

## Effective social dialogue and collegial governance on higher education and research needs more improvement

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**Recently published survey report identifies the state of play of social dialogue and collegial governance in higher education and research.**

ETUCE lately surveyed 30 member unions representing higher education and research staff and members of ETUCE's Higher Education and Research Standing Committee (HERSC) on social dialogue and collegial governance practices in the higher education and research (HER) sector. The 30 responding unions from 23 EU countries and 4 non-EU countries represent more than 555,900 employees. These survey results draw a picture of the most used social dialogue practices in the respondents' countries as well as the level of satisfaction at different levels (national, regional, local and institutional).

Here are some highlights of the results:

- All responding unions are **recognised social partners** in their countries and mostly have established social dialogue negotiations or consultation **three times a year** (87%) **and more often** (83%). 90% of the respondents conduct collective bargaining.
- The **national and institutional levels** are mostly used for involvement in social dialogue.
- 90% of the unions reported that their most important social partner are the national **ministries of education and research**. Various other organisations are also involved in social dialogue, such as ministries of finance, education agencies and employers' associations.
- **Collegial governance meetings take place several times a year** (93%, 26 out of 28 unions), most frequently at the institutional level (23 out of these 26 respondents).
- Involvement in collegial governance is mainly established at the **level of higher education and research institutes** and conducted through **committees** taking binding decisions and bodies with **advisory functions**. 50% of the responding unions state that within the governing bodies internal members constitute the majority.
- The most **discussed topics** in social dialogue for higher education and research are: working conditions, human and trade union rights, working time and salaries, whereas the topics of collective bargaining are only working conditions, wages and professional issues of HER employees. Collegial governance mainly focuses on institutional strategies/priorities, curricula development and budget issues.
- According to the responding unions, **satisfaction with social dialogue is higher than with collegial governance**. The cause of many complaints about collegial governance is mostly the lack of democracy and influence of staff at the institutional level.

Although the level of satisfaction concerning social dialogue is quite high and the number of complaints rather limited, satisfaction often depends on the geographical location. The only unions which are fully satisfied with social dialogue on higher education and research are from Sweden. The most unsatisfied unions are the French ones.

Martin Rømer, European director of ETUCE, underlined that *"The report shows that we are still far from an equal level of effective social dialogue with the teacher unions on higher education and research in Europe."* He added: *"Quality education for social and economic growth in Europe will not be achieved if the trade unions' point of view and demands are not taken into account, and if trade unionists are not associated to the decision-making process. Effective social dialogue is a must."*

Read the executive summary [here](#).

Read the full survey report [here](#).



**The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)** represents 131 Teacher Unions and 11 million teachers in all countries of Europe, 4.2 million teachers in the EU, from all levels of the education sector. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at the EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of **Education International**, the global federation of teacher unions.

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