



*Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting Quality Education*

## Resolution

### **Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting Quality Education**

**Adopted by the ETUCE Conference, the Regional Conference of Education International,  
meeting in Belgrade on 6 - 8 December 2016**

Further to and consistent with the Resolutions adopted by the 7th EI Congress in Ottawa in 2015, the Resolutions adopted at the ETUCE Conference in Budapest in 2012 and at the Special Conference in Vienna in 2014, the ETUCE Conference in Belgrade, on 6 - 8 December 2016

#### **Recognises that**

1. EI and ETUCE policies clearly underline the dual role of education trade unions of providing support to teachers both in relation to their terms and conditions of employment and in relation to professional matters, and stress that they are highly competent in both roles. The EI Constitution also stresses the dual role of trade unions working both on improving working conditions and on promoting the professional interests of education personnel;
2. The global economic and financial crisis is a major challenge for trade unions in Europe and threatens social dialogue on working and employment conditions as well as on other issues of professional interest for education personnel;
3. Education trade unions increasingly face reluctance or a lack of will by education authorities and governments to conduct social dialogue on national education reforms, on teachers' working conditions, and on professional needs related to these reforms;
4. As a negative consequence, a growing number of professional associations and non-governmental organisations claim to represent teachers and seem to become the preferred consultative bodies or even social partners of many governments;
5. New trade and investment agreements, including CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union), TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the US and the EU) and TiSA (Trade in Services Agreement), which clearly lack transparency and democracy, pose significant risks to educational policy, public schools and other education institutions, and for teachers, students and communities. The concluded CETA text demonstrates that public services are not protected from the scope of the agreement.



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### **Notes that**

6. ETUCE has been working steadily on influencing European policies to ensure that greater consideration is given to the effective involvement of education social partners in the process of drafting and implementing national education policies through consultation with education trade unions on issues related to their affiliates' work and professional interests;
7. ETUCE has been advocating that education trade unions are the only recognised competent social partners of governments on issues related to education and in particular on teachers' professional needs and interests;
8. Within the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE), ETUCE together with its European social partner has already achieved many substantial and knowledge-based agreements on several education issues, such as joint declarations and recommendations.

### **Acknowledges that**

9. An autonomous, highly qualified and highly valued teaching profession is a prerequisite for providing high quality education for all. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to education trade unions to protect and promote the teaching profession;
10. Cuts in education budgets have seriously undermined the salary, pensions, working conditions and job security of education personnel and resulted in shortages in the teaching profession with severe challenges to recruitment and retention of teachers; These budget cut policies go hand in hand with governments challenging and weakening collective bargaining and trade union freedom, against the principles of conventions 87 and 98 of the ILO. The right to strike, inseparable from trade union freedom is under attack as well. These attacks are unacceptable. Respect of fundamental trade union rights and collective bargaining rights through the full and complete implementation of ILO fundamental working norms is an essential objective of trade union organisations.
11. It is essential that education trade unions are and remain recognised by governments as social partners in a permanent effective social dialogue with a view to contributing constructively to developing quality education systems and providing an independent professional view. Education trade unions should have a permanent and central role in national and European decision-making on developing education policies, especially on pedagogical issues and on curricula. They should also have a formal consultative status in relation to budgetary issues.

### **Asserts the commitment of ETUCE Member Organisations to**

12. Continue to engage in actions aimed at improving social dialogue and collective bargaining at European, national, regional and local level to ensure an increase of public funding for education and teachers' salaries, equal access to and provision of quality education for all learners, and with a view to increasing the status of teachers and improving the image of the teaching profession in society;



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13. Strengthen capacity building of education trade unions through a renewed and innovative strategy on organising education trade unions, strengthening the effective sectoral social dialogue and cooperating with other unions and partner organisations in education;
14. Enhance participation through ETUCE's work on international and especially on European-level political decisions;
15. Recognise the direct impact of European-level policies on national policies on education, teachers' work and professional interests and the financial governance of education budgets;
16. Actively support that the role of education is not only about supplying skilled labour but, even more so, about promoting active citizenship and common democratic values such as freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination;
17. Ensure that unions have the capacity of specialised permanent professional expertise and research on teachers' professional needs and interests within the education trade unions themselves;
18. Provide various means of professional support to education personnel and be a centre for teachers' professional development, e.g. by informing education personnel on training possibilities, providing them with a platform for self-development, networking, high quality induction and continuous professional development throughout their careers;
19. Cooperate and better exploit European and international funds in education for national trade union work on improving teachers' work and professional development;
20. Extend education trade union membership and provide support to a wide range of education personnel including teachers new to the profession, teacher college students, researchers, including early stage researchers, education personnel working in public, private and religious-based education institutions and those who are most in need of support, that is those working in precarious contracts and employment;
21. Provide assistance, recognition and equal membership rights to all teachers, regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, age, belief, religion, and sexual orientation including special needs, minority, migrant and refugee teachers with a view to enhancing diversity;
22. Reinforce the active role of women and youth especially at union leadership and decision-making level and strengthen the role of any other underrepresented groups within the education trade union;
23. Strengthen solidarity among education trade unions and within the whole education trade union movement at regional, national, European and global level through the actions of ETUCE and EI;
24. Support ETUCE to pursue this resolution at European level and enhance an effective and efficient dialogue with the European Union Institutions and Council of Europe.