



**ETUCE Statement on the Key Messages,
drawn from the Education and Training 2010 Joint Interim Progress
Report, submitted by the Education Council to the Spring European
Council, 23-24 March 2006¹**

**Adopted by the ETUCE Executive Board
in their meeting on 10-11 May 2006**

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ETUCE welcomes balanced focus and renewed commitment to step up efforts, but highlights that social partner involvement at the national level is urgently needed

In response to the Key Messages submitted by the Education Council to the European Spring Council, ETUCE welcomes the balanced focus taken by the Education Council, emphasising both the social and economic role of education and training systems, and, importantly, emphasising that there can be no trade-off between these two dimensions.

In particular, ETUCE also welcomes that, contrary to the draft Joint Progress Report set forward by the European Commission in November 2005, the final adopted version of the 2006 report, as well as the Key Messages, contains a clear recommendation on the importance of investing in the training of teachers and trainers.² In addition, as noted in the ETUCE Statement on the draft 2006 progress report,³ ETUCE welcomes the increased attention to the pre-primary school area in the Education & Training 2010 process, as expressed in the call for investment in this area in the Key Messages.

However, ETUCE regrets that the Education Council has omitted a commitment to set in place national mechanisms coordinating the implementation of the Education & Training 2010 process by a definite date (2008), as proposed in the draft progress report. Whereas the Commission had proposed a recommendation indicating that coordination structures for involving stakeholders, especially social partners, should be in place by 2008, the recommendation in the progress report adopted by the Ministers calls for the setting in place of coordination structures, but contains no reference to timing.

ETUCE highlights that there has been, in many countries, a lack of involvement and consultation of social partners by national governments in the Education & Training 2010 process so far. Teachers' unions should at national level be involved in both the preparatory, decision-making and implementation phases of individual initiatives within the Education & Training 2010 process. The fact that all Member States have reported that the Education & Training 2010 process is a factor in policy development

¹ - Key messages to the Spring European Council (Council doc. 7620/06), 22 March 2006.

² 2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and of the Commission on Progress under the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme (Council doc. 2006/C 79/01), section 3.1, p. 8.

³ ETUCE Statement on the Communication from the Commission: *Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe – Draft Joint 2006 progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the "Education and Training 2010 work programme."* Adopted by the ETUCE Executive Board 6-7 December 2005.

at national level,⁴ makes the need for a genuine social dialogue and proper follow-up structures at national level on EU education policies even more apparent.

In connection with the submission of national progress reports for the purpose of the 2006 Joint Progress Report, very few governments consulted social partners at national level. In the reporting exercise in 2007 (for the 2008 Joint Progress Report), for which preparations will begin in 2006, ETUCE calls on governments to ensure proper consultation and dialogue with teachers' unions from all levels of the education sector.

With regard to the overall coordination of the Education & Training 2010 process at EU level, ETUCE is pleased to be member of the Education & Training 2010 Coordination Group (ETCG), and is also pleased to take part in several of the clusters for Peer Learning Activities during 2006-2007. ETUCE stresses, however, that the Member States hosting Peer Learning Activities have a responsibility to involve the social partners at national level in these activities.

ETUCE calls on governments to live up to commitment to implement policies with a dual focus – social and economic – on education

ETUCE acknowledges the renewed commitment in the Key Messages to step up efforts to achieve the agreed objectives. ETUCE calls on governments to live up to their commitment of implementing the 'Education & Training 2010' programme with a view to both the economic and the social dimension of education and training. ETUCE reminds that this not only entails making progress in the social cohesion-related benchmarks (early school leavers, upper-secondary degree achievers, reading skills) and progress in setting in place comprehensive lifelong learning strategies; the commitment to a dual focus also entails that the overall education policies implemented at national level support both dimensions – and do not jeopardise advances in either of them.

In this connection, ETUCE wishes to bring forward its reservation on the 'key message' adopted by the Education Council concerning future directions for strengthening governance through diverse learning partnerships: *"To enhance the effectiveness and impact of reforms and to share responsibilities and costs, governance should be strengthened, involving relevant stakeholders, in particular through effective inter-ministerial synergies and diverse learning partnerships at all levels (institutions, public authorities, social partners, enterprises, sectoral, regional and local organisations)."* ETUCE highlights that a positive wording of the necessity of partnerships for improving governance and policy development should in no way lead to a decrease of governments' responsibility to fund education, to ensure the quality of education, and to ensure equal access to education. Nor should public-private partnerships lead to transfer of employees from the public sector to the private sector. Moreover, public-private partnerships, e.g. long-term contracts between the private sector and the public sector, reduce the flexibility to adjust to changes in educational policies and objectives; they can indeed also be more costly than traditional funding mechanisms.

⁴ 2006 Joint Interim Report, p. 2.