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Hearing of Jan Figel, Commissioner-Designate for culture, education, training and multilingualism

The Commissioner-Designate Mr. Jan Figel of Slovakia faced questions on mobility, private investment in education and the Lisbon strategy during his hearing at the European Parliament.

[>>> Read more](#)



New Campaign:

Europe Needs Teachers!

ETUCE wishes to initiate a debate in all Member States concerning the quality of the teaching profession and whether there is a shortage or a sufficient number of teachers in their countries. As a result, ETUCE is launching the *Europe Needs Teachers* campaign!

[>>> Read more](#)

Unacceptable revision of working time directive

The proposal is clearly contradictory to the fundamental principal objective of the directive – *health and safety of workers*.

[>>> Read more](#)

Calendar 2004

21-22 October
Higher Education
& Research
Standing
Committee
Meeting

8 November
EI/ETUCE Bureau
meeting

9 November
Quality advisory
panel

14-16 November
ETUCE-ETUCO
Social Dialogue
Seminar

22-23 November
1st European
eLearning Forum
for Education
(ELFE)

6 December
EI Pan-European
Committee /
ETUCE Executive
Board

New generation of Programmes

On 14 July 2004, the European Commission adopted ambitious proposals for programmes in the education, youth, culture and audiovisual fields. These will replace the current programmes for the period 2007-2013 and will be a step towards achieving the Lisbon objective, i.e. making Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010.

Integrated lifelong learning programme

The integrated lifelong learning programme proposed by the Commission builds on the current Socrates, Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci programmes, the eLearning programme, the Europass initiative and the various actions funded through the Community action programme to promote bodies active at European level and support specific activities in the fields of education. In addition, the Erasmus Mundus programme should be incorporated as an additional programme within the Integrated Programme from 2009. Finally, the proposal incorporates a *Jean Monnet* Programme to support action related to European integration and European institutions and associations in education.

In order to make the new programme an adequate instrument to support the Lisbon objective, the budgetary envelope will need consequent expansion. The proposed indicative financial amount is set at € 13.620 billion for the 7 years of the programme.

The distribution of activities differs somewhat from the current programmes. The most important change is that advanced vocational education transfers from Leonardo to Erasmus. Furthermore, the Erasmus actions include higher education student placements in companies (formerly in Leonardo) and envisage specific mobility arrangements for students on Joint Masters programmes. In Leonardo da Vinci, the project's action has been revised. A new partnership action will consist of small-scale projects enabling training organisations to co-operate on themes of mutual interest and the networks action has been significantly reinforced. In Grundtvig, new mobility actions are proposed to support the mobility of adult learners, staff exchanges and European assistantships in addition to adult educators (the current action of Grundtvig was limited almost exclusively to the latter).

New quantified targets

The Commission has revised the quantified targets set out in the earlier Communication, in the light of changes to the amounts it now proposes in the detailed financial perspective 2007 – 2013. The targets are:

- 1 in 20 school pupils involved in Comenius actions 2007 – 2013
- 3 millions Erasmus students by 2011
- 150,000 Leonardo placements by 2013
- 25,000 Grundtvig mobilities by 2013

In the light of the wide consensus on the value of the programmes, and of the new challenges following the Lisbon targets, the Commission concludes that the new Integrated Programme for education and training should aim for a substantial increase in volume and effectiveness compared to the current programmes.

A simpler and more decentralised programme

Pressure for a simpler and more flexible programme has emerged from the public consultation from Member States, from the National Agencies and from the Commission itself in its budgetary Communication. The simplification implies further consideration, in particular, of the following areas:

- A greater use of flat-rate grants and scales of unit costs.
- Providing simpler application forms and contracts.
- Extending the co-financing through contributions in kind and limiting the accounting obligations of beneficiaries in such cases.
- Simplified documentation on the financial and operational capacity of beneficiaries.

Moreover, the Commission proposes that more activity should be managed at national level, through the network of National Agencies. It is appropriate to administer actions through National Agencies where one or more of the following conditions apply:

- An objective method of distributing budgetary resources between Member States can be established, reflecting the rate of occurrence of the activity.
- The actions are small-scale or addressed to individuals, so that a full selection at European level is not warranted.

- The actions address needs specific to individual Member States.

The proposal envisages two types of National Agency procedures. The first (currently applied to all decentralised actions within Socrates and to the mobility actions of Leonardo) will continue to be the most widespread.

The second type is designed to replace the current “procedure B” under Leonardo and allows for National Agencies to select entire transnational or multilateral projects and to fund the participation of all partners concerned through the coordinator, subject to a favourable decision from the Commission.

Synergy, flexibility and efficiency

The Commission’s proposal for an integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning responds to the emergence of lifelong learning as a paradigm for the organisation of education and training in the knowledge society. Hopefully, a single integrated programme will allow greater synergies, flexibility and efficiency.

Read the Commissions proposals:

[Integrated action programme pdf.file](#)

[Youth in action programme pdf.file](#)

Successful conference and *European night* in Budapest

A Conference of Central and Eastern European Teachers Trade Unions took place in Budapest from 23rd to 26th September 2004. The programme concentrated on working conditions, especially working time for teachers. A report of the conference will soon be available. During the conference, ETUCE and GEW hosted an International reception called *European Night*.

The reception was a celebration of the enlargement of European Union and the cooperation between all teacher organisations in Europe, with 70 participants at the Benczúr Hotel.

Hearing of Commissioner-Designate Jan Figel

Mr. Jan Figel, Commissioner-Designate for Slovakia, will be responsible for the portfolio “Culture, education, training and multilingualism”. During the hearing at the European Parliament on 27th September, he pointed out that the Lisbon strategy is more ambitious than all the efforts deployed to put the internal market in place. Questions on mobility, private investment and the new generation of programmes were asked by MEPs to Mr. Figel.



Mobility must be greatly improved

In reply to pessimistic questions concerning the attainment of the Lisbon strategies, Mr. Figel stated that work needs to be speeded up at both Community and national level. Priority has to be given to lifelong learning and the European system for transferring and accumulating course credits in higher education should provide a model for a similar system in the field of vocational training. *Mobility must be greatly improved, both between geographical regions and sectors of activity, in order to create a dynamic European labour Market*, he stated.

Encouragement to partnership between the public and the private sectors

With reference to figures in the EU budget on education, Mr. Figel indicated, whereas public investments in education and research in the Member States was close to the target of 3% of GDP, private investment was falling short, particularly compared to the United States and Japan. *The United States has both the knowledge and the capital, whereas in Europe we are desperately short of risk capital, for example to promote research and innovation*, said Mr. Figel. Additionally, he emphasised that the Commission intends to give further encouragement to partnerships between the public and private sectors and between universities and industry. The Commissioner-Designate was not opposed to the idea of private bursaries which, he believed, can ensure better access to Community Programmes for people in the less developed parts of Europe.

New generation of programmes: Simplification of procedure

Several MEPs voiced disappointment at the slow, complicated procedures of Community Programmes and asked for clarification of Mr. Figel's concept of *better regulation*. According to Mr. Figel it substantially means *smarter regulation* as it might be less in terms of content but better prepared, more thorough and based on a longer but simplified consultation procedure. He promised to speed up the implementation of the reforms and emphasised that the aim of the new programmes is to increase the number of citizens benefiting from mobility for learning purposes.

He also underlined the importance of teachers as opinion formers and pointed out that part of the new Erasmus Mundus programme focuses on teacher mobility.

The Commissioner-Designate looks on his portfolio as a challenge: *The measures needed in the field of education are vital to achieve the Lisbon goals and to promote economic growth.*

ETUCE Website launched!

A new ETUCE website provides information on the aims, projects and events of ETUCE, as well as the latest news in the field of education and training. The website will publish reports of all ETUCE events and it contains links to relevant publications from a wide range of organisations and institutions. Furthermore, links lead to specific ETUCE projects such as ELFE – *European e-learning Forum for Education* – and the *Europe Needs Teachers* campaign. However, because of resource limits some parts of the website are still to be developed over the coming period.

The website is accessible at: www.csee-etuice.org

Unacceptable revision of Working Time Directive

On 24th September, the Commission adopted a proposal to update key aspects of the Working Time Directive. According to the Commission, it is a balanced

package of inter-related measures which retains the principal objective – health and safety of workers – while responding to the needs of the modern European economy. Nevertheless, ETUCE finds the proposal unacceptable as it clearly contradicts the fundamental objectives of the Directive and other existing Community legislation.

Increase of individual opt-out

The proposal states that Member States can put measures into place at national level to apply the individual opt-out to the 48 hour limit. The individual opt-out will be dealt with by collective agreement or by agreements between two sides of industry within a sector or workplace. A worker can agree to opt out with the employer directly when, under national legislation or practice, collective bargaining cannot be used to negotiate agreements on working time.

At first glance, the proposal seems to restrict the use of the opt-out. However, on closer examination, it does not at all lead to a restriction, and may even lead to an increase in various forms of opt-out of maximum working time regulations. It might cause increased pressure on trade unions at the negotiation table to accept individual opt-outs within the framework of a collective agreement. The employer may threaten not to have a collective agreement, or even not to recognize the trade union at all!

Extension of reference period from 4 to 12 months

Member States will be given the possibility to extend the standard reference period for calculating the average working week of 48 hours from 4 months to up to one year in order to allow companies greater flexibility. This might lead to very long working hours per week on a regular basis (up to 85 hours!) as well as a very irregular and unpredictable working time pattern, which will make it very hard for workers to manage their working and private lives.

Introduction of *inactive part of on-call time*

In the current working time directive, European Court of Justice-judgements have defined on-call duty as working time. Under the revised proposal a new category of on-call time is created, the “inactive” part of on-call time. This is the time the worker, although available for work at his place of employment, does not carry out his duties. This will not be counted as working time, unless Member States or collective agreements regulate otherwise. In addition, the proposal specifies that compensatory rest does not have to be given immediately, but within a reasonable time not exceeding 72 hours.

Lack of work-life balance

The proposal states that reconciliation of work and family life is an essential element allowing the European Union to attain the Lisbon objectives. But the Commission refers the issue to the Member States, stating that *it is for Member States to encourage social partners to conclude agreements to ensure better compatibility between work and family*. In conclusion, the proposal as presented does not take the needs of workers and families seriously.

The proposal will now be sent to the Council and the Parliament for agreement. ETUCE will follow the discussion very closely and provide Member Organisations with full background material.

[Read the proposal...pdf.file](#)

Launching of ETUCE Campaign:



*Europe needs not only a sufficient number of teachers. Europe needs all teachers to be highly qualified in order to meet the challenges deriving from the expectations set out in the Lisbon strategy. It is the very quality of the education systems in our countries that is at stake. As a result, ETUCE is launching the **Europe Needs Teachers** campaign!*

Teachers meet new challenges

A new European education policy has gradually been developed since the Lisbon European Council in 2000. The general purpose of this new policy is to improve the quality of the European education systems so that Europe is more competitive in the world market. Such a step can only be taken if teachers are given the proper support to do a better job. Europe also needs an increased number of new teachers because of the growing shortage in many countries and in several key subjects.

ETUCE has considered it one of our most important priorities to improve the quality of the teaching profession, to recruit and retain qualified teachers and to ensure a continuous professional development for teachers. However, this cannot be achieved without the active contribution of teachers and their organisations. That is why, this campaign has been initiated.

Purpose of the campaign

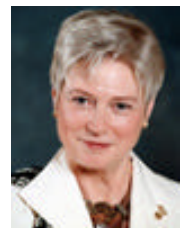
ETUCE wishes to initiate a debate in all Member States concerning the quality of the teaching profession and whether there is a shortage or a sufficient number of teachers in each country. Therefore, it is imperative that all of our member organisations are aware of the current situation in each Member State and this campaign should make the Member States accountable for their responsibilities. As a result, ETUCE has taken the initiative to organise several hearings ([see campaign programme Pdf.file](#)) and a concluding Conference will take place in the summer 2005.

It is our sincere hope that this campaign will shed light on the teaching profession and ETUCE hopes to create a stronger focus upon the matter from in our Member Organisations. This focus should initiate actions both on European and national levels in order to recognise the importance of teachers and to ensure a continual development of the teaching profession and its quality assurance.



Dutch Presidency brings research into focus

At the EU inauguration meeting on 1st July in Maastricht, the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Ms. van der Hoeven, outlined her ambitions for Europe, focusing on developing a European research area.



Ms. van der Hoeven agreed that the European research area can best be achieved by strengthening publicly-funded fundamental research, but in her speech she emphasized that private investment in Research & Development is needed as well. Furthermore, the public knowledge infrastructure will have to put more effort into marketing its research results and translate knowledge into social and economic capital.

The Dutch Presidency has set the following priorities:

- Evaluation of the new instruments in the sixth Framework Programme
- Research infrastructures

- Interaction between the public knowledge infrastructure and industry
- The 3% target
- Researcher mobility and career opportunities and
- A real European Research Council

It is now a matter of achieving all the priorities for the first full Presidency with 25 Member States.

ETUCE met with the Dutch Minister of Education during the ETUCE Council in Amsterdam in June and the Dutch Presidency has invited ETUCE to participate in a number of meetings this autumn.

Green Paper on Equality in an enlarged European Union

A Green Paper issued by the Commission on 28 May 2004 analyses the progress that has been made so far in the European Union on tackling discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation. As the Green Paper has not yet been discussed in the Committee for Employment and Social Affairs, ETUCE encourages all Member Organisations to respond with statements.

The Commission launched a consultation process on 1 June 2004 using mainly an on-line questionnaire in order to receive responses from other EU Institutions, Member States, public authorities, business and social partners, NGOs and other stakeholders, as well as interested individuals regarding non-discrimination and equal treatment.

The public consultation period ended on 31 August 2004, but ETUCE and its Member Organisations can still influence the debate if needed. The reactions gathered from all interested parties will be passed on to the new Commission in November 2004 and will thereby be taken into account when drafting the new EU Social Policy Agenda during 2005.

High unemployment rate of older workers and women

Although the Green Paper is wide-ranging in some areas, it contains some specific points relevant to all Member States

and our Member Organisations. One of the major concerns is the relatively high unemployment rate of older workers and women in the new Member States. As one of the aims of the Lisbon Strategy, action is needed in order to raise the labour participation rate of older workers by 2010 (the average being only 30.5%).

Furthermore, the Commission calls for a greater availability of data (specified by gender) when collecting, monitoring and analysing the effectiveness of legislation and discrimination measures in the Member States. Such a proposal is not easily implemented but it would help to support the development of anti-discrimination policies

The Commission wishes to launch a dialogue on anti-discrimination with the western Balkan countries, the newly independent States¹, the Western newly independent States², the Southern Mediterranean³ and Russia to ensure every individual's right to non-discrimination.

Even though much remains to be done in order to ensure the implementation of Racial Equality and Employment Equality Directives in some Member States, the adoption of Article 13 of the EC Treaty reflects the recognition of an integrated approach towards the fight against discrimination (whether of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation).

In conclusion, the Commission stresses the need for further action / cooperation from the National authorities, the European Parliament, social partners (interest groups), NGOs, regional and local authorities if we are to change behaviour and attitudes across the enlarged EU.

ETUCE recommends all of our Member Organisations to consult the Green Paper online in order to initiate, at every level, a coherent understanding of equality and non-discrimination in our enlarged European Union.

Consulting the Green Paper:

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/gpr/2004/com2004_0379en01.pdf

¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

² Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus.

³ Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia.

New Publications

New Publications from ETUCE

[ETUCE Council Report: Education and the Lisbon Process – Developing policies on the use of indicators and benchmarks Pdf.file](#)

[Report: ETUCE Networks Meeting Pdf.file](#)

New Publications from ETUC

A new publication of the ETUI and SALTSA: [Six years of the European Employment Strategy: Summary of ETUI-SALTSA publications on the EES \(2001-2004\)](#)

New Publications from Eurydice

[Survey: Integrating immigrant children into schools in Europe Pdf.file](#)