



EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION

REPORT

ETUCE Networks Meeting

Amsterdam, 16 June 2004

Foreword

On the 16th June 2004, the ETUCE Networks held their first annual meeting within the new structure of the Networks. The ETUCE Executive Board recently decided to both restructure and expand the Networks, which were set up in collaboration with the European Trade Union College (ETUCO) in November 2001. The ETUCO Network project 'Dialog-On', which involved numerous European trade unions, received funding from the European Commission up until February 2004.

The Network meeting included plenary interventions on the experiences of networking so far as well as meetings in the separate networks on the aims, methods and priorities of future work.

Since the network meeting in Amsterdam, many new participants have signed up and are now online. It is still possible for organizations to join the networks. Please contact the secretariat. The next network meeting is scheduled for June 6th, 2005, in Brussels.

Martin Rømer
General Secretary

Report from the ETUCE Networks meeting

16 June, Amsterdam

ETUCE Networks 2001 – 2004

In 2001, ETUCE welcomed the opportunity to join the 'Dialog-On' project. With an increasing number of member organisations, the need for communication and for sharing accurate information was growing. The electronic networks provided a timely opportunity for ETUCE to facilitate the means to stay in contact with member organisations.

In general, it has been a great experience for ETUCE to see how the four networks have been working so far. There has been an exchange of information on many issues.

For ETUCE it is important that the networks are able to function autonomously; the success of the networks depends to a large extent on the personal commitment and motivation of each member. This has however proved to be one of the more difficult aspects of the networking. It is now time to strengthen the efforts put into the running of the networks, both on the part of the ETUCE secretariat as well as on the part of each network member.

In the light of the EU's increasingly prominent role in the field of education, employment and social affairs, the need to enhance the international cooperation among trade unions is more pertinent than ever. We still need much information about what is going on in the individual countries; and we need to continuously update information which we can only get from each other.

ETUCE will undertake the necessary coordination of the four networks, ensuring that work is not duplicated, but also encouraging cooperation between networks where relevant. ETUCE will furthermore disseminate information on all its political work to the networks, including posting the ETUCE Newsletter on the networks. The networks have the potential to serve as a very important advisory body for ETUCE,

raising the quality not only in our responses to the EU institutions, but also in all of our campaigning.

The new structure for the networks provides for one annual physical meeting, but networks could very well be proactive in organising seminars, projects, etc. with financial support of the European Commission.

In the reorganisation of the networks, the Chief Negotiators Network has been turned into a Working Conditions Network, signifying that also other trade union officers can join. The Quality in Education Network now embraces the broader area implied by renaming it into a Development in Education Network. The Legal Experts Network and the Higher Education and Research Network have remained the same, though expanded. The expansion of the networks means that each ETUCE member organisation can join each of the networks. Nominations should be sent by letter, fax or electronic mail to the ETUCE secretariat.

Experiences of networking

Monique Fouilhoux, animator of the Higher Education and Research Network

The EI Standing Committee for Higher Education and Research at European level was the basis of the development of the network. The main lessons learned from this first phase are the benefits of working collectively and sharing information. As a result of the network, most trade unions are now better informed on a) what happens at EU level; b) what happens in other countries concerning numerous issues. The network is a very useful tool *if we commit ourselves to it*.

Ulf Fredriksson, animator of the Quality in Education Network

There are three different ways of using a network:

- 1) **Elaborate policies** - This works best when it involves responding or producing documents; discussions alone proved not to be very dynamic.
- 2) **Questions and answers** - A good method of exchanging information.

- 3) **Building up libraries** with documents relevant for the discussions, i.e. EU documents, papers elaborated in the network, links, etc.

The main problems and challenges for the network have been language barriers, ICT illiteracy, and the lack of time or priority of members.

Barry Fawcett, animator of the Chief Negotiators Network

Contrary to the two other networks, this network did not have any already existing committee gathering people beforehand. The issue on which the network is based does not necessarily entail a European focus, as pay conditions etc. is a national issue.

The network identified three areas for study:

- 1) Pay
- 2) Working hours
- 3) Performance-related pay

In the subsequent work with elaborating questionnaires and obtaining answers, one of the main lessons learned was that information exchanged must be very accurate and concrete.

Graham Clayton, animator of the Legal Experts Network

This is a relatively new network, established in March 2003.

Two common seminars have taken place within the framework of this network, and common problems have been identified in most countries:

1. Occupational stress related claims
2. Forms of insecure employment
3. Teacher qualifications
4. Problems of teacher accountability and liability
5. Intellectual property rights

Two questionnaires have been sent out and returned already; one on general features on national legal systems and on working time directive and judgments

from The Court of Justice of the European Communities. A third one is currently being answered by all members on working time and occupational stress. The network seems to be functioning better with the questionnaire method than when discussions are opened through the Conference system itself.

Group reporting from separate network meetings: Aims, methods and priorities of future work

Development in Education Network

Animator: Birgitte Birkvad

Rapporteur: Rudy van Renterghem

The network firstly discussed the question of the good practices of networking based on previous experiences.

- It was noted that the network should function on an informal basis.
- The information shared among members should only be used internally; the concern was expressed that, if used externally, information shared could be used against members in negotiations with other trade unions.
- There should be a balance between members' role as official representatives and their role as innovators.
- Closed conferences in the networking should only be used to a limited extent.

The network members developed a protocol of future tasks.

Working methods and aims:

- exchange of documents
- produce comments on EU consultation
- produce papers for ETUCE

Key issues for future work :

1) Inspection systems

- tests: how do we use them?
- Teachers' use of self-evaluation
- Indicators in Lisbon Strategy

2) **PISA report in December 2004.** Focus mainly on:

- Social cohesion
- Equity

The network members furthermore agreed that the question of additional indicators as suggested in the EU's follow-up work on the Lisbon Strategy, should be one of the tasks of the network in the future.

Working Conditions Network

Animator: Barry Fawcett

Rapporteur: Barry Fawcett

1) Time schedule for work programme:

- Between now and September, each member should post on the network:
 - a short biography
 - a profile of their trade union
- For September and one year onwards, the network has identified three key areas of work:
 - **Teachers' pay.** Obtain a picture of relative pay area, starting salary, salary for the head of a primary school, of a secondary school. Thus showing potential career progress.
 - **Teachers' working hours.** The Legal Experts Network should be involved in this, particularly due to their work on stress. This area of work involves identifying different aspects of teaching hours.
 - **Teachers' pensions.** Identify the main issues.

All work will be carried out through a questionnaire approach. The members agreed that once a month a member from each country should give a short newsletter. It was moreover decided that a future study should be centered on health and safety.

Legal Experts Network

Animator: Graham Clayton

Rapporteur: Wiebke Düvel

In relation to the question of time or priority given to work in the networks, the group emphasised that it would be useful to change the understanding of the outcome of the network: instead of focusing on the immediate outcome, the networks should be considered a forum where benefits and payback are found over a long period of time.

The network will use questionnaires to obtain information. It should be noted that, if relevant, other persons in the trade union than the network participants should be the ones to answer the questionnaire.

Future work:

- Each network member will give a description of aim and purposes of their trade union.
- The issue of public/private education from a legal point of view.

The network moreover discussed how the cooperation between ETUCE and the networks could be improved.

Once a month, information on discussions at European level should also be provided by the ETUCE Secretariat.

The network will also work actively to attract more members. The aim is to cover expertise in all sectors and from all countries involved.

Annex I

ETUCE Networks Meeting

Amsterdam, 16 June 2004

Draft Agenda

- 8.30 - 9.30 Special Session for new participants
- Information and introduction to First Class Conference System
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- 8.00 - 9.30 Registration
- 9.30 - 10.00 Plenary :Welcome and opening of meeting .
- The ETUCE networks seen from the Secretariat
- 10.00- 11.00 Plenary: Discussion on experiences from networking so far.
- Interventions from representatives of the networks and debate.
- 11.00 - 11.15 *Coffee break*
- 11.15 - 12.15 Network discussions (in the different networks):
Discussion of the aims, work, methods and priorities for the future
- 12.15 - 13.30 *Lunch*
- 13.30 - 14.30 Network discussions
- 14.30 - 15.30 Plenary: Reports from Networks
- Discussion on the future networking
- 15.30 - 15.45 *Coffee break*
- 15.45 - 16.00 Conclusions
- 16.00 Closing of meeting