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ETUCE Position on the Final Report “Quality Investment in Education and Training”

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In October 2022, the European Commission ad-hoc Expert Group released the report “[Quality Investment in Education and Training](#)”. ETUCE reiterates the messages conveyed in its [Position on Quality Investment in Education and Training](#), adopted by the ETUCE Committee in March 2022 with regards to the interim version of the same report.

The final report, however, opens with the foreword by Commissioner Maryia Gabriel: “Public investment in education and training is investment in our future. Within the European Union, we are committed to ensure that everyone receives the best education possible”. ETUCE welcomes this opening statement as it indicates a growing consensus around one of the main messages ETUCE has always keenly advocated: the fundamental role of public investment to provide quality and inclusive education for all. It also moves in line with the joint “[Declaration to build a shared vision of effective, efficient and equitable investment in education](#)” adopted in April 2022 by the Ministers of Education, University and Research of 26 EU Member States.

As the expert group report confirms, investing in education and training pays off with long-lasting effects in the medium-to-long term. The experts call for timely actions because the earlier the investment is made, the larger the future benefits. ETUCE therefore supports the experts’ advice that addressing existing and emerging challenges will require major public investment in several sectors, which will extend beyond the scope and time horizon of the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

However, ensuring public investment cannot be subject to a simple cost-benefit analysis, as the report suggests. Despite the recognition of the specificities of the education sector and the fact that education policies are investments with current costs and long-term benefits, the report calls for a cost-benefit analysis of education policies to assess the efficiency of such interventions and choose among different policies to promote sustainable public finances. ETUCE criticises the underlying market-oriented approach to investment in education adopted in the report, *de facto* encouraging the commodification of education and its detriment as a public good and human right.

Following the call made by ministers in their declaration of April 2022, the European Commission also set up the so-called [Learning Lab](#) to promote the use of education policy evaluation and identify ways to invest in education policies. ETUCE is concerned by the top-down approach driving this initiative and the use of the report “Quality Investment in Education and Training” to steer the work of the Learning Lab.

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