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2014 ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality

Recommendations on

Mainstreaming Diversity and Tackling Inequalities

Adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 13 - 14 October 2014

The 2014 meeting of the ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality puts forward the following recommendations for adoption by the ETUCE Committee. The recommendations are to assist ETUCE member organisations in mainstreaming diversity and tackling inequalities in education in the areas of: competences for addressing diversity issues in teaching, the inclusion of migrants and dealing with disability and special needs education. The Standing Committee for Equality recognises that anti-discriminatory, inclusive education must recognise different dimensions such as age, race, economic status, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and culture or class position. The Committee encourages unions to promote the positive impact of diversity to social inclusion and economic prosperity. Teacher unions play an important role in advocating for the inclusion of teacher unions and education staff rights in equality and diversity policy discussions, particularly those areas that impact on education.

Moreover, these recommendations stand in the light and contribute to the ETUCE/EI campaign '[Unite for quality education](#)'. They follow up on the recent initiatives and policy documents concerning equal opportunities developed by ETUCE, ETUC and other stakeholders at EU level¹.

Member organisations are encouraged to regularly communicate with the ETUCE Secretariat to share their strategies, concrete action plans and activities that they have developed to implement the 2014 Standing Committee for Equality Recommendations.

These recommendations are intended for teachers and education staff in general.

The Standing Committee recommends that member organisations engage in a process to identify the competences and skills for teachers and education staff to address equality and diversity.

¹ ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality:

http://etuice.homestead.com/Policies/ETUCE_action_plan_gender_equality_EN_final.pdf

ETUC Action Plan on Migration: <http://www.etuc.org/documents/action-plan-migration#.U7ZlRpSSzs4>

ETUC Resolution 'A roadmap to achieve gender balance in ETUC statutory bodies'

European Commission Strategy for Equality between women and men 2010-2015':

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/strategy_equality_women_men_en.pdf

1. Competences for addressing diversity issues in teaching

The Standing Committee for Equality notes that there is often a lack of equality and diversity training and skills in initial and continuous professional development programmes; recruitment and selection processes tend to neglect diversity and often education staff is not aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding equality and diversity; there is a need to provide open-minded and safe working and learning conditions for education staff and students; moreover, internal union representation, structures and professional development programmes should also address equality and diversity.

Suggested Actions

Member organisations are encouraged to:

- Create effective partnerships where teacher unions, in collaboration with governments and other stakeholder groups in the field of diversity, tackle inequalities and mainstream diversity in education and support the exchange of good practices.
- Advocate for a national policy and legislative framework on integration/diversity education with a view to include this topic in social dialogue negotiations and collective bargaining, taking into account regional and local specificities.
- Promote the development of appropriate teacher training and learning tools on mainstreaming diversity in education.
- Partner with school leadership organisations as school leaders play a key role in creating the safe learning and working environment for pupils, students, teachers and other education personnel.

2. Migrant issues and the inclusion of migrants

The Standing Committee for Equality recognizes that ‘migration’ refers to the free mobility of EU citizens, the movement of third-country nationals and refugees and other types of movement between and within European countries.

The Standing Committee for Equality notes that in many countries migration increasingly impacts on the provision of education and education personnel. As people continue to cross borders throughout Europe families migrate, pupils and students change schools and education systems. Migrant children and their families often face barriers such as language, discrimination, economic, social and cultural differences, which ultimately result in inequalities in education and society.

The Standing Committee for Equality also notes a rise in far right extremism and right wing positions in Europe, shown clearly in the results of the 2014 European Parliament elections, which further impact on education policy.

Suggested Actions

Member organisations are encouraged to:

- Advocate for appropriate initial teacher training and professional development that prepare and train teachers to challenge inequalities as they relate to migration in education

- Stimulate dialogue including online communication in order to facilitate cooperation among teachers and member organisations in order to learn from each other's experiences and to work together in partnership and solidarity
- Build strong anti-discrimination and anti-racism alliances to mainstream diversity in society
- Lobby for the need of free and public education to prepare for a global society free from injustices, intolerances and discrimination.

3. Supporting education staff dealing with disability and special needs education

The Standing Committee for Equality notes that there is a lack of appropriate resources and training for teachers and education staff on this issue; collaboration between teacher unions and associations organising support staff need to be enhanced; People with disabilities are often excluded from campaigns and social dialogue instruments; teachers with disabilities and/or mental health problems often lack support.

Suggested Actions

Member organisations are encouraged to:

- Monitor and collect data on education of pupils with special education needs and disability in order to identify the challenges
- Disseminate and draw attention to positive case studies of successful inclusion of pupils and staff with disabilities and special education needs
- Prioritise the matter as a campaigning and bargaining issue with the national/regional government/education authorities, as regards the provision of appropriate resources for education institutions for inclusive practices and to address the challenges concerning the various strands of discrimination²
- Lobby their government to ratify and implement the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and to adapt national legislation to apply international standards concerning all strands of discrimination.