



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

Resolution

Refugees and Displaced Children

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

The ETUCE Conference

Notes:

1. The impact of the continuing devastation and turmoil of the global refugee crisis on the world's most vulnerable communities, including children and young people;
2. The statistical data compiled by the UNHCR that shows there are in excess of 65 million refugees and forcibly displaced people worldwide and that this represents the highest level of displacement ever recorded;
3. That over half of refugees seeking safety and security are children and young people aged under 18 years of age and that many are travelling unaccompanied, unprotected and separated from their siblings and families;
4. That more than 21 million refugees are registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and of these over half are under 18, many travelling unaccompanied and 3.6 million are school-aged children out of school with no access to education;
5. That half of refugees and internally displaced children are not enrolled in primary school, three-quarters are not enrolled in secondary school and very few have access to pre-primary or tertiary education;
6. That just one per cent of the global humanitarian aid budget is spent on education;
7. That whilst the overwhelming majority of the world's refugee and displaced people are hosted in the Middle East and North Africa, Europe has struggled to cope with the arrival of migrants and refugees crossing into Europe.

Notes with concern:

8. That many child refugees have died trying to cross the Mediterranean in 2015 and 2016;
9. That displaced children are disproportionately at risk of trafficking, forced labor, child marriage, sexual exploitation, violence and recruitment by armed militia;



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10. The failure of of the European Union and of governments to ensure adequate provision of specialist support services to meet the emotional and psychological needs of refugee and displaced children who have experienced distress and trauma;
11. That despite protections enshrined in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that provides for rights to shelter, protection from abuse, access to healthcare, freedom from violence and to high-quality education, many displaced children continue to be denied access to even the most basic levels of education;
12. The failure of the European Union and of European governments to agree a coordinated response to the refugee and migrant crisis, and the disproportionate impact on countries including Greece, Italy, Hungary, Sweden, Austria, Norway, Finland and Germany.

Welcomes:

13. The protections for refugees laid down in international law under the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol that establish a right to safety, access to asylum procedures and basic human rights, including a right to live in dignity and safety;
14. The actions of those governments in Europe that have demonstrated moral leadership in welcoming refugees.
15. Resolutions adopted by the 7th EI World Congress in 2015 on the rights to education of refugee and stateless children, together with relevant policies and statements of commitment made by the ETUCE, including the 2015 Statement on 'Refugees and Education';
16. The actions taken by ETUCE member organisations, together with a number of civil society organisations, in providing practical support and education to refugees, displaced children and migrants;
17. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the international governmental commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals on the right to quality education for refugee and displaced children.

Believes that:

18. Schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions have a critical role to play, working with national and international partners, to deliver practical education assistance to meet the needs of refugee and displaced children;
19. The European trade union movement must continue to play a full part in securing the right to quality education for refugee children and young people, including ensuring access to fully trained and qualified teachers to support this aim.



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Resolves:

20. To place all possible pressure on the governments across Europe to ensure that refugee children are given access to the full range of educational support, mental health support and resources they need to learn, achieve and succeed;
21. To continue to provide practical support and assistance to ETUCE member organisations within and outside the Europe where they are engaged in the provision of education and support programmes for refugee and displaced children;
22. To advocate publicly for the human rights and security of all refugees, including non-discrimination on grounds of sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability and ethnic or national origin.