



Resolution

Education Trade Unions on the Refugee Situation in Europe: Promoting Education as the Key to Integration and Inclusion

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. The global turmoil of recent decades causing crises, conflicts and wars in the Middle East and Africa and the consequences of climate change worldwide have led to millions of individuals fleeing their countries in search of safety, rescue, shelter and prospects of a better life in neighbouring countries and in Europe;
2. The considerable and sudden flow of migrants, refugees, asylum seeking children, young people and adults claiming international protection in Europe has developed into the greatest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the second world war;
3. Education personnel and their unions are key promoters of sustainable integration and inclusion. They challenge extremism in education institutions at all levels and within wider society; yet education personnel and education institutions are left to deal with the newly arriving migrant, refugee and asylum-seeker students without receiving the pedagogical, financial or administrative support and long-term assistance that they require to competently address and cater for the needs of these students;
4. The cuts in education and other public services budgets implemented by some governments due to austerity measures, in combination with the decreasing attractiveness of the teaching profession, bring about a shortage of qualified education personnel, especially people both competent in subject knowledge and trained to address the needs of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeker students; this situation may worsen as national governments seek ways of financing their migration and refugee policy through further budget cuts;



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5. The non-integration and lack of inclusion of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in education and society amounts to a several billion Euro loss per year per country, whereas successful integration could be instead a valuable asset to society even in economic terms;
6. The predominant focus on military and financial interests in the Mediterranean area has deepened existing imbalances and aggravated the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, including girls and women;
7. The failure of European governments, in particular the member states of the European Union, to build a coherent, unambiguous, unified, and single, rather than fragmented, migration policy and subsequent legislative framework, including the basic principle of solidarity, has resulted in thousands of deaths in the Mediterranean Sea;
8. Today, the “Balkanroute” restrictions, segregation, fences and detentions based on alleged nationalities for thousands of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and persons claiming international protection are undermining respect for international law as well as Europe’s democratic, societal, civil and human rights values; the EU and European states should instead take care in solidarity to secure a well-ordered crossing of the borders for migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and persons claiming international protection in accordance with the international conventions and norms:
9. The sudden and massive flow of refugees and displaced people claiming international protection in Europe is not solely a humanitarian concern, but also has a severe impact on both the integrity and security needs of European countries;
10. Partly due to the urgent nature of the situation, the inability to develop a fair migration and asylum policy has allowed for the rise of extremist and radical movements across Europe, deeply rooted in intolerance, xenophobia and racism, supported by tacit consent in society.

Acknowledges that

11. Education is a fundamental human right conceived to give the opportunity to all children, young persons and adults, regardless their socio-economic cultural background – be they nationals or third-country nationals- to enhance their chances for a good life, decent employment and participation in the democratic life of a country, and have a key role in fostering mutual understanding and respect for others;
12. Education institutions at all levels of education should be safe and healthy places which support achievements in teaching and learning. It is therefore crucial to support the creation of an atmosphere where students can learn and education personnel can work in a positive, healthy and safe setting, regardless of their socio-economic or cultural background;
13. Education personnel are at the forefront of integration policies from early childhood education to higher education and cover all types of education institutions. Education personnel are called on to provide quality education to an increasing number of children, youngsters and



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adults regardless of their legal migratory status and taking into account different socio-economic backgrounds, different language skills and psychosocial issues that they might represent and bring along;

14. Education trade unions are key to defending and promoting also the rights of education personnel among migrants and refugees as a crucial factor in securing successful integration;
15. Education institutions, school communities, education personnel and education trade unions play a major role in helping all displaced people see their human rights and dignity fully respected, independently of their legal status and in accordance with international and European law¹;
16. Education trade unions substantially contribute to the promotion of democracy, justice and freedom in Europe and have the farsightedness to call for solidarity and respect for others even when some might be challenged by decreasing membership numbers.

Recalls that

17. EI and ETUCE policies have a central role in advocating for equal access to education and fair treatment of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and all those claiming international protection, and in supporting actions aimed at raising awareness of the need for integration based on inclusive quality education for all, respecting cultural, ethnic, religious, age and gender differences;
18. EI and ETUCE policies support the recognition of the important contribution made by education trade unions in challenging extremism and violence in education institutions at all levels and within the wider society; in calling for the inclusion of peace education in all curricula and at every level of education; and the need for education trade unions to be supported in this regard;
19. ETUCE has been urging governments to prioritise investment in education and training, investment in inclusive education programmes, and investment in education personnel, including their need for initial training and continuous professional development in mainstreaming diversity, tackling inequalities, addressing integration and inclusion of migrants and other socio-economically disadvantaged children and young people with special needs, different language needs and diverse cultural backgrounds.

¹ In particular, the Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 “Laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection”.



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Asserts the commitment of ETUCE and its member organisations to

20. Continue to engage in actions aimed at raising awareness of individual education trade union affiliates, students, parents and the wider society in relation to inclusive education and the need for integration;
21. Denounce any discriminatory policy from governments and any reaction based on intolerance, xenophobia and racism, that feed far-right extremist ideologies in Europe and that risk creating division both within society and in the education trade union movement itself;
22. Negotiate with governments on supportive education systems to improve access to quality education for all socio-economically disadvantaged students, focusing on inclusive learning environments, quality teaching and the enhanced capacity of education institutions;
23. Negotiate with governments and education authorities on the provision of additional resources for education institutions at all levels of education, including, a) Bridging programmes for education graduates with foreign qualifications, the recruitment of more qualified education personnel from a migrant and refugee background, hired under terms that guarantee stable, secure and lasting employment, b) teacher training on inclusive and intercultural competences, as well as second language acquisition, c) the provision of appropriate school buildings and class rooms, d) teaching material and e) compensation for education personnel for additional individualised teaching and working hours;
24. Strengthen education trade unions' capacity to train their affiliates and other actors in education on intercultural competences, intercultural dialogue, inclusiveness and mutual respect;
25. Strengthen education trade unions' support for education personnel among the refugees and migrants by assisting them with the recognition of their teaching qualifications, their affiliation to local education trade unions and involving them in education trade unions' training programmes;
26. Take action to promote the language skills of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and people claiming international protection of all ages in the official language(s) spoken in the host country, as well as in the mother tongue(s) of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and people claiming international protection of all ages, through a personalised and inclusive approach;
27. Support access and integration of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and all those claiming international protection into education and the labour market by encouraging education authorities and education institutions at all levels of education, especially in higher education where programmes in English are available, to offer learning opportunities to these people;
28. By means of contributing to the EI Strategy, provide an ETUCE platform to support the exchange among member organisations of information concerning their actions and good practices with a view to addressing in particular the challenges facing education trade unions



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- and their affiliates in countries with high numbers of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and people claiming international protection;
29. Appeal to regional and national education authorities and governments, as well as to European and international institutions, to do everything in their power to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education with a view to improving education access and learning achievement among migrant, refugee, asylum seeker children, young people and adults claiming international protection with a focus on the learning environment, teaching quality, early childhood development and accelerated learning programmes;
 30. Maintain pressure on governments and on European and international institutions to prioritise public investment in education to make sure the above objectives are achieved.