

ETUCE NEWSLETTER

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October 2007

SPECIAL EDITION

The EI/ETUCE Campaign "Teachers for a Social Europe" has met with an enthusiastic response among teacher unions in Europe. A number of important contributions from national teacher unions have been received in the secretariat. This special edition of the ETUCE Newsletter dedicated to the Campaign presents the views of the national affiliates on the values and accomplishments of the European Union. Jointly with the EI/ETUCE Campaign Magazine "Teachers for a Social Europe", published earlier this month, this newsletter paves the way for the debate on the future of the EU to be held at the EI/ETUCE Campaign Conference "Teachers for a Social Europe" in Lisbon on 29-30 October 2007. Contributions from EI affiliates in European countries outside the EU have also been received, adding the point of view of countries developing neighbourly relations with the EU or already within the negotiation process for accession to the Union.

The national teacher unions have considered the following four issues related to the theme of the Campaign:

- the impact of European Union policies on their societies, including the EU added value to education
- the role of education in the European Social Model
- the future of the EU, including analysis of the current constitutional crisis and the new EU Treaty
- the role of teachers as transmitters of culture in Europe, including the promotion of Active European Citizenship

Brussels, 25th October 2007



Martin Rømer



Charlie Lennon

Teachers for a Social Europe



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With the support of the European Union: Support for bodies active at European level in the field of active European citizenship



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación
Bildungsinternationale



European Trade Union Committee For Education
Comité Syndical Européen de l'Éducation

APPROACHING THE NEW EU: THE VIEW FROM THE TEACHERS' UNION OF SERBIA

by Borka Visnic, Teachers' Union of Serbia, TUS, Serbia

A united Europe with European values, as a common project for all Europeans should be the aim of a redefined European Union under the new circumstances of its enlargement. Thinking of this Europe as an idea and creating the conditions for its practical realization is a challenge not only for the “old” member states which established the former Steel Agreement, or the new countries which acceded in 2004 and 2007, but also for those intending to become a part of this community.

The EU enlargement to include countries from the former Eastern Bloc has raised a lot of questions and suspicions, reflected in the dismissal of the Constitutional Treaty even by founder members of the EU, it is clear that it is necessary to renew the vision of a United Europe. This vision should be the road sign for a future, which promotes the value system of Europe. Most of the stakeholders' activities in the EU should be profiling and promoting that vision of the future.

As with every vision, the most important question is what values are offered for the future? If they are general human values, exemplary of European culture and civilization, such as democracy, social justice, equality and freedom, then a mechanism should be found for (re)establishing them. It is a European tradition to transmit these values through the educational system. This defines the key role of education and educators.

Teachers should participate in broader social discussions about the value systems in society. Therefore, the European value system should be at the heart of national education systems. No education system reform will be successful if it has no clear profile of the values it aspires to promote. These values should preserve the particularities and cultural identity of each nation and at the same time have common features enabling free exchange of ideas, people and joint projects.

“Teachers should participate in broader social discussions about the value systems in society.”

Educators have multiple responsibilities within social issues - defining the value system, profiling curricula and pedagogical work, conveying the value system and knowledge to students. This position is an exclusive one and like no other profession, especially with regard to the complexity of requests and challenges. The importance of the teaching profession should enable teachers to have a relevant social standing and high status in society.

According to data from EU countries and from countries moving towards entry to the EU, education as an activity as well as the teaching profession itself have faced challenges for a long period, and are still struggling to preserve their importance. Facing the challenges of the negative aspects of globalisation and neo-liberal capitalism, where education is a “commodity” exposed to the wind of the market, teachers

are not (and should not be) alone in defending the position and importance of education and their own profession. Other stakeholders in society should also get involved in the protection of education. The EI/ETUCE Campaign “Teachers for a Social Europe” is the right occasion to ask and find answers to the challenges forced on us by global corporations, and the countries that introduce them.

Teachers are excluded from this responsible work, as their material situation (low pay, poor working conditions, etc.) does not correspond to the importance and value of their profession to society. This state of affairs sends a wrong message to thousands of current and future teachers, who are not valued appropriately by their societies. Teacher unions, as the most important organizations defending teachers’ interests, work primarily, for the improvement of the material situation of employees in education, in order for them to match up with the status and importance of their profession to society. In most Eastern European countries (including EU member states), trade unions’ agendas principally include “hard” trade union issues struggling for the dignity of employees in education. However, even though Western Europe trade unions primarily deal with “soft” issues, they have not secured an appropriate material status for education employees compared to the importance of their profession. Since social status often depends on material status, dealing with “soft” issues only produces results of a “decorative” character, which does not live up to the fundamental obligations of trade unions and does not secure the position of importance educators should hold.

This brings us back to the foundation of the trade union movement where protests were used and pressure was applied to achieve basic requirements. At the same time, it is a conflict of interests represented by opposite sides and values.

The future of the EU poses many questions to be answered before restructuring basic elements of the Treaty. However, before the questions are put on the table, it is necessary to admit past mistakes. We will then understand each other better, and this will make it easier to exchange new ideas and programmes in the future.

With the wishes of the so-called “Western Balkan” countries to approach the EU and with the different activities in Serbia towards entering the EU, it would help if the EU also recognised its role in destroying our former country during the war; and to recognise, at least, a part of its responsibility for the many events burdening our relations. To start with its responsibility in the NATO bombings of Serbian citizens, where many children suffered. Then it would be easier to face the future, which is a future all Europeans share, in spite of past atrocities and dislikes.

This would create space to form a new generation of young people who will understand such a Europe and the possibility for teachers to prepare our common future properly. Serbia is prepared for such challenges. We expect that the EU is also prepared for us.



EUROPE MEANS US

GEW criticises social imbalance and calls for social dialogue in the EU

by Ulrich Thöne, President of the German Education Union (GEW)

At the Brussels summit in June, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, standing amid an otherwise male portrait gallery of European heads of state, made the front pages of the world's press. After tough, lengthy negotiations, they had reached agreement on a new basic treaty for the European Union, putting paid for the time being to ideas of a common EU Constitution.

First- and second-class citizens

Nobody can be satisfied with the outcome. The GEW criticised the original draft Constitution for its lack of social balance and its adherence to neo-liberal economic assumptions. The new EU Treaty, which copies large chunks of the draft Constitution, has done nothing to allay our concerns. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights - which was originally the lynchpin of the draft Constitution and defines social rights, such as paid annual leave, collective bargaining and the right to strike - does not appear in the new treaty at all, except as a reference. That has devalued the political status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, but for the United Kingdom and Poland it was not enough. To make sure the Charter really could not influence national policies or case law, they have reserved the right not to apply the Charter in their countries. As a result, the European Union will have first- and second-class citizens. By taking decisions like this, the EU heads of state who consented to this undignified circus are fanning the distrust of their citizens and encouraging the EU to drift apart. Angela Merkel sold the results of her Council Presidency as a success story because they ensured that the European Union would remain functionally viable. She said nothing about the ongoing deficits in its democratic structures or the social imbalance in the EU. In truth, the new EU treaty is a third-class funeral for the EU Constitution. Politics like this will not encourage citizens to place fresh confidence in Europe.

Protecting public services

One thing that certainly would inspire greater approval would be to strengthen and expand public service provision in the EU. GEW therefore supports the petition of the European Trade Union Confederation to the EU Commission calling for an EU Directive that protects public services. Too often recently people across the EU have seen prices rise while service quality falls as a result of opening up markets and privatisation. Employees in these sectors have been faced with an often drastic deterioration in their working conditions. Drawing on this negative experience, the European Trade Union Confederation is now calling for a moratorium on further liberalisation. Before more steps are taken to open markets, legal security is needed in the EU so that public services can be maintained and developed over the long term. Solidarity, access and universality need to be firmly anchored as the principles underlying public service provision in the EU.

No unanimous approval

For many years education policy was not an issue for the European Union. This has radically changed. The EU has recognised that education is now a key factor in Europe's future development and it has recently been adopting a range of initiatives and programmes on education policy. The rationale for these activities is the Lisbon Strategy, which aims to make the European Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economic area in the world by 2010. The results of this policy are already tangible in a number of education fields. In the universities the Bologna Process, designed to create a European area of higher education, has triggered in-depth reforms of courses and degrees. We are witnessing similar developments now in vocational training, where the European Qualifications Framework and the ECVET points system are intended to create greater transparency and comparability of vocational skills. This has not met with unanimous approval in Germany. The many changes are sadly also being used to achieve savings and cutbacks. This has sparked protest and rejection. It is all the more important that education unions participate in the process of change with a critical eye so that they can defend the interests of their members in the education sector.

“The EU has recognised that education is now a key factor in Europe's future development and it has recently been adopting a range of initiatives and programmes on education policy.”

Sectoral social dialogue in education

For all our criticism of details, the GEW basically welcomes the education policy changes initiated by the EU and is participating in various national and European committees and forums to discuss and implement them. We recognise an opportunity to exert the influence of European trade unions on standard-setting. We campaign for a publicly financed, high-quality education system in Europe. It is high time, therefore, to establish a sectoral social dialogue between employers and labour in the education system, as already exists in many other sectors of the European Union. I do not believe, however, that it is helpful or realistic to call for a single social dialogue to cover all fields of education in the EU. It would be extremely difficult to piece together appropriate employer representation for pre-school facilities, schools, universities, vocational training and institutions of life-long learning.

Trade unions are a driving force

I discern greater opportunities if we concentrate to begin with on a sectoral social dialogue for compulsory schooling and higher education, where we are dealing for the most part with public-sector employers. The other fields of education could follow later. Our advantage as education unions is that we are well organised at national and European level. We are the driving force in this process which, thanks to the coordination and guidance provided by the ETUCE and its General Secretary Martin Rømer, has already made considerable headway. The wheels have been set in motion and the train can hardly be halted now. I am very optimistic that we will have a sectoral social dialogue for education in the EU within the foreseeable future.



PUBLIC EDUCATION IN CROATIA AND TUWPSEC'S VIEW ON EDUCATION IN THE EU

*by Božena Strugar, President of the Trade Union
of Workers in Pre-School Education of Croatia, TUWPSEC*

Since 2004, Croatia is a candidate country for accession to the European Union. The official opening of the accession negotiations started 3 October 2005. As regards education, the country is currently working on having the necessary implementation capacity in place to participate effectively in the Community programmes in the field.

The current education system in Croatia

Preschool Education: Children in Croatia can begin attending preschool from the age of one.. It is, however, possible in Croatia to attend preschool from the age of six months. Children, who do not attend from an early age, normally begin preschool at the age of five - at this time local authorities are required to provide preschool services.

Primary education: From the age of 6 children must attend primary school, but exceptions can be made for children with special disabilities. Primary education of eight years duration is mandatory for all children in Croatia.

Secondary education: After primary school Croatian students can choose between three types of secondary education:

- Vocational education: one to four years
- Professional education: four years
- Academic education: four years

Higher education: University students study for five years to earn a Master's degree. The Bologna Process in Croatia was implemented during the period 2003 - 2006: "The education programme is divided into three cycles: the 1st cycle lasts three to four years and leads to the title of *prvostupnik / prvostupnica* (bachelor). The 2nd cycle normally lasts one or two years and leads to the titles of *magistar / magistra struke* (master of arts or master of science). The majority of Higher Education Institutes adopted the 3+2 model, and only a minority adopted the 4+1 model."¹

Education for adults: Education for adults is meant for people who did not attend or complete primary, secondary or higher education and for people who want to acquire new qualifications, or simply, for people who want to study further.

How the TUWPSEC union sees the education system in Croatia:

The general educational system in Croatia is good. But our approach to and the process of education could be better. The relations between teachers and pupils/students must be improved. Small children,

*"... all states in
Europe realize that
we should work
towards a common
goal."*

¹ http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/085DN/085_HR_EN.pdf

adolescents and even adults need attention, friendships and parental love. The teacher has to be aware of that, and position him/herself accordingly. Human relations constitute the basis and the fundamental requirement for a good education. To fill this role properly, a teacher has to possess the right pedagogical, didactical and communicative qualifications. This requires the best teacher education possible, with access to the highest academic degrees and training in communication.

Even though the educational programs of Croatia are good, we still need to improve them: education is a process which needs a constant flow of new content. The teacher is central to this process and stands as the pillar, responsible for creating new possibilities and choices for the students, and in so doing give them the opportunity to demonstrate their own independent knowledge.

How should Education in the EU be regarded?

The educational system is the most important element in each member state. The EU must put education at the forefront and make sure that it provides:

- Equal education for all
- Education throughout life - life-long learning
- A European curriculum for all in Europe

This requires that all states in Europe realize that we should work towards a common goal. This does not mean that all education in Europe should be identical: every state should promote educational systems based on their culture, traditions and specific features. But we need to create a European consciousness, which will enable us to think of ourselves as “educated” European citizens.



**EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS -
A DRIVING FORCE OF SOCIAL EUROPE**
*by José Campos, General Secretary of FECCOO,
Spain*

“We are building Europe from mutual knowledge and contact with each other...”

The constitutional treaties and constitutions of nation states were used to tame industrial capitalism in the 19th and 20th centuries, and led to the much lauded and defended social welfare states of today. Constitutional treaties such as that of the EU, with a multi-national and multi-state scope are, in our view, the only instruments that can actually tame globalising capitalism and establish transnational rights and standards. On the other hand, trade unions demands such as cohesion, non exclusion, democracy, security, participation, citizenship, progress on social rights, freedom, etc. can only be claimed under the security afforded by common standards.

FECCOO has given its support to the draft European Constitution, calling especially for a legally binding Charter of Fundamental Rights. As regards the text of the Constitutional Treaty, it is worth pointing out that its contents have been largely eroded through restrictions in the common foreign policy, and through ten years of delays in adopting a decision-

making process based on qualified majority. FECCOO, as other members of the European Trade Union Movement, will oppose a constitutional “mini-treaty” that would devalue the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

At a time when the crisis that had paralysed the EU has been overcome - although not in a very brilliant way - the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) must rely on a mandate from the Brussels Summit, which is not an easy task. Both the CCOO and UGT are calling for an official consultation procedure with the Spanish government, and both organisations support ETUC’s demands in Europe. In this way, we shall monitor the work performed in the IGC and analyse the results with greater knowledge and detail.

In Spain we are well aware of what the impact of European policies entails, as we have gone through a very rapid change, partly due to the solidarity of Europe and the approximation of policies on education, health and social rights in a European context, as well as the unremitting efforts of trade unions such as CCOO, acting as key social partners. We are at present dealing with legislative initiatives such as same-sex marriage or the equality act, which are ahead on the legislative front of other neighbouring countries.

Similarly, we have gone through very rapid changes in education. We are an example of how generalised education, the development in basic training, the expansion of the right to education and a better and more extensive vocational training have had an impact in the economic development of the country, as well as in the development of tolerance and other values of pluralistic and democratic societies.

As trade unions of professionals from every level of the education sector, we are particularly concerned about the leading role of the teaching profession and other educational staff as bearers of culture and the basis of the education of citizens who take an active part in society. We are building Europe from mutual knowledge and contact with each other. This is a task carried out by all the education centres in Europe. In this respect, we consider it a matter of priority to pay attention to a good quality of teacher education and initial and in-service training, to teachers’ working conditions, and to the respect for and recognition of the teaching profession in society. In these last months of the current government’s term FECCOO has continued to work unremittingly in Spain to achieve good Statutes for teachers’ rights as a matter of priority for securing the working conditions of professionals in the education sector.

Faced with the challenges of the knowledge society and the new contexts in which teachers have to operate, it is necessary to deal with factors that seem decisive for us to recognise the value of education and its professionals in society. Special attention must be paid to initial and continuous training for professionals in the education sector, by working to redefine the professional skills. Paying attention to the education sector means dealing with psycho-social factors, working conditions and esteem for the profession, new working conditions, the responsibility of the school, the profile of education centres, etc.

As trade unions in the education sector we are working to improve education overall, as well as in our communities. In Spain, FECCOO and FETE-UGT have put the need to conclude major education agreements, BYLAWS, on the agenda, and are endeavouring to make progress on the social dialogue. In Europe, we support the creation of a framework for the social dialogue, in particular under the European Higher Education Area, which we consider a more appropriate formula in our continent. In general, we support the approval of the EI Declaration on Professional Ethics, which cites the commitments that teachers have undertaken with regard to the profession, the students, their colleagues, education centres and families. However, this Declaration also refers to the commitment that society and the community have towards teachers.

Social Europe will not become a reality without a contribution from the trade union movement. Because the EU is not only a large market, but also the most important concentration of human capital, aware that work is the prime wealth of a country, the type of wealth that makes the other - financial - capital grow in the form of rights. For this reason, ETUC, and we the European trade unions from the education sector along with it, are aware we represent and lead this prime wealth of Europe, to assert its claims and to open the path to rights by mobilising our members and by concluding agreements.

For education and knowledge to be added values in Europe, we education professionals and our trade unions will have to play a fundamental role.



THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN EDUCATION

by Birgitte Birkvad, Head of Office, Danish Teacher Trade Unions International

The *European dimension* is an often used phrase within “the EU system” and it indicates that it is possible to point out common principles and values that will distinguish Europe from the rest of the world. The *European dimension* might also be used as an excuse for cross-national initiatives dealing with matters that are not clearly within the framework of the Treaty, e.g. education systems.

Within the framework of the Education and Training 2010 process, it was decided by the Commission to examine how the *European dimension* could be integrated into education and into the teaching of key competencies. The overall purpose was to find out if and how the *European dimension* could be part of teaching in the schools of Europe. It became the task of the Commission’s Working Group B - of which ETUCE was a member together with Member State representatives and other stakeholders - to sort out the matter. It became very fast to the members of the group that “the European Dimension” was far from being well defined. To some the *European dimension* in teaching is a question of assigning teachers the task of making all students “happy European citizens”; to others it might be a much more subtle matter related to shared values and a common history. But in the working group the

agreement that could be reached was that the *European dimension* is clearly connected with active citizenship.

“Schools can and will contribute by educating the students to become active and responsible citizens...”

Some efforts to define the *European dimension* have been made within the EU system in the last 20 years. But a clear definition does not exist. In the working group two papers were introduced: Resolution of the European Council (1988) and the Green Paper on the *European Dimension* in Education (1994). They both list objectives and strategies for implementing the *European dimension* in education, but no definition of the concept itself. The Green Paper, for instance, refers to “European Citizenship” that is based on “*shared values on interdependence, democracy, equality of opportunity and mutual respect*” for different cultural and ethnic identities and to educating people “*for democracy, for the fight against inequality, to be tolerant and to respect diversity*”. On other occasions the *European dimension* has been defined as ‘a shared political culture of democracy’. A Commission study group on Education and Training states in a report from 1997 that the *European dimension* could be defined as a whole range of key values that form the basis of a common European development: *Human rights/human dignity; fundamental freedoms; democratic legitimacy; peace and the rejection of violence; respect for others; a spirit of solidarity; equitable development; equal opportunities; the principle of rational thought/the ethics of evidence and proof; preservation of the eco-system; personal responsibility*. No doubt these are values that politicians would like to see as our common European characteristics, and no doubt that these are values that teachers try to embed in their teaching. The values are closely connected to the ideas of the Council of Europe on “Democratic Citizenship” and “Education for Democratic Citizenship”. All the big programmes on education, training and youth can be seen as tools to reach the objectives or ideas of the European Dimension.

Right now the objectives are challenged in many European countries. Racism and xenophobia pop up in the political landscape in many European countries and it is a well-known fact that welfare and democracy do not come out of the blue, but are benefits that must be taken into consideration and be taken care of on a daily basis. And, of course, the schools can and will contribute by educating the students to become active and responsible citizens.

One contribution from teachers is to make democracy a living and active part of daily life in schools. Democracy is not an intellectually acquired skill but is learned by practicing democracy within the framework of daily teaching. If young people are to learn to believe in all the above mentioned values, they must experience that they are heard and listened to. Involvement must “*pay off*”. Studies show that young people who believe strongly in democracy have been trained in involvement and democratic processes throughout their childhood and have experienced that they were *heard*.

The Commission paper on “European Dimension in the Key Competencies” defines the European dimension as “a cultural construction at individual and social levels”:

- *The European dimension enables to identify oneself as a European, which provides a continuation of perceptions of the life in a family, community, region, nation, EU, leading ultimately to the perception of being a world citizen.*
- *Socially it means living in a European house that is based on democracy, human rights and responsibility for a peaceful and sustainable development of the world.*
- *Culturally it means creation, maintenance, exchange and enjoying of a diverse, vital and rich heritage in terms of environment, architecture, music, literature and visual²*

This of course makes sense to teachers. To educate young people to the global realities of the future includes cultural awareness and cultural literacy. And the reality is that the *European dimension* is more than a common market. The European social model is worth fighting for. The members of the European teacher trade unions can contribute to a social Europe by ensuring that future generations know the common European history. That young people know that the peace and prosperity of Europe developed through devastating wars, but that along with the wars widespread cultural exchange took place throughout all times. We have learned from each other throughout history.

One way of looking at the EU is to see it as a framework for cultural exchange and a forum for conversation that at the end of the day prevent conflicts. Tomorrow's prosperity requires new skills, new ways of working together and political, economic and social reforms. Teachers can contribute to the process by making their students aware of the historical and cultural background for the idea of "The European House".

What values should be prevalent in Europe? Pure market forces - or solidarity and social cohesion? As citizens in Europe the teachers too must take a stand. We must strongly believe that what we achieved in modern Europe derives from skills and knowledge acquired through systematic education for all. So the teacher's contribution to "the European Dimension" is to ensure that their pupils have knowledge, skills and attitudes at local, national, European and global level, because we believe that stability and welfare are the children of knowledge.



THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AS SUSTAINERS OF CULTURE IN EUROPE, INCLUDING THE PROMOTION OF ACTIVE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP - THE CASE OF POLAND

by Dorota Obidniak, Coordinator of International Cooperation and Educational Projects, ZNP, Poland

Recently, Poland has witnessed a conflict, which a distinguished Polish journalist and writer called: "*conflict of societies - clash of narrow-*

² Working Group B: Key Competencies - Progress Report. November 2004, p. 9-13.

“One of the most important challenges for trade unions becomes searching for such solutions and forms of work which would make the organization more effective in defence of education and in aid of an open-minded society”

mindfulness and parochialism pitted against an open-minded approach of compromise and understanding.” He also stated that *“It has become increasingly obvious, the outcome of the struggle between these two will shape social, political and economic life for years to come.”* This conflict does not concern only Poland. We can see it in all parts of the World. We can state, however, that in countries where the economic and political system is undergoing transformation the danger of society becoming narrow-minded is higher than in other countries. It may become a great threat for the future of the European Union.

The possibility of turning into a narrow-minded society concept has dramatically increased in Poland, where the schools have become involved in the clash of these two visions. The former Minister of Education, leader of the ultra-right wing and nationalist party and adversary to the idea of Poland joining the European Union, Mr. Roman Giertych, has made education one of the actors in this conflict. He began by spectacularly sacking the head of the National Teacher Training Centre, a unique organization that has designed educational reforms and popularised new ideas in education, promoted active European citizenship, led many international projects and cooperated with the Council of Europe. The Centre’s head was dismissed for publishing the European Council Handbook on Teaching Human Rights. One of its 50 chapters discusses a ban on discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Although used by teachers in 19 countries, the Handbook has been banned in Poland as an example of homosexual propaganda. Even though the Court stated that the dismissal violates both Polish and international law, he was not brought back to work and the decision concerning the Handbook has not been withdrawn.

In his first year in office, the Minister called 100 press conferences in which he unveiled 35 of his own ideas. Among them were such inanities as:

- classes in patriotism
- high school *matura* examination (final examination after high school) in religion
- establishing a pro-life day which in fact is an anti-abortion day
- troublesome students to be placed under special supervision in designated schools
- teachers to report unruly students to the police
- teachers to be deprived of the choice of textbooks
- a record to be kept of pregnant female students, and
- thanks to a new law, passing 50 000 students who failed the final high school examination after the completion of the examination.

Most of the Minister’s ideas were downright foolish as well as harmful; they perpetuated stereotypes, referred to the worst practices, and often violated the law. Some of them were put into effect despite the clear protest of the educational establishment with The Polish Teachers’ Union among them. It’s not hard to notice that the “Giertychian” school has a very clear character - it is a restrictive school. It is a school where diversity is to be replaced by catholic doctrines. It is a school where there is no place for children with problems who need the most support. It is a school where there is no place for promotion of European ideas -

The Minister was against projects such as, a common handbook of European history.

Roman Giertych's removal did not lead to a change in the vision of educational policy because the reasons for his dismissal were not his views on school problems. The former Minister's actions divided students, teachers, public opinion and weakened the will to carry on the reforms. Hundreds of initiatives undertaken by schools before and after Poland joined the EU as well as the change in the approach to civic education, creating partnership between students, teachers and parents, building school autonomy, developing key competences have been stopped. Representatives of the Government disparaged of these initiatives at public conferences, they also ignored public protests against the Minister's decisions.

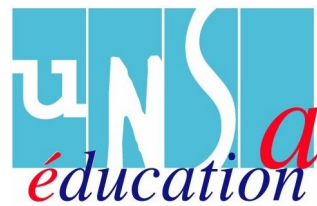
The school created today will not be able to cope with modern challenges. As Ms. Magdalena Środa - philosophy professor and the chief of the Office of Equal Status of Men and Women in the Government (2004-2005) - states, it perpetuates the attitude which she calls: *(...)civic educational nihilism. The Polish school does not teach civil attitude or political criticism, does not give the ability to function in the public domain and control it, and does not try to get pupils into the habit of resourcefulness and self-government. Young people are stuck between the poor lessons of catechism and the spirit of patriotism taken straight from the 19th century. (...) We have no reason to believe that the vacuum of the public domain will be filled with civil initiatives in the near future (...)*³.

Polish teachers are in a most difficult situation. They are lost and unprepared for the discussion on the shape of society in the future, they are dependent on the local set-up, nor always aware of their rights, nor always able to defend them. Despite all the attempts of the Polish Teachers' Union (information actions and protests), we have not managed to influence the attitude of this professional group of nearly 600 thousand teachers. ZNP's efforts were also successfully weakened by the Government's attitude towards the social partners whose role in recent years has been marginalized. Part of the responsibility for this situation falls on the social partners themselves. Some of them care more for the short-term gains in terms of terms and conditions than the well-being of education; and that is why they are ready to support the most unfortunate ideas from the Government as long as it brings even a temporary benefit. From this moment on, all the declarations made in the international arena and the direction of educational policies set by International Confederations, even if they used to support it, doesn't mean anything to them. Such an attitude of some of the trade unions in Poland leads to situations where ZNP acts mostly alone, and becomes an easy target for fierce attacks. In this context, the support of international organizations and their critical attitude to the Polish Government's policies were of the utmost importance. We do realize that this kind of situation is not only the domain of Poland and that we

³ *Jak powstał układ*, Gazeta Wyborcza, 5 September 2007, p. 20

can find examples of it in other EU countries, so we think that this issue needs an open discussion in the future.

In this situation, one of the most important challenges for trade unions becomes searching for such solutions and forms of work which would make the organization more effective in defence of education and in aid of an open-minded society and preparing and supporting teachers for whom this vision of education is the closest to their own aspirations. We hope that the “Teachers for social Europe” campaign will help us cope with these challenges.



CONTRIBUTION OF UNSA EDUCATION TO THE EI/ETUCE CAMPAIGN “TEACHERS FOR A SOCIAL EUROPE”

by Patrick Gonthier, General Secretary of 'UNSA Education' and Vice-President of Education International

“UNSA Education considers that giving all young people every opportunity to succeed and become integrated in society and the world of work is a duty.”

An enlarged Europe as a harbinger of democratic values, peace and freedom is also a challenge. UNSA Education plans to defend a social Europe built in the interest of citizens, taking into account the high social requirements that would ensure a high level of social protection for every European citizen, thereby pulling Europe upwards. It calls for a political and economic area of growth and solidarity, where all social rights are recognised. Since the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, the education systems have taken centre stage in European social and economic policies. Making the education systems a reference for quality in the world and investing in research and innovation are undeniably indispensable goals. Yet, one of the major challenges facing Europe, and more specifically social Europe, is that of policy of equal opportunities through the democratisation of the school. UNSA Education considers that giving all young people every opportunity to succeed and become integrated in society and the world of work is a duty. The school must prepare everyone for citizenship. It must be the place for forming the new citizen, for learning to “live together.”

UNSA Education defends a Europe of transparency and mobility that must rely on the mutual recognition of qualifications and competencies acquired in education and training systems whether formal, informal or non-formal. But for UNSA Education, the encouragement to mobility must go together with securing careers and advice and guidance measures must be taken.

The impact of the application of private sector methods on the education sector is an increasingly growing concern in many European countries. UNSA Education is against a levelling of training systems that would lead to competing education systems and entail job insecurity for teachers. It intends to spare no effort so that the quality - rather than the profitability - of education remains the main focus.

To this end, UNSA Education demands that public services be accorded means and resources commensurate with their ambitions so as to roll back failure and provide general education and qualification for all. UNSA Education considers that the quality of life of citizens depends on public services (general interest services, general economic interest services) that must meet their daily needs, and which are indispensable for their welfare. UNSA Education considers universal access to public services to be a fundamental right and a pillar of the European social model.

Teachers for a Social Europe



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