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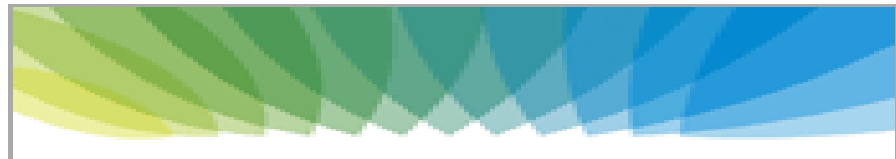
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Efficiency and Equity - not necessarily mutually exclusive

On 29 September, ETUCE General Secretary Martin Rømer addressed representatives of EU Member States and stakeholders at the Finnish Presidency Conference on the theme "Lifelong Learning, Efficiency and Equity – from Theory to Practice", held in Helsinki on 28-29 September.

The conference was organised in the context of the Commission's recently released Communication "*Efficiency and Equity in European education and training systems*", which argues that, contrary to what some may think, policy measures which seek to increase equity are not contradictory to efficient education systems. In taking an economic approach to the issue, the Commission argues that equity measures are *per se* also increasing the efficiency of education systems, as raising the educational level of the population brings significant societal and economical gains in the long run.

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Social Dialogue in Education

In October 2006, ETUCE will launch a series of seven regional seminars on social dialogue which will take place during the autumn of 2006 and the spring of 2007. Grouping three to four countries each, the seminars will bring together teacher unions and employer representatives to joint discussions on the prospects of setting up a sectoral social dialogue committee in education at EU level. The series of bipartite regional seminars will enable in-depth discussions between ETUCE member organisations and employers in education at national level.

[>>> Read more](#)

Calendar

October

12: Ahead of Entrance - Cooperation between Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, Seminar, Bucharest

13: Towards a European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education, Regional Seminar for Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, Bucharest

24: Towards a European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education, Regional Seminar for Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, Vilnius

30 - 31: ETUCE Executive Board/ EI Pan-European Committee, Brussels

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The conference was organised in the context of the Commission’s recently released Communication “*Efficiency and Equity in European education and training systems*”, which argues that, contrary to what some may think, policy measures which seek to increase equity are not contradictory to efficient education systems. In taking an economic approach to the issue, the Commission argues that equity measures are *per se* also increasing the efficiency of education systems, as raising the educational level of the population brings significant societal and economical gains in the long run. The statistics underline the importance of setting focus on this issue: although the general level of education of the population in the EU has been rising steadily since the 1960’s, education systems are still not good in delivering equity. Research shows that education systems reproduce rather than reduce the inequalities in the social and economic standing of the population. The socio-economic background of pupils still exerts too large an influence on their learning outcomes and educational opportunities. The gap between the educational attainment level of the labour force and the qualifications needed on the labour market is also worrying: In 2004, 32% of the labour force in the EU were low-skilled but in 2010 only 15% of the new jobs will be for those with only basic schooling.

In addressing the Conference, Martin Rømer notably took issue with the Communication’s recommendation on introducing tuition fees in higher education. The Communication argues that tuition fees accompanied by financial assistance for those in need would bring about a more equitable balance between costs and benefits for the individual and the society, as it currently is mainly students from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds who benefit from higher education, with considerable private returns. Mr. Rømer stressed that there is no evidence that tuition fees increase the student intake in higher education, nor that fees can close the funding gap in higher education. If we want to increase the opportunities for pupils from low-socio economic backgrounds to enter into higher education, we need to create learning environments at earlier stages in the education sector, which will make pupils choose to enter higher education, stressed Mr. Rømer, and continued: Economic incentives do not in themselves bring about the desired increase in young people achieving a higher education degree. In drawing attention to the predominantly economic perspective of the Communication, Mr. Rømer moreover called on the Commission to consider more carefully the relation between equity and efficiency. Equity needs to be looked at both in terms of equal access and in terms

of equal opportunities in the learning environment in each school. Moreover, priorities for investment in education should not be ruled by a principle of distribution *within* the education sector according to where the greatest economic returns can be found. We need sufficient investment in education to satisfy the funding needs of both the pre-school area as well as for higher education and lifelong learning, and it is a political priority to ensure that the funding is there, stressed Martin Rømer.

The main recommendations in the Communication

The Communication addresses the whole lifelong learning continuum with a view to proposing policy measures which increase equity. The Commission calls on Member States to engage in long-term investment planning, to develop a culture of evaluation, and to ensure interplay between education policies and related fields, such as employment, social inclusion, health, justice and economic policies, in order to address educational disadvantage. With regard to each level of the education sector, investment in pre-primary education and improving the supply of specially trained pre-primary teachers are highlighted as an effective means to promote greater equity with long lasting benefits, as it facilitates learning at later stages and prevents early school leaving. The Commission refers in this context to research showing that the pre-primary school level produces the highest rates of return compared to intervention at later stages of the education sector. In addition, the Commission sets forth the following policy measures:

- No separation of pupils into educational “tracks” at too early an age
- Improving teacher quality and recruitment procedures in disadvantaged areas
- Designing autonomy and accountability systems in order to avoid inequity
- Reducing the funding gap in higher education with tuition fees combined with financial assistance for the disadvantaged
- Offering a more differentiated range of provision in higher education
- Clear and diverse pathways through VET to further learning and employment

Further action

The ETUCE Executive Board is expected to adopt a statement on the Communication at their meeting on 30-31 October 2006, incorporating the Higher Education and Research Standing Committee’s statement from their meeting on 26-27 September. The Council of Education Ministers will adopt a Resolution on this subject at their meeting on the 13-14 November 2006.

The entire communication is available in several EU languages at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comm481_en.pdf

The Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/sec1096_en.pdf

Towards a European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education



In October 2006, ETUCE will launch a series of seven regional seminars on social dialogue which will take place during the autumn of 2006 and the spring of 2007. Grouping three to four countries each, the seminars will bring together teacher unions and employer representatives to joint discussions on the prospects of setting up a sectoral social dialogue committee in education at EU level.

On the part of ETUCE, the political decision to work towards establishing a sectoral social dialogue at EU level was taken with the adoption of the ETUCE Action Plan on Strengthening Social Dialogue in Education in December 2005. At EU level, social dialogue between trade unions and employers has been steadily developing since 1985, when the first possibilities for an autonomous dialogue between the European Social Partners at cross-industry level became a reality. In 1998, the EU social dialogue underwent an important development, as the European Commission decided to allow for the establishment of sectoral social dialogue committees. Until now, 33 sectoral committees have been established, but none of these are directly involved in the area of education. One of the reasons for this is that employers within education at national level are not organised at EU level. There has, in other words, so far not been a partner to represent the employers of teachers vis-à-vis ETUCE at EU level.

The series of bipartite regional seminars in 2006/2007 will enable in-depth discussions between ETUCE member organisations and employers in education at national level on the possibilities inherent in establishing an EU level dialogue in education, its implications at national level, the influence to be gained at EU level, as well as how an EU-level dialogue in turn can strengthen the social dialogue in education at national level.

A high-level representative from the European public employers' organisation CEEP will participate in all the regional seminars in order to present the views on a Euro-level sectoral dialogue from the employers' perspective. In May 2007, the series of regional seminars will be followed by a Status Conference inviting ETUCE affiliates and employer representatives to jointly discuss the further steps to be taken.

The regional seminars build on the extensive knowledge about social dialogue obtained through the two surveys undertaken by ETUCE in

2005 and 2006 concerning the status of social dialogue in education in Europe, and the status and role of employers in education. These exploratory studies have permitted ETUCE to obtain a comprehensive picture of social dialogue in education in EU/EFTA and candidate countries.

In the near future, ETUCE will launch a new website on social dialogue in education, providing both ETUCE affiliates and employers in education with the latest information on the ongoing process.

Dates and venue for the regional seminars in the autumn of 2006:

13 October, Bucharest: Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania

24 October, Vilnius: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

15 November, Ljubljana: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland

14-15 December, Cyprus: Cyprus, Malta, Croatia, Turkey

Regional seminars for the 15 old Member States are currently being planned for the spring 2007.

The European Qualifications Framework

On 14 September, ETUCE launched the second consultation among member organisations on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). ETUCE has invited member organisations to communicate their views on the recently released formal proposal on the EQF, presented by the European Commission on 5 September 2006. The formal proposal is the outcome of the former Europe-wide consultation process, which the Commission undertook during the second half of 2005 on the first outline of the EQF. At that time the ETUCE secretariat consulted all member organisations on the EQF, which concluded in an ETUCE statement adopted by the Executive board in December 2005. Now it's time for a second round.

The formal proposal

Based on a first analysis of the formal proposal, ETUCE is pleased to note notably two amendments: one concerning the involvement of social

partners in the implementation of the EQF and one concerning the descriptors relating to personal competences. Two amendments, ETUCE also drew attention to in the ETUCE statement from 2005.

In response to the consultation in 2005, ETUCE called on increased involvement of social partners at both national and European level in the development and implementation of the EQF. In the new proposal this involvement is recognised by the setting up of a European Qualification Framework Advisory Group, including representatives of the European social partners and other stakeholders to monitor, co-ordinate and ensure the quality and overall coherence of the process of relating qualification systems to the EQF. The proposal also includes a recommendation to involve national social partners in the work of the national centres designated to coordinate the implementation of the EQF in each country.

With regard to the descriptors on personal competences, the EQF paper from 2005 covered four different subdivisions of personal competences: 1) autonomy and responsibility, 2) learning competences, 3) communication and social competences and 4) professional and vocational competences. Variations in all four subdivisions referred to each level of learning outcomes. The direct link between learning outcome levels in terms of knowledge and skills and learning outcome in terms of personal competences was subject to criticism in the opinion of ETUCE, as a qualification's knowledge- and skill-level also directly referred to e.g. the holder of the qualification's ability to interact with others, and display solidarity. In the new proposal the category is simplified and now only describes competences in terms of responsibility and autonomy in relation to study and/or work situations.

Other demands put forward in the ETUCE statement from 2005 have also been met in the new proposal, including an evaluation and possible review of the EQF after a period of 5 years.

Future action to be taken

Despite the amendments there is still reason to be attentive in relation to some aspects of the EQF, especially the question of how the EQF will strike a balance whereby it achieves a convergence of national qualifications systems but without leading to standardisation of systems.

The ETUCE Executive Board is expected to adopt a statement on the EQF at their meeting on 30-31 October 2006. In order to prepare the statement all member organisations are invited to send possible comments to the ETUCE secretariat by 16 October 2006.

The Council of Education Ministers will discuss their first general approach to the proposal at their meeting on 13-14 November 2006.

The entire proposal for an EQF can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/com_2006_0479_en.pdf

The ETUCE statement on the EQF from December 2005 is available at the ETUCE website: www.csee-etu.org

Facts about the European Qualifications Framework

The proposal for an EQF is one of the concrete outcomes of the “Education and training 2010” work programme. The EQF aims at creating mobility and transparency of qualifications throughout the EU. The core element of the EQF is a set of 8 reference levels describing the learning outcomes at each stage. These levels will act as reference points for education and training authorities at national and sectoral levels. In shifting the focus from *learning input* to *learning outcomes*, the Commission furthermore hopes to promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The EQF is viewed as an instrument for the promotion of lifelong learning, as the eight levels cover the entire span of qualifications from those achieved at the end of compulsory education and training to those awarded at the highest level in tertiary education. The qualifications on each level are described in terms of three types of learning outcomes: *knowledge, skills, and competences*.

In order to implement the EQF the Commission suggests the development of national qualifications frameworks (NQF). The NQFs will contribute to the consistency of the implementation process, in particular as regards the referencing of national and sectoral qualification levels to the EQF levels. The proposal recommends that NQFs are related to the EQF by 2009.

The European Social Fund - increased opportunities for funding in the area of education



In 2007 a new seven-year programme period for the European Social Fund (ESF) begins, and the upcoming period is a crucial opportunity to influence the future funding priorities. As a result of the European Social Fund's new objectives, the opportunity for funding in the area of education is furthermore increased.

The European Social Fund is one of the EU's four structural funds set up to reduce differences in prosperity and living standards throughout Europe. One of the top priorities for the ESF is the fight against unemployment and the need to improve the skills of the workforce.

In this context, the ESF channels money into strategic long-term actions in the member states and regions. Seven-year programmes are created in co-operation with the Commission and the Member States, and then implemented by a wide range of organisations, both in the public and private sector.

Along with the new programming period (2007-2013) a thematic concentration in the objectives of the Fund has been made. Forthcoming programmes will centre attention on the Lisbon and Gothenburg priorities, and the thematic focus of the ESF will hereby be education and training and employment aid. Accordingly, the ESF aims at funding initiatives promoting and improving training, education and counselling in a lifelong learning perspective, in order to promote access and integration into the labour market and improve job mobility.

The next programming period (2007-2013) "Jobs and new opportunities for all" is about to be designed. The Member States are responsible for identifying their priorities for funding and selecting individual projects before entering negotiations with the Commission on these issues. In the second half of 2006 Member States draw up proposals for such priorities and projects. This is a decisive moment for ETUCE member organisations to influence the national priorities and project suggestions before the final funding programme for 2007-2013 is adopted by the Commission in late 2006 or early 2007.

The ESF works on the basis of partnerships. The Member States and the Commission draw up priorities and budgets allocated for the ESF programmes, whereas it subsequently is the local and regional governments, the social partners and other relevant bodies within the Member State who oversee the way the programmes are put into action and managed. This provides ETUCE member organisations with another opportunity for influencing the initiatives within the ESF.

Representatives from national education ministries have recently received information on how the ESF works at a meeting in the Education and Training Coordination Group (ETCG) at the end of June 2006.

For further information visit following website:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf2000/index_en.html

New ETUCE survey report published: The impact of private sector working methods in education



ETUCE has published the report of the survey on the impact of private sector working methods in education carried out among 31 ETUCE affiliates in the first half of 2006 within the framework of the TRACE project: *Trade Unions Anticipating Change in Europe*.

The report presents a comparative study of pay determination arrangements throughout the EU in primary and secondary education,

as well as in vocational education and training. The survey does not access or compare salary levels, but provides insight into different forms of pay determination at national and sub-national levels, with a particular focus on the extent to which new forms of management and payment methods, such as performance management and performance related pay, have been introduced in the education sector in EU and EFTA countries. Thanks to the good response rate to the survey, up-to-date information on developments within these issues in 22 countries is now available.

The concept of performance management refers to formal structured systems applied by employers or head teachers/principals to teachers, which monitor, review, and assess the performance by teachers of their teaching duties and responsibilities. This system typically involves three stages: planning the objectives for the teacher, monitoring the teacher's progress, and the review of performance. The notion of performance related pay refers to systems where there is a direct and short-term link between teachers' performance and their individual rates of pay.

Experience show that the use of these management and pay methods, traditionally used in private companies or in the industrial sector, in the education sector is by no means unproblematic and have often deteriorated teachers' working conditions. The survey report provides useful information on the strategies unions have deployed in facing this challenge, and the lessons they have learned. Unions have recognised the need to call for clear criteria to ensure that performance management systems are operated fairly, acknowledge the importance of training for national and local union representatives, and sought to improve inter-union co-operation. They have also recognised the need to forge wider alliances between unions, local communities and their representatives, local employers and the civil society.

Although the survey results also show that the extent to which such private sector management methods are used in education differs widely from country to country, the fact that performance management and performance related pay systems often have negative consequences for teachers, makes it a serious concern for teacher unions in many countries.

The TRACE project, led by the ETUI-REHS, is a two-year project involving 17 partners from European Industry Federations and national trade union confederations with the aim of building improved capacity within European trade unions to respond to situations of economic and industrial change. The project ends in November 2006.

The full report of the survey is available on the ETUCE website: www.csee-etuce.org

ETUCE High Level Seminar on Social Dialogue in CEE countries

On 21-23 September, ETUCE and ETUI-REHS held a High Level Seminar addressing the theme “Social Dialogue in Education – status and further progress” near Larnaca, Cyprus. The seminar gathered high-level representatives from ETUCE member organisations in the 10 countries who joined the European Union in 2004, as well as from associated member organisations in the EU accession and candidate countries. Three days of dynamic and detailed discussions on social dialogue in those countries took place under the direction of ETUCE Vice-President Odile Cordelier and General Secretary Martin Rømer.



The seminar kicked off with an overview of ETUCE action within the EU “Education and Training 2010” process by Martin Rømer, including a detailed explanation of the peer learning activities on educational issues currently taking place in EU member states. The General Secretary also outlined ETUCE’s future activities within social dialogue, notably the series of sub-regional bipartite seminars to be undertaken in the 2006-2007 season.

Participants also benefited from the presentation of the public employers’ point of view on social dialogue in education, carried out by high level representative of the European public employers organisation CEEP, Mr. Charles Nolda. This issue was followed-up in the next presentation, in which a summary of findings in the ETUCE Euro-level survey on the status and role of employers in education were presented by ETUCE advisor Mr. Riku Matilainen. “Like tango, it takes two to create a social dialogue” could be the up-and-coming proverb of this first day.

The second day of the seminar focussed on the impact of decentralisation on social dialogue. Detailed presentations of national cases were held by Mr. Slawomir Broniarz (ZNP, Poland) and Mr. Frantisek Dobsik (CMOS, Czech Republik), followed by workshops on this key topic. A major challenge emerging from the discussions is the rhythm of economic and social changes faced by the unions in recent years. Union strategies to accommodate new challenges were also

discussed in workshops, introduced by Ms. Erzsebet Szlamko (SEH, Hungary) and Mr. Jan Gasperan (OZPSaV, Slovakia).

Last but not least, the third day of the seminar featured workshops in which ETUCE invited participants to express their viewpoints regarding future policies and activities. The workshops were introduced by Ms. Kounka Damianova (SEB, Bulgaria) and Mr. Aleksas Bruzas (LEETU, Lithuania). Exchange and acknowledgment of experiences, training and knowledge improvement, unity and solidarity, were undoubtedly the recurring key-words of this last High Level Seminar session.

In closing the seminar, Odile Cordelier and Martin Rømer gratefully thanked the Cypriot participants for their wonderful hosting.

EESC Biennial Conference – In search for the European Civil Society



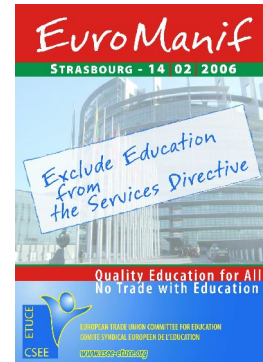
On 18-19 September 2006, ETUCE attended the biennial conference of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). On the occasion of marking the mandate of the EESC president in office for the up-coming two-year period, the EESC had this time chosen the topic: *“Living Europe: a Challenge for Civil Society”*.

The conference addressed the issue of the European Social Model, looking at its specific values and how they are translated into concrete policies aiming to maintain a balanced interdependence between economic action, solidarity, and the promotion of dialogue and participation.

An overarching concern of the conference was the need to create a real civil dialogue upon the EU issue: a European Civil Society. In the context of the crisis of the Constitutional Treaty, the need for a civil dialogue at the national level on the ideas behind the European Union and its future prospects seems ever more apparent. Speakers at the conference recognised that education is a crucial means to achieve this vision. In this context speakers stressed, in line with the EU recommendation on Key Competences recently adopted by the European Parliament, that the national school curricula should include a European dimension and respect for diversity and cultural differences.

Update on the Services Directive – second reading underway in the European Parliament

Based on the Council's common position on the Services Directive adopted on 17 July 2006 in the first reading of the Directive, the European Parliament is this autumn conducting its second reading of the Services Directive.



From the outset, the political groups in the European Parliament have been reluctant to embark on any major discussions on the Directive in order not to risk upsetting the compromise reached in the Parliament in February 2006. The Council followed in large parts this compromise, albeit with some amendments. The EP's rapporteur Evelyne Gebhardt (PES) seeks, in the second reading, mainly to re-introduce some amendments, which the Council had omitted in their position from July. These concern legal technicalities regarding the exclusion of labour law, exclusion of social services, and a suggestion to re-introduce a reference to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

For the education sector, the situation remains the same as reported in the last ETUCE newsletter from June 2006. In the Council's common position from July, the national education system is excluded as, in the EU legal terminology, it belongs to the category of Services of General Interest (SGI). On the other hand, education services provided in the interest of making a profit and funded *essentially* out of private funds are covered, as they are considered to fall under the category of Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI). Importantly, the payment of a tuition fee or enrolment fee for education services otherwise considered to belong to the national education system, does not alter the fact that the given education service belongs to the category of SGI and thus is excluded from the Directive.

The European Parliament is expected to vote on the Directive in plenary during the second half of November.

Deadlines for candidatures in relation to the EI Pan-European Conference / ETUCE General Assembly

In order to ensure effective preparation, transparent procedures, and smooth running of the meeting, the EI/ETUCE-Bureau has set the following deadlines for the 2006 holding of the EI Pan-European Conference / ETUCE General Assembly:

1. 31st October 2006: Nomination of Delegates
2. 31st October 2006: Submission of amendments to the By-Laws (Statutes)
3. 17th November 2006: Submission of resolutions
4. 17th November 2006: Submission of nominations for President and Vice-Presidents¹
5. 17th November 2006: Submission of nominations for ETUCE General Secretary
6. 14.00 hours on 5th December: Submission of nominations for Country seats on the Committee/Board²

¹ Candidates nominated for the election of President who are not elected to this position will automatically be nominated for the election of Vice-Presidents, unless they explicitly withdraw their nomination.

² Candidates nominated for the election of Vice-Presidents who are not elected to a vice-presidency will need to formally submit their nomination within the proposed deadline if they wish to be nominated for a national seat.

ETUCE Calendar Autumn 2006

October

12: Ahead of Entrance - Cooperation between Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, Seminar, Bucharest

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30 - 31: ETUCE Executive Board/ EI Pan-European Committee, Brussels

November

15: Towards a European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education, Regional Seminar for Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, Ljubljana

December

4 - 5: EI Pan-European Structure / ETUCE General Assembly, Luxembourg

14-15: Towards a European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education, Regional Seminar for Cyprus, Malta, Croatia and Turkey

New Publications

- [New Eurydice Publication: Science teaching in schools in Europe. Policies and research.](#)
- [ETUCE Survey Report: The Impact of Private Sector Working Methods in Education, June 2006](#)
- [ETUCE Report: Survey on Teachers' Working Time in CEE Countries prepared by the CEE Working Group, March 2006](#)