

# WHY SHOULD EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS GET INVOLVED IN THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER?

- The European Semester is a **process** with significant implications for all aspects of education across Europe, and in all sectors of education
- Key policy **process** with the potential for considerable impact on education policy in member states
- It provides a '**policy space**' to shape the education policy discourse
- Not easy, not sufficiently embedded in social dialogue
- ...but important **opportunities** to make an impact:
  - > Shape it
  - > Make a difference



# Key Challenges and Opportunities

Focus on  
fiscal  
policies

Considerable  
impact on public  
investment levels

Opportunity to  
make the case for  
**increased public  
investment** and  
against internal and  
external  
privatisation trends

EU2020  
key  
targets on  
education

Reflecting on  
education-related  
CSRs

Opportunity to  
make the case for  
education **reforms  
that are a priority  
for education  
unions** to become  
recommendations

General  
nature of  
CSRs

Education related  
CSRs need to reflect  
the voice of  
educators and the  
professional  
expertise of  
teachers and  
education workers

Opportunity for the  
professional voice  
of teachers to be  
inserted into the  
**policy making**





## CSRs

- Take further measures to improve the labour market relevance of tertiary education, including by *providing incentives* for cooperation between universities, firms and research. Increase *performance-based funding* of public research bodies and universities... (Spain, CSR, 2016)
- *Incentivise* the cooperation between universities and the business sector (Portugal, CSR, 2016)
- Adopt and implement the planned *school reform* (Italy, Bulgaria, CSR, 2015)
- Ensure adequate *teachers' training* and teachers' continuous professional development. Improve the *attractiveness* of teaching as a profession (Czech Republic, Malta, Hungary, CSR, 2015)



# Country Specific Recommendations



*Country Specific Recommendations, especially education recommendations, are not crafted in dark rooms in Brussels and crudely imposed on Member States. They are the outcome of on-going dialogue between the Commission and national governments. Influencing the Semester shouldn't be seen as separate to influencing national education policy but as another space in which education trade unions can frame the narrative about public education in their country. The challenge for education trade unions is to open up this space, and to make sure that the voice of educators is clearly heard. This is what will make the European Semester more transparent and the European Union more democratic.*





# MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

- > **Strengthen cooperation at all levels**
  - > National/European level actions
- > **Develop social dialogue in the European Semester**



*In the aftermath of the economic crisis the European Semester appeared adversarial and punitive. The Commission has since committed to a 'new start' for social dialogue in which social partners are integrally involved in policy development. What this 'new start' amounts to in reality is, as yet, unclear. But it is undoubtedly an opportunity for education trade unions to make sure that their voice is heard at all the key points in the European Semester process.*



# ETUCE Areas of action and activities:

- > Promotion of increased public investment
- > Promotion of a meaningful involvement of education trade unions in policy and reform making within social dialogue structures
- > Denounce internal and external privatisation trends as a result of budgetary constraints
- > Liaising and coordination with European institutions, ETUC and other ETUFs
- > Disseminate timely information and call for action
- > Sharing and collecting information from Member organisations
- > ...

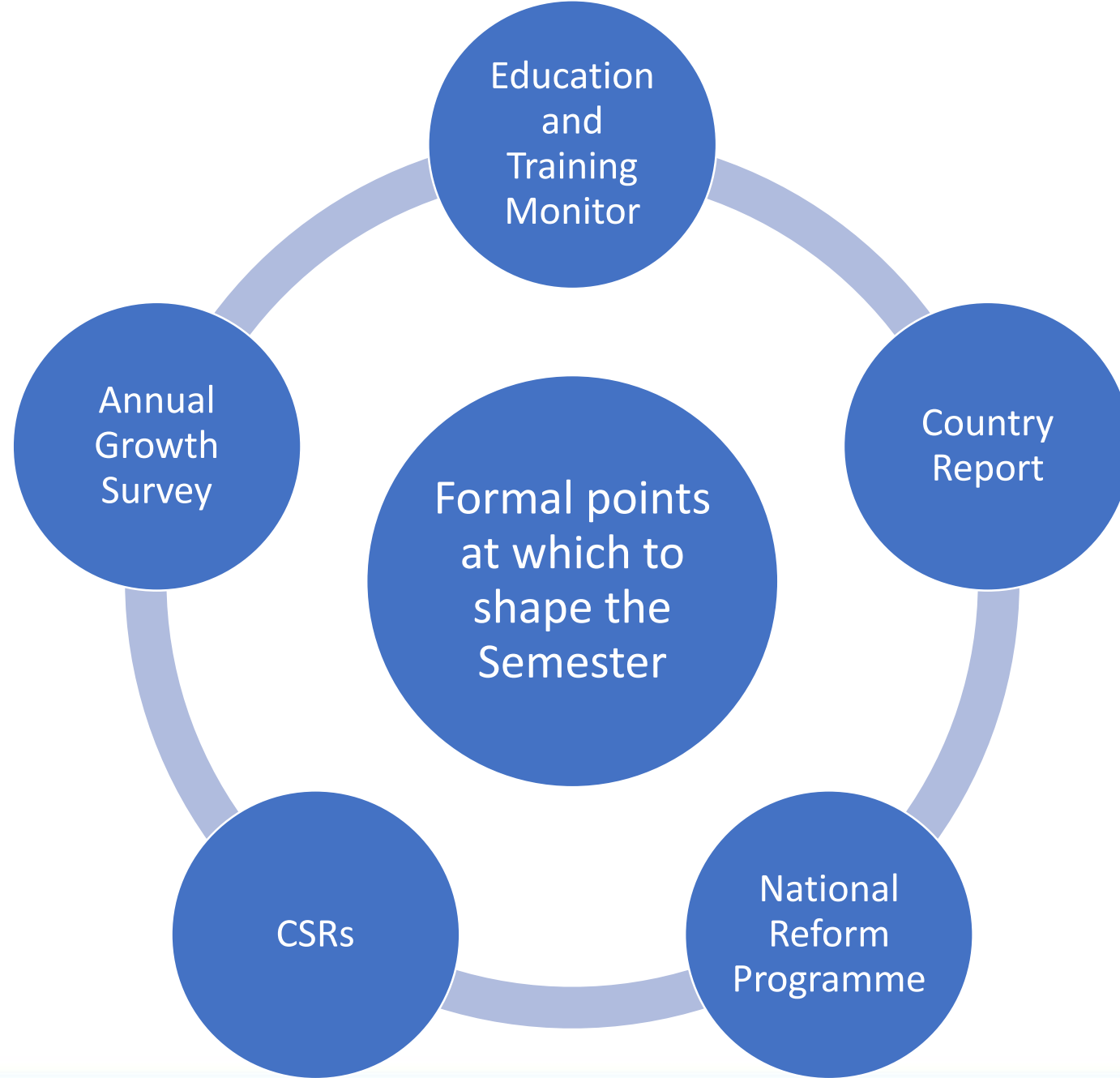


# National education unions activities - Get ready:

- > Push the door open early in the process
- > Develop relationships, informal networks and channels of communications with key actors in order to communicate key messages
- > Use information provided and experiences from others to intervene proactively, to put pressure, or to adverse the messages
- > Anticipate rather than react!
- > Base your claims on sound arguments
- > Build alliances, though unusual...



Identify the right policy space and timing of action:





# DEVELOPING SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER – KEY POINTS FOR EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS

- > **Shape the discourse**
- > **Have a plan**
- > **Focus on the beginning**
- > **Social dialogue: take the opportunities and make the opportunities**
- > **Allocate resources**
- > **Create alliances**
- > **Communicate internally**

