



ETUCE Special Conference

Athens, 26-28 November 2018

Shaping the Future of Europe: The Role of Education Trade Unions

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The delegates to the ETUCE conference in Belgrade in 2016 discussed the document “**Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting Quality Education**” and how radical economic and societal changes, in particular the economic and financial crisis, high rates of unemployment in Europe, austerity measures, the weakening of social dialogue and growing radicalisation and extremism affect the teaching profession.

Two years after the Belgrade conference the focus lies on **the future of Europe and the role of education trade unions**, on ensuring that education trade unions have the capacity and tools to influence and shape future education and training policies.

Setting the frame for the debate are on the one hand the United Nations’ **Sustainable Development Goals** to **end poverty, protect the planet** and **ensure prosperity for all** with specific targets to be achieved by 2030. Goal 4 on education invites all UN countries to reach the targets of high quality education, ensuring access, inclusiveness and gender equality in education. An important target deals with teachers: “By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.”¹

On the other hand, in Europe policy-makers at European and national level have evaluated their education targets and achievements foreseen to be reached by 2020 and have begun discussions about new indicators and benchmarks in **education for the years 2025/2030**. The European policy discussions focus on implementing the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** with specific European targets. The **Council of Europe** is also engaged in reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The targets in education for the UN, the Council of Europe, and the EU have a big influence **on the whole European Region**. In addition, the EU’s education priorities have an impact on the EU candidate and neighbourhood countries via the EU’s economic and political activities in these countries and via regional political cooperation between them (e.g. Western Balkan Platform on Education and Training²).

ETUCE and its member organisations are prepared to take part in European-level decision making on the future of education and demand that the future of education be shaped according to the following principles which ETUCE presented at the First European Education Summit of the European Commission (25 January 2018):

1. Education is a **human right and a public good** and this has to be respected and strengthened by 2030 while implementing the 1st principle of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**;

1 <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

2 Launched in 2012, this is the EU’s initiative for cooperation in education with Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. The Directorate General Education and Culture of the European Commission Chairs the annual ministerial meetings which identify common priorities, discuss latest policy and reform measures and decide on topics for regional cooperation with EU assistance, https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/international-cooperation/western-balkans_en.

2. Respect **national competence in education and the diversity** of education systems;
3. Place **teachers in the forefront** of priorities of education systems to ensure that the teaching profession is highly valued with appropriate salary and good working conditions;
4. **Strengthen democratic governance of education** and collaborative leadership in schools with the involvement of education trade unions in the framework of effective **social dialogue**;
5. Ensure **sustainable investment** in high quality education and invest more in order to facilitate **innovation and creativity** with the best learning and teaching equipment in schools.
6. Improve education systems to reach an **equally high level education for all students** without any discrimination;
7. **Reduce socio-economic disadvantages** which result in low achievement in schools;
8. Reach **full inclusiveness and equality** in education for all;
9. Improve education systems by **teaching key competences**, by emphasising **democratic values, arts and culture** besides digitalisation, innovation, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) skills;
10. Enhance **quality and trust** among education sectors and national/regional education systems to ensure recognition of studies across Europe.

This ETUCE conference seeks to discuss how to shape the future of Europe and which role education trade unions play therein.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

1. SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

CHALLENGE

Eurostat³ estimates that 18.1 million women and men in the EU countries were **unemployed** in November 2017 of whom 3.6 million are under age 25. The lowest unemployment rates of **young people** were observed in the Czech Republic (5.0 %) and Germany (6.6 %), while the highest were recorded in Greece (39.5 %), Spain (37.9 %) and Italy (32.7 %).

Since 2012 in the **countries of Eastern Partnership** (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), employment rates have increased. Youth unemployment rates are higher in Armenia and Georgia (35%).

In 2015 and 2016 alone more than 2.5 million people applied for asylum in the EU⁴. The large and sudden **flow of migrants, refugees, asylum seeking** children, young people and adults claiming international protection has developed into the biggest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the second world war. A third of the refugees arriving in 2015 were minors. Around 90,000 unaccompanied children sought asylum in Europe in 2015 and around 63,300 in 2016. Many education trade unions mobilised their members to provide education to adult and young refugees.

The response of government leaders in the EU to the refugee crisis was slow and diverse, leading in the context of the terrorist attacks of 2015-2016 (Paris, Brussels, Berlin, and many others) to a European political crisis (including Brexit). While education trade unions had been advocating for social values, democratic citizenship and critical thinking as equally important in the fight against fundamentalism and radicalisation, only on 17 November 2017, did the EU leaders adopt the **European Pillar of Social Rights**. This essential achievement of the European trade union movement aims at delivering new and more effective rights for citizens while building upon 20 key principles, structured around three categories: ensuring equal opportunities and access to the labour market (1), fair working conditions (2), and social protection and inclusion (3).

The first principle is about Education, training and life-long learning, declaring that *“Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market”*

³ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics.

⁴ Idem.

When the EU leaders adopted the European Pillar of Social Rights, they discussed, for the first time, the importance of this principle and the future of education. For the discussion the European Commission published its Communication entitled [Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture - The European Commission's contribution to the Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017](#). The text focuses on setting up new policy goals on education for the 2018-20 period and beyond while pointing to important elements required to **develop education of high quality**, such as excellent training and attractive prospects for teachers, lifelong learning which includes low skilled adults and early childhood education, focus on key competences and transversal skills, active citizenship and equal opportunities in education and life.

The European governments are aware that these targets are to be achieved in the context of **numerous challenges**, such as:

- continued digitalisation, automation, artificial intelligence and their impact on education;
- changes in the future of work, working conditions and future needs for skills and competences;
- the modernisation of European welfare states, social inclusion and the need to reduce inequalities, including gender inequality;
- demographic trends, an ageing workforce and integration of migrants;
- new patterns in communication, social media, the phenomenon of “fake news” and the need to promote media literacy among all citizens;
- increasing populism and xenophobia, the risk of violent radicalisation and the need to strengthen the sense of belonging together.

In that respect governments give education a key role in “ensuring resilient economy, social cohesion, active citizenship and identity”. They underline the importance of teachers and admit that teachers face numerous challenges, with for example an ageing teaching population, recruitment and retention, professional training and remuneration.

The question for the future will be shaped around how the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights can be implemented in every country in Europe.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *Are further actions of education trade unions necessary to ensure the right to high quality and inclusive education for all students?*
- *How can education trade unions support teachers to meet the needs of the constantly changing societal and economic environment?*
- *What should be the education trade union response to the increasing demands towards teachers?*

2. SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

The ETUCE Resolutions of Belgrade (2016) points out the need to recognise the direct impact of European-level policies on national education policies, teachers' work and professional interests and the financial governance of education budgets. The European economic governance coordination (European Semester), the Investment plan for Europe and trade and investment agreements profoundly influence education budgets and reforms.

CHALLENGE

The case for investing in universal, free, high-quality education could not be more compelling. Despite pledges to increase funding to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 4 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all', the latest '[Education at a glance](#)' report (OECD, 2017) reported a 2% decrease in public expenditure on educational institution as a percentage of GDP across the OECD countries with peaks of 18% reduction in Greece, 4% in Italy, 6% in Portugal and 4% in Spain since the years 2008-2010. Latest available figures for 2014 account for an average 4.4% GDP invested in educational institutions from primary to tertiary level. At primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level, at least 4.7% of the GDP is spent in Denmark, Iceland and the United Kingdom, while in the Czech Republic, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and the Slovak Republic, investment in those levels accounts for less than 2.8% of the GDP.

Europe's chronic and decade-long under-investment, especially in the public sector and in particular in education, constrained in the EU by the deficit and debt targets of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), has resulted in a retarded Europe-wide growth, and turned Europe into a stagnation morass for many Southern and Eastern European countries and even into a debtor prison for countries like Greece. Although the economic recovery is now considered on track, the patchy reversal of the logic of austerity still combines **calls to expand the provision of and access to quality education with demands to restrain public investment.**

The ETUCE study⁵ on the impact of the economic crisis in education shows that when European countries implemented cuts to public expenditure, there was often a **decline in educational expenditure** as a percentage of total public expenditure and/or in nominal terms. Despite the assumption that education had experienced a delayed reaction to the financial crisis and only began to feel the real effects in 2010 (OECD, 2015), many European countries had already reduced education spending as a percentage of total public expenditure in 2008 and 2009. These figures are confirmed by the European Commission's [Education and Training Monitor 2017](#) showing that the ratio of education spending to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stood at 4.9% in the EU in 2015 and that this ratio has been stagnant in recent years. When looking at recent OECD [Education at a Glance](#) (2018) figures⁶ on education spending as a percentage of public spending, many European countries have experienced a decline since 2007. More recently, the report [Boosting Investment in Social Infrastructure](#) from the High-Level Task Force (HLTF) set up by

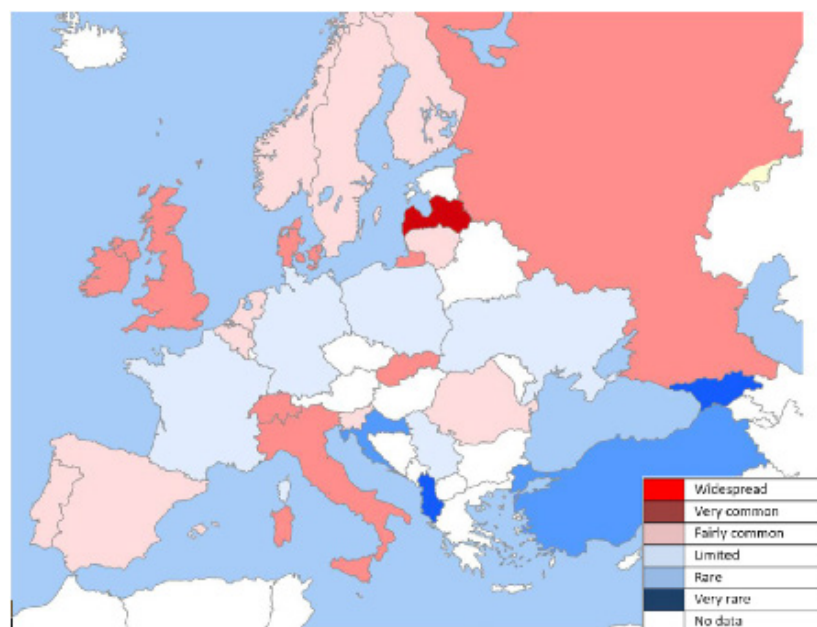
5 Stevenson, H., Hagger-Vaughan, L., Milner, A. and Winchip, E., (2017), 'Education and Training Policy in the European Semester - Public Investment, Public Policy, Social Dialogue and Privatisation Patterns across Europe', ETUCE-CSEE

6 OECD (2018), Public spending on education (indicator). doi: 10.1787/f99b45d0-en (Accessed on 19 March 2018).

the [European Long-Term Investors Association](#) and supported by the European Commission, has also identified an average stagnation in public education infrastructure investment in Europe from 2010 to 2015. Arguing that '*lack of investment in this field has led to further inequalities in educational outcomes, as poorer areas are not being provided with the same quality of education as in richer areas*', the report identifies **widening geographical inequalities**.

Trapped by the austerity narrative and debt and deficit targets, however, the European financial institutions carry on assuming that there is no scope for increasing public investment. Despite using the **European Semester** process to urge some countries (namely, those with available fiscal space) to boost public investment, the continuous pressure on education budgets has led to limited results in terms of investment increases, or even **exposed education to privatisation pressures**. European countries at risk of breaching the rules of the SGP have been largely encouraged to provide incentives for private investments. Across Europe, this appears today in multiple forms including in the contracting-out of educational services, in the increase in transfers of costs to students and households and in the adoption of management practices in the direction of education institutions, including shifts towards individualised and performance-related pay of teachers and other education personnel. In some cases, countries are even privatising education or parts of it and loosening or breaking the vital link between education and democracy.

Despite patterns of privatisation differing significantly across countries and sectors, the ETUCE study (2017) mentioned above identified key trends in statutory and non-statutory education. The Higher Education and Research sector appears as the most highly developed privatised sector mixing a high degree of involvement of the private sector and a growing tendency to behave according to commercial imperatives. The figure below shows the degree of commercialisation of the sector according to the experiences of ETUCE member organisations responding to the survey.



Source: H. Stevenson, L. Hagger-Vaughan, A. Milner, E. Winchip, Education and Training Policy in the European Semester. Public Investment, Public Policy, Social Dialogue and Privatisation Patterns across Europe, ETUCE 2017, p.36

While evidence shows the high long-term costs and the uneven allocation of risks that **public-private partnerships** (PPPs) bring about, an emerging narrative in European policies focuses on the ways in which the private sector might catalyse resources for inclusive growth, for filling under-investment gaps in people, and for helping countries to respond successfully to current and future societal challenges. As

suggested by the **European Fund for Strategic Investment** – hailed by the European Commission as its major tool to fuel investment, including in education, and by the plans for a new **EU budget** post-2020, the investment gap in Europe could largely be filled in by creating the financial and legislative space for increased cooperation and partnership between the public and the private sector.

In a post-2020 perspective, the future of Europe relies on its ability to be a front runner in implementing the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and the United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** across all European countries. A decade of economic crisis has revealed the urgent need for Europe to tackle sustainability challenges, to leave no-one behind and not to compromise the future generations of Europe when fulfilling the contingent needs of the present. Implementing the SDGs largely depends on sufficient and predictable financing of education, and on ensuring that every single public resource is spent sustainably and meets the needs of the most disadvantaged. By 2030, more effort is needed to incentivise European countries to commit to boosting public education investment rather than diverting resources from public services into incentives and subsidies for the private sector.

For this to be achieved, more effort is needed to **reframe the narrative and the debate around quality public education**, in a context where private provision is being championed for being more effective and efficient. In parallel, education trade unions have a key role to play in calling on governments to intensify their efforts to expand their revenue base to allow for public investment in education. This includes through more effective **tax collection systems** that are free of unfair loopholes, measures to reduce tax fraud and to combat corporate tax evasion and avoidance, and more progressive tax initiatives on financial transaction taxes, on wealth and property taxes, and on implementing the Common Corporate Consolidated Tax Base to limit fiscal dumping and financial speculation across Europe.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *How should education trade unions organise to respond to challenges which have a direct impact on education budgets, national policies on education, teachers' work and professional interests?*
- *How to identify and denounce hidden privatisation trends and commercialisation practices across European countries?*
- *How do education trade unions support teachers who are increasingly exposed to the detrimental effects of privatisation and commercialisation pressures in their working conditions and professional prerogatives?*

3. THE FUTURE EUROPEAN EDUCATION POLICY

CHALLENGE

Policy-makers in Europe are preparing their strategy for the future of education and training in the wake of the **Sustainable Development Goals**⁷ of the United Nations. The UN has set the explicit target of achieving high quality education by 2030, ensuring access, inclusiveness and gender equality in education. Goal 4 on education focuses on improving quality in every education sector and ensuring **equal access and eliminating gender disparities**. It puts special emphasis on “education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of **peace and non-violence, global citizenship** and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”. The focus lies also on expanding communication technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes in education. These goals are to be accomplished through **international cooperation on teacher training**.

Along these targets, policy-makers in the EU and EU Neighbourhood countries have begun preparing their strategy for the future education and training policy of Europe. For example, the European Commission published a policy document⁸ announcing the establishment of the **European Education Area**.

The future strategy on education of the European Union will have a major impact also on non-EU countries in the region.

It suggests the setting up of the European Education Area based on “trust, mutual recognition, cooperation and exchange of best practices, mobility and growth”, to be established by 2025, including via the following initiatives:

- **Making learning mobility a reality for all**, for example by doubling the number of students and teachers in **international mobility** via the Erasmus+ Programme. Mobility of up to 500,000 **school students**, long-term mobility of trainees and apprentices with 500,000 participants, including 45,000 long-term trainees or **apprentices** is foreseen. ETUCE has been demanding inclusive access to mobility in Erasmus+ as the scholarship/funding provided to students usually does not cover all their costs. Trade unions demand that the status of apprentices be ensured including long-term mobility, training, a work contract and fair payment.
- **Removing obstacles to the recognition of qualifications**, by ensuring more transparency and better **recognition of studies** across Europe while establishing the “Sorbonne process” for mutual recognition of higher education and school leaving diplomas/study periods abroad. ETUCE has been demanding the achievement of equally high quality education across Europe so that national education systems can trust each other and easily mutually recognise qualifications and studies.

⁷ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

⁸ Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture - The European Commission’s contribution to the Leaders’ meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017

- **Modernising the development of curricula** in line with more competence-based education (Key Competence Framework⁹) and by achieving **equality in education**. Teachers are essential when it comes to the integration of key competences into teaching and need free and accessible high level continuous professional development.
- Boosting **language learning** by helping all young Europeans to finish upper secondary education with a good knowledge of two languages in addition to their mother tongue(s). ETUCE demands high quality language learning for teachers and students supported by the best teaching tools.
- **Creating “world-class European universities”** by setting up **networks of European universities** to ensure mobility and more joint degrees among institutions based on common curricula and same offers to students. ETUCE has concerns that these networks of universities will be developed according to levels of “branding” of universities creating inequalities among universities, students, teachers and researchers.
- **Improving education, training and lifelong learning**, for example by improving **early childhood education (ECE)** as “there are shortcomings with regard to access, quality and affordability of such education”, and reducing the proportion of **low achievers and early school-leavers**. ETUCE has been insisting that ensuring high level ECE and reducing the numbers of low-achievers is a broader question related to solving social-economic problems, supporting families and providing free and high quality ECE.
- Concerning driving **innovation in education in the digital era**¹⁰, ETUCE considers the potential of ICT as a tool among others that is helpful to improve teaching and learning, to make it more inclusive, to widen access and to raise the quality of education. All teachers and learners should benefit from internet and communication technologies (ICT) and the latest developments for their teaching and learning. It is therefore essential that teachers receive adequate training to use ICT pedagogically. The European Commission, through a series of actions described in the EU Digital Education Action Plan 2020, aims, among other objectives, to facilitate the introduction of coding in at least 50% of schools across Europe by 2025¹¹. To ensure this, teachers, other education personnel and schools must have access to training, technical support as well as public funding.
- Giving more **support to teachers** by offering them “excellent training and attractive perspectives for their professional development and remuneration” with a view to attracting more and younger teachers to the profession. ETUCE has been demanding better working conditions and decent salaries for teachers to improve the recruitment and retention of teachers.
- **Fostering a sense of democratic values and European identity and culture** remains a priority¹². ETUCE advocates that supporting and empowering teachers is one of the most effective solutions for building inclusive learning environments and for dealing with multiculturalism, diversity and controversy.

Furthermore, the European Commission suggests that EU countries should invest a **minimum of 5% of GDP into education** while only 9 out of 27 countries have not achieved this goal yet, confirming the EU22 average standing at 4.9%. **OECD countries** spend on average 5.2% of their GDP on education from primary to tertiary level, ranging from less than 3% in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, the

9 <https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/recommendation-key-competences-lifelong-learning.pdf>

10 Communication of the Commission on the Digital Education Action Plan

11 <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/all-schools-europe-are-encouraged-take-part-eu-code-week-6-21-october>

12 Council Recommendation on common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching

Russian Federation and Slovak Republic to more than 6% in Denmark, Iceland, UK and Norway. These figures, however, include large differences in private spending observed across countries. While in the UK private education expenditure represents an important proportion of the GDP, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden's share of private expenditure is below 0.2%.

ETUCE reacted¹³ to this policy initiative underlining the future needs in education, such as sustainable investment, effective social dialogue with education trade unions, ensuring quality and inclusive education for all, while putting teachers in the forefront of future strategies on education so that governments and the society at large value the profession.

At European-level a new policy trend is emerging, highlighting **social and civic competences**. The Declaration on [Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education](#) (2015) of the European ministers for education underlines the need for education in teaching **democratic values, citizenship, critical thinking, tolerance and non-discrimination, also related to the fight against radicalism and fundamentalism** and the promotion of freedom of expression, democracy, respect for the rule of law, human rights and solidarity. Within this context, the role of education, and in particular, of teachers, school leaders and other education personnel is crucial.

In January 2017 the European Commission held its first **European Education Summit** with the title "*Laying the foundations of the European Education Area: for an innovative, inclusive and values-based education*". Ministers of education of the EU member states took the floor to explain their vision of shaping the **future of education**. The participants of the summit discussed how to better address **equality** in education systems, how education can help with transmitting common values, which competences will be needed for the decades to come, and how to create a future "**European Education Area**".

The topic of the summit was surprising as the national and European level political discourse in recent years had been focusing mostly on how education could better serve the demands of the **labour market**. Some policy-makers have been blaming education since the outbreak of the financial and economic crisis (2008) for the high unemployment rate among young people and echo the claim of companies that education should prepare students for the constantly changing labour market. 40% of European employers reported¹⁴ in 2015 that they cannot find people with the "**right skills**". **Skills mismatch** between education and the labour market had a strong role in shaping the education policy even though research¹⁵ proved that education is not to be blamed and in order to find the appropriate candidates companies should offer employment with an appropriate salary and decent working conditions based on fair recruitment for the job.

The ministers of education at the summit acknowledged that the future of education should be shaped around teaching **critical thinking** and how students can become **full citizens**. The focus, according to the ministers, should be around European values and how they can be taught in schools. Many of them explained that they see teaching **science and humanities** side by side and that Europe should give more importance to the **mobility of students, teaching language skills, and lifelong learning**. They underlined that education must be seen from a **holistic perspective**.

¹⁴ Eurofund: [Third European Company Survey](#), 2015.

¹⁵ CEDEFOP: [Matching Skills and Jobs in Europe](#), 2015.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *How to support teachers with the shift in the political discourse?*
- *How to ensure that education policy changes happen with the involvement of education trade unions and in the framework of social dialogue?*
- *What support do teachers need to teach critical thinking and help students become full citizens?*

4. THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN 2030

CHALLENGE

Teachers experience a variety of challenges related to teaching, professional autonomy and teaching effectiveness. They also face increasing **societal demands**. This calls for systemic changes to the teaching profession and for increased emphasis on teacher education and training.

Teaching a subject well is not the sole requirement for teachers anymore. According to policy makers teachers need to know how to teach in a **multicultural environment**, build **environmentally friendly schools**, with **cultural diversity, democratic values and human rights** across the curricula. In addition, teachers should teach other **key competences**, know **languages** and **participate in international mobility**. Teachers should **work** in a team with their fellow teachers, they should create partnerships between the schools and the local environment (e.g. libraries, museums, elderly care centres, companies), and they should continuously update their skills and knowledge via **continuous professional development** in their subject and in pedagogy.

Teaching for “**life and jobs**” is also requested as a shift towards project-based practical learning, real life experience and work experience. For example, improving **quality and fair apprenticeship** for students of the secondary and tertiary vocational education sector is a common demand of the trade unions¹⁶.

To add to this, **social media** have a big impact on young people, the “Generation Z” (starting in the birth years of the mid-1990s to mid-2000s) and influence teaching to a big extent while teacher training has not been fully adapted to catch up with the new technological developments, leading to a generational gap between parents, teachers and today’s students. **Media competence and media skills** are essential for the continuous development of teachers. In this context, data protection and ensuring the right to access to information play a key role. While policy-makers on the one hand are pushing for digitalisation of schools, several countries on the other hand have banned WIFI access and, the use of smartphone and social media by students in schools.

These high demands on teachers do not translate into valuing them accordingly. The status of the teaching profession remains low in many countries deriving from, among other reasons, **poor working conditions and low salaries** and this inhibits the recruitment of young professionals.

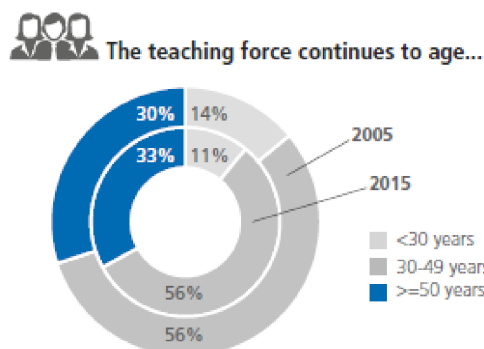
In order to meet the increasing demands, the teaching profession urgently needs support.

In OECD countries (2015)¹⁷ the teaching profession is ageing. Young teachers (below the age of 30) comprise 12% of primary education, 10% of lower secondary, and 7% of upper secondary on average across the OECD countries.

¹⁶ ETUC: A European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships, 2016 <https://www.etuc.org/publications/european-quality-framework-apprenticeships#.WoR0pdG0dU>

European Commission: Proposal for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, 2017 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2017%3A563%3AFIN>

¹⁷ OECD: Education at a Glance, 2017 <http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm>



In OECD countries (2015) 32% of primary school teachers, 36% at the lower secondary level, 40% of the upper secondary school teachers are at least 50 years old.

The profession faces a major gender imbalance: 7 out of 10 teachers are women in OECD countries. In OECD countries (2015) teachers are

- 97% women at pre-primary level,
- 83% women at primary level
- 69% women at lower secondary level
- 59% women at upper secondary level
- 43% women at tertiary level.

At the same time the OECD shows that teachers' salaries are **low compared to other similarly educated full-time workers**. The range of teacher salaries lies between **78% and 94% of the salaries of full-time workers with tertiary education**. The level of teachers' salaries depends on a country's relative wealth. The **economic downturn** in 2008 had a direct impact on teachers' salaries, which were either frozen or cut in some countries.

Considering the important role that the teaching profession has in society, it should be recognised that **decent salaries** are fundamental to drawing people into the teaching profession and ensuring that teachers stay satisfied and motivated to continue teaching.

The Eurydice report on Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe (2015) shows that teachers' **salaries increased** in comparison to the previous two year-period due to salary reforms (such as in Croatia, Slovakia and Iceland) and adjustments to the cost of living. However, in many countries during the years of the crisis salary decreases followed after the raise. Despite the average data, there are six countries (Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovenia and Liechtenstein) in which a salary freeze is still being applied and in Serbia a salary decrease of more than 1% has been registered.

According to EURYDICE¹⁸, between 2005 and 2015 teachers' statutory salaries decreased in real terms in one-third of EU countries. The salaries decreased by 10% or more (both primary and lower secondary level) (OECD¹⁹) in the Czech Republic, in Greece and in Turkey. According to EURYDICE salary levels

18 EURYDICE : Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe 2015/16 : https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/images/2/22/Teacher_salaries.pdf

19 OECD: Education at a Glance, 2017 <http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm>

increased in Romania by 5% , in FYROM by 4%, and in Serbia by 5%, but after a long period of salary freezes.

The calculation of teaching hours and working hours of teachers shows a great divergence in Europe. The number of **teaching hours** (OECD²⁰) in lower secondary education (2015) is:

- 500 hours/year: Russia, Turkey, Poland
- 600 hours/year: Hungary, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovenia
- 650-700 hours/year: Slovakia, Latvia
- 1000-1050 hours/year: Scotland, Switzerland

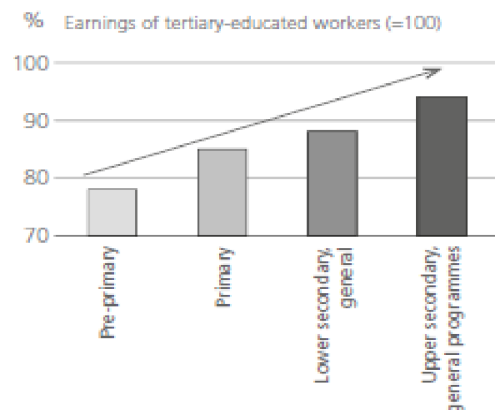
„**Teaching hours**“ evidently are not equal with „**working hours**“. For example, **the percentage of time spent teaching according to the OECD is:**

- 60% Lithuania
- 40% Estonia, Slovakia, Latvia
- 35% Czech Republic, Hungary
- 30% Turkey



Teacher salaries are not competitive

Teachers' salaries relative to other tertiary-educated workers (2015)



QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *How to ensure better support for teachers and their valorisation in society and the media?*
- *Which actions can education trade unions in Europe take to improve the status of the profession?*

PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Equal opportunities for all relies on the principle of inclusion. Access to quality education for all regardless of socio-economic background or other potentially discriminatory factors is the basis for education as a public good and the driver of sustainable growth and innovation in the future. Supporting personal learning needs and promoting individual learning opportunities for all students is crucial and lays the founding stone for lifelong learning and active citizenship. It helps students acquire the necessary skills for the future labour market. There can be many different strands of discrimination, at times overlapping and multifaceted, to overcome in education. Some of the most commonly addressed ones are taken up in this paper, beginning with gender equality, LGBTI rights and rights of ethnic and cultural minorities to special needs education and others. Only a society based on equal opportunities for all, human rights and universal values can in the long term be successful in replying to its citizens needs in a satisfactorily and forward-looking way and address and respond to the challenges of the future.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

Education has a major impact on gender relations in the labour market and in the society as a whole. From an early age, gender perceptions are reproduced and transformed in the school through interactions between girls and boys, female and male teachers, as well as school curricula and learning materials. Education is a basic human right and should help to realise the full potential of every student, including preparing students as tolerant and gender sensitive citizens. Girls and boys choosing study fields and

career paths according to their interests not gender stereotypes, can significantly boost the potential productive capacity and competitiveness of the European economy while ensuring gender equality in the research sector leads to future innovation and success.

Gender equality is one of the key UN Sustainable Development Goals and a fundamental European value and objective. However, in reality, the battle for gender equality is far from being won. Worldwide, it still requires *'more vigorous efforts, including legal frameworks, to counter deeply rooted gender-based discrimination that often results from patriarchal attitudes and related social norms'*.²¹ **Europe is also moving towards gender equality at 'a snail's pace'**²² as inequality and gender gaps prevail in almost all areas of life. The profession remains a field where gender segregation and inequalities are strongly present with gender stereotypes limiting the opportunities in the lives of girls and boys and horizontal and vertical gender segregation creating obstacles for female teachers' professional development.

CHALLENGE

Despite the fact that women are often more successful in educational attainment than men and they make up the majority of tertiary student²³, the **segregation in study fields for women and men remains a serious issue in the current educational systems**, especially in vocational education and training. Gender segregation in study fields creates challenges in school-to-labour transition and leads to gender pay gaps considering that occupations which are traditionally male-dominated are usually the fastest-growing and better remunerated occupations (ICT, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)).

Horizontal and vertical gender segregation in the teaching profession also undermines gender equality in education and the labour market. As in other professions in the public sector, the majority of employees working in education are women (71%²⁴) and issues of gender equality require special attention in the teaching profession. The teaching profession provides more opportunities for flexible working time arrangements than other professions in the public sector making it attractive to women who still more often than men take care of children and the elderly. However, such arrangements reduce the working time of female teachers and make them less competitive in economic and career development terms compared to their male colleagues. Women are over-represented in early childhood and primary education which are often associated with care-giving and are usually less-paid than employments in other education sectors. Whereas men are more often employed in better-paid, higher-status positions (e.g. in tertiary education), as well as in leadership positions that hold greater influence on decision-making and policy development.²⁵

In addition to existing gender inequalities and disparities, new challenges for gender equality arise from the **changes in our societies such as socio-economic adjustment resulting from the economic crisis, new technologies, migration, and different family patterns**. Even though provisions for equal pay of women and men in the education sector exist in Europe, the low valorisation of the teaching profession, challenging working conditions, and unequal distribution of caring responsibilities between men and women have a strong negative impact on gender equality. Moreover, precariousness and job insecurity strongly contribute to expanding gender inequalities in the society as a whole.

²¹ Report of the Secretary-General, "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals", E/2017/66

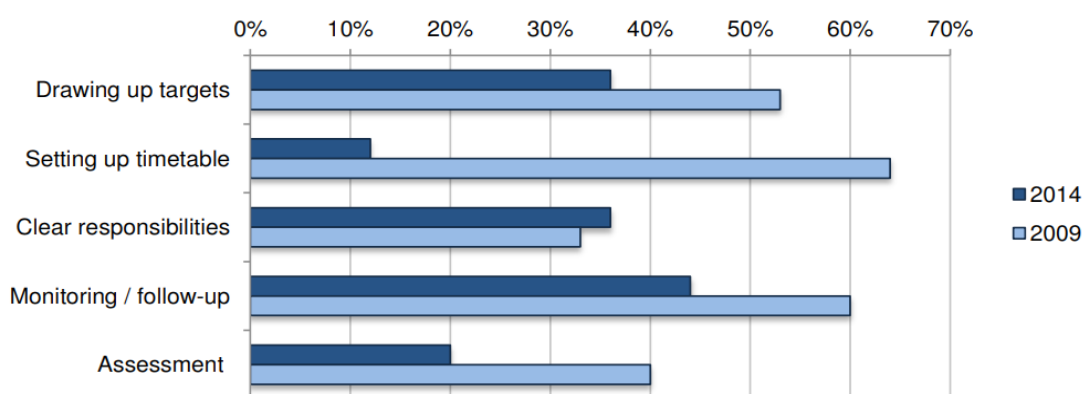
²² European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) Gender Equality Index 2017: Europe has the average score of 66.2 out of 100, which is only a 4.2-point increase since 2005, <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index>

²³ EIGE notes that the gender gap in education and training in STEM fields (around 19% of girls) is more or less the same size as the gender gap in public service, education and healthcare fields (around 19% of boys). However, the gender gap in employment in these fields is significantly bigger for women: only 14% of women in STEM sectors and 27% of men in public service, education, and healthcare (<https://goo.gl/wcYvc5>).

²⁴ Eurostat, 2018, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20180307-1?inheritRedirect=true&redirect=%2FFeurostat%2F>

²⁵ Eurydice Key Data on Education in Europe 2012; According to EIGE, "with a few exceptions, such as Finland where there is a near gender balance, the share of women teachers in primary schools usually exceeds 75%" (<http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/policy-areas/education>).

In order to ensure that future education addresses the needs of boys and girls in an equal manner and that tomorrow's society is free of gender stereotypes and gender segregation in the labour market, education trade unions need to improve gender equality not only in the education system and the teaching profession, but also in trade union structures. Findings of the ETUCE project "*Promoting gender equality within education trade unions and in the teaching profession II: Implementing and reinforcing education trade union actions on gender equality in times of austerity*"²⁷ showed that **women are also underrepresented in decision-making structures and leadership positions in education trade unions**, compared to their share in the union membership. Moreover, it was revealed that less than 40% of the unions deal with the gendered effect of the economic crisis and address issues of gender equality in social dialogue.



ETUCE Report *Gender Equality in Education Trade Unions in Times of Austerity*, 2014: Mechanisms for implementing policy on gender equality in the union, 2009-2014.

Education trade unions play a key role in combating gender stereotypes in the education sector, promoting equal representation of women and men in decision-making positions, and overall, raising of the status of the teaching profession. It is crucial that they take action to develop and implement measures that can improve the current situation.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *What is needed to attract both men and women to the teaching profession?*
- *What actions are needed to combat gender segregation in study and career paths?*
- *How can education trade unions enhance the representation and participation of women in decision-making in the education sector and in education trade union structures?*
- *How can education trade unions contribute to better work-life balance policies at national and sectoral level?*

26 ETUCE Report of a survey among national education trade unions 'Gender Equality in Education Trade Unions in Times of Austerity', 2014, https://www.csee-etu.org/images/attachments/Gender_equality_Survey_report_EN_only.pdf.

PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION

The [UNESCO definition](#), endorsed by the EU agency for special needs education and inclusive education, defines “inclusive education” as an on-going process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination. Indeed, the three major principles governing systems of inclusive education are typically identified as the following: a) Educational provision and support should be provided in the community and not in segregated settings; b) Support and services should be person-centred so that individuals with difficulties or disadvantages are more involved in the process of decision-making concerning the support they need; and c) Support should take account of permanent human relationships and should be provided throughout an individual’s life not only in terms of additional material and economic resources at a specific point in time.

CHALLENGE

In parallel, [OECD research concludes that inclusive education](#) is concerned with the ‘transformation of the education system in general into a system capable of responding effectively to the totality of learners’ diverse needs. Inclusive education, the authors state, is not about the placement of learners into mainstream settings by responding to their individual needs, but about reforming schooling, ‘to support education for all and remove barriers to participation and learning for disadvantaged groups, essential links must be made between the reform of the education system and other policies such as those to alleviate poverty, improve maternal and child health, promote gender equality and ensure environmental sustainability and global partnership.’

In addition to the special situation of migrants and refugees in Europe, **other vulnerable groups of learners** deserve attention from an “inclusive education” perspective, beginning with early childhood education. The role of education trade unions in supporting teachers in their tasks of training and supporting vulnerable groups of learners is fundamental. Among these count for example [disabled students and students with special educational needs; Roma, LGBTI students](#); students from a weak-socio economic background; students at risk of marginalization or social exclusion; students from dysfunctional families or others. Each group has its own specific educational needs and its own social and economic particularities according also to the respective national context and cultural traditions. Teachers and their unions are key to promoting education for the social inclusion of these students.

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), in their second EU-LGBTI Survey and the research report on “Professionally Speaking: Challenges to Achieving Equality for **LGBT People**”²⁷, has collected and analysed data on the experiences of LGBTI people, including teachers and educational personnel. The results help strengthen the EU’s anti-discrimination legislation from an inclusive LGBTI perspective. This year, 2018, the LGBTI international week focused on “Alliances for Solidarity” and has particularly spotlighted the strengthening of alliances for intersectionality, with a view to promoting safe working and learning environments, fighting violence, lobbying for legal change, and continuing to raising awareness on the issue; alliances that highlight the necessity for sexual and gender minorities to be allies to other vulnerable groups.

27 http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-lgbt-public-officials_en.pdf

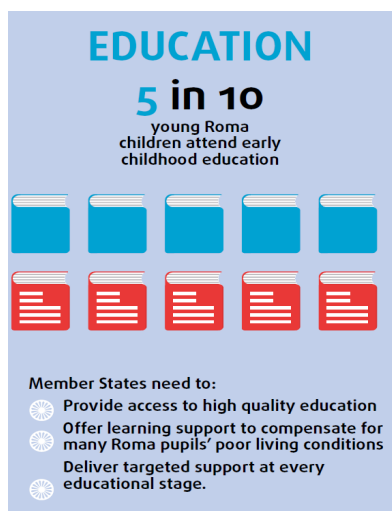
From their side, the European Commission's actions (DG JUSTICE) to advance LGBTI equality to be implemented during the period 2016-2019²⁸ are aimed at achieving full legal protection against LGBT anti-discrimination.

While 91% of respondents had heard negative comments or seen negative conduct towards a schoolmate who was perceived to be LGBTI (EU LGBT Survey, FRA, 2015)²⁹, the **Eurobarometer 2017** showed that:



From the teachers' perspective, several arguments can encourage teachers to take action, among others: 1) The stigma, discrimination and bullying children suffer goes against their right to education; 2) Students who are different from the majority gender norm suffer most from violence in schools; and 3) Homo/transphobia is an entry point to tackle sex/gender-based violence in schools.

Another group of vulnerable learners is the **Roma community**. Based on a new FRA report (May 2018)³⁰, educational barriers still persist for Roma inclusion. Member States need to provide access to high quality education eliminating any form of school or class segregation; offer learning support to compensate for many Roma pupils' poor living conditions, including basic digital inclusion; and deliver targeted support at every educational stage with a particular focus on early-childhood education.



Another important vulnerable group are **disabled teachers and students**. Indeed, the European Parliament has started to analyse the implementation of the EU Disability Strategy 2020, including education and training for children and adults with disabilities and special needs and access to quality education and lifelong learning. More precisely, the 'Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)' of the European Parliament has recently published an opinion³¹ which addresses key issues for teachers teaching students with disabilities and special educational needs. In particular, this Committee recommends preparing teachers and trainers to work with children with disabilities and providing

28 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/lgbti-actionlist-dg-just_en.pdf

29 https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?action=display&doc_id=44677

30 http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-anti-gypsyism-barrier-roma-inclusion_en.pdf

31 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fNONGML%2bCOMPARL%2bPE-604.815%2b02%2bDOC%2bPDF%2bV0%2f%2fEN>

them with adequate support; encouraging the member states to design inclusive education, training and continuous professional development for teachers and trainers; encouraging the exchange of good practices on inclusive education and lifelong learning between teachers, other education personnel, governing bodies, and students with disabilities; and calling on the member states to ensure that education and training are organised to include children and adults with physical or intellectual disabilities, providing counselling, assistance and individual teaching. Nowadays, in a digitally fast changing world, technological universal design (e.g. with adaptative and assistive ICT devices) and information accessibility standards' ICT integration is also important to advance in equal opportunities.

In general, the achievement of **equal opportunities for all** requires that teachers and other education personnel receive further and appropriate training about the fundamental rights of defined groups of students both in initial teacher training and in continuous professional teacher training supported with sufficient and sustainable public funding. This can contribute to strengthening the capacity and awareness of teachers and other education professionals in managing diversity, tackling bullying and school-violence and in promoting inclusive learning environments for all.

Education trade unions need to continuously inform their affiliates about developments and updates on national and European anti-discrimination legislation as well as legal provisions tackling discrimination in their various forms in schools and in the workplace with the ultimate goal of achieving full formal and material equality.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *What actions can education trade unions undertake to support "inclusive education"?*
- *How can education trade unions support teachers in their tasks of teaching vulnerable groups of students?*



6. INCLUDING MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN EDUCATION

CHALLENGE

For ETUCE and its member organisations providing migrants and refugees access to quality and inclusive education for successful integration the involvement of the European social partners in education in mainstreaming migrant education into education policies is essential. To ensure this, appropriate and sustainable investment must be provided so that teachers and other education personnel can receive adequate training in migrant education both in initial teacher education and continuous professional development. This also involves other challenging activities for quality and inclusive education, i.e. pedagogical training, linguistic support, psychosocial counselling and other didactic complementary actions. Other challenges in future education concern more diversity in the teaching workforce and the issue of online learning courses for inclusion purposes³² and the role of education trade unions therein.

Governments and leaders in Europe have responded slowly and with divided political reactions to refugees seeking protection in Europe. The large and sudden flow of migrants, refugees, asylum seeking children, young people and adults claiming international protection in Europe has developed into the biggest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the second world war: 1.26 million asylum seekers arrived in the EU in 2015. In 2016 around 370.000 refugees entered the EU, with further decreasing numbers in 2017. At the gates of the EU, Turkey hosts approximately 3.2 million Syrian refugees (UNHCR³³) and a significant non-Syrian population of protection-seekers: about 44% are from Afghanistan, 42% are from Iraq, and 10% are from Iran. In addition, mixed migration flows along the Balkans route continue³⁴, indicating that **the Western Balkans remain one of the most travelled migration routes**. More than 5,000 refugees and migrants are estimated to have arrived in the Balkan countries³⁵ in the last four months of 2017, bringing to more than 6,500 refugees and migrants currently present (January 2018) in the Balkans countries. Indeed, [according to UNCHR](#) (2016):

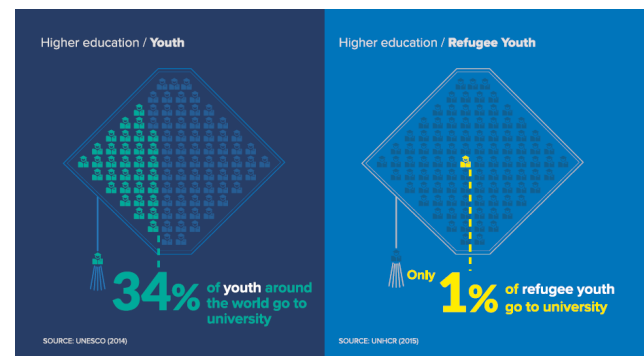
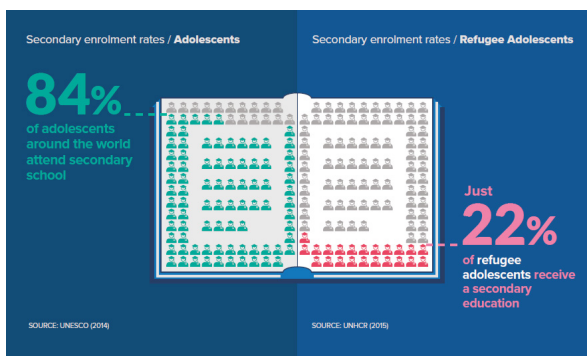
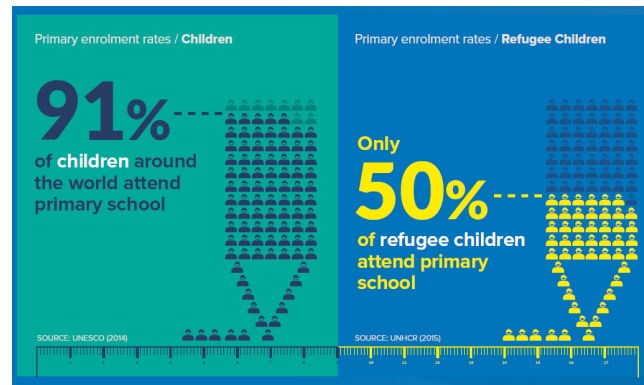
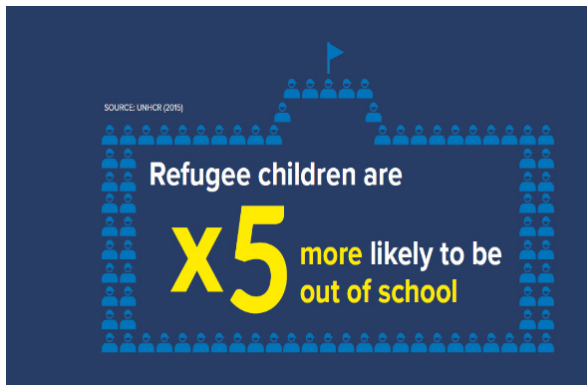
- 91% of children around the world attend primary school. **Only 50 % of the refugee children go to primary school.**
- 84% of adolescents around the world attend secondary school. **Only 22 % of the refugee adolescents receive secondary education.**
- 34% of youth around the world go to University. **Only 1 % of refugee youth go to University.**

³² European Commission, Joint Research Centre 2018, [Mapping & analysis of MOOCs & free digital learning for inclusion of migrants & refugees](#).

³³ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/60180>

³⁴ Save the Children, December 2017: REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS AT THE WESTERN BALKANS ROUTE, A regional overview: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SC%20BMDH%20DATA%20Regional%20Overview_%20September%20-%20December%202017.pdf

³⁵ Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosova, FYROM, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.



Indeed, there are many challenges linked to the inclusion of migrants and refugees in education systems³⁶.

One statistic which particularly stands out in the report of the Fundamental Rights Agency on the “Current migration situation in the EU: Education” is that in nine out of 14 Member States covered, children in immigration detention centres have not got access to any form of education. ETUCE has long advocated for education being a human right available to everyone and this should be extended to children in immigration detention centres. With this in mind, ETUCE and its member organisations strongly appeal to governments in Europe to do everything in their power to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education with a view to improving education access and learning achievement among refugee children, focusing on the learning environment, teaching quality, early childhood education and accelerated learning programmes.

Other challenges³⁷ refer more precisely to long waiting periods for refugee protection applications for asylum-seekers, language barriers, accessibility in terms of distance, insufficient guidance for families, lack of information provided on such opportunities, low allowances for asylum applicants to cover expenses, and the treatment and inclusion of traumatised children. All these issues require improved coordination between the EU, national governments and education trade unions to ensure that there is adequate funding for schools and support for teachers to assist with the inclusion of migrants and refugees in education, as well as training for teachers in schools experiencing an increase of students from migrant or refugee backgrounds so that teachers are prepared and students obtain the inclusive education they need. In order for education institutions and teachers to appropriately reply to the needs of refugee children, it is also essential that education institutions and facilities are made available in sufficient quantity to facilitate this.

³⁶ Fundamental Rights Agency's report on the “Current migration situation in the EU: Education”, 2017.
³⁷ FRA report on Access to education failing many migrants, 2017

Another challenge is the lack of adequate psychological support available for refugee children who have experienced severe distress and trauma. Whilst some countries do have a form of provision of psychological support, it is rarely targeted specifically towards refugee children and their needs. To ensure the inclusion of migrant and refugee children, specialist psychological support must be available to those students who require it³⁸.

The provision of education in the mother tongue of the migrant students at the time of teaching in multicultural environments remains challenging. Bilingual teachers, teacher language assistants, linguistic support from local services and the development of targeted bilingual courses for students with a migrant or refugee origin can be different alternatives³⁹.

With these challenges in mind, ETUCE has been taking concrete actions to ensure education trade unions play their part in creating more inclusive school environments for migrants and refugees. ETUCE recently joined the [SIRIUS Network on migrant education](#) and the [European Asylum Support Office \(EASO\) Consultative Forum on Asylum Support](#) (headquartered in Malta) to ensure that the voice of teachers and other education personnel are included in EU-level discussions on migrant and refugee education.

Aimed at creating a sustainable framework for social partners to support schools and education institutions, teachers, trainers and school leaders dealing with students of migrant origin, ETUCE is leading a project alongside the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) entitled '[European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting effective integration of migrants and refugees in education](#)'.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *What are the needs of teachers and education personnel in terms of including migrants and refugees in education?*
- *What are the main support mechanisms/reforms needed to help teachers with including migrants and refugees into public education systems?*
- *How can education trade unions mobilise further their resources in supporting the inclusion of young and adult refugees in the education system/lifelong learning and in the labour market?*
- *How can quality public education for all promote school integration and remove barriers at school for children and youth with a migrant background to reduce segregation and early school leaving?*
- *What role does non-formal education in migrant and refugee inclusion play?*

³⁸ European Parliament, Education Committee [Study on monitoring and assessment of migrant education](#) (2017)

³⁹ European Commission, DG EAC 2015, "Language teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms", and the AVIOR EU project from SIRIUS network on migrant education: Bilingual education, 2017.

7. DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND UNIVERSAL VALUES

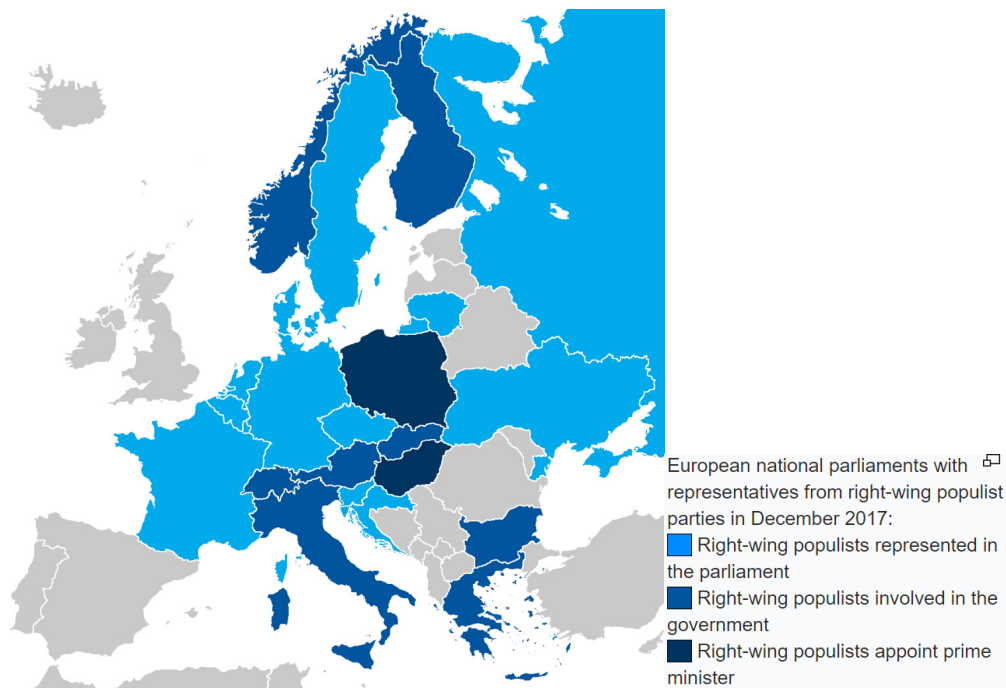
Education is a crucial tool to tackle extremism, violent radicalisation and any form of intolerance through the promotion of **civic education, citizenship and universal values** of democracy, tolerance, freedom and non-discrimination, especially in today's pluralistic and globalised societies. Teaching in multicultural learning environments is one of the main challenges and a valuable source of opportunities for promoting human rights education and social inclusion. Indeed, this comprises diverse subsequent challenges ranging from **academic freedom** to select the most appropriate techniques and methods for teaching; the balanced approach between religion-related issues and human rights for intercultural dialogue; e-safety-and digital responsibility and commitment to the use of the internet and social networks; the implications of a 'whole school approach' and the possibilities to liaise with new actors from municipalities. Within this context, the role that education trade unions and teachers play when they become aware of students showing signs of being drawn into violent extremism is particularly complex and varies depending on national contexts and traditions and on the educational strategy.

Following the [2015 Paris Declaration on the promotion of citizenship and EU shared values](#) aimed to enhance social, civic and intercultural competences, including critical thinking and media literacy, especially for disadvantaged students, and to promote intercultural dialogue and more inclusive education and training systems at national and regional level, the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission has recently published the results on the public consultation on "Promoting social inclusion and shared EU values through formal and non-formal learning". Among other important findings, the consultation report showed that: supporting and empowering teachers is one of the most effective solutions for building inclusive learning environments and for dealing with multiculturalism, diversity and controversy. Improving the quality of initial teacher training and continuing professional development feature also among the most effective ways in creating high-quality inclusive education systems. Adapted school curricula, innovative teaching methods and learner-centred approaches to teaching are vital to effectively teach transversal issues of citizenship and human rights. Training for teachers, including mentoring, peer guidance and exchange of best practices, as regards 'non-formal learning' is also important to help teachers enhance and better comprehend their role in promoting shared values outside the classroom (e.g. in extra-curricular activities). On the basis of this consultation report the European Council is preparing [recommendation on the "promotion of common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching"](#). Indeed, the report took into consideration several ETUCE recommendations⁴⁰, in particular, on "*Stepping up efforts to overcome the shortage of qualified teachers and to make the teaching profession more attractive. This includes offering good salaries which are comparable with other graduate professions. Efforts should also be made to enhance the recognition of the status and social function of teachers, academics and other education personnel as educators of future active and responsible citizens who are able to think critically and contribute effectively to a more just society*".

In parallel, major educational developments in relation to citizenship education have taken place [at national level](#). They vary, for example, from the French Action plan 'Grande mobilisation de l'École pour les valeurs de la République'; the Package for teachers with tools for preventing and acting on radicalisation tendencies within the school system in Denmark; and legislative changes and new instructional material for teachers for an improved implementation of the national curriculum, including

40 https://www.csee-etu.org/images/attachments/PositionPaper_Consultation-EUshared_values_Social_inclusion.pdf

which ultimately lead to poverty in old age. Growing insecurity, discontent and fear nourish the desire for protection from imagined and real threats, such as a dependency on the global market, domineering European bureaucracies, increasing crime and terrorism, and are a breeding ground for nationalist and racist sentiment. Trade unions have a particular responsibility to confront the extreme right because these forces seek to undermine the *raison d'être* of trade unions and weaken their function as crucial regulatory forces within industrial relations while calling into question their role in representing the interests of employees. Social justice and social protection are only achievable through policies based on solidarity, openness and in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and other international human rights mechanisms. Trade unions are defenders of democratic values as an alternative to nationalism and racism.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_active_nationalist_parties_in_Europe (December 2017)

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *What role do education trade unions have in tackling and confronting extremism, racism and intolerance?*
- *Are educational reforms or measures regarding citizenship education needed at policy level?*
- *What are the needs of teachers and other education personnel in terms of promoting democratic citizenship?*

EMPOWERING EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS

8. THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

Challenging precarious work is a central topic for ETUCE. The ETUCE resolution on '*Empowering Education Trade Unions: The Key to Promoting Quality Education*' adopted by the ETUCE Conference in Belgrade in 2016 highlights the essential link between decent contracts for teachers and quality education for students. Connecting the issue of better working conditions for teachers to quality of education across all sectors, remains key to ETUCE's work, as professional and working conditions are inevitably interdependent.

In the last decade, across many European countries, fiscal discipline and budgetary rules have been at the core of European and national policy-making, profoundly impacting both the labour market and education system reforms. Structural reforms addressing the labour market and education systems manifest nationally unique features that do not make them comparable. Yet, across all countries in the European region, the same logic of cost reduction and increases in labour market flexibility has applied leading to similar results in countries with traditionally different employment and industrial relations models. It is no surprise that teachers' deteriorating working conditions and wellbeing have become a prominent challenge to recruitment and retention and are hindering the attractiveness of the profession all over Europe.

The first common challenge identified relates to teacher shortages and unemployment. The economic shift of the last decade has inflicted big **employment losses in education**, as many ETUCE member organisations have reported and shown in the [EPSU-ETUCE Briefing](#) (2017). A reduction of the teaching workforce has in turn led to an increased deterioration of the working conditions of those remaining in work, such as: bigger student/teacher ratios, a growing risk for work-related stress and psychosocial hazards, low salaries and/or salary freezes.

Second, the quality of work is being challenged by increasing demands for flexibility and precarious employment, especially for those who are entering the profession. Teachers and other education personnel are progressively threatened with **fixed-term contracts**, including interim or agency contracts, **the erosion of their status and security** and **unrewarding working conditions including low salaries**, a clear product of austerity economics. Young and female teachers are particularly affected.

Third, decentralisation and casualisation of employment relations have been pursued at the same time as **the reduction of the protections** for those working with standard, open-ended, full time employment contracts. Consequently, the notion of poor quality is increasingly common across all levels, age ranges and terms of employment in all sectors of education. There is an urgent need to ensure that decent levels of protection are available for those working under non-standard employment relations because diminishing job security, social and employment protections and welfare entitlements are challenging the working life of all teachers.

Fourth, the progressing modernisation, **digitalisation** and use of internet and communication technologies in education where ICT can be an added value to teaching relies heavily on substantial investment into the teaching profession and the education sector as a whole. Education trade unions are important promoters of the pedagogical use of ICT in education as a tool, among others, to support teaching. Due to the lack of public funding in education the use of ICT bears the risk for many education institutions of gradually moving to privatisation and commercialisation in public education as a means to stem the costs for adapting teaching infrastructure and teacher training to the needs of modern education systems in a fast changing world. In particular the challenge lies with the clear need for more directed teacher training according to education personnel's needs.

Across Europe, the dominance of economic concerns has sometimes overshadowed broad education policy objectives when applied to educational reforms, and relegated education policy to be only a tool of a supply-side economic policy, **altering teachers' professional identity** within the context of the school and educational community. Bascia and Stevenson (EI, 2017) argue that educational reforms targeting the context in which teaching occurs profoundly alter teachers' professional and working conditions, leading to de-professionalisation, limited autonomy and influence over curriculum and teaching methods, in increasingly competitive, as opposed to cooperative, working environments. At a time when demands on teachers are rising including dealing with a more diverse student population and rapid technological changes, teachers are increasingly subject to standardised teaching methods and curricula, testing and measurements, challenging their professional identity and working conditions.⁴¹

The **drive towards privatisation and the prevalence of the cost-effectiveness narrative** are visibly impacting on the quality of work, as they pave the way for shifts towards individualised and performance-related pay of teachers and other education personnel. In some cases, financial incentives for teachers enhance competitiveness and undermine cooperation and social solidarity in the workplace. In parallel, emphasis on the marketable aspects of education and on the commercialisation of educational outcomes, especially in higher education, is beginning to emerge in some countries, affecting employment conditions and leading to an abuse of fixed-term research contracts, particularly when the contract type is linked to short-term project funding or result-oriented.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *What are the main features of quality employment in the education sector as a key element of quality education?*
- *Can we identify the main consequences on teachers' terms of employment and social protection following labour market reforms and deregulation?*
- *How can education trade unions strengthen representation of teachers, including those working in private education institutions?*

41 Bascia, N. and Stevenson, H., 2017, 'Organising teaching: Developing the power of the profession', Education International Research, p.6

9. SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Social dialogue and collective bargaining are the cornerstones not only of wage setting, labour market and employment regulation, social protections and professional interests of teachers, but also of the development of education policies which are central to the attainment of quality education for all. As such, the key role of teachers and education personnel in implementing education reforms is recognised by the UNESCO 1966 Recommendation concerning the status of teachers, calling for teachers to be consulted and be negotiated with on the provisions of the Recommendation. Additionally, it calls for 'close co-operation between the competent authorities, organisations of teachers, of employers and workers, [...] for the purpose of defining educational policies and its precise objectives', as well as for the recognition of teachers' organisations as 'a force which can contribute greatly to educational advance and which therefore should be associated with the determination of educational policy.'

As a follow-up to the [ILO Resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work](#), adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2016, the ILO is holding recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of social dialogue and tripartism in a changing world of work and rapidly changing environments. The pressures on trade unions stemming from the decade-long economic crisis, deteriorating conditions of the workers they represent and of social standards opened the way for an unprecedented shift in the balance of power between labour and capital owners, to which unions have responded by strengthening organising capacity and mobilisation potential, as well as creating wider public support for public services. Yet, with the economic recovery considered on track, the value of social dialogue as a problem-solving mechanism and as the crucial means of achieving social equity and sustainable economic growth is now being promoted again at all levels. The climate for social dialogue at sub-regional, national and local level, however, remains uneven across countries in the European region: the South and East facing wider delays than the North and West.

The **European Pillar of Social Rights**, endorsed by the European leaders in November 2017 and hailed by the European Commission President Juncker as an ambitious initiative paving the way for the establishment of a more social Europe, has opened a new momentum for social dialogue as a key practice conducive to growth, social cohesion and equality. Laying at the very foundation of the Pillar, there is the right of everyone to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning (principle 1) and the right of social partners to be consulted on the design and implementation of economic, employment and social policies. According to the Pillar, social partners at all levels have a crucial role to play in pursuing and implementing these principles, in accordance with their autonomy in negotiating and concluding agreements and the right to collective bargaining and collective action.

While fully respecting the national competence on education, it is recognised that the **European Social Dialogue** could scale up national social dialogue in education, foster cooperation and provide an opportunity to share results with other European countries within and outside the EU. However, as the quality of the national and European social dialogue are intertwined, effective outcomes can be reached only with enhanced commitment, involvement, agreement on mandate from both sides of the partnership, balanced representation and enhanced capacity in order to negotiate agreements at national and European level.

In sharp contrast with the growing EU calls for more social dialogue and ownership of policy reforms,

attacks on unions and their members and deregulation of collective bargaining have seriously undermined both the working conditions and job security of education personnel and the overall quality of education and the levels of equality in society.

In the last decade, social dialogue and collective bargaining in nearly all European countries weakened. Wage policies, which were the result of long-standing collective bargaining traditions across European countries, were undermined by **unilateral legislative** acts and by the **decentralisation** or even the **dismantling of bargaining systems**, especially in Southern and Central and Eastern European countries. Cutting or freezing public sector wages and labour market deregulation including the incremental use of fixed-term contracts for teachers and other education personnel entering the profession made it even **harder for the unions' defence of collective interests to prevail**. Evidence confirms⁴⁴ that **union density** declined during the crisis years in most European countries, in parallel with a decline in bargaining coverage, resulting in drops in the number of sectoral agreements concluded.

In parallel, a drift towards a **'business model' or commodification of education** has taken place across European countries challenging education trade unions in their struggle to defend quality public education in society against the rising efficiency narrative that champions the positive role of the private as opposed to that of the public in delivery of quality education. Against this background, direct attacks on unions result in increasing denial and/or obstruction of trade union rights especially in private education institutions, including limits to the scope of bargaining, and a limited involvement in negotiating civil servants' rights and working conditions.

Finally, while both education and collective bargaining policies are traditionally considered as a national prerogative, the **European Semester** is having increasingly significant implications for shaping education policies, budgetary issues and social dialogue settings across Europe, most notably through the Country Specific Recommendations. For years, European initiatives had little influence over national education and collective bargaining policy. With the strengthening of the European Semester, a more or less direct **intervention into these policies** took place, pointing at the risk for a clear democratic gap between policy inception, design and implementation and the involvement of the social partners therein.

The ETUCE report (2017) finds that despite the European Commission's commitment to social dialogue as a key practice underpinning the EU governance, and the European Semester in particular:

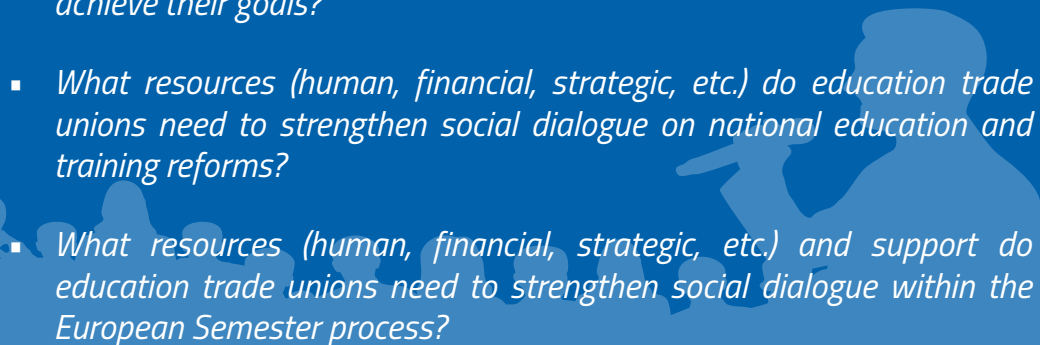
- Education trade unions have limited involvement in social dialogue with European institutions relating to the Semester;
- The quality of social dialogue at European level involving national education trade unions appears closely related to the quality of social dialogue within Member States;
- Social dialogue arrangements are not static, but are the outcome of wider political developments and contexts'⁴³

Limited engagement of education trade unions in the policy and agenda shaping within the European Semester translates into the need for more strategic interventions in the process to secure results at national level.

42 Visser, J., 2016, 'What happened to collective bargaining during the great recession?', *Journal of Labor Policy*, 5:9 and Lehndorff, S., Dribbush, H. and Shulten, T., 2017, 'Rough waters. European trade unions in a time of crisis', ETUI.

43 Stevenson, H., Hagger-Vaughan, L., Milner, A. and Winchip, E., 2017, 'Education and Training Policy in the European Semester - Public Investment, Public Policy, Social Dialogue and Privatisation Patterns across Europe', ETUCE-CSEE.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *Which concrete actions contribute to improving social dialogue and collective bargaining at European, national, regional and local level?*
 - *What is needed to strengthen social dialogue beyond salary negotiations and collective bargaining structures?*
 - *Are there new communication strategies that can help trade unions achieve their goals?*
 - *What resources (human, financial, strategic, etc.) do education trade unions need to strengthen social dialogue on national education and training reforms?*
 - *What resources (human, financial, strategic, etc.) and support do education trade unions need to strengthen social dialogue within the European Semester process?*
- 
- A blue silhouette graphic of a group of people in a meeting or discussion. One person in the center is gesturing with their hand while speaking to others. The silhouettes are arranged in a semi-circle, suggesting a collaborative environment.

10. TRADE UNION RENEWAL

In the last three decades, **trade union membership has declined in most European countries**. Changes in employment relations and the composition of the workforce have resulted in greater fragmentation, competition between workers, uneven relations between employers and employees even within the same workplace, weakening of trade union influence on labour market policy⁴⁴, the fading of education trade union influence on education policy and reform and, alongside with this, weakening of their position in social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Despite the education sector and organised teachers having resisted the membership crisis which hit other industrial sectors harder, by retaining high levels of trade union density⁴⁵, they are now confronted with increasing societal and sector-specific challenges. These are hindering their ability to meet the demands for support of teachers and other education personnel and endangering their future as collective organisations.

Societal and sector-specific challenges are originating both internally and externally. Internal challenges relate to the need to **adapt union structures to a changing world of work** at a time of decreasing resources, of erosion of workplace representation and democratic participation, of declining mobilization potential, of weakening of the traditional alliances between unions and social-democratic/left-wing parties and of a deterioration in their institutional and social legitimacy.

All this happens in a context of deep societal changes originated in the **broad political agenda for deregulation and fragmentation** of workers and of societies. Changes in the labour market structures, the expansion of free and unrestrained market forces and ideas encouraging the direct involvement of private actors⁴⁶, the adoption of 'business-like' management practices and increasing reliance on commercial imperatives in education, are undermining traditional forms of solidarity and financial redistribution and are emphasizing the role of individual and of personal ambition at the expense of collective action and social aspirations.

Unions themselves are under attack, globally and in every single country. This appears in attempts to undermine collective bargaining⁴⁷ through direct interference by international and European financial institutions (e.g. the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank) asking for regulatory changes to collective bargaining or even through the increasing use of legislative measures to introduce changes to the professional and working conditions of teachers. Also, ETUCE member organisations have reported on several occasions on the increasing attempts to deny formal involvement in social dialogue, decision and reform making, even in those countries with a long tradition of strong formal social dialogue governance structures.

To face all these challenges, education trade unions have strengthened their efforts to identify and tackle threats, frame problems, reorganize resources and use them in a creative manner. **Strategic 'renewal'** responses to internal and external challenges in these years have been largely dependent on the different institutional settings in which education trade unions operate⁴⁸. Specifically, those unions based in countries with well-established social partnership traditions have relied more on social dialogue

44 See section on 'Changing world of work' in this document for in-depth analysis.

45 Kelly, J., 2015, 'Trade union membership and power in comparative perspective', the Economic and Labour Relations Review, Vol 26, Issue 4, pp. 526 – 544.

46 See section on 'Sustainable financing for quality education' in this document for in-depth analysis.

47 See section on 'Social dialogue and collective bargaining' in this document for in-depth analysis.

48 Bascia, N. and Stevenson, H., 2017, 'Organising teaching: Developing the power of the profession', Education International Research

and on collective bargaining to make their voices heard. In countries where social dialogue is more recent, and where union membership and collective bargaining coverage has been steadily declining, education trade unions have turned the wide-spread discontent arising from imposed austerity into an opportunity to address all those teachers, education personnel and broad sections of the population disillusioned with neo-liberal policy prescription, thus managing to widen outreach and to build even closer contacts with all teachers and education personnel. This was commonly the case of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries.⁴⁹

Education trade unions across Europe have opposed the onslaught of the economic and political crisis by becoming more open to the concerns of the most marginalised and/or under-represented employees, by intensifying organising and servicing efforts and by strengthening their capacity for effective social dialogue and involvement in educational policy and reform making.

In order to redress the declining membership situation and the subsequent decline of unions' power and position, strategic long term reflections and identification of the most appropriate tools to deal with both the causes and consequences of globalised ideas and reform patterns are needed. Whether through the instruments of organizing, servicing, collective bargaining and social dialogue, coalition-building, attempts to influence legislation, mobilization and professional identity politics, a key starting point is the **understanding of the context within which each union operates** and the added value of strengthening relations with education trade unions from other countries through solidarity actions and joint responses to the global economic, societal and political crisis.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE:

- *What are the main elements of a long term strategy to resist and redress the declining membership situation of many European education trade unions?*
- *What are the main challenges to reach, recruit, organise, affiliate and protect teachers and other education personnel at time of major erosion of traditional forms of social solidarity?*
- *What are the most appropriate tools for trade union renewal that are used in your country?*
- *How can education trade unions ensure that priority is given within their structures to strategic discussions and decisions on organising and development, membership recruitment and retention?*
- *Which policy responses can be identified at European level to resist and combat external challenges that are threatening the role of education trade unions and the role of education as a human right and a public good?*

⁴⁹ Bernaciak, M. and Kahancova, M., 2017, 'Innovation practices in Central-Eastern Europe', ETUI.





