



# PRESS RELEASE

## ETUCE calls the ministers of education who are meeting today in Osnabrück to provide effective support to VET teachers

16 September 2020

Today and tomorrow, 16-17 September, an informal meeting of Education Ministers is being held in Osnabrück, Germany hosted by the German Presidency of the EU Council. The education ministers of the EU member states, EU candidate countries, EEA and EFTA countries are meeting to discuss the future priorities of an EU strategy on vocational education and training (VET).

As it is stated in its [Programme](#), the German Presidency focuses on overcoming the pandemic, digital education, and excellence of the vocational education and training (VET) as priorities of policy debates and actions this semester.

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 132 education trade unions and 11 million teachers, many among them are vocational education teachers and trainers. We remind the ministers that the initial VET sector was shaken hard in the pandemic. While across Europe all educational activities were transferred online, VET schools and staff were not adequately prepared for the switch to distance learning in particular concerning practical classes. Despite the enormous efforts and motivation of VET teachers to ensure the continuation of vocational education and training for their students, education trade unions experienced a lack of governmental support for VET teachers during the pandemic. In addition to this, most VET teachers did not have adequate instruments for online teaching, only few had received trainings on the use of pedagogy in an online environment and on the use of digital tools remotely in a classroom context, while psychological support for VET teachers in the pandemic was also missing. The pandemic has also unveiled the gaps in equity and the growing inequalities in access to quality vocational education and training and apprenticeship.

Education trade unions are still awaiting urgent solutions to the problem that VET teachers have been suffering from low status of their profession due to low salary, working conditions and workload. ETUCE expects that this meeting of the ministers will reply to the VET teachers' needs.

ETUCE calls on the Ministers of Education who meet in Osnabruck today to set up a new VET strategy for the EU which provides effective support to increase the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession of the VET teachers and trainers with decent salary and working conditions in the long run. The strategy should propose adequate professional support and up-to-date teaching materials, tools and practices to VET teachers and trainers to face the new challenges in the present and in the future. Particular attention should be paid to a safe return to vocational education and training and apprenticeship.

ETUCE reminds that effective social dialogue with trade unions representing VET teachers and trainers is important to reduce the negative consequences of the pandemic on VET students, teachers and trainers and to increase the quality and inclusiveness of the VET sector.

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The **European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)** represents 132 Education Trade 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.

