



ETUCE NEWSLETTER

European Trade Union Committee for Education

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[ETUCE Council 2007 – focus on lifelong learning in the EU](#)
[Page 2](#)

[New EU Communication on the Quality of Teacher Education](#)
[Page 3](#)

[European Consultation on 'Schools for the 21st Century'](#)
[Page 4](#)

[ETUCE response to Green Paper on the ERA](#)
[Page 5](#)

[ETUCE policy response on Early Childhood Education](#)
[Page 7](#)

[ETUC summer seminar on collective bargaining](#)
[Page 9](#)

[3rd ETUCE- ETUI- REHS Social Dialogue High Level Seminar](#)
[Page 10](#)

[EI/ETUCE Campaign Conference: 'Teachers for a Social Europe'](#)
[Page 10](#)

[ETUCE conference on teachers' work-related stress](#)
[Page 11](#)

[Three new ETUCE projects](#)
[Page 11](#)

[Calendar & publications](#)
[Page 15](#)

[30 years of history of the ETUCE](#)
[Page 15](#)

ETUCE Council 2007 – focus on Lifelong Learning in the EU

On 27-28 November, ETUCE will hold its annual Council Meeting in Luxembourg. The theme of this year's Council is Lifelong Learning in the EU. At EU level, the debate on which priorities should govern the EU's educational cooperation beyond the "Education & Training 2010" work programme has already begun and will continue well into 2008. Under the main heading of lifelong learning, the Council's workshop sessions will allow for in-depth discussions on the priorities which should shape the EU's educational agenda in the next decade, through consideration of the main issues on the agenda at present within school education, vocational education and training, and higher education and research.

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Three new ETUCE projects

ETUCE has successfully applied to the Commission for funding to support three projects which will be undertaken in the coming one to two years. The new funding will allow ETUCE to continue the ELFE project (*European eLearning Forum for Education*) undertaken in 2004-2005; to reinforce the *Europe Needs Teachers Campaign* with new activities during 2008; and to launch an entirely new project setting focus on violence in schools.

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ETUCE Conference on teachers' work-related stress, Malta, 19-20 November 2007

This Conference is the final event to take place within the framework of the ETUCE project "Improving expertise on teachers' work-related stress and assisting ETUCE member organisations in implementing the ETUC-UNICE/UEAPME-CEEP autonomous Framework Agreement".

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Calendar

November:

- 19-20: Conference on Work-related Stress, Malta
- 26: ETUCE Networks Meeting, Luxembourg
- 27-28: ETUCE Council Meeting, Luxembourg
- 28-29: EI Pan-European Committee/ETUCE Executive Board Meeting, Luxembourg

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ETUCE Council 2007 : Focus on Lifelong Learning in the EU

On 27-28 November, ETUCE will hold its annual Council Meeting in Luxembourg. The theme of this year's Council is Lifelong Learning in the EU.

Since the launch of the Education & Training 2010 work programme in 2002, lifelong learning has become the guiding principle for the EU's cooperation on education policies. This has not only led to the introduction of a number of instruments to promote lifelong learning, such as the EQF, the ECVET, common principles on validation of informal and non-formal learning, etc, but also entails that education policies in general are viewed within the perspective of lifelong learning. Issues such as key competences in the school curriculum, teacher education, efficiency and equity, etc., are all approached in a lifelong learning perspective. Moreover, in the spring of 2007 Member States were reporting to the Commission on the extent to which they have implemented the 2002 Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning, in which Member States committed themselves to put in place coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies by 2006. Based on previous reports from earlier years, the conclusion of the draft 2008 progress report (expected to be published in November 2007) is likely to show that only a small number of countries have put in place comprehensive lifelong learning strategies, while the vast majority still have much to do to make lifelong learning a reality for all.

The ETUCE Council in 2007 will take stock of the previous work done on lifelong learning, and will provide an opportunity to develop teacher union policies on the direction of the EU education policies beyond 2010. At EU level, the debate on which priorities should govern the EU's educational cooperation beyond the "Education & Training 2010" work programme has already begun and will continue well into 2008. Under the main heading of lifelong learning, the Council's workshop sessions will allow for in-depth discussions on the priorities which should shape the EU's educational agenda in the next decade, through consideration of the main issues on the agenda at present within school education, vocational education and training, and higher education and research.

The Council Meeting will include expert presentations on two key aspects of the lifelong learning agenda: the social aspects of education and training in the EU as well as finance of education in the EU. Speakers will moreover include representatives of the European Commission and the European Employers' organisations, among others.

The ETUCE Council Meeting will be preceded by network meetings on the 26th November for the ETUCE Development in Education Network and the ETUCE Working Conditions Network, who this year will focus

on respectively teacher education and teachers' work-related stress.

New EU Communication on the Quality of Teacher Education

According to research studies teacher quality is the most important within-school aspect explaining student performance, i.e. of greater importance than aspects such as financial conditions or school organisation. It is against this background that improving the quality of teacher education is acknowledged at EU level as a key means to achieve the Lisbon goals of education and training. The Commission has accordingly initiated a process aimed at bringing attention to the quality of teacher education in Europe. Early August 2007, a Commission Communication was sent to the Council and the European Parliament aiming to improve the quality of teacher education. Induced by this, ETUCE has recently invited all its members to submit their responses to the Commission's Communication to the Secretariat.

Need for improvements

The Commission has been preparing a policy paper on the issue of the quality of teacher education since 2004. The suggestions from the Commission in the recent Communication are based on the *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications* prepared by a Commission expert group in 2004-2005 and discussed with experts and major stakeholders in a subsequent conference.

The Communication assesses the current situation in the EU with regard to the education and training of teachers and proposes a framework for action to be taken at national as well as at European level. Several areas within teacher education which need to be improved are identified. This applies among other things to the need to increase investment in the continuous professional development of teachers, which the Commission finds low across the EU, as well as the need to remedy the current lack of coherence and continuity between the different elements of teacher education in many Member States.

The Commission also emphasises the responsibility of Member States to make teaching an attractive career choice and points out that there is an overall need to take necessary steps to recruit and retain a sufficient number of well-educated and motivated teachers in the profession. Among other things remuneration is acknowledged as a central factor for the supply of teachers.

Policy steps proposed by the Commission

The Commission proposes a number of policy steps to be taken in order to improve the quality of teacher education, including calling on Member States to provide opportunities for further qualification and updating of

skills to all teachers and to ensure adequate funding of teacher education. At the European level the Commission proposes to develop indicators that reflect the issues relevant for improving education and training for teachers, to take steps to promote the mobility of teachers and to report on progress in the quality of teacher education.

ETUCE welcomes increased focus on teacher education

ETUCE is pleased to note that the Commission puts focus on the need for improvements in the quality of teacher education and welcomes the acknowledgement of the immediate need for increasing investments in this area. The Communication dovetails on many points with the areas of action which ETUCE has identified within its Europe Needs Teachers Campaign. ETUCE regrets however that the Communication fails to bring sufficient attention to the role of the teacher educators, including to their educational needs and terms of employment. ETUCE will be following the further developments closely to ensure that Member States react to the challenges and needs facing teacher education today.

The Communication from the Commission will be discussed on a meeting in the Council of Education Ministers on 15-16 November. In view of this, ETUCE has drawn up an elaborate statement to the Commission's Communication. ETUCE has also strongly encouraged all member organisations to put forward their views on the Communication to the education ministries at national level prior to the meeting in the Council of Ministers.

The full ETUCE statement in response to the Communication is available on the ETUCE website:

http://www.etcue.homestead.com/Statements/2007/ETUCE_statement_teacher_education_communication_Nov2007_eng.pdf

The Communication can be found here:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st12/st12414.en07.pdf>



European Consultation on 'Schools for the 21st century'

In mid-July, the Commission launched its EU-wide public consultation on a series of issues central for schools in Europe, putting focus on the future challenges for schools and the role of schools in society. ETUCE has invited all its member organisations to submit their views on these issues to the Secretariat in order to prepare a comprehensive ETUCE policy response to the Commissions consultation.

Schools and teachers in the 21st century are challenged by an increasing diversity in the needs of the students as well as a growing need to make use of new technologies in the classroom. This also puts pressure on the competences and qualifications of teachers. In the light of this, as well as considering the central role of school education for the economic and social development in society and the prospects and well being of the individual, the aim of the Commission's consultation is to identify the areas where joint work and exchange of experiences can be profitable at the EU level. A total of eight questions are raised in the consultation, among those how schools can be organised in such a way as to provide all students with the full range of key competences and how schools can equip young people with the competences and motivation to make learning a lifelong activity.

The Commission's consultation is open to all interested in the development of school education in Europe, but ETUCE has been invited to be particularly closely involved in the consultation through representation in the ad hoc "Stakeholders Platform on School Education" set up in this context.

The outcome of the consultation will make up the ground work for future priorities at the EU level in the area of school education. As such the Consultation is no doubt of major importance to the Commission, which has also recently announced a two-month extension for the deadline of the consultation, from 15 October to 15 December. ETUCE has also taken part in the debate on school education in the EU by participating in a Conference organised by the Portuguese Presidency on 2-3 November 2007 in the context of the Consultation.

The ETUCE response to the consultation will be submitted to the Executive Board for adoption in their meeting on 28-29 November.

In addition to contributing to the ETUCE's response, member organisations are also encouraged to submit their separate responses directly to the Commission until December 15th to the following address : eac-schools-consult@ec.europa.eu

ETUCE Response to Green Paper on the European Research Area



ETUCE has recently submitted its response to the Commission's Green Paper on the European Research Area (ERA).

The ERA has been launched in 2000 in order to overcome the fragmentation of research activities across Europe. With the Green Paper the Commission wishes to take stock of the progress up to now with regard to the creation of the ERA and the identification of the areas where further steps need to be taken. To this purpose the Commission opened a public debate on the question of what future action should be taken in order to create a unified and attractive ERA.

Support to the mobility dimension

In the response ETUCE concentrates mainly on the issues related to the enhancement of the mobility of researchers and the strengthening of research institutions. The elaborate work done in recent years on these issues by the EI Pan-European Higher Education and Research Standing Committee (HERSC) formed the basis of the response.

In this document, ETUCE expresses full endorsement of the mobility dimension of the ERA but brings forward a number of comments to the underlying analysis. First of all, ETUCE draws attention to the lack of comprehensive data on researchers' career paths and mobility patterns. Furthermore ETUCE stresses that there is a need for the management of higher education and research institutions to take on a greater degree of responsibility in facilitating the mobility of researchers, and proposes that every institution of higher education should develop a mobility policy. ETUCE also reminds that the definition of what constitutes an 'obstacle' to mobility must be made with a fine distinction between what are entirely appropriate employment regulations ensuring proper salaries and working conditions on the one hand, and what are genuine obstacles to mobility and recruitment on the other hand.

Strengthening European research institutions

With regard to the Green Paper's call for more autonomy to universities and research institutions, ETUCE agrees that greater autonomy is one way of strengthening research but stresses that institutional autonomy should be a twin principle to that of academic freedom, based on the definition of institutional autonomy as presented in a recommendation by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe¹ which among other aspects also considers the social and cultural responsibility of universities.

On the issue of funding, ETUCE highlights that it does not support the proposal to develop shared European criteria for the funding and assessment of research institutions, as the systems of funding and assessment of each Member State are embedded in national contexts. Instead the funding of research institutions could be improved through exchanges of 'best practice', as this method takes the national and cultural contexts into account. In addition ETUCE expresses

¹ Recommendation 1762 on academic freedom and university autonomy (2006)

reservations on the Green Paper's call for stimulating public-private relationships in underlining that due consideration needs to be taken of the negative consequences that may occur, i.e. that public-private partnerships might bring about restrictions in the use of research funds or restrictions on the publication of research results.

ETUCE furthermore notes that there is a tendency to link the ERA primarily to the economic aspects of the Lisbon Strategy. In turn, ETUCE stresses that it is important that a comprehensive and long-term view on research be taken in the further development of the ERA.

On the basis of the consultation and debate the Commission intends to propose concrete initiatives in 2008.

The full ETUCE statement can be found on http://www.etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2007/ETUCE_response_Greep_Paper_ERA_August2007.pdf

ETUCE policy response on Early Childhood Education



At EU-level, early childhood education (ECE) is increasingly acknowledged as a priority area in its own right due to increasing recognition of its crucial role in creating the foundation for later learning processes and in contributing to children's cognitive and linguistic development. In addition, efforts to broaden access to childcare facilities are part of the EU's employment strategy as an important element in policies promoting a better work-life balance for the workforce. In connection with a Commission consultation on the issue of reconciliation of professional, private and family life, ETUCE therefore used the opportunity to put forward its view on how to increase the availability, affordability, accessibility and quality of childcare. The response from ETUCE is based on feedback received from member organisations in an internal consultation in the early summer 2007 as well as on the recently adopted EI Pan-European Policy Paper on Early Childhood Education.²

Calling for a coherent and comprehensive approach to ECE

In 2002, The European Council set up the target to provide childcare to at least 33% of children below the age of 3 and to at least 90% of

² ETUCE and EI define early childhood education as education taking place before compulsory education. This includes kindergartens, nurseries, pre-school classes, childcare centres and other similar institutions.

children between 3-year old and the mandatory school age before 2010. In order to push forward in this area, the Commission is expected to present a Communication on childcare in 2008.

Presenting its viewpoints in the above stated context in its response to the Commission, ETUCE emphasised the importance of a coherent and comprehensive approach to the issue of childcare and early childhood education. Potential Community initiatives should take a coherent view on the needs of both the children below the age of three and the age group up to the compulsory school age. When structuring early childhood education and care, both the aspect of care as well as of education should always be regarded.

While acknowledging the importance of accessibility to childcare and early childhood education to the pursuit of gender equality and the economic and social development in Europe, ETUCE finds it important to stress that early childhood education should first and foremost be for the child and the child's opportunity to learn. In this relation, ETUCE stressed the need to put focus on the quality of training of early childhood educators. ETUCE had earlier this year welcomed that the importance of the training of early childhood educators was acknowledged by the Ministers of Education in their Conclusions from an informal ministerial conference in March 2007, and also in the recent statement ETUCE emphasised that teacher education for early childhood educators should be at a high academic level, on a par with the academic level for teacher education for primary school and onwards. Furthermore access to continuous professional development should be secured.

Future action regarding work-life balance

The consultation by the Commission is the second consultation of the European Social Partners in the process of preparing proposals regarding work-life balance. In the first consultation, carried out in the autumn of 2006, the European trade union movement expressed support for strengthening Community action concerning reconciliation of professional and private life. The recent consultation aims at clarifying the opinion of the Social Partners of what the specific contents of future Commission proposals should be.

ETUCE will follow the future development in the area closely and would like to thank all the member organisations who contributed to the response.

The entire response from ETUCE, which includes the EI Pan-European Policy Paper in annex, can be found on:

http://www.etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2007/ETUCE_response_Reconciliation_ECE_July2007_eng.pdf



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)

ETUC summer seminar on collective bargaining

The ETUCE secretariat sent a delegation to the ETUC Summer Seminar on collective bargaining coordination in Sintra (Portugal) on 4-6 September. The recent developments in trans-national collective bargaining initiatives were presented. The ETUC trans-national committees system currently applies for some cross-borders private companies and one can consider them as a “lab for Social Europe”, said the ETUC officer in charge of them. Collective agreements are elaborated and put in practice at company level.

The second theme of the summer seminar was a discussion about a possible ETUC campaign for an EU wage policy. A minimum wage standard at EU level would not mean an absolute salary but a common method used to calculate a reasonable minimum wage for each of the 27 countries, depending on each respective situation. Starting during the 2007-2008 season, such a campaign would send a strong political message in favour of a Social Europe. The ETUC member organisations have different views concerning the relevance of this initiative.

The summer seminar also introduced the Danish concept of Flexicurity, which is now presented by the European Commission as an essential tool for the achievement of the Lisbon goals. Flexicurity consists of a coherent set of dispositions aiming at ensuring the labour markets’ flexibility, a generous welfare protection as well as “activation” labour policies. The European Commission has published a Communication on Flexicurity in June 2007, which will be a basis for the elaboration of this strand in the renewed Lisbon Strategy. A new agenda for the Lisbon Strategy is indeed to be set up by the institutions by March 2008. In the meantime, the ETUC will do a response to this communication and present its position on Flexicurity, notably through the work plan for the EU cross-sectoral social partners, to be published before the end 2007. An interesting debate on Flexicurity took place during the summer seminar. Some of the represented ETUC member organisations were pleading for a clear “no” to any new flexibility initiative, while others put the accent on the necessity for the trade union movement to develop its own definition of flexibility. The ETUCE is currently exploring the Flexicurity principles from a teachers’ union point of view.

Third ETUCE – ETUI REHS Social Dialogue High Level Seminar for the new EU member states



This year's Social Dialogue High Level Seminar for affiliates from new member states, jointly organised by the ETUCE and the ETUI-REHS, took place in Bourgas, Bulgaria, from 22 to 25 September. The seminar was chaired by ETUCE General Secretary Martin Rømer. It welcomed 35 high-level participants from nine Central and Eastern European countries as well as Cyprus for three days of information exchanges and debates on social dialogue in education. The seminar was held at a very important moment for the teachers' trade union movement in Bulgaria, going on strike to claim for better working conditions. Bulgaria is the country holding the lowest salary standards for teachers of all EU member states. The ETUCE and all the teacher unions represented at the seminar expressed their full support to their Bulgarian colleagues in their struggle for decent working conditions, and condemned the attitude of the current Bulgarian government who had chosen to violently stigmatise the teachers instead of engaging in constructive discussions.

The seminar's content focussed this year on the ongoing process towards a European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education. The participants were invited to present the current status of the process in their country. Participants from countries who already took national initiatives to create a permanent national working group that will act as a back-up system to the Sectoral Social Dialogue at EU level, shared their experience with those who are currently facing barriers in implementing the process in their country. Presentations were given by the ETUCE Secretariat about the current status of the process, the national working groups, the sub-sectoral dimension of the dialogue and the relation-building with the national employers. Participants also benefited from a detailed presentation about the different possibilities of EU funding for national social partners to strengthen social dialogue and develop educational projects. The last session of the seminar was devoted to the recent developments in the "Education and Training 2010" process and its national implementation.



**EI/ETUCE Campaign Conference:
'Teachers for a Social Europe'**



In July, EI and ETUCE launched a joint Campaign entitled "Teachers for a Social Europe" in order to engender a debate among affiliates on the European Social Model, the new EU Reform Treaty and on the future of the EU and its neighbourhood relations.

After the first and essentially informative phase³ of the EI/ETUCE Campaign, an open debate on the future of the European Union and on its neighbourhood relations took place among teacher unionists in Lisbon on the 29-30 October 2007 in the frame of the Campaign Conference.

During the Conference, a representative from the EU Portuguese Presidency gave a presentation on the new EU Reform Treaty, recently adopted by the EU Heads of State and Governments. In relation to this, the ETUC Confederal Secretary Mr. Josef Niemiec gave more details on the European trade unions' view and position on the social dimension of this new EU Treaty. Martin Rømer, ETUCE General Secretary, further developed the issue by presenting the social challenges European education systems are facing today.

The panel and working group discussions held during the Conference led teacher trade union representatives to examine the role of teachers and the teaching profession in the EU and for the future of the EU. Thoughts about the European Union, its policies and especially about the mutual influence which the EU and its neighbouring countries exert on each other regarding educational policies were also exchanged.

Participants further had the opportunity to learn what the demands and actions of civil society organisations working in the social field are regarding the future of Europe, in a presentation by Mr. David Lopez from the Social Platform in Brussels. Mr. Pierre Masson, a Council of Europe representative, explained to the participants how cooperation in the education and social fields is engaged under the auspices of his organisation.

A detailed report of the Conference will be available soon on the special EI/ETUCE Campaign webpage.

In the context of the Campaign, a Magazine has been published with several interviews with trade union representatives taking position on Social Europe and the future of the EU, as well as comprehensive information about the various topics of the Campaign. The Magazine has been published in English, French, German and Spanish. In addition, a special edition of the ETUCE newsletter was issued in October with contributions from a number of affiliates on the issues within the Campaign.

³ All the information published in the frame of the Campaign can be found on the special Campaign webpage :

http://www.etuce.homestead.com/ETUCE_Teachers_Social_Europe.html

ETUCE Conference on teachers' work-related stress Malta, 19-20 November 2007



The Conference on teachers' work-related stress, taking place in Malta on 19-20 November 2007, is the final event to take place within the framework of the ETUCE project "Improving expertise on teachers' work-related stress and assisting ETUCE member organisations in implementing the ETUC-UNICE/UEAPME-CEEP autonomous Framework Agreement".

On 20-21 September a seminar held in Ljubljana within the framework of this project, successfully launched the debate on the issue among national teacher trade unions. The seminar, organised by the ETUCE and attended by 50 teacher trade union representatives, was held in order to discuss the recently finalised ETUCE survey report on teachers' work-related stress. Speakers from the European Commission, the ETUC and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work made relevant presentations on their respective work on the issue. Particular attention was paid to the European Social Partners Framework Agreement on work-related stress, and to the risk assessment system put in place in the schools. Good practices in dealing with stress at local and national levels were also presented during the Seminar.

The project's final Conference aims at providing national teacher trade unions with comprehensive guidelines and practical examples for an effective implementation of the social partners Framework Agreement on work-related stress in the education sector. Moreover, national teacher trade unions will have the opportunity to discuss a draft policy document on the future actions the ETUCE should undertake regarding work-related stress amongst teachers. This Draft ETUCE Action Plan will then be presented for adoption by the ETUCE Executive Board.



Three new ETUCE projects

ETUCE has successfully applied to the Commission for funding to support three projects which will be undertaken in the coming one to two years. The new funding will allow ETUCE to continue the ELFE project (*European eLearning Forum for Education*) undertaken in 2004-2005; to reinforce the *Europe Needs Teachers Campaign* with new activities during 2008; and to launch an entirely new project setting focus on violence in schools.

- **ELFE II (European eLearning Forum for Education)**



ELFE II is a continuation of the ELFE I project carried out in 2004-2005 which aimed at identifying good practices in the pedagogical use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in upper-secondary schools. ELFE I showed that a structured use of ICT strengthens students' acquisitions of "new competences" and identified a number of central factors for obtaining an added value of the use of ICT in education.

ELFE II seeks to observe the consistency of these findings when looking at other countries. In the ELFE II projects the approach is therefore broadened out to also include pilot projects in three countries from the EU-12: Lithuania, Slovenia and Poland. The project thereby seeks to make broader recommendations for the use of ICT in education and, additionally, to examine how such findings are or can be included in teacher training programmes.

- **ETUCE Campaign:**



This project will reinforce the *Europe Needs Teachers Campaign* launched by ETUCE in 2004. In the context of this campaign, an ETUCE working group has over the past year been preparing a revision of the ETUCE's 1994 Publication on Teacher Education, and the current project will allow for a broad discussion among member organisations on the new draft before it is put on the table for adoption by the Executive Board. The first discussion will take place on 26 November as part of the meeting of the ETUCE Development in Education Network, which will be followed by a second seminar in the spring of 2008. In addition, the project will feature a compilation of 'best practices' on teacher unions' strategies on a number of issues within teacher education, such as improving the quality of teacher education, recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, or raising the status of teachers.

- **'TRUCE' (Trade Unions Concerned for Education) - Violence in schools**

An EU survey in 2000 showed that 4 % of employees in the education sector have been subject to violence (from inside or outside the workplace) at work. In addition, 12 % reported having been subjected to intimidation. Often there is a lack of knowledge and concrete tools to face and prevent violence in schools which evidently frustrates teachers in their daily work.

Against this background ETUCE launches a project which aims at supporting member organisations in implementing the *Autonomous framework agreement on harassment and violence at work* adopted in March 2007 by the European Social Partners. The project will thus seek to strengthen unions' knowledge, skills and training measures to prevent and deal with violence in schools, and will also allow for an exchange of best practice. The project will result in the development of an ETUCE policy on the topic.

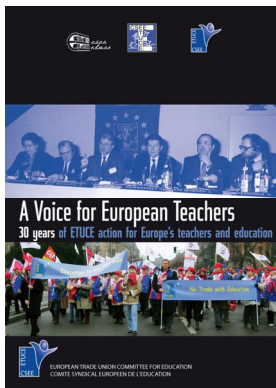
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New Publications

- [ETUCE newsletter special edition 'Teachers for a Social Europe'](#)
- [New EI/ETUCE Campaign Magazine: Teachers for a Social Europe](#)



A publication telling 30 years of existence of the ETUCE: “*A Voice for European Teachers*”: 30 years of ETUCE action for Europe’s teachers and education has just been published and will be presented in Luxembourg on 27 November 2007, within the framework of the meetings organised by the ETUCE (see calendar). This book, available in French and English as well as in the form of a CD rom, does not allege to be an academic study. It is the history of ETUCE as seen by many different eyes, and representing the viewpoints of the women and men who have been in charge of its developments at various stages then and now.