



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

Resolution

Solidarity with Turkish education community

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

The ETUCE Conference

Notes with concern

1. The segregation and instability in/of Turkish society as a result of the mistrust and anxiety in the country which is being spread by the Turkish government's authoritarian regime;
2. The escalating violations of human and trade union rights in Turkey, the disrespect for fundamental freedoms such as the freedom of expression and speech, as well as the breach of academic freedom, in particular since Turkish academics signed the peace statement [‘We will not be a party to this crime’](#);
3. The erosion of the principles of quality education for all through the limitation of education trade unions' involvement in all decisions concerning the education sector and the denial of academic freedom; likewise, the Turkish government's undemocratic repressive measures and actions, in particular against the education community under the guise of the state of emergency;
4. The threats posed to democratic processes, principles and justice by the Turkish government's disregard for, and non-recognition of, the values and principles of the European Union. Preventing Turkish citizens from enjoying fundamental rights, including the right to education, jeopardises the development and future of children and young people. Education personnel are confronted with working conditions which deny them a decent and healthy working environment and which preclude their providing high quality services. Students are able neither to attend school or university nor to receive education in a safe and creative learning environment;
5. The failure to comply with international laws and conventions envisaging and guaranteeing freedom of association and assembly that Turkey has ratified.



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Condemns

6. The Turkish government for using the failed coup attempt to justify (a) its undemocratic and authoritarian actions against the Turkish education community and (b) the abuse of power against those who are not afraid to raise their voice to advocate for democracy, high quality education and decent working conditions for education personnel;
7. The Turkish government's strict control of education personnel's and trade unionists' functions and actions which is leading to the stagnation and regression of education in the country. The infringement of education personnel's rights and freedoms reinforces the Turkish government's oppressive regime and unwillingness to cultivate a democratic spirit of independence;
8. The prosecutions, allegations and accusations against Turkish education personnel, alongside the increasing number of unfair dismissals based on presumptions about their alleged involvement in the Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation (FETÖ) in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt. Whereas both women and men are affected by the dismissals, suspensions and withdrawal of teaching licenses, it is mainly women, who constitute a high percentage of education personnel in Turkey, who are affected by these arbitrary actions of the government. They are seeing their access to fundamental labour rights, including the right to work, pension rights and freedoms violated and deliberately infringed;
9. The lack of genuine social dialogue as a key mechanism for improving the education system and promoting quality education for all children and young people in Turkey undermines the recognition and respect for education trade unions as professional organisations and social partners - which is a prerequisite for ensuring an effective and democratic education sector;
10. The disrespect for freedom of association and assembly embedded in Article 11 of [the European Convention on Human Rights](#), which explicitly demonstrates the Turkish government's indifference to the cornerstones of European society which each country applying for EU membership should respect, promote and observe;
11. The split that the Turkish government's witch-hunt has inflicted on the Turkish people and which hampers the democratic development of the country and leads to the spread of mistrust, fear, and further political unrest and turmoil.

Acknowledges that

12. Governments should recognise the close connection between the promotion of quality education and academic freedom and the prosperity of a society where literacy and high skills ensure citizens' well-being and the social and economic development of a country. Thus, governments, in close cooperation with education trade unions, should advocate for autonomy of higher education and research institutions;



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13. Quality education also comprises, inter alia, decent working conditions for education personnel and respect for their human and labour rights;
14. Consultations with social partners, alongside respect for their autonomy and recognition of their role as stipulated in [Article 152 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#) are the key to the democratic and sustainable development of countries;
15. Compliance with fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression and speech, and the protection and promotion of universal human rights are the Turkish government's direct responsibility. The violation of fundamental freedoms and dictatorial approaches lead to the regression of society;
16. Public funding of education should be a priority for every government. Instead of continuing with persecutions and illegal dismissals of Turkish education personnel, the Turkish government should make more effort to guarantee its citizens, refugees and asylum seekers access to quality education.

Welcomes

17. The solidarity demonstrated by ETUCE member organisations with Turkish colleagues and fellow education trade unionists in relation to the critical situation in the Turkish education sector;
18. The readiness of ETUCE member organisations to defend Turkish colleagues' rights and fundamental freedoms alongside their commitment to involve national governments in putting an end to the repressive and radical measures undertaken by the Turkish government.

Asserts the commitment of ETUCE and its Member Organisations to:

19. Continue to support their Turkish colleagues and engage in actions aimed at defending quality education, Turkish education personnel and their rights and freedoms in order to ensure high quality education in the country;
20. Continue to protest against prosecutions and arrests of Turkish colleagues, ask for an immediate stop to all the punitive measures such as suspensions and dismissals taken by the Turkish government against teachers, education personnel, academics and researchers and obtain the returning to their former positions;
21. Continue to press national governments to put more pressure on the Turkish government;
22. Pursue further efforts at European level to engage with European Union institutions, the Council of Europe and other European institutions, as well as the European Trade Union



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- Confederation (ETUC), European Trade Union Federations and other European level organisations with a view to protecting and ensuring respect for universal rights, values, democratic citizenship and social dialogue instruments in Turkey;
23. Continue to closely monitor developments in Turkey with a view to maintaining their affiliates' awareness of the critical situation of the Turkish education sector and to bringing into public focus the support needed for a bright future for Turkish children and youth;
 24. Continue to support Turkish colleagues in their demand for more transparency in public administration in order to make sure that all decisions affecting education are subject to democratic public scrutiny.