



STATEMENT BY ETUCE ON THE SITUATION IN HUNGARY

Brussels, 5 November 2009

The European Trade Union Committee of Education (ETUCE), representing 115 member organisations and 5,5 million individuals in the EU/EFTA, wishes to express its concern about the current situation in Hungary.

President
Président
Ronnie Smith

The Hungarian authorities recently announced their intention to reduce the education budget with 15 % for 2010 in order to comply with the requirements of International Monetary Fund to access support funding subsequently reducing teacher wages with 8,3 %. This decision means degrading teachers' working conditions, infringement of pupils' rights, risk of school closure in some parts of the country and a general deterioration of the quality of education.

Vice-Presidents
Vice-Présidents
Paul Bennett
Odile Cordelier
Kounka Damianova
Jörgen Lindholm
Ulrich Thöne

While understanding the necessity to tackle public deficit, the ETUCE stresses that the choices to be made in implementing the cuts are critical and should not put the Hungarian education system at risk.

General Secretary
Secrétaire Général
Martin Rømer

Within this context, the ETUCE,

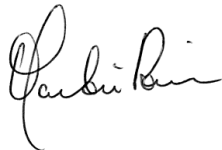
Treasurer
Trésorier
Walter Dresscher

- Having regard to the Education policy coordinated at the European level since 2000 under the overall Lisbon Strategy;
- Having regard to the New Skills for New Job Communication stating that Member States must increase their efforts to raise the attractiveness and status of the teaching profession (COM 2008 868);
- Having regard to the latest key messages on Education and Training issued by the Council of the European Union (19 February 09, 6666/09), stating notably that *"It is precisely in times of economic difficulty that the key strategic importance of sustaining open and efficient, high-quality education and training systems (...) must continued to be emphasised"*;
- Having regard to the latest EU Presidency's Conclusions from the Council of the European Union (19/20 March 09), which has confirmed the priority to be given to appropriate investments in education (7880/09: 16);
- Whereas any policy impacting on the teachers' working conditions has to be collectively negotiated with the teachers' organisations;
- Whereas the current economic crisis results from a combination of egoistic and dangerous behaviours among the private financial and business world and the laissez-faire policy of national governments;
- Whereas the national effort to reduce the public deficit and comply with the IMF requirements for accessing support funding have to be shared by all actors in the economy, first in line being those who led the economy into the crisis;

1. Urges the Hungarian government to avoid any budget cut that would endanger the education system and the teachers' working conditions;

2. Invites the Hungarian Government to engage in a comprehensive and sustainable dialogue with the teachers' organisations in order to find a collectively constructed solution to the current situation;
3. Reiterates its full support for the Hungarian teachers and their trade union organisations in primary and secondary sector, SEH and PDSZ.

On behalf of the ETUCE,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Rømer', with a stylized, cursive script.

Martin Rømer
General Secretary