



Press Release



ETUCE deeply concerned about sharp labour conflict in Macedonia's education sector

23 January 2015

ETUCE, the European Trade Union Committee for Education, which represents 129 national teachers' trade unions across Europe, welcomes that the Italian Presidency put special emphasis on language learning and multiculturalism in its political agenda.

ETUCE European Director Martin Rømer will travel to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) at the beginning of next week to intensively help finding a solution to the current labour conflict in the education sector which has increasingly worsened and threatens to escalate now. ETUCE will support its Macedonian affiliate, the Trade Union for Education, Science and Culture (SONK) to get back to the negotiation table with its social partner, the Ministry of Education and Science.

For many months, industrial relations in the education sector have been extremely difficult about several pending labour issues. The conflict comes at a time when social dialogue in FYROM has just been declared as one of the key pillars of the country's democratic and economic development. The government is currently implementing an extensive EU funded project on social dialogue promotion. In contrast, the social partners in education have been heading into a dead end with their dialogue.

Previous consultations between the social partners have been entirely unsuccessful and led drastically to the final decision for a strike despite all concerns about the difficulties a strike in education may cause to pupils and parents. SONK reports about more and more oppressive reactions against the demonstrating teachers. ETUCE points out that one of the most fundamental human rights of all is the right to strike.

During his stay in Skopje, Martin Rømer will try to meet among others with the Head of the EU Delegation to FYROM, the Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy to consult on possible ways for a complete reversal from this serious and unsustainable situation which may threaten quality education in FYROM and the development of all other economic sectors.



The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 131 Teacher Unions and 11 million teachers in all countries of Europe, 4.2 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.

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