



Mapping education reforms and trade unions' involvement in the European Semester on education and training in post-austerity Europe

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What's the connection?





The European Semester – does it matter to education unions?

1. A system of ‘economic governance’
2. A process of ‘policy coordination’

An opportunity to influence policy and to use policy to influence national governments



Country specific recommendations

YEAR	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH <u>NO</u> EDUCATION CSRs	CSRs RELATING TO TWO OR MORE EDUCATION SECTORS
2011	5	10
2012	2	13
2013	2	13
2014	0	19
2015	7	11
2016	3	6



Education-related CSRs – analysing the content (2016)

- 11 CSRs focused on human capital development/labour market performance
- 7 CSRs addressing issues relating to migrant education
- 5 CSRs promoting investment in research
- 3 CSRs concerned with teacher supply/quality



Education-related CSRs – analysing the content

Facilitate the employment of women, in particular by extending the provision of affordable, quality childcare.

(Slovakia, CSR, 2016)



Key conclusions about CSRs

- Education features prominently
- Education CSRs can be considered ‘second order’ – ‘first order’ CSRs relate to economic policy and are prioritised (underpinned by sanctions)
- Education CSRs are often ‘open’ (addressing an issue/ambition, rather than identifying specific action)
- They are ‘co-constructed’ between the Commission and Member States (*‘there should be no surprises’*)
- There is a claimed ‘re-balancing’ – with social objectives featuring more prominently



The European Semester, education unions and social dialogue

- The European Union has an institutional commitment to social dialogue (Articles 153 – 155 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU))
- *‘Knowing the important role that social dialogue plays and the positive benefit it has on a country’s economy, the challenge today is to enhance its role across all EU Member States.’ (EC, 2016)*
- *Commitment to ‘a closer involvement of the social partners in the European Semester’ (EC, 2016)*



The European Semester – making a difference

- Three formal points of intervention (at European Commission level)
 - Annual Growth Survey, Country Reports, Country Specific Recommendations
- Two additional points of intervention
 - Education and Training Monitor, National Reform Programmes
- Exploit informal opportunities – the importance of on-going dialogue
 - European Semester Officers, Desk Officers



School Sector (primary and secondary)

There are established collective bargaining arrangements for negotiating pay in the primary and/or secondary education sectors.	75.0	9.1	6.8	9.1
There are established collective bargaining arrangements for negotiating non-pay-related employment conditions in the primary and secondary education sectors.	70.5	15.9	9.1	4.5
Unions are involved in a social partnership to determine overall policy in the primary and/or secondary education sectors.	61.4	18.2	20.5	0
Significant changes in the primary and/or secondary education sectors are only introduced with the involvement of relevant unions.	29.5	38.6	25.0	6.8
There is consultation between unions and EU agencies about the impact of EU policies on the primary and/or secondary education sectors.	4.5	20.5	50.0	25.0



There is consultation between unions and EU agencies about the impact of EU policies on our education sector.

Early Childhood Education

6.1 21.2 42.4 30.3

Primary and Secondary

4.5 20.5 50.0 25.0

Technical Vocational Education and Training

8.1 13.5 51.4 27.0

Higher Education/Research

10.3 10.3 65.5 13.8



Key conclusions about social dialogue

- There is a commitment to increase/improve social dialogue in the European Semester
- There is good involvement of social partners at the European level (ETUC, ETUCE) but much more limited engagement/involvement of unions at national level
- Where social dialogue is more robust at a national level, it is more likely to occur at the European level
- Intervene EARLY to make a difference
- The European Semester is evolving – it is a ‘policy space’ which can be opened up with strategic interventions