educational reform has acquired a fresh impetus from the possibilities that ICT and the knowledge society bring to the cause of learning, equality and social transformation²⁸. New technologies constitute an extremely powerful tool to widen access and match the growing social demand for more diverse and pertinent education throughout life²⁹. Europe needs to concentrate on further promoting a high-skill, knowledge-based economy. This can be only achieved by investing in research and innovation, creating more high-quality jobs, and ensuring that workers have the skills to fill

²⁶ E. Stiakakis, P. Kariotellis, M. Vlachopoulou, From the Digital Divide to Digital Inequality: A Secondary Research in the European Union, http://www.researchgate.net/publication/220850389_From_the_Digital_Divide_to_Digital_Inequality_A_Secondary_Research_in_the_European_Union/file/d912f50bf664f9f839.pdf.

²⁷ The Digital Divide Index – A Measure of Social Inequalities in the Adoption of ICT, <http://www.ifiptc8.org/asp/aspecis/20020042.pdf>.

²⁸ K. Facer, (2011). *Learning Futures: Education, Technology and Social Change*. London: Routledge.

²⁹ Different Educational Inequalities: ICT an Option to close the Gaps by Guillermo Kelley-Salinas <http://www.oecd.org/site/schoolingfortomorrowknowledgebase/themes/ict/41284104.pdf>

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them. Back in 2002, the European social partners agreed on a framework of actions for developing lifelong learning. With a view to continuing this momentum and in order for the teaching profession to help to narrow the digital gap and to counteract digital inequalities in future, how do teacher unions in Europe envisage to contributing to the provision of educational opportunities made available through ICT as a powerful means of overcoming social inequalities?

Challenge 11 Reducing social inequalities through education notwithstanding the economic crisis

With governments seeking to reduce debts, public expenditure has been cut in all areas, without giving much consideration to the objectives of most countries before the crisis, i.e. to ensure regional and social cohesion. Growing unemployment and social problems have led again to increased nationalism, social exclusion, gender stereotyping³⁰ and the stigmatisation of some groups³¹, such as the Roma. Poverty and exclusion rates have soared alarmingly and extended to a larger share of the middle class³². Government policies to boost employment rates have shown little effect and achievements in youth employment are overall disappointing. General cuts in education and social policy are not alleviating this long-term trend and the more general problem of the increased proportion of low paid and working poor gives rise to more vulnerability among those in employment. The EU Social Protection Performance Monitor states that the social situation in the European Union is not improving while in some countries the situation is even worsening³³.

PIAAC data shows that immigrants with a foreign-language background have significantly lower proficiency in literacy and numeracy than native-born adults. The problem is aggravated for foreign-language immigrants who come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. When low educational attainment is combined with poor proficiency in the language of the host country, integration into the society becomes difficult³⁴. Another consequence of socioeconomic inequalities and demographic differences, such as age or gender, is that they are often accompanied by unequal exposure to environmental risk factors³⁵. Socioeconomic inequalities therefore lead to health inequities and most often put disadvantaged groups at significantly higher risk to environmental health effects³⁶.

In the education context, latest research reports of recent mergers and school closures, reduction of budgets for educational infrastructure and for specific programmes of educational support and downward trends in funding and changes to national policies for the financial support of students are

³⁰ ETUCE Guidelines on Gender Stereotypes:

http://etuce.homestead.com/Policies/Guidelines_on_how_to_mitigate_gender_stereotypes_segregation_rev.pdf and ETUCE Gender Action Plan: http://etuce.homestead.com/Policies/ETUCE_action_plan_gender_equality_EN_final.pdf.

³¹ EI Gender Equality Action Plan: http://www.ei-ie.org/en/websections/content_detail/6896.

³² The European Social Model in times of economic crisis and austerity policies, ILO:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-brussels/documents/publication/wcms_236720.pdf.

³³ Report from the Social Protection Committee (SPC): Social Europe – Many ways, one objective - Report of the Social Protection Committee (2013) <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7695&type=2&furtherPubs=yes>.

³⁴ OECD, PIAAC, <http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/surveyofadultskills.htm>.

³⁵ EI Resolution on Social Protection Education: <http://pages.ei-ie.org/library/libraries/detail/161>.

³⁶ WHO, *Social inequalities in environment and health*, <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/pages/social-inequalities-in-environment-and-health>

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emerging³⁷. This is happening despite the knowledge that the budget allocated to such support is one of the key elements in ensuring high levels of participation in education, especially for disadvantaged groups of students³⁸. Children enter education from different backgrounds, have different experiences of education, and leave with very different results. Children from the poorest and most disadvantaged homes are most likely to attend the lowest performing schools and to achieve the poorest academic outcomes. Education institutions are faced with the challenge of finding ways of breaking the chain of disadvantage, educational failure and restricted life chances³⁹.

It is clear that policies should focus on making sure that improving the social situation across Europe becomes a widely shared priority. Structural reforms need to take into account social and employment concerns. Reforms should be impact-assessed and sequenced to minimise adverse effects. Where reforms entail trade-offs, those at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion should not bear the burden of economic adjustment. European leaders need to invest in policies designed to reduce the effect of inequality, even though these take many years to show positive results. They need to overcome their reluctance about such reforms because results are seldom evident within electoral cycles or because redistribution to counteract the effects of poverty is not popular with voters. Progressive investments in health, education and family support services for children and families should go hand in hand. The World Health Organisation clearly signals a need to ensure that investment in younger children is given an appropriately high priority⁴⁰. Yet, although a recovery is now claimed, the legacy of the crisis in social and budgetary terms, the risk of persistent low economic growth for several years, and the challenge of ageing populations, makes the pursuit of economic progress and social cohesion even more challenging⁴¹.

The question is which role teacher unions wish to play in this policy field in future. How can the teaching profession contribute to ensure quality education for all in the future? Can teacher unions and the teaching profession in general narrow the gap of social inequalities? The role of teacher unions must be surely more than picking up the broken shards of glass and supporting the recovery from the crisis by smoothing out the path for economic recovery.

Mrs Susan Lee Robertson, Professor of Sociology of Education from the Graduate School of Education at Bristol University will set the framework for an animated debate in the third session with an intriguing presentation where she not only reveals the link between the economic crisis and social inequalities but also examines whether education still provides the solution for economic growth in future as has been the credo of European governments and the belief behind education systems in the past centuries. Professor Lee Robertson's presentation prepares the grounds for the discussions in working groups and the following plenary debate on the future of the teaching profession,

³⁷ *Funding of Education in Europe 2000-2012: The impact of the economic crisis* (2013):

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/147EN.pdf.

³⁸ UNESCO: Teaching and Learning : Achieving Education for All, http://unesco.nl/sites/default/files/dossier/gmr_2013-4.pdf?download=1.

³⁹ K. Kerr and M. West: Social inequality: Can schools narrow the gap?, <http://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Insight2-web.pdf>.

⁴⁰ *Early years, family and education task group: report* Resolution on Social Inequalities,

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/early-years,-family-and-education-task-group-report>.

⁴¹ F. Vandenbroucke and B. Vanhercke: 'A European Social Union: 10 tough nuts to crack', Friends of Europe,

http://www.friendsofeurope.org/Portals/13/Events/WorkingGroups/Social_Europe/03_03_14_Report_SocialUnion_FINAL_V.pdf.

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focusing in particular on the European social model and the strain social inequalities are going to exert on the teaching profession. We look forward to a profoundly interesting and lively debate.



Susan Lee Robertson is Professor for Sociology of Education at the University of Bristol, UK and the Director of the Centre for Globalisation, Education and Societies. Susan graduated with a Degree in Applied Science from Curtin University, Western Australia (Distinction) and an Honours Degree in Sociology and Politics of Education from the University of Western Australia in 1977. Following a brief period teaching in secondary schools, Susan

took up a post in the Research Division of the Department of Education, Western Australia, where she was engaged in policy work. In the early 1980s she moved to a teaching post in the university sector specializing in the sociology of education. Following completing her PhD in Canada in 1990, Susan has subsequently held posts in New Zealand, and most recently in the University of Bristol in the UK.

Susan's research activities have been shaped by a long-standing interest in policy formation and implementation, in global and regional processes, and in labour issues. She has been deeply involved in tracking governance shifts in education – particularly those associated with the privatising of education, and has been active in many circles arguing for a more informed engagement by policymakers as to the social justice outcomes of these developments.

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5. Open Questions

1. One of the means to raise the attractiveness of the teaching profession is to offer attractive salaries and working conditions in the teaching profession. Apart from negotiating salaries, how can teacher unions contribute to making teaching a more attractive profession?
2. If the gap between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged pupils and students is already widening, does the solution really lie in public education funding or can privatisation and commercialisation of education tools and material reduce the costs and so make education accessible to all?
3. It seems as though, with austerity policies determined by political ideologies and neoliberal tendencies, public provision of education (free of charge and available to all) has to give way to increasing privatisation of potentially profitable education services. Are there concrete alternative approaches that teacher unions can entice governments to embark on?
4. How can teacher unions contribute to adapting the teaching profession to make it viable for the preparation of pupils and students for the future demands of the labour market in the long-term?
5. In light of recommendations from international organisations like the OECD to develop skills-related policies that complement more open trade policies, does the teacher union answer to globalisation with the aim of bringing about positive effects on growth and employment lie exclusively in Social Europe as means of offering a framework for helping people to come to terms with change and its consequences?
6. Innovation and the use of ICT in education are an inexorable trend and education institutions cannot ignore or exclude the rapid development of modern technology from pedagogy. Should teacher unions therefore not embrace this development and discuss the advantages and dangers of it for education staff and the quality in education?
7. How can teacher unions intensify their leverage to further increase access to computers and ICTs in education institutions to staff and students?
8. Back in 2002, the European social partners agreed on a framework of actions for developing lifelong learning. With a view to continuing this momentum and in order for the teaching profession to help to narrow the digital gap and to counteract on digital inequalities in future, how do teacher unions in Europe envisage to contributing to the provision of educational opportunities made available through ICT as a powerful means of overcoming social inequalities?
9. Which activities are teacher unions committed to undertake in support of the call for the sustainable future of the teaching profession and education staff and the promotion of social dialogue despite the fact that employees in the EU member states have been affected asynchronously and unevenly: the south and the east having been harder hit than the north and the west?



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10. Although a recovery is now claimed, the legacy of the crisis in social and budgetary terms, the risk of persistent low economic growth for several years, and the challenge of ageing populations, makes the pursuit of economic progress and social cohesion even more challenging⁴². The role of teacher unions in the policy field of social cohesion and social equality must surely be more than picking up the broken shards of glass and supporting the recovery from the crisis by smoothing out the path for economic recovery. How can the teaching profession contribute to ensuring quality education for all in the future? Can teacher unions and the teaching profession in general narrow the gap of social inequalities?

⁴² F. Vandenbroucke and B. Vanhercke: 'A European Social Union: 10 tough nuts to crack', Friends of Europe,
http://www.friendsofeurope.org/Portals/13/Events/WorkingGroups/Social_Europe/03_03_14_Report_SocialUnion_FINAL_V.pdf



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Notes



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