



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación  
Bildungsinternationale

# Counteracting Gender Stereotypes in Education and Gender Segregation in The Labour Market

**TEACHER TRADE UNIONS PROMOTING  
GENDER EQUALITY: ASSESSMENT,  
KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND ACTION**



This project is supported by the European Commission, DG Employment,  
Social Affairs and Inclusion in the frame of the budget heading  
*Information and training measures for workers' organisations.*

# 2012



European Trade Union  
Committee for Education

*The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 135 Teacher Unions and 12.8 million teachers in all countries of Europe, 5.5 million teachers in the EU, from all levels of the education sector. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at the EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of Education International, the global federation of teacher unions.*

**Also available in French, German, Spanish and Polish.**

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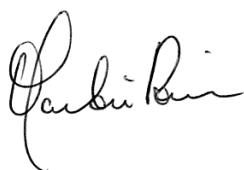
## Preamble

Gender equality is a diverse issue that comprises a **multitude of intersecting dimensions** concerning, i.e., moral, economic, philosophic and judicial aspects. The topic can be approached from numerous angles, each with different implications for the analysis and the resulting conclusions. In the brochure you are now about to read, the focal point concerns the link between the socialisation of individuals taking place in the education sector and gender (in)equality in the labour market. Considering this connection in detail prompts reflection on both moral and economic aspects, making it a multifaceted and thought-stimulating issue to examine and discuss.

Teacher trade unions, teachers and education employees play an important role in the phase of education for more or less all individuals. This obliges them to consider possible ways of improving the learning environment and the effects it has on students' future choices. ETUCE together with a range of important stakeholders have taken on this **responsibility** and seek to fuel changes where this is seen as necessary. The aim of this project consisted in identifying ways to mitigate gender stereotypes in education, with the long-term objective of reducing gender segregation in the labour market. Gender segregation has harmful effects such as pay gaps and gender discrimination and ultimately gender inequality. In order to forestall this, it is important to intervene as early as possible, hence the relevance of the education sector and the stakeholders therein.

In a time of **global economic downturn** and financial hardship in the education sector as well as in many other areas, it is important not to forget the principles that lay the foundation for human rights and for the European Union. Focusing on generating growth and overcoming the recession could result in giving a lower priority to principles that do not have an easily discernible and immediate effect on the economic development. The **underlying argument** for the project is that gender stereotypes, gender segregation and gender inequality have substantial negative implications for the individual as well as for the overall economic well-being of society. Hence gender equality needs to stay on top of the political agenda, encouraging further steps in order to create a labour market where gender equality is fully implemented and where gender stereotypes do not constitute invisible barriers for individuals.

The ETUCE Member Organisations and other important stakeholders comprising the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the Council of Europe (COE), the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) have all actively contributed to the project. The ETUCE Secretariat very much appreciates the participants' contributions to these events with their inspirational and reflection-stimulating points and presentations, fuelling the work on the project and for further ETUCE actions in this field.



**Martin Rømer,**  
*European Director*



## Table of contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1. BACKGROUND .....	7
1.2. EARLIER PROJECT ON GENDER EQUALITY .....	8
1.3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES .....	8
<b>3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1. ACTIVITY OVERVIEW .....	12
3.2. THE ADVISORY GROUP.....	13
3.3 PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY .....	13
3.4. THE TRAINING SEMINAR.....	14
3.5. THE CLOSING CONFERENCE.....	14
<b>4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5. ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6. CONTACTS .....</b>	<b>19</b>

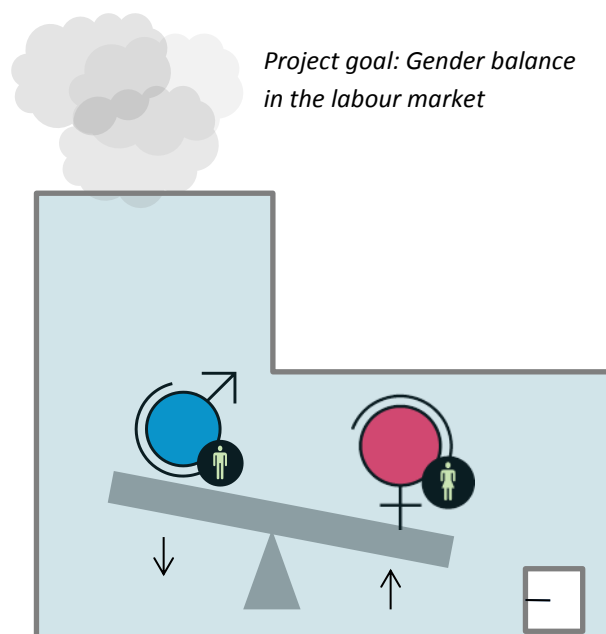


## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

The ETUCE project **Teacher Trade Union Actions Challenging Gender Stereotypes in Education and Gender Segregation in the Labour Market** was funded with the support of the European Commission in the frame of the budget heading: *Information and training measures for workers' organisations*<sup>1</sup>. Launched in November 2011, the project aimed at promoting gender equality in the labour market by challenging gender stereotypes in education. The project addressed two important objectives of the call for proposals, namely **Gender equality** and **Modernisation of the labour market**. These two objectives are interrelated as gender sensitive education promotes equal opportunities on the labour market. Information and awareness-raising are strongly needed to promote gender sensitive education.

The project aimed to promote the implementation of the targets set in the *Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015*<sup>2</sup>, adopted by the European Commission in 2010. This strategy translates the principles of the *European Commission's Women's Charter* into specific measures, emphasising that **equality is one of the five key values on which the European Union is founded** and that the endeavour to promote equality between women and men should be part of all EU activities<sup>3</sup>. Gender equality has been a key principle in the EU since the ratification of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, which recognised the principle of equal pay for men and women. The proposals in the Council of Europe's *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender mainstreaming in education*<sup>4</sup> was also an important source of motivation and inspiration for the project. Gender equality in the



<sup>1</sup> See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?callId=293&catId=630&furtherCalls=yes&langId=en>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>3</sup> European Commission: Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015, p. 3. See [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/equality\\_between\\_men\\_and\\_women/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/index_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> See <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1194631&Site=CM>

labour market has gained increasing importance on the political agenda over the past 50 years. Much of the change in European legislation has been in response to trade unions' pressure and efforts to improve the conditions for their members. Given the important role and the change-inducing potential of the education sector, it is highly relevant for teacher trade unions to address the issue and to examine the role of teachers, education employees and trade unionists in promoting gender equality in and out of the labour market.

## 1.2. Earlier Project on Gender Equality

Gender equality has been on the ETUCE agenda for many years. In 2008-2009, ETUCE carried out the project *Promoting gender equality within teacher trade unions and in the teaching profession* which sought to inform national teacher trade unions about the EU legal framework, policy priorities and instruments for promoting gender equality. By improving teacher trade unions' knowledge of gender issues the project sought to direct the work of the unions towards promoting gender equality, both at national policy-making level and internally, within their own structures. The European Social Partners' instruments on the issue were presented to the teacher trade unions and they were provided training on how to implement these instruments within the education sector in particular. The main outcome of this project was the **ETUCE Action Plan on Gender equality within teacher trade unions' structures and in the teaching profession**<sup>5</sup> adopted by the ETUCE Executive Board meeting in Brussels in March 2010.



Promoting Gender Equality in the Teaching Profession and within the Teacher Trade Unions (2009)

## 1.3. Project Objectives

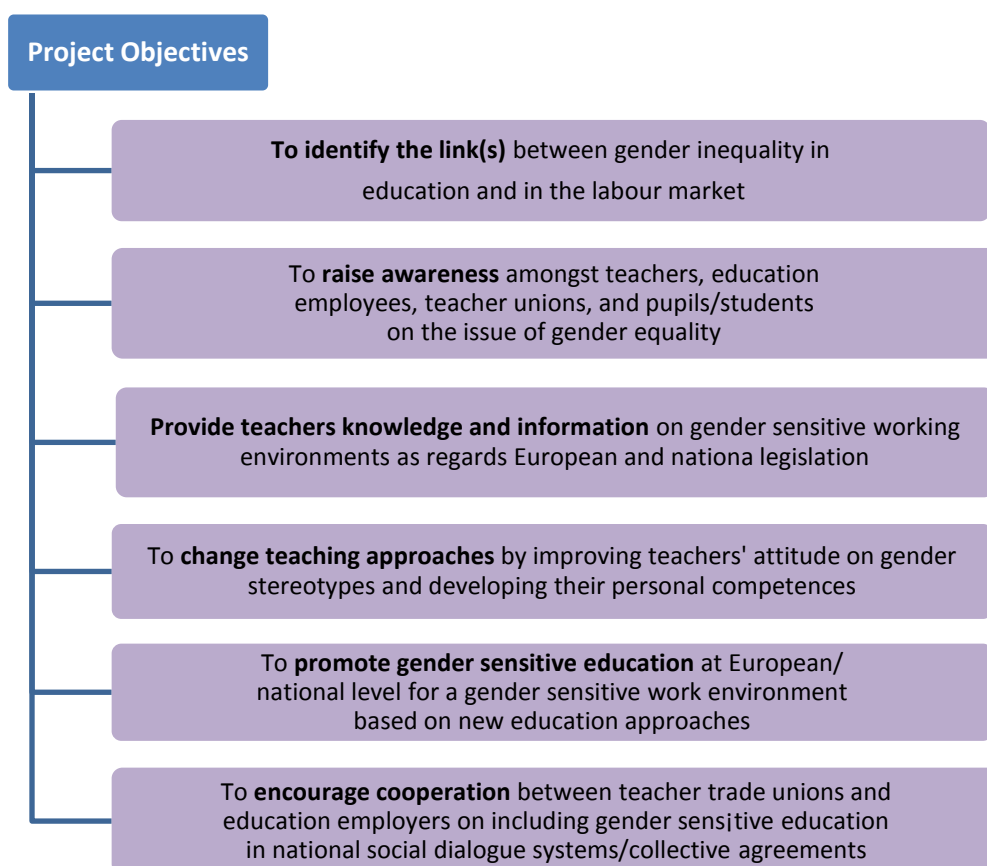
This project strived to fully exploit the potential of the education sector to overcome gendered discrimination in the labour market with a view to promote not only more gender equality within the teaching profession itself but also to trigger a change in student's future career choices by providing teachers and teacher unions with the know-how and tools that are necessary to promote a gender sensitive approach in education and consequently in society as

<sup>5</sup> Report at [http://etuce.homestead.com/EUprojects/Gender/ETUCE\\_action\\_plan\\_gender\\_equality\\_EN\\_final.pdf](http://etuce.homestead.com/EUprojects/Gender/ETUCE_action_plan_gender_equality_EN_final.pdf)



a whole. Establishing a forum of discussion on the inclusion of gender sensitive education with the employers in education (European Federation of Education Employers) will furthermore foster social dialogue within the education sector. The project had **six objectives**, altogether important components in reaching the target of overcoming gender discrimination and gender segregation in the labour market. The **first specific objective** was to identify and examine the link between gender inequality in the labour market and education: reproduction of gender stereotypes in the learning environment, teaching methods and materials and interaction in the classroom - all leading to gender stereotypical education outcomes and career choices. The **second aim** was to raise awareness amongst teachers, teacher unions, students and pupils on the issue of gender equality (roles, labour market participation, legislation, pay gap, women in decision-making) and on how to improve gender sensitiveness in teaching with a view to mitigate gender stereotypes in students' (future employees) choice of career paths. The **third project goal** was to provide teachers with

Babies are born with equal opportunities, but the educational and career expectations for boys and girls are different. By the time they grow up, the boys will be earning on average 17.5 % more than the girls (European Commission, 2011)



knowledge and information on gender sensitive working environments, as regards European and national legislation on equality issues and working conditions in general, such as parental leave, maternity leave, equal payment, sexual harassment and the work achieved by trade unions in these fields so far with a view to enable students to choose a career path irrespective of gender stereotypes. **The fourth aim** was to change teaching approaches (subject and content-wise) by improving teachers' attitude on gender stereotypes and their personal competences, in particular as regards gender sensitiveness and pedagogy; hereby reaching all young people in education/training in view of entering all levels and sectors of the labour market. **The fifth aim** was to promote gender sensitive education at European and national level for a gender sensitive work environment based on new education approaches. **The sixth aim** was to encourage national teacher trade unions to cooperate with national education employers on including gender sensitive education in national social dialogue systems and collective agreements by feeding the project outcomes into the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education. The results achieved here are also expected to have a cross-sectoral impact at national and European level.

## 2. Definitions and Concepts

Traditional perceptions of gender roles and gender stereotyping influence individual decision-making in many important aspects of life. They can influence and delimit the choice of

In this section you can read descriptions of the concepts used in the project

education, career plans and working place; a range of decisions that have significant influence on the life of the individual, on the economy and the society<sup>6</sup>. It is consequently in everyone's interest to offer equal possibilities and choices for women and men and to ensure that choices about career

and education are not influenced by stereotypical and delimiting perceptions of gender roles, both in and outside the labour market. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) the concept of gender equality refers to a state of affairs where all humans - women and men - are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without limitations imposed by gender stereotypes, rigid gender roles or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and

<sup>6</sup> See European Commission: Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015, p. 3. At [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/equality\\_between\\_men\\_and\\_women/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/index_en.htm)

favoured equally<sup>7</sup>. Gender equality also means equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life. It requires the acceptance and appreciation of the complementarity of women and men and their diverse roles in society<sup>8</sup>.

**Gender stereotypes** can be defined as simplistic generalisations about gender attributes, competences and differences of individuals. Stereotypes can convey both positive and negative characteristics, but they seldom communicate accurate information about individuals. Gender stereotypes stem from many sources and are often deeply rooted in the surrounding society and the education system plays an important role in shaping, continuing and reducing them. The (re)production of gender stereotype attitudes takes place at all levels; from pre-

Gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex (Council of Europe, 2011)

school to higher education and vocational education and training (VET). They are formed by many factors; examples are interaction in the classroom, teaching

methods, the portrayal of gender roles in teaching materials and the general learning environment. The **underlying argument** of the project is that the existence of gender stereotypes can lead to people selecting education and careers that reflect stereotypical perceptions of the two sexes. When career choices are influenced by traditional and stereotype beliefs that link the specific gender with particular sectors, educations, competences or positions they create undesirable, invisible barriers. Such barriers play a role in perpetuating gender inequality and in creating a gender segregated labour market. Their continued influence is harmful for both individuals and society as a whole. Two simple examples of gender stereotypes could be the nursing sector being described as primarily a 'female domain' and when the subject of mechanical engineering is denoted as 'male territory'. When such beliefs cause the opposite sex to refrain from choosing positions and educations belonging to the respective areas, the stereotypical ideas have had a distorting impact. The concentration of men and women in different kinds of jobs is known as occupational segregation. **Occupational/gender segregation** is caused by gender bias based on

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Gender-Equality-and-Climate-Change-Report.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The Council of Europe, 1998. see <http://hub.coe.int/what-we-do/democracy/gender-equality>.

stereotypical, biological and social differences between men and women<sup>9</sup>. Gender segregation in the labour market has detrimental consequences such as opposing efficient reallocation of labour sources and pay discrimination<sup>10</sup>. There are two main approaches to analysing labour market segregation. The concept of **horizontal gender segregation** is the most commonly used and is understood as under-/ (over-) representation of a given gender in occupations or sectors, not focusing on specific positions or rankings. **Vertical gender segregation** denotes the under-/ (over-) representation of a gender in occupations or sectors at the top or bottom of a listing based on attributes such as income and prestige<sup>11</sup>. According to research on the subject there is **no single explanation** for the existence of gender segregation. Main explanatory factors brought forward in the literature are preferences and prejudices, socialisation and stereotypes, comparative biological advantages, under-investment in schooling or training, differential income roles, entry barriers and organisational practices. In this project the role of stereotypes, socialisation and prejudice as causes of gender segregation have been the focal points.

### 3. Project Description

#### 3.1. Activity Overview

The project's **methodology** was built on a sector-oriented approach by reaching out to relevant players of the education sector organised at national and European level. The project activities were organised following a bottom-up dynamic, where the project partners contributed to the Peer Learning Activity (PLA) for national teacher union experts on gender sensitive education; the outcome of the PLA was then used in the training seminar involving experts and institutional players and the results of the PLA and training seminar were disseminated at the closing conference.

The project strived to examine and utilise the potential of the education sector to overcome gender discrimination in the labour market

<sup>9</sup> The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2012, see <http://osha.europa.eu/en/fag/women-and-health/what-does-2018gender-segregation-in-occupations2019-mean>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission Publication: Gender segregation in the labour market -Root causes, implications and policy responses in the EU, p. 9.

### 3.2. The Advisory Group

The goals of the advisory group meetings were, i.e., to create and sustain the project overview and to steer the project in the right direction, discussing both practical issues and policies/strategies. The five advisory group members formed the steering body of the project, guiding the implementation and supporting the work with their expertise. The group consisted



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Kounka  
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Joëlle Casa, CGIL, Italy



Dorota Obidniak, ZNP,  
Poland

of five experts from different national teacher trade unions, representing a geographical diversity; thereby ensuring the transnational dimension of the project.

### 3.3. The Peer Learning Activity

The purpose of the **Peer Learning Activity**<sup>12</sup>, held on 9 May 2012, was to identify and examine the link between gender inequality in the labour market and in the education system in different national contexts in Europe. Experts on gender stereotypes in education shared their knowledge of gender mainstreaming, their focus being different national education systems and the important stakeholders in promoting gender sensitive education (teachers, students, parents, school leaders, teacher educators, employers, etc.). During the PLA two key

<sup>12</sup> Report at [http://etuce.homestead.com/Publications\\_2012/04.2012\\_Report\\_of\\_the\\_ETUCE\\_Gender\\_Peer\\_Learning\\_Activity\\_eng.pdf](http://etuce.homestead.com/Publications_2012/04.2012_Report_of_the_ETUCE_Gender_Peer_Learning_Activity_eng.pdf)

presentations were given. **Thomas Viola Rieske**, Potsdam University, Germany, brought up the subject of gender typical pedagogies and general inequalities in education and **Agnes Parent-Thirion**, Programme Manager at the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND) talked about gender inequality in Europe. The PLA also served as preparation for the work in the following Training Seminar.

### **3.4. The Training Seminar**

The **Training Seminar**<sup>13</sup> took place on 10 May 2012 in Brussels, gathering 35 participants from 17 European countries. One objective of the seminar was to give the participants an opportunity to exchange best practices as regards gender mainstreaming in their national education systems. Furthermore the aim was to raise awareness on gender mainstreaming and on how to improve gender sensitiveness in teaching and how to mitigate gender stereotypes in students' choice of career paths. At the seminar **Lucie Davoine** from the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice, gave a presentation concerning gender equality principles and legislation in the EU and **Carolyn Hannan**, Associate Professor at the University of Lund, Sweden, gave a presentation concerning the situation of girls in education. The presentations and the discussions at the PLA and the Training Seminar served as basis for drafting the guidelines on how teacher trade unions can mitigate and tackle gender stereotypes in education and gender segregation in the labour market.

### **3.5. The Closing Conference**

The **Closing Conference**<sup>14</sup> was held in Warsaw, on 11-12 September 2012. The event gathered representatives from different national teacher trade unions, the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and The Council of Europe (COE). During the two days of the conference, the participants were presented with an overall view of gender stereotypes and their impact on choice of education and career paths. **Anne Marie Faradji**, Gender Equality Expert, Council of Europe, gave a key note speech on democratic citizenship and gender inequality and **Anna Krasteva**, Doctor Honoris Causa, University of Lille, gave a presentation on the issue of gender stereotypes and measures to overcome them. Focus was on the education system and different approaches to tackle the

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<sup>13</sup> Report at [http://etuce.homestead.com/Publications\\_2012/04.2012\\_Report\\_of\\_the\\_ETUCE\\_Gender\\_Peer\\_Learning\\_Activity\\_eng.pdf](http://etuce.homestead.com/Publications_2012/04.2012_Report_of_the_ETUCE_Gender_Peer_Learning_Activity_eng.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Report at [http://etuce.homestead.com/Publications\\_2012/06.2012\\_Report\\_Closing\\_Conference\\_Gender\\_Stereotypes\\_EN.pdf](http://etuce.homestead.com/Publications_2012/06.2012_Report_Closing_Conference_Gender_Stereotypes_EN.pdf)

issue of gender stereotypes, examples of good practices being presented by different teacher trade unions. The participants also discussed the transferability of the different practices to other national contexts in a working group session and were able to propose and discuss amendments to the *ETUCE Guidelines on how teacher unions can contribute to mitigating and tackling gender stereotypes in education and gender segregation in the labour market*. The overall aim of the conference was to give the participants an opportunity to reflect on how teachers, education employees and teacher trade unions can promote gender equality in the

### Activity Overview

#### PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY (May 2012)

**Participants:** Teacher trade unionists in charge of gender equality issues

**Objectives:** To identify and examine the link between gender inequality in education and the labour market and to seek ways to introduce gender sensitiveness in national education systems.

#### TRAINING SEMINAR (May 2012)

**Participants:** Teacher trade unionists in charge of gender equality issues

**Objectives:** To raise the participants' awareness concerning gender mainstreaming and on how to improve gender sensitiveness in teaching with a view to mitigate gender stereotypes in students' choice of careers. To provide the participants with knowledge on gender sensitive working environments.

--- Drafting of project guidelines ---

#### CLOSING CONFERENCE (September 2012)

**Participants:** Representatives from teacher trade unions and other relevant stakeholders such as EFEE, EIGE & Council of Europe.

**Objectives:** To provide a forum for discussing the inclusion of the gender equality in education with a view to overcome gender inequality in the labour market and to validate the project guidelines developed on the results of the previous project activities.

#### DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS (September 2012 - January 2013)

Conference Report, Project Brochure and Guidelines on how teacher unions can contribute to mitigating and tackling gender stereotypes in education and gender segregation in the labour market (gathered and published on a CD-ROM).

Advisory  
Group:  
Steering and  
overview



You can find all the reports from the events at [http://etuce.homestead.com/ETUCE\\_Publications.html](http://etuce.homestead.com/ETUCE_Publications.html)

labour market by mitigating gender stereotypes in education.

#### 4. Findings and Recommendations

The PLA, the Training Seminar and the Closing Conference provided opportunities for debate and deliberation amongst the participants on how teachers, education employees and teacher unions can contribute concretely to the inclusion of gender equality in education, thereby mitigating gender segregation in the labour market. A range of different approaches, ideas and strategies to promote gender equality in the labour market and education were presented and debated during the project events, resulting in a panoply of useful inspiration and advice. Some themes, methods and points were emphasised as having particular significance for the project aims and have therefore been established as the **key conclusions and recommendations** of the project. One recurrent theme was the important roles of the teacher and the education employees. It was underlined that their attitude on the issue should be acknowledged as having a significant impact on students and that an improvement of their working conditions is pertinent. This includes making the positions more attractive, for example by looking at the issue of work-life balance and by providing better possibilities for promotion. Concerning how to challenge gender stereotypes one important finding was that the strategies and examples must be adapted to fit with the **national contexts** and that there is no one-size-fits-all.

The **concrete outcomes** of the project consist in reports on the Peer Learning Activity and the Training Seminar, a Conference Report, a Final Project Brochure and the document *Guidelines on how teacher unions can contribute to mitigating and tackling gender stereotypes in education and gender segregation in the labour market*, all gathered and published on a CD-ROM. The guidelines provide recommendations for teacher trade unions at both national and European level on possible social dialogue and collective bargaining actions to challenge gender stereotypes in the education sector with the wider objective of having a significant impact on gender segregation in the labour market. The **first** recommendation in the guidelines points to the

ETUCE seeks to promote education systems that reduce gender stereotypes and to equip teachers and their unions with the necessary know-how to implement gender sensitive education



importance of raising awareness amongst education employees, teachers and social partners in education on the issue of gender stereotypes. The aim of this is to mitigate and challenge stereotypical gender perceptions in the education sector. The **second** conclusion concerns the importance of developing tools and measures that can contribute to gender sensitive education and gender mainstreaming in the education systems. **Thirdly**, it is of significant value to mitigate gender stereotypes in students' choice of career paths in order to reduce gender segregation in the labour market. The **fourth** point recommends taking concrete measures to engage in a national social dialogue about how to include gender sensitive education with the aim of achieving equal economic independence for both sexes. The **fifth** and final conclusion points to the value of exchanging best practices of successful institutional and/or legislative changes in national education systems at European level. These five points are included in the

*Guidelines on how teacher unions can contribute to mitigating and tackling gender stereotypes in education*

Education is a human right. Gender stereotypes limit opportunities in girls' and boys' life. Access to and participation in education should therefore be free of charge and free of barriers. Children and adolescents should have the same educational opportunities regardless of their gender

*and gender segregation in the labour market.* These guidelines will be made available on the ETUCE website in English, French, Spanish, Polish and German and will be presented for adoption to the ETUCE Committee in the spring 2013, inviting the member organisations to make good use of the recommendations therein. The guidelines are to be seen as the continuation of ETUCE's work with the issue of gender equality and the achievements such as the ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality<sup>15</sup>.

The project came up with these concrete recommendations on how to mitigate and tackle gender stereotypes in education and gender segregation in the labour market. In the long term the project inspires and encourages actions, reflections and further work on the important issues of gender stereotypes and gender equality in the education sector and in the labour market by providing teacher trade unions, teachers, education employees and other stakeholders in education with information and knowledge on these important issues.

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<sup>15</sup> See [http://etuce.homestead.com/EUprojects/Gender/ETUCE\\_action\\_plan\\_gender\\_equality\\_EN\\_final.pdf](http://etuce.homestead.com/EUprojects/Gender/ETUCE_action_plan_gender_equality_EN_final.pdf)

## 5. Abbreviations

<b>EFEE</b>	European Federation of Employers in Education
<b>EIGE</b>	European Institute for Gender Equality
<b>ETUCE</b>	European Trade Union Committee for Education
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUROFOUND</b>	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
<b>FLC-CGIL</b>	Federazione Lavoratori della Conoscenza
<b>GEW</b>	Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft
<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Study Assessment
<b>SD</b>	Social Dialogue
<b>SEB</b>	Syndicat des Enseignants Bulgares
<b>SNES-FSU</b>	Syndicat National des Enseignements de Second Degré
<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training
<b>ZNP</b>	Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego

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