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Conclusions of the national education indicators adopted at Council meeting



Luxembourg Presidency
of the Council of the European Union

Under the Presidency of Luxembourg, the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) met on 23 - 24 May in Brussels. Chaired by Mady Delvaux-Stehres, Luxembourg's Minister for National Education and Vocational Training, the Council adopted the conclusions of the national education and training indicators.

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Third summit of the Council of Europe Warsaw, 16 & 17 May 2005

This third summit gathered 23 presidents and heads of government, 16 prime ministers and 7 ministers as well as the president of the Parliamentary Assembly, the president of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and, for the first time, a delegation of NGOs led by its president.

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Calendar

6 June:
ETUCE Networks Meeting,
Brussels

10 June:
ROMA Legal Seminar, Bratislava

13 June:
EI / ETUCE Bureau, Brussels

13 - 14 June:
EI Pan-European Committee /
ETUCE Executive Board, Brussels

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The Services Directive in the European Parliament - Update on Discussions

Several of the nine European Parliamentary Committees that have been asked to comment upon the Services Directive are taking a positive stance towards excluding education services from its scope.

The opinion of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), which was adopted on 24 April, contains the clear message that *"education services must be clearly excluded from the scope of the proposed Directive"*

On 24 May, draft opinions on the Directive were presented in the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) and in the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON)..

MEP Anne Van Lancker, who drafted the opinion by the EMPL committee, writes; *"This Directive should not apply to services that are guaranteed or financed, entirely or in part, by a Member State. This is particularly the case for educational...services,...including vocational/professional training"*. Ms Van Lanckner furthermore emphasises that the Directive should not apply to services which Member States subject to specific public services obligations (e.g. education).

Similarly, the draft opinion of ECON clearly states that the responsibility of Member States to organise their national education systems must be respected. ECON believe the Services Directive should not apply to the field of Education and Vocational Training.

The ECON and EMPL will present their opinions to the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO), who have ultimate responsibility for the directive, calling on the main rapporteur of the Directive, German Socialist Evelyne Gebhardt, to incorporate the proposed amendments in her final report. Ms Gebhardt presented the much awaited second part of her draft report on 24 May, elaborating the views expressed in the first part presented on 19 April. In the coming months, Gebhardt's draft report will be discussed, and according to the current timetable the IMCO are to agree on the report in September.

ETUCE welcomes these draft opinions all advocating that education should not be subject to the trade provisions in the proposed Directive. But vigilance is necessary; it is still unclear to what extent the Parliament will agree on this direction taken by the committees' rapporteurs.

ETUCE will continue its campaign on the Directive, ensuring that the sound public regulation needed to foster the multidimensional role education plays in society is not endangered by an expansion of trade in services in the internal market.

[Visit the campaign website](#)

Conclusions of the national education indicators adopted at Council meeting

Under the Presidency of Luxembourg, the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) met on 23 - 24 May in Brussels. Chaired by Mady Delvaux-Stehres, Luxembourg's Minister for National Education and Vocational Training, the Council adopted the conclusions of the national education and training indicators.



Luxembourg Presidency
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Strengthened cooperation with international organisations

Mr Delvaux-Stehres emphasised the increased necessity of having comparable and quality indicators to evaluate and compare the different educational systems in order to achieve the Lisbon objectives. He asked for more cooperation with international organisations active in the area of education to improve the consistency and avoid duplication of data collected by different bodies.

Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs

Based on a questionnaire prepared by the Presidency, the Council discussed the important role of education in the integrated guidelines from an economic and social perspective. The Ministers of Education debated how to contribute actively to the revised Lisbon Strategy and in the continuation of the "Education and Training 2010" work programme at national and European levels. It was emphasised that education not only plays an important role in economic activity but also has a crucial cultural and social mission.

The Council meeting ended with a short presentation of the future British Presidency's programme and acknowledgements to the Minister of National Education and Vocational Training for the progress made under the Luxembourg Presidency. General Secretary of ETUCE, Martin Rømer, participated in the Monday evening dinner, discussing relevant issues with the Ministers of Education and the Commissioner of Education, Ján Figel'.

Creation of a European Research Council

The report "Frontier Research: The European Challenge" concludes that a European Research Council (ERC) will be an instrument to link science to technological innovation, have a major effect on the level of excellence of research in Europe and benefit the European economy. The report was drafted by an Expert Group set up by the European Commission. Chaired by William C. Harris of the Science Foundation Ireland, the group is composed of scientists, research managers and economists from Europe and the United States.

The Expert Group was asked to examine the effects and benefits of creating a new European funding mechanism to support the very best

research carried out at the frontiers of knowledge. They conclude that a European Research Council would be arguably the single most effective means to remedy Europe's current weakness in high-quality research and in new, fast-developing research areas. The objectives of the European Research Council are identified in the report:

- Reinforcing excellence, with a focus on new, fast-growing research areas;
- Staying ahead in a world of growing scientific and technological competition;
- Linking science to technological innovation;
- Competing for talent and attracting the best researchers;
- Encouraging greater investment from the private sector.

Furthermore, the Expert Group identifies a number of important impacts and benefits beyond those achievable through national funding mechanisms alone:

- The ability to recognize, encourage and support the best talent through direct competition at pan-European level;
- Selectivity and agility, enabling resources to be focused on excellent research in the most promising areas for the future;
- Providing high status and visibility for truly excellent research leaders;
- Dynamic structural effects on the European research system by helping national research structures to adapt to the evolving European Research Area;
- Economic benefits through nurturing science-based industry and attracting more R&D intensive firms in Europe;
- Benefits to society from investing quickly in the knowledge necessary to tackle major issues.

The Commission has proposed the establishment of a European Research Centre within its proposal for the next Framework Programme for Research.

Draft opinion of CULT on protection of minorities

In a draft opinion, the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) of the European Parliament calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the body responsible, to incorporate its suggestions in its motion for a resolution on Protection of minorities and anti-discrimination policies in an enlarged Europe.

CULT suggests that the resolution should urge Member States to do their utmost to ensure the effective integration of the children of refugees, asylum-seekers and immigrants in education systems. Furthermore, the resolution should call on Member States to continue their efforts to improve the situation of the Roma/Sinti minorities by acting against discrimination in employment and housing, and by taking account of the particular educational requirements of Roma/Sinti children.

ETUCE welcomes the opinion of CULT, which is in line with the ETUCE ROMA project aiming at advocating ROMA children's integration in primary and secondary education. The project is of particular relevance in three Eastern and Central European countries; Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia.

ETUCE is pleased with the European Parliament's vote on the Working Time Directive

On 11 May, the European Parliament voted in favour of the updated version of the working time directive, submitted by Spanish Socialist Alejandro Cercas. The motion was passed with a convincing majority of 345 in favour to 264 against.

ETUCE welcomes the European Parliament's decision to eliminate the opt-out clause that currently offers countries the possibility of allowing individual employers and employees to agree on a working week of more than 48 hours. The vote in the plenary of the Parliament also agreed that all time spent on-call, including time not actually working, should be counted as 'working time'. Exceptions to this rule in specific sectors are still possible through collective bargaining.

After the vote, Alejandro Cercas said: *"We have today started a long march in favour of our social Europe. Our European citizens want sensible and reasonable working hours and they don't want social dumping in any part of the EU"*. ETUCE joins the ETUC and EPSU in welcoming this vote which defends the European social model and fundamental rights against neo-liberal ideas. We endorse the fight for health and safety of workers, social dialogue, and a better balance between work and family life.

Urgent action at national level is needed

The adoption of Cercas's amended directive is a first and important step, but it is clear that the battle with the Commission and the Council is not yet won. Disappointingly the Commission, represented by Commissioner Spidla, has announced that it would not be ready to accept most of the amendments proposed by the Parliament. Furthermore, the debate in the Employment Council on the Working Time Directive (June 2-3) is of great importance as some countries – the United Kingdom and eastern European countries in particular – might block the MEPs' vote.

Consequently it is crucial that ETUCE member organisations take action immediately at national level asking their governments – via parliamentary questions or otherwise – how they will respond to the outcomes of the vote in the European Parliament, and which position they will take on key issues in the Council. ETUCE has sent a letter to all member organisations urging them to approach their national governments ahead of the Council meeting in June. ETUCE member organisations should send a clear message to national governments demanding that the position expressed by the majority in the European Parliament is respected.

2005, European Year of Citizenship through Education The Warsaw Conference

ETUCE was one of 70 national NGOs, 20 INGOs and 20 Polish NGOs which gathered on 22 and 23 April in the Polish Senate for the Warsaw Conference.

This “Conference on the role of NGOs in Education for Democratic Citizenship” was organised under the Polish presidency of the Council of Europe and was part of the Action Plan of the European Year as determined in Sofia in December 2004.

The conference was organised into plenary sessions and workshops. Debates focused on the role and involvement of NGOs (including trade unions and associations) in our societies and their participation at a local, national and international level both within school programmes and outside schools.

A statement was adopted by the Conference and immediately approved by the Organising Committee of the Third Summit of Heads of State and Governments of the COE.

This statement calls for the continuation of activities in the area of Education Citizenship, which is an essential factor of democracy, social cohesion and the evolution of mentalities and behaviours.

[Declaration from the Conference on “The role of NGOs in Education for Democratic Citizenship”](#)

Third summit of the Council of Europe Warsaw, 16 & 17 May 2005

This third summit gathered 23 presidents and heads of government, 16 prime ministers and 7 ministers as well as the president of the Parliamentary Assembly, the president of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and, for the first time, a delegation of NGOs led by its president.

Major orientations and decisions were taken during this third summit which “will remain in history as the summit of the European unity” according to COE General Secretary, Terry Davis.

Jean-Claude Juncker, First Minister of Luxembourg and currently president of the EU has drafted a memorandum on the relationships between the EU and the COE “because both organisations are very complementary”.

Three conventions on terrorism, organised crime and the human trafficking were presented to 46 member states for ratification.

The adopted final declaration, as well as the action plan, invites the different countries to commit themselves to:

- reinforce the social, educational, cultural and health dimensions of our societies;
- intensify NGO participation in the COE actions;
- enable an equal participation of women and men;
- promote sustainable development;
- build a Europe for children;
- develop the intercultural dialogue;
- and, regarding education, “the task of building a society based on knowledge and of promoting a democratic culture to our fellow citizens, request increased efforts from the COE in the area of education in order to guarantee the access to education and improve its quality for all young people throughout Europe...”

On the eve of this summit, an extraordinary meeting of the INGO Liaison committee was held in presence of Terry Davis under the theme “*An undivided Europe, a Europe of solidarity*”.

Bologna Process: the Place and Role of Academic Staff is Recognised

After years of frustration, academic staff are now fully recognised through the integration of the Education International Pan-European Structure.

The decision was made at a conference for ministers of higher education of 45¹ European countries, held in Bergen on 19 - 20 May. The Communiqué² signed at the conference states: “*We underline the central role of higher education institutions, their staff and students*”

¹ 5 countries were integrated: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldavia, Georgia and Ukraine. It was mentioned that the territory limits for the process would be the same as for the Council of Europe.

² See <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

as partners in the Bologna Process. Their role in the implementation of the Process becomes all the more important now that the necessary legislative reforms are largely in place, and we encourage them to continue and intensify their efforts to establish the EHEA³."

EI expressed its satisfaction at this pledge, hoping that it would signify *"the starting point, at a national level, of a real involvement of academic staff in the implementation of the Bologna process"*.

In parallel to the ministerial conference, participants gathered in workshops on Research, Lifelong Learning, Quality of Education and Governance. Teacher organisations at national and European level must apply themselves to deepen their understanding of these issues.

The practice of mid-term review shows that the structural reforms led in most countries are being applied. This review, which mainly focused on the 2-cycle structure, the quality and the recognition of diplomas and periods of study, will continue in anticipation of the next conference to be held in London in May 2007. Furthermore, three priorities were established for the two next years. They concern the link between higher education and research, the social dimension and the mobility of students and staff. These are crucial points on which academic staff and their organisations will have to express and commit themselves at European, national and institutional level.

With this in mind, the collaboration between all partners in the process (including ESIB, EUA, UNESCO/CEPES, and ENQA⁴) must be intensified. This will mean more work for the Higher Education and Research Standing Committee and the on-line network.

Finally it should be noted that for the first time the "external" dimensions of the Bologna Process were discussed; issues dealing with the attractiveness of the European space and the cooperation with other regions in the world among them. Participants were reminded that this international cooperation should be based on "academic values" and meet the *Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*, currently developed by OECD and UNESCO.

Highlights from the EI/ETUCE Bureau meeting 28.04. 2005

Bologna process: A discussion took place how to ensure an integrated approach to a possible partnership in the Bologna Process. So far ETUCE has been the driving force to obtain a partnership and the application has changed to admit the Pan-European Structure of EI. The Bureau concluded that ETUCE and EI internally would have to work out procedures that would ensure an integrated approach from teachers.

³ European Higher Education Area

⁴ European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Service Directive: The Bureau endorsed and acknowledged the ETUCE secretariat campaign and the results so far. On the basis of a general approach to trade in Education it was decided to put "Trade in Education" as one of the themes for discussion in the EI Pan-European Committee / ETUCE Executive Board in June.

Education and Training 2010: On the basis of the information about the new and integrated EU Commission approach to the different education processes: Bologna, Copenhagen, Lifelong learning and General education in the Lisbon Process, the Bureau decided to give time for a general discussion in the Committee/ Executive Board in June for a debate on the "Education and Training 2010" Process.

ETUCE Projects: The Bureau was informed about the current state of projects, and especially the surveys on "The state of the Social Dialogue for teachers in Europe" and on "Teachers Working Time in Eastern Europe". Both surveys are expected to be presented at a Social Dialog Seminar in Vilnius the 3 July.

ETUCE Council: The Bureau decided to suggest to the Committee/ Executive board in June that the themes for discussion at the Council meeting the 5 and 6 December should be the most important issues in the "Education and Training 2010" Process including the Commissions proposals for European Frameworks on qualifications and competencies in teacher education, vocational education and training and lifelong learning. In the higher education context, the impact of the Bologna Process on teacher education should be discussed.

ETUCE Foundation: As many other trade unions ETUCE has to deal with new regulations from EU to obtain funding for projects. New regulations from the European Commission require ETUCE to prove it self as a legal entity under Belgian law. For this purpose an ETUCE Foundation will be established with specific statutes recognised by Belgian authorities and the European Commission. The ETUCE Executive Board will in the meeting in June be asked to approve the creation of an ETUCE Foundation and the final statutes. The creation of the Foundation will enable ETUCE to receive funds for projects in the future without any legal problems.

ETUCE Finances: The treasurer presented a final Financial Report for 2004, showing a healthy state of ETUCE and a positive result for the year. The report will be presented for approval by the Executive Board in June.

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ETUCE Networks Meeting, Brussels

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ROMA Legal Seminar, Bratislava

13 June:

EI / ETUCE Bureau, Brussels

13 - 14 June:

EI Pan-European Committee / ETUCE Executive Board, Brussels

16 - 17 June:

EU: June 2005 Summit of Heads of States, Brussels

2 July:

CEE Working Group, Vilnius

3 July:

ETUCE Social Dialogue, Regional Seminar, Vilnius

8 July:

ROMA Legal Seminar, Sofia

New Publications

- [Report, Social Dialogue in Education: 'Training seminar II'](#)
- [ETUCE Brochure: "A Constitution for Europe and Workers' Rights"](#)
- [Report: "Bologna Process Stocktaking"](#)
- [Report: "A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area"](#)