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## Conclusion of the ETUCE Treaty Campaign: Education subject to trade, but safeguards achieved!

As a result of new amendments presented within the very last week of the intergovernmental negotiations on the Constitutional Treaty, the final Treaty text now contains specific measures to safeguard our public education systems in relation to liberalisation of education services.

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## ETUCE Council and Conference

The annual ETUCE Council meeting took place in Amsterdam on 14-15 June 2004 on the theme *Education and the Lisbon Process: Developing policies on the use of indicators and benchmarks*.

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## ELFE website launched – join the debate

The ETUCE project on the use of ICT in education *ELFE – European e-Learning Forum for Education* has launched its website.

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## Calendar

27 September  
EI/ETUCE Bureau meeting

21-22 October  
EI/ETUCE Round Table on Teacher Education

8 November  
EI/ETUCE Bureau meeting

14-16 November  
ETUCE -ETUCO Seminar for new EU Member States

22-23 November  
ETUCE Conference launching ELFE project

## **Conclusion of the ETUCE Treaty Campaign: Education subject to trade, but safeguards achieved!**

Over the course of the intergovernmental negotiations on the new Constitutional Treaty, ETUCE has been pressing for a clear exemption of education from the scope of the EU's competencies within Common Commercial Policy, as in the Nice Treaty, or unanimous voting in the Council on all decisions on trade in education.

Twice during the Treaty negotiations has the Irish Presidency presented amendments on this particular issue. The first proposal of 29 April was largely a legal adjustment, ensuring that the same voting rules are applied for the adoption of external trade agreements as for internal legislation on the specific services area.

The second amendment, however, which was presented within the very last week of the negotiations and subsequently adopted in the final agreement on the Treaty on 18 June 2004, contains specific measures to safeguard our public education systems in relation to liberalisation of education services, going some way towards meeting the demands of ETUCE.

The final text now includes measures to protect the right of Member States to decide for themselves whether or not and to which extent they wish to open up for trade in education services. However, this right only exists in certain cases. Unanimous voting on trade in education is introduced in the case where the agreement is judged to "seriously disturb" the responsibility of Member States to provide education services. Otherwise, trade agreements in this area will be concluded by qualified majority in the Council. The draft Treaty text presented by the European Convention proposed qualified majority voting on any agreement on trade in education.

While ETUCE welcomes the specific provision on unanimity in comparison to the draft Treaty text, there are grounds for concern over the degree to which the specific wording of the text is open to interpretation.

Specifically, the Treaty article III-217 on EU Common Commercial Policy states that agreements in the field of trade in social, education and health services shall be decided by an unanimous vote in the Council in the cases where these agreements "*risk seriously disturbing the national organisation of such services and prejudicing the responsibility of Member States to deliver them*". The question of what determines when a given agreement "seriously disturbs" or "prejudices" Member States' educational responsibilities remains open to

interpretation. Hence, it will be a political interpretation that will determine when unanimous voting is introduced, not a legal safeguarding in the Treaty of each Member State's right to decide on the scope of trade with education services, as ETUCE has been advocating for.

However, in reviewing the Constitutional Treaty as a whole, ETUCE agrees with the ETUC that it represents a big step forward for Social Europe. The specific recognition of the role of the Social Partners and the Tripartite Summit, the Charter of fundamental rights, the inclusion of gender equality as a value of the EU, the legal base for Services of General Economic Interest and the social clause all mark significant progress in comparison to the Nice Treaty.

### **ETUCE Council and Conference 14-15 June 2004**

#### **Education and the Lisbon Process: Developing policies on the use of indicators and benchmarks**

“Create new, adequate indicators to inform us on the state of teacher education and professional development for teachers. Develop more qualitative indicators aimed at a broad range of important values and cross-curricular competencies fostered by the education systems as well as indicators that take account of the school environment. Always remember that indicators are a tool to improve educational outcomes, not an objective. Give teachers support and training in how to work with indicators and increase the involvement of teachers in the development of national education policies. Promote respect of cultural diversity and strengthen the social dialogue at the national as well as EU level.” Such were the key elements in the policy recommendations concluded at the annual ETUCE Council meeting held on 14-15 June in Amsterdam.

The theme of the meeting was *Education and the Lisbon Process: Developing policies on the use of indicators and benchmarks*. In April, ETUCE had received funding from the European Commission to hold a Conference on this theme; the two events were therefore combined.

Speakers this year included the Dutch Minister of Education, Mrs Maria van der Hoeven, who gave an informative talk on the priorities of the Dutch EU Presidency in the area of education. The Presidency will take the theme of “learning from each other” as its guiding line. Priority will be given to enhancing mobility, transparency and language learning in the “European Area of Education”. Equally, the Presidency will address the issue of the

role of education in promoting social cohesion and active citizenship, specifically in view of cultural diversity.

A representative from the European Commission, Mr. Anders Hingel, provided an overview of the Commission's work in the follow-up of the Lisbon education objectives, while Mr. Ulf Fredriksson, Mid Sweden University, in his intervention enquired into the question of whether the Lisbon Process is gradually leading the EU to a common European Union education policy.

The debate in the Council and Conference on how education policies influence indicators and vice versa was further informed by the presentation by Professor Peter Mortimore, former Director of the Education Department, University of London, on his views on the benefits and difficulties associated with using educational indicators, particularly addressing this topic from the perspective of the classroom teacher. In two panel debate sessions, ETUCE representatives in the Commission's expert groups dealing with the Lisbon follow-up work and representatives of member organisations respectively, led the discussions on future trade union policy on indicators and benchmarks.

The final report of the ETUCE Council and Conference will be sent to member organisations.

### **Meeting of the ETUCE Networks**

The first annual meeting within the new structure for the ETUCE Networks took place in Amsterdam on 16 June 2004.

The ETUCE electronic networks were recently expanded and restructured and now comprise the Development in Education Network, the Legal Experts Network, the Working Conditions Network and the Higher Education and Research Network.

The meeting included plenary interventions on the experiences derived from networking so far as seen by the ETUCE Secretariat, as well as by representatives of the networks. In separate meetings for each network, the networks had the opportunity to discuss their aims, methods and priorities for work in the near future.

The expansion of the ETUCE networks potentially to include one person per member organisation per network increases the possibility to strengthen the international cooperation, both among the education trade unions and between the ETUCE Secretariat and its member organisations.

Many positive views on the benefits of electronic networking were expressed in the meeting. ETUCE strongly encourages each member organisation to nominate a member to the networks, if they have not already done so, and to participate actively in the future work of the networks. Nominations should be sent to the ETUCE secretariat by letter, fax or electronic mail.

Log on and be connected to colleagues throughout the European Union!

### **The Council of Europe: the «other» European institution**

Created in 1949, it groups together 45 member states including more than 800 million Europeans. This intergovernmental political organisation is based in Strasbourg.

The Council was set up to:

- defend human rights and the rule of law in all its member states
- reinforce democratic stability
- fight against discrimination, racism and terrorism
- promote social cohesion and social rights
- promote the European cultural identity and the role of education.

The Council of Europe draws up recommendations and conventions which are binding for the States that ratify them.

About 400 international non-governmental organisations are recognised by the Council of Europe and were granted in November 2003 a participatory status, replacing their consultative status, which enables new fields of action, representation and influence.

The INGOs gather in thematic groupings regarding their field of activity, their centres of interest and their claims. The grouping on Education and Culture includes 110 organisations among which are ETUCE, EI and the WCT. Alain Mouchoux is the representative of ETUCE in the Council of Europe and was re-elected President of the Education and Culture grouping on 23 June 2004.

Many themes of work and activity of the Education and Culture grouping, as well as of the INGOs are directly linked to concerns and commitments of all ETUCE member organisations, for example:

- the teaching and learning of languages, the rights of the disabled persons in Europe, higher education and the Bologna process
- a reflection on formal, non-formal and informal education “which all contribute to developing practical and social cognitive competences”
- the preparation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> summit for heads of state and governments, to be held in 2005.

However, for many years the INGOs concerned with education and culture have mobilised on the issue of education for citizenship. It is a strong concept and theme which aims to help people to live together on a continent characterised by its cultural, ethnical and linguistic diversity and its historical evolution.

Democratic citizenship comes through education and training, by mutual knowledge and by living and acting in schools, in the family, in the street, in any collectivity: it is a condition for the equality of rights.

2005 has been instituted «The European Year for Citizenship through Education». The Council of Europe has called upon INGOs, associations and trade unions to mobilise on this issue by presenting achievements and actions undertaken to fight against social exclusion and to promote and develop the intercultural dialogue through education.

This is very close to EU priorities regarding education, as defined by the Dutch Minister of Education, who is chairing the Council of Ministers of Education from 1<sup>st</sup> July and who wants to develop a concept of European citizenship respecting cultural diversity and the democratic values shared by Europeans.

It is therefore necessary to act at every level in a coherent and coordinated way to make «the voice of teachers in Europe» heard.

### **ELFE website launched – join the debate**

The ETUCE project on the use of ICT in education *ELFE – European e-Learning Forum for Education* has launched its website. The website provides information on the aims, methods and events of the project, and contains a debate forum for discussing ICT in schools.

ETUCE encourages everyone to take part in the debate forum on how to use ICT in schools to maximise the student pedagogical benefit as well as to combine subject training with training of

personal and cross-curriculum competences. The website provides for separate debate forums for teacher unionists and the public respectively.

The website will publish reports of all ELFE events, including, in the near future, reports of the ELFE Steering Committee's study visits to lower and upper secondary schools in Denmark, Germany, Norway, Portugal and the UK being undertaken between May and September 2004.

During the two-year period of the project (2004-2005), presentations of Pilot Projects on ICT in European schools will also be posted on the site together with information on policies and initiatives within ICT in Schools.

The website is available at: [www.elfe-eu.net](http://www.elfe-eu.net)

### **Council Meeting – Education, Youth and Culture**

On 27-28 May 2004, the EU Ministers of Education, Youth and Culture met in Brussels. The Council adopted several conclusions and resolutions within the field of Vocational Education and Training and came to a political agreement on the new Europass proposal. In the area of the EU's mobility and exchange programmes, the Council adopted its conclusions on the European Commission's Communication of 9 March 2004 on the new generation of the education and training programmes after 2006.

#### **▪ Guidance throughout life in Europe**

In the context of the EU's aim to enhance lifelong learning, the Council adopted a resolution on improving the provision, quality and coordination of career guidance throughout the Union. The resolution takes a broad approach to guidance, referring to activities that enable citizens of any age to identify their capacities, competences and interests in order to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings. The resolution highlights among its priorities the importance of strengthening the involvement of the social partners in developing policy and systems related to guidance.

#### **▪ Quality assurance in vocational education and training**

As part of the follow-up of the Copenhagen Declaration (2002) to increase cooperation within the area of Vocational Education and Training, the Conclusion defines the outline of a Common Quality Assurance Framework. Such a framework aims to provide support for Member States in developing,

monitoring and evaluating their national or regional systems for quality assurance within vocational education and training, as well as to further EU cooperation in this area by increasing transparency and consistency between policy initiatives of individual Member States.

- **Identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning**

In referring among other policy papers to the European social partners' *"Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications"* (14 March 2002), the Council adopted a set of common European principles on the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. The principles are to be applied on a voluntary basis and aims to make visible and value the individual's full range of knowledge and competences. The common principles cover individual entitlements, obligations of stakeholders, confidence and trust, as well as credibility and legitimacy.

- **Europass**

With the Council reaching political agreement on the Commission's proposal for a new Europass – the single portfolio for documents related to the individual citizen's qualifications and competences – the proposal now awaits the vote of the European Parliament in the autumn and is on the way to being finally adopted by the end of 2004.<sup>1</sup>

- **Education and training programmes**

The Council adopted its conclusions on the Communication from the European Commission (9 March 2004) on the new generation of education and training programmes after 2006. The Council underlines the need to simplify the administrative and financial procedures in the programmes, and thus agrees with the Commission that a larger share of the administration of the programmes should be delegated to the National Agencies as from 2007. The European Commission will now draft the legislative proposal on the programmes, which is due to be finally adopted by the end of 2005.

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<sup>1</sup> See the ETUCE Newsletter number 3 (March 2004) for a detailed outline of the Europass proposal.

**New publications from Eurydice – the Information Network on Education in Europe**

*Keeping teaching attractive for the 21st century. The teaching profession in Europe: Profile, trends and concerns. General lower secondary education. Report IV. 2004.*

[http://www.eurydice.org/Doc\\_intermediaires/analysis/en/teachers\\_frameset\\_EN.html](http://www.eurydice.org/Doc_intermediaires/analysis/en/teachers_frameset_EN.html)

*Key data on information and communication technology in schools in Europe – 2004 edition.*

[http://www.eurydice.org/Doc\\_intermediaires/indicators/en/frameset\\_key\\_data.html](http://www.eurydice.org/Doc_intermediaires/indicators/en/frameset_key_data.html)

European Glossary on Education. Volume 1. Second edition:  
*Examinations, qualifications and titles.*

[http://www.eurydice.org/Doc\\_intermediaires/term\\_tools/en/frameset\\_glossaries.html](http://www.eurydice.org/Doc_intermediaires/term_tools/en/frameset_glossaries.html)

**The ETUCE Secretariat wishes you all a nice summer break.**

**The Secretariat will be closed from 19 to 23 July and from 9 to 13 August 2004.**