



Resolution

Education should be safeguarded from trade in the EU internal market

Adopted by the ETUCE Executive Board on 13-14 June 2005

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) notes that:

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- the European Commission is, via the proposed Services Directive, aiming to expand the internal market for services, including increasing the possibilities for trade with educational services. If the provisions of the current draft Directive enter into force, it would lead to liberalisation and diminishment of public regulation of a range of core public services vital to Social Europe, such as health care, social, educational and cultural services.

ETUCE strongly opposes the neo-liberal agenda and the lack of social concerns evident in the text of the draft Directive. The economic boost, in the expectation of which the provisions of the draft Directive is justified by its defenders, would be achieved by way of competition on the basis of the lowest standards, not by way of the development of a genuinely sustainable, knowledge-based competitive economy which Europe needs.

ETUCE demands that EU Governments:

- fully live up to their responsibility of securing high quality public education at all educational levels, equally accessible for all, and ensuring access to lifelong learning for all;
- fully promote the multidimensional role education serves in society through well-founded public regulation of national education systems;
- commit themselves to confer adequate resources to continuously develop public education systems of the highest standards;
- place all-important emphasis on developing an EU of equality, social cohesion, high standards of social rights, respect for cultural diversity, and an inclusive knowledge-based society.

ETUCE stresses that:

- The division of competences between Member States and the EU in the area of education should be respected. Education is the competence of Member States, while the EU's role is to promote cooperation and to complement Member States in the development of quality education by adopting recommendations and incentive measures. Education should not fall under legally binding directives within the EU trade policy.
- Increased privatisation of the education sector and increased trade in education has never been included as a target in the EU's policy agenda prior to the introduction of the draft Services Directive. There has been no prior consultation of member states and stakeholders on this issue, and no explicit arguments have been put forward to argue in favor of such a development.

- The European Commission has provided no impact assessment on the consequences the draft Services Directive will have for national education systems, yet is proposing legislation in this area with potentially adverse effects.

ETUCE supports:

- the current efforts within the European Parliament to secure a clear exclusion of education from the Services Directive.