



**ETUCE Statement**  
On the Progress Report  
*“Making the Best Use of Resources”*

ETUCE is very concerned about some key recommendations and proposals in the Working Group E's progress report *“Making the Best Use of Resources”*. ETUCE warns that they could be a threat to social cohesion and the Lisbon objectives. The six following points spell out ETUCE's main concerns regarding the report.

President  
Président  
Doug McAvoy

Vice-Presidents  
Vice-Présidents  
Odile Cordelier  
Christoph Heise  
Radovan Langer  
Jörgen Lindholm  
Marjatta Melto

General Secretary  
Secrétaire Général  
Martin Romer

Treasurer  
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George Vansweevelt

- Tuition fees

Free education is a basic premise in several Member States and introduction of tuition fees in higher education is essentially against the European Social model fighting social exclusion of individuals and groups from the society.

ETUCE believes that funding of higher education and recruiting of students should be based on society's need for well educated and qualified citizens (cf. the Lisbon strategy) and not on the individual student's economic situation.

It's essential not to discourage young people from entering higher education as a shortage of highly educated personnel in many professions will be needed in the years to come. Even if loans and grants are available, young people – in particular those from non-academic backgrounds – would be discouraged to enter university. Furthermore, there is a risk that students in higher education will restrict their studies to the minimum, avoid time consumption or difficult areas of study that all will reduce the students' flexibility and mobility.

To conclude, ETUCE believes that the introduction of (higher) tuition fees can not be integrated with the goals of social cohesion set up in the Lisbon strategy.

- Private investment in education

ETUCE does not support outsourcing of education as proposed in the report and calls for focus on learning conditions, pedagogy, teaching methods and quality in education when considering efficiency of systems – areas that are overshadowed by the focus on financial incentives for improving efficiency in the report.

ETUCE wants to emphasise that the report by saying “since public budgets are constrained, private investment is necessary to ensure an increase of the resources” seems to be in conflict with the overall Lisbon conclusions stating that an increase of resources should be the result of joint effort from both private and public sector.

ETUCE supports cooperation between the education institutions and the private sector but it is crucial that education remains a public, independent and prioritized matter.

- More diversified wage and reward system for teachers

ETUCE is concerned about the proposed reward system for teachers and ask for a more specified and in-dept description of the methods for measuring individual teacher performance (it is briefly described in annex 2). Both methodological and practical challenges are linked to a reward system and ETUCE anticipates that merit pay would depend on subjective or political criteria and lead to inexpedient competition among teachers.

- Standardised tests

As described above certain problems are connected to the use of standardised testing of a complex and qualitative area as teaching. Furthermore, standardised tests do not allow much for national variations and different contexts which are factors that have to be discussed deeper in the report.

ETUCE believes that the report should reflect more on the positive diversity in education systems throughout Europe.

- Binding contracts in vocational education and training

ETUCE fears that binding contracts and payback clauses in vocational education and training will reduce incentives for trainees and hinder the individual students' mobility. Instead, collective agreements in the field should be developed between social partners.

- The methods of the report

ETUCE regrets that many of the problems and precautions in relation to the proposals are not mentioned in the report for which reason the report becomes narrow-minded. It is important that the report clearly reflects that no consensus has been reached within the working group concerning the proposals. ETUCE believes there is a need for querying the proposals and recommendations of the report.

### Conclusion

ETUCE is of the opinion that the report is a step away from achieving the Lisbon strategy and strengthening the European social model. It is clear that this report does not reflect the opinion of the entire working group E and ETUCE can not support many of the report's proposals and recommendations. Instead of encouraging all young people to enter a higher education, the report is in danger of stimulating social exclusion.

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