



## ETUCE STATEMENT to THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL Meeting 17 June 2010 and THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION in preparation of the June G8/G20 SUMMIT in ONTARIO

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) wants to express the following important views to the European Council and the European Commission meeting in Brussels on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2010, in the phase of preparing the EU positions for the G8/G20 summits taking place in Ontario, Canada on 25-27 June:

**President  
Président**

Ronnie Smith

**Vice-Presidents  
Vice-Présidents**

Paul Bennett  
Odile Cordelier  
Jörgen Lindholm  
Ulrich Thöne

**General Secretary  
Secrétaire Général**

Martin Rømer

**Treasurer  
Trésorier**

Walter Dresscher

The Lisbon Strategy from its outset has always included education and training as key elements in achieving the full potential of the knowledge-based society. This approach was recently confirmed by the European Council when adopting the new EU 2020 Strategy, in the continuity of the process initiated in Lisbon in 2000. However, the ETUCE regrets that education continues to be seen merely as a tool to meet the specific and immediate demands of the labour market. The ETUCE stresses that education and training systems serve several purposes in society and that the view of education must contain both an economic and a social dimension. The most essential task of the education systems is to educate for life and the outlook on education must be comprehensive and cover various skills and key competences. Only a broad approach to education and training can contribute to personal and social competences, which are vital to social cohesion, equality, active citizenship, cultural diversity and personal fulfilment.

The ETUCE believes that investment in high quality education for all students is necessary, not least to help Europe to recover from the current economic downturn. Free and compulsory education of high quality is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and the acquisition of the key competences for *all* students. It must therefore be recognised that education as a fundamental right is a public responsibility. Education must be publicly funded and publicly regulated. The increased interest at national, EU and global level in diverse forms of cooperation and partnerships in the education sectors is a risky development, as it can lead to a decrease of governments' responsibility to fund and ensure high quality education and training systems for *all*. This risk is especially present in time of economic crisis when governments can be more inclined to resort to budget cuts in areas like the education sector.

Within this context, the ETUCE hereby wishes to stress the following points to the European Council and the European Commission for their preparation of the EU positions to be defended at the G8/G20 summit.

- Having regard to the Education policy coordinated at the European Union level since 2000 under the Lisbon Strategy ;
- Having regards to the EU 2020 Strategy objective that is the school drop-out rate should be less than 10% and the share of population having completed tertiary or equivalent education should be at least 40% by 2020;
- Having regard to the key messages on Education and Training issued by the Council of the European Union (19 February 09, 6666/09), stating notably that *"It is precisely in times of economic difficulty that the key strategic importance of sustaining open and efficient, high-quality education and training systems(...)must continue to be emphasised."*;

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- Having regard to the EU Presidency's Conclusions from the Council of the European Union (19/20 March 09), which has confirmed the priority given to appropriate investments in education (7880/09: 16);
- Whereas the national efforts to reduce the public deficit and fulfil the IMF requirements for accessing support funding have to be shared by all actors in the economy, first in line being those who led the economy into the crisis;

The ETUCE urges the European Council and the Commission to defend the following positions at the G8/G20 Summit:

1. Education and training must be protected from public sector budget cuts due to premature "exit strategies". No country can afford a "lost generation" of children and youth.
2. Education is not just a cost. It is the smartest investment in sustainable recovery.
3. G8 countries must maintain their commitment to close the Education for All (EFA) financing gap, so as to achieve the target of all children in primary school by the year 2015. G20 countries should convene a ministerial level committee, with the major agencies, to put in place a new approach for funding of EFA, and education unions must have a place at the table.
4. We call on the G20 to support a new Global Partnership for Teacher Education and Professional Development, aimed at ensuring enough qualified teachers to achieve quality education for all, and to foster good human resource practices for the teaching profession. The global organisation of teachers' unions Education International should have a recognized leading role in this new partnership.

*Brussels, June 2010*

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 110 teachers' unions in the EU and EFTA countries and more than 5.5 million teachers from all levels of the education sector. A recognized European social partner, the ETUCE is a member of the Education and Training Co-ordination Group (ETCG) and the ETUC European industry federation for education. The ETUCE is also an autonomous organisation within the Education International Pan-European Structure.