

EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS ADDRESSING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH SOCIAL DIALOGUE

FINAL CONFERENCE
Bucharest, 16-17 September 2019

REPORT



EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'ÉDUCATION



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ABBREVIATIONS

EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITUC-PERC	Pan European Regional Committee of the International Trade Union Confederation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education
BUPL	Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators
LESTU	Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Union
FSLE	Fédération des syndicats libres de l'enseignement
GEW	Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft
SNUipp-FSU	Le Syndicat national unitaire des instituteurs, professeurs des écoles et PEGS
UIL Scuola	l'Unione Italiana del Lavoro - Scuola
VBE	Verband Bildung und Erziehung

1. INTRODUCTION

The final conference, organised within the framework of the two-year long (2017-2019) [ETUCE Project “Social dialogue and gender equality: Empowering education trade unions to address gender equality in the teaching profession through social dialogue”](#), took place in Bucharest on 16-17 September 2019. The project sought to foster the gender equality perspective in the work of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) and the European Semester with the aim to enhance the professional profile of teachers, trainers and school leaders and to make the teaching profession more attractive for both women and men. Furthermore, the project aimed to empower education trade unions to address challenges of gender inequality in the teaching profession through social dialogue in the education sector and to continue to improve education trade unions’ understanding of gender equality issues, as well as to update the ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality and to promote concrete measures for its implementation at European, national and local level.

Within the project, a series of workshops for ETUCE member organisations was held in [Rome](#), [Vilnius](#) and [Munich](#). The findings and good practices collected during the three workshops were presented in an Online Database of Good Practices and were used to update the existing ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality (2010) in order to better support ETUCE member organisations in promoting gender equality within education trade unions and in the teaching profession with a view to providing concrete measures to ensure the gender equality perspective in policy-making. Additionally to the database, the conference provided the member organisations with a variety of useful outcomes including a [project research report](#), in which the final results of a survey on gender equality among 63 unions in 43 countries is presented; a [promotional video](#) with the title “Let’s talk about Gender Equality” and a [project leaflet](#) with statistics and data on the topic.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Provide education trade unions with concrete tools and practices;
- Raise awareness of the need to include the discussion on gender equality in social dialogue at national and European level in the education sector;
- Identify major factors in gender inequality in the teaching profession;
- Update the ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality;
- Assess the implementation of the Recommendations of the ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality



2.PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

The project was led by an Advisory Group who provided guidance and field knowledge, assisted in the design of the online survey activity, contributed to training workshops and the project conference as well as to the creation of the Online Database of Good Practices and animated video clip "Education Trade Unions for the Teaching Profession: Let's Talk about Gender Equality", released in September 2019. The Advisory Group consisted of six representatives from different national education trade unions from different levels of education:



Ute Foit, VBE, Germany,



Alexandra Cornea, FSLE, Romania



Gabriella Tønneson Lanyi, BUPL, Denmark



Rossella Benedetti, UIL Scuola, Italy



Alexandra Bojanic, SNUipp-FSU, France



Inga Puisa, FLESTU, Lithuania

3.OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

Following up on the objectives of the ETUCE Work Programme 2017–2020, ETUCE is committed to promoting concrete measures for enhancing gender equality in the teaching profession. This commitment was demonstrated by the adoption of a [Resolution](#) at ETUCE’s Special Conference in Athens 2018, which mandated the Standing Committee for Equality to develop an Action Plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Within this framework, the final conference sought to give ETUCE member organisations the opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the project, exchange good practices, comment on the revised ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality and make adjustments.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

- Discuss outcomes and findings of the project
- Validate the updated ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality
- Exchange good practices
- Discuss gender Equality issues in a national context with European policy makers and gender equality experts

The conference started with opening words by **Irina Kovac** on behalf of the Romanian Ministry of Education. She welcomed the participants and noted that teachers and students build the future success for generations and ensure good quality education. ETUCE is a social partner that brings projects and activities to a national level and the ministry welcomes EU projects that involve trade union movements.

Aurelia Gratiela Draghici, State Secretary in the National Agency for Equality between Women and Men underlined the importance of common values and equality for Romania and the whole of Europe. Gender mainstreaming needs to be strengthened and proposals need to be brought into schools to empower young people to become social activists. She highlighted that education and training in the spirit of equality, tolerance and human rights contribute to the strengthening of the democratic culture and equal society.



“Gender equality is not a stand-alone issue which education trade unions can address separately from other topics”

From left to right: Aurelia Gratiela Draghici (State Secretary in the National Agency for Equality between Women and Men) and Irina Kovac (Romanian Ministry of Education)



The president of FSLI **Simion Hancescu** welcomed the trade union representatives and wished for a continuous cooperation in the future. Furthermore, **Anton Hadar** President of Alma Mater, highlighted the success of Romanian education trade unions in implementing projects and laws and underlined the fact that their voice had been listened to by employers in recent years.

Opening the Conference, **Susan Flocken**, European Director of ETUCE, emphasised the strong impact that education and education trade unions have in society and in progressing in gender equality. She, called on member organisations to lead by example. She reminded that ETUCE supports its member organisations in their work with practical tools and in particular, using the social dialogue for introducing the gender equality aspect. Susan Flocken noted high participation and the diverse group of participants from across Europe as a good basis for a fruitful discussion and satisfying conclusion to a successful two-year project.

From left to right: Christine Blower (President, ETUCE) and Susan Flocken (European Director, ETUCE)





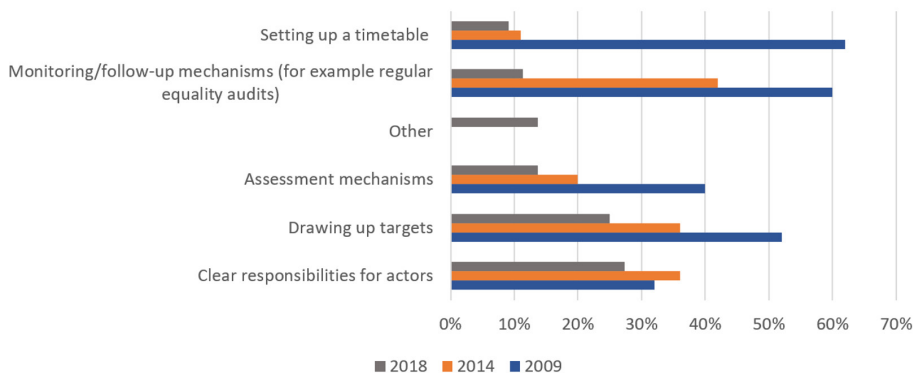
From left to right: Martina Weber (Project Researcher) and Inga Pavlovaite (Project Researcher)

4.SURVEY RESULTS

Inga Pavlovaite and **Martina Weber**, project researchers, provided insight into the key findings of the survey conducted among the trade union members, combined with a review of existing literature and data on the topic. The research shows that gender stereotypes continue to persist in relation to women’s and men’s roles in society, caring responsibilities, and labour market. This fuels challenges for work-life balance, gender pay and pension gaps, and both horizontal and vertical segregation in the teaching profession. Comparison of the trends between the 2009, 2014 and 2018 surveys shows that the importance and use of various mechanisms for implementing gender equality policies in the education trade unions have been decreasing across the decade and across all types of implementation mechanisms included in the surveys. attractive for men. Furthermore, female teachers are considered more suited to primary and early childhood education, posing a challenge for men who wish to work with younger age groups in several countries.



50% of trade unions indicated they had taken action to address the unequal representation of men and women in different sectors of education



Proportion of responding trade unions using various mechanisms to promote gender equality

Source: ETUCE surveys from 2018, 2014, 2009 reported in [Education trade unions addressing gender equality through social dialogue](#)

5. 'AT A SNAIL'S PACE': WHAT DOES EUROPE NEED TO SPEED UP TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY?

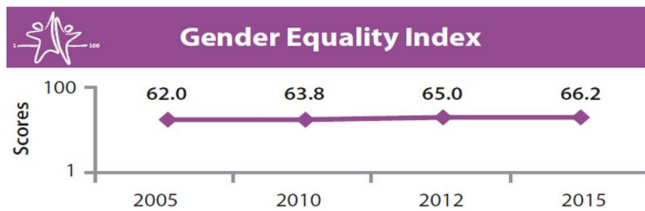
An expert panel discussion analysed various factors that slow down the progress of Europe towards gender equality. The panel was led by the Chair of the ETUCE Status of Women Committee, **Gitta Franke-Zöllmer (VBE, Germany)**, who highlighted that despite gender equality being a fundamental right enshrined in the EU Treaties and legislation, in the reality, all key gender inequalities in the labour market and wider society continue to persist with new ones (e.g. digital gender gap) growing exponentially:

- Deeply rooted gender stereotypes in our daily lives, publicity and media, continue to affect the perceptions of women's and men's role in the household, caring responsibilities, the labour market and public life

- Vertical and horizontal segregation in the labour market is still in evidence, with women more likely to be represented in sectors which tend to attract lower wages and working part-time
- Gender-based violence remains a serious and highly unreported problem in Europe

The new Gender Equality Index prepared by European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) was to be launched on 15 October 2019. The previous index states clearly that over the past decade, gender equality has been progressing in Europe ‘at a snail’s pace’.

Figure 2: Scores of the Gender Equality Index, EU-28, 2005-2015



Jorge Cabrita, research manager at Eurofound, working on projects related to working conditions and social dialogue, explained the differences between working conditions of women and men in the labour market linked to the difficult division of the gender role in our society. In general, men work more hours than women and are more likely to work weekends or night shifts. On the other hand, women tend to work shorter hours and more often part time, while their work in the household or as a caretaker is not paid and not included in the working hours. Mr Cabrita highlighted the fact that it is mostly women who bear these chores which have repercussions on their careers and pensions as well as on the labour market in general. Within this context, he mentioned that women tend to organise their careers around



From left to right: Rosanna Ruscito (ETUC), Jorge Cabrite (Eurofound), Rossella Benedetti (ETUCE), Gitta Franke-Zöllmer (VBE)

their family and men the other way around. He also noted that female dominated sectors are more exposed to adverse social behaviours like harassment or bullying. Women exposed to those risks suffer more often from health issues.

When asked about the [EU Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers](#) adapted by the European Commission this spring, **Rosanna Ruscito, ETUC Vice-President of the Women's Committee** noted that the first legislative action that came out of the [European Pillar for Social Rights](#) should be welcomed. However, the text of the adopted Directive is diluted and only sets the minimum standards, differing significantly from the original proposal of the European Commission. It is now a challenge for EU member states to implement it critically and for the social partners to engage in its implementation. Furthermore, Ms Ruscito suggested four problematic points that need to be addressed in the transposition of the Directive to national systems:

- payment of the parental leave (66% of the previous earnings);
- flexible working arrangements;
- eligibility criteria for parental leave;
- addressing of different types of caring (not just nuclear families but also single parents).

Rossella Benedetti, Chair of the ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality presented two challenges for the teaching profession in the next years. First of all, she mentioned the low salaries of teachers across Europe and the fact that even though most teachers are holding a Master degree, they are still paid less than their male counterparts in other professions. The second challenge she presented is linked to women's role in society. Women are expected to bear the responsibility of caring and to prioritise their families over work. The teaching profession is seen as a field in which women can combine their career and families but in return they are giving up on decent salaries and adequate working conditions. Ms Benedetti noted that paid leave for fathers should be implemented in the whole of Europe in order to make childcare more attractive for men.

Concluding the panel discussion, experts named the following changes as the most important for being implemented in Europe to speed up towards gender equality:

- closing of gender pay and pension gaps;
- training of trade unionists on how to achieve gender equality;
- addressing gender equality through social dialogue and collective bargaining;
- mainstreaming gender equality in all policies;
- more capacity building and activities on gender equality for education personnel.

6. FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION: HOW DOES GENDER SEGREGATION IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION LINK TO GENDER PAY GAP?



Inga Pavlovaite (Project Researcher)

Project researcher Inga Pavlovaite explained how the gender pay gap plays out in the wider labour market, especially in the education sector. The gender pay gap across the EU shows significant differences between countries, with hardly any progress in the last ten years. Countries like Germany or the UK for example, have a high gender pay gap. In this context, there is an existing need for legal mandates. Even though there are frameworks in the EU, there are often difficulties in the implementation of directives on the national level. Another problem is the fact that most Europeans do not know that equal pay is a right. Even though, the pay gap in the educational sector is only 3%, in practice male teachers advance faster in their careers. Reasons for that are the interruption of women's careers e.g. due to childcare duties and the fact that women are often employed in part-time work. Moreover, the findings show that male teachers hold more leadership positions than female teachers (except in early childhood education) and are able to take more career development opportunities, since most of them do not have the same care responsibilities as their female counterparts.

Furthermore, Ms Pavlovaite highlighted the horizontal segregation, with more female staff present in early childhood and primary education, sectors which are still underpaid. She noted that there is still a persisting glass ceiling due to gender stereotypes and due to many women lacking confidence to apply for leadership positions. During the discussion the conference participants also mentioned the social pressure on women as a factor contributing to gender segregation in the education sector.

During the good practice fair, the member organisations were able to share their unions best practices on gender segregation and the gender pay gap:

<p>Women’s Organising Forums (NEU-NUT, UK)</p> <p>One of the key building blocks of the NEU’s work on gender equality has been the Women’s Organising Forums set up in 2016. They were set up to promote and develop the engagement of women in the Union; share and build on effective practice and advise on policy in relation to respective groups.</p> <p>Click here for more information.</p>	<p>Training seminars on leadership and mentoring (CTU, Croatia)</p> <p>CTU organises training seminars for members, during which they can acquire legal and communication skills as well as how to perform decision-making roles in education bodies. Due to the high representation of women in the union, the seminars are largely taken up by female members.</p> <p>Click here for more information.</p>
<p>Research on gender equality in schools (FeSP-UGT, Spain)</p> <p>With the funding of Madrid City Council and several universities, research has been carried out accompanied by action plans and communication campaigns. Examples of research include stereotypes and references to women in school textbooks and the privatisation of gender-based violence services.</p> <p>Click here for more information</p>	<p>Training and seminars on gender equality, and confidence workshops (TUS, Serbia)</p> <p>TUS has recently received the accreditation for seminars on gender equality as part of regular continuous professional development for teachers in Serbia. The union also organises a range of activities to empower its female members and female teachers, namely confidence workshops for those who aspire to be school leaders.</p> <p>Click here for more information.</p>

Equal Pay Committee (KTOS, Cyprus)

A Committee of Equal Pay for Equal Work was created by KTOS in 2008 with a view to amending laws which have reclaimed rights on equal pay for equal work, retirement age and the pension gap.

Research 'Prestige of the teaching profession in Latvia' (LIZDA, Latvia)

In 2016, LIZDA undertook research called "Prestige of the teaching profession in Latvia" (2016). It showed that in Latvia, there is a very small number of male teachers and that men do not choose the teaching profession because of limited career opportunities, low pay and low professional prestige.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Good practice fair: Training seminars on leadership and mentoring, Croatia, CTU

Good practice fair: Training and seminars on gender equality, and confidence workshops, Serbia, TUS



7.ADDRESSING GENDER STEREOTYPES AND SEXISM IN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE, IN TIMES OF POPULISM AND VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Chairing the panel discussion on gender stereotypes and sexism in education and society, European Director Susan Flocken highlighted that despite the progressive work carried out by European institutions, the spread of right-wing and conservative political discourses and the intensification of poverty and social exclusion that we witness nowadays in a number of European countries, attack gender equality. These trends push women out of the labour market to take care of the household, eliminate abortion rights, and remove sexual education from the curricula. In March 2019, the Council of Europe adopted its revolutionary [Recommendation to member States on preventing and combating sexism](#), the first international instrument to formally define sexism. This Recommendation advises governments to take measures to prevent and combat sexism and its manifestation and encourages relevant stakeholders to implement effective legislation, policies and programmes. In this context, Ms Flocken opened the expert

Only 0,6% of the EU budget is spent on Gender Equality





From left to right: Olga Nicolae (ITUC-PERC), Tatjana Babrauskienė (EESC), Elisabeth White (DG JUST)

panel discussion on potential actions to promote gender equality in times of populism and violation of human rights and to avoid reverting to a society governed by conservative gender roles.

Elisabeth White, legal and policy expert from the gender equality unit of the European Commission (DG JUST), stated that the current time is a good moment to promote gender equality in Europe. The new European Commission with the president-elect Ursula von der Leyen placed the topic of gender equality at the top of the Commission's agenda, mentioning such topics as work-life balance, pay gap, and gender stereotypes. Furthermore, she pointed out that for the first time in the Commission's history a Commissioner for Equality was appointed. She noted that the discussion on gender equality should include men and boys as they are also tangible to gender stereotypes (violence, parenting, performance at school). Ms White highlighted that sexism and stereotypes are expressions of structural inequality which is why they should be addressed through structural systematic work through a fact-based approach and legal frameworks. She concluded by expressing hopes for the new Von der Leyen administration and its ambitions in the fight for gender equality.

Tatjana Babrauskienė, a representative from the Worker's group of the European Economic and Social Committee, reported on the recent self-initiated EESC opinion which represented the interests of employers, trade unions and civil society and showed that there are different views on what is gender and how to address gender inequality. She highlighted that



Olga Nicolae (ITUC-PERC)

Europe is far behind the gender equality targets laid down in the [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 4 on education](#) for 2030. Ms Babrauskienė pointed out that the environment of segregation, in which boys choose subjects like Maths and IT, and girls concentrate on humanities or health and childcare, creates a huge imbalance for the future. With the spread of digitalisation and new technologies, it will be harder for girls to find their place in the future, which will affect their social status, as well as their pension. In this context, Ms Babrauskienė remarked Eurostat findings showing that 91% of Europeans think that gender equality is necessary for the wellbeing of society; 65% want the European Commission to interfere in national politics when it concerns this issue but only 0,6% of the EU's budget is spent on gender equality. Statistics show that at this pace, it would take at least 100 years to reach gender equality in Europe. Concluding, Ms Babrauskienė underlined that education is a key factor in achieving gender equality faster and acknowledged the responsibilities trade unions have in pushing this topic forward through concrete actions.

To show that gender equality issues go beyond European borders, **Olga Nicolae, Policy Advisor of the ITUC-PERC**, asked for closer cooperation among trade unions in the European region. She noted that gender issues are not always a priority in trade unions due to various reasons. Firstly, Europe is still suffering from austerity measures and the forecasts announce other potential crisis. Furthermore, the right to strike is under attack, as well as the collective bargaining in many countries. The uncertainty of Brexit leaves many young people suffering and in need for assistance from trade unions, in the context of growing Euroscepticism as well as populist and nationalist

movements. In many countries, especially in non-EU countries in Europe, trade unions struggle with increasing the membership of young people, workers' rights, migration and 'brain drain'. In conclusion, Olga Nicolae asked to bear in mind that all those countries are facing a wide range of problems, and that gender equality might not always be the highest priority. Outlining positive trends addressing gender stereotypes and inequalities, she mentioned the adoption of the [ILO Convention on combating harassment and violence in the workplace](#), and noted that now trade unions need to campaign for its ratification at national level.

8. FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT – NEW OLD CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION PERSONNEL?



Martina Weber (Project Researcher)

Project researcher Martina Weber reflected on the research regarding work-life balance issues and gender-based violence and harassment in the education sector. Financially, the work-life balance represents one of the biggest challenges for women and constitutes the main reason for their underrepresentation in leadership positions. There is a difference between voluntary and involuntary part-time work and sometimes the lines are blurred. Moreover, the findings show, that having children significantly reduces employment participation of women, while men in many countries still do not have the same opportunities for taking care of their children as women.

Ms Weber noted that the statistics on gender-based violence are alarming

and that unions need to address those issues more publicly. The survey showed that 33% of women report having been subject to gender-based violence since the age of 15. Gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace is considered a serious and growing problem by over half of the education trade unions who replied to the survey, linked also to an increased prominence due to technological challenges and the #MeToo movement.

During the second day Good Practice Fair on work-life balance and gender-based violence and harassment the unions presented the following projects:

<p>Campaign against gender-based violence at school (NASUWT, UK)</p> <p>Development of campaign and training materials and standards of good practice. Gender-based violence is a key campaigning issue. Surveys are being run to establish the extent of the problem in schools. The abuse of social media and mobile phones as a tool for gender-based violence is particularly emphasised in this work.</p> <p>Click here for more information.</p>	<p>Collective agreements on work-life balance issues (CISL-Scuola, UIL-Scuola, FLC-CGIL, Italy)</p> <p>In order to improve work-life balance, well-being, mental health, and leisure time, CISL-Scuola, UIL-Scuola, and FLC-CGIL, have integrated these concerns in the negotiations on the latest collective agreement in the sector. Likewise, a collective agreement on the right to disconnect has recently been introduced.</p> <p>Click here to access the agreement.</p>
<p>Research on the level of violence and harassment in schools (SPASH-ITUEA, Albania)</p> <p>SPASH conducted research in 32 school districts with the aim of identifying the main problems related to gender equality in school workplaces and analysing gender-based discrimination and violence in schools. Following the research on the content of teaching materials, SPASH succeeded in having 130 books with violent content removed from schools.</p> <p>Click here for more information.</p>	<p>Yearly brochures on equality issues (SNES-FSU, France)</p> <p>A global approach on gender issues is necessary and the reluctance to discuss gender issues, within and outside the union, should not be underestimated. In order to raise the topic with members and change mentalities, the union publishes yearly brochures on gender equality issues at union and social level.</p> <p>Click here for more information.</p>

GET UP project (MUT, Malta, FLESTU, Lithuania)

The main priority of the project is to address the stereotyping of educational and career choices and to promote gender equality in education, training, career guidance and at the workplace. Among other goals, it aimed to define a European Minimum Standard of Competences on Gender Equality.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Gender Ambassadors (ACV, Belgium)

The union now organises an after-work party for 'gender ambassadors. It is an "educational" relaxation moment for activists, aiming at those who wants to know more about what ACV is doing on gender equality, gender stereotypes, and gender-related violence.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Campaign against gender-based violence at school (FSLI, Romania)

The aim of the FSLI campaign is not only to raise awareness of the public opinion and the decision-makers on the phenomenon of teacher bullying, but also to launch a national debate on this topic that will lead to a stronger and more accurate media coverage. One outcome of this campaign is a short film, which was released in May 2019 and has already garnered over half a million views.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Good practice fair: Campaign against gender-based violence in the UK, NASUWT

Good practice fair: Gender ambassador training in Belgium, ACV



9. TEACHER STUDENTS ON INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING ON GENDER EQUALITY

Two young teachers were invited to speak about their academic training on equality and their proposals for change.

Irene Caporaletti, UIL-Scuola, from Italy criticised the lack of training during her studies. She noted that boys and girls are still in 'cages' of stereotypes that are hard to escape. She mentioned that primary teacher used to be a prestigious employment in the 1960s but due to the low salary its reputation has changed. She highlighted the need to promote gender equality as early as possible and supported the idea of organising more workshops to bring together students and to debate openly about gender equality issues.

Alexandru Banciu, FSLI, from Romania explained that he never had any training on equal opportunities. When he was struggling because he wished to work in early childhood education, the Romanian schoolboard put many obstacles in his way. He therefore turned to the unions to ask for support. In universities in Romania, students do o't receive education on gender-based discrimination and most of them have no idea where they can obtain assistance. Alexandru promoted his idea of "making a change to give a chance" and providing all students with equal opportunities.

The proposed ideas were strongly supported by Conference participants who noted that unions need young members and young teachers need unions

"Girls and boys need to deconstruct the dominant order together and reflect on the non-naturality of the school system."

Irene Caporaletti, UIL-Scuola
GEW, Germany



From left to right: Alexandru Banciu (FSLI, Romania); Irene Caporaletti (UIL-Scuola, Italy)

to support them. Unions therefore must increase their efforts to assure that everyone is aware of their rights from the beginning of their teaching career.

10.OUTCOMES

During the final conference, the participants were able to reflect on the whole project. In the course of the two days, the member organisations discussed ways in which social dialogue could be used as a tool to:

- combat **gender stereotypes**;
- tackle the problem of **horizontal and vertical segregation** in the education sector;
- eliminate the **gender pay gap** or **pension pay gap** amongst teachers;
- improve **work-life balance** and
- prevent **gender-based violence** and **harassment**.

Those key topics are also the foundation of the revised [ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality](#), which was discussed and validated by the participants during the conference.

The ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality is a policy framework which seeks to enhance the work of ETUCE member organisations on promoting gender equality with a view to provide concrete measures for ensuring the gender equality perspective in policymaking at national and local level. The plan outlines the challenges trade unions face concerning the key topics and suggests European, national and local level actions to tackle gender inequality in the education sector.

In the course of the two days, ETUCE member organisations discussed the revised plan in small working groups. The groups presented their comments in the plenary on the last day and underlined among other points, the necessity to:

- combat **gender stereotypes** through the promotion of gender-neutral language and teacher training, to develop tools on gender awareness and recognition of gender stereotypes;
- tackle **horizontal segregation** in the education sector by addressing the high number of women working in primary education and improving the status of the teaching profession and alignment of salaries;
- prevent **vertical segregation** in the education sector by providing opportunities for discussion on the issue of gender quotas and by organising campaigns to change the social perception about women's and men's working abilities and skills;
- eliminate the **gender pay gap** and **pension pay gap** amongst teachers by raising awareness on the problem and by lobbying education authorities and government for legislation based on statistical evidence; this would require the equal sharing of caring responsibilities between both parents (e.g. mandatory non-transferable parental, paternity and maternity leaves);
- improve **work-life balance** by lobbying governments and education authorities for the immediate implementation of the Directive on work-

life balance for parents and carers and to provide public affordable and accessible infrastructure for work-life balance, including care facilities;

- prevent **gender-based violence** and **harassment** by raising awareness on the need to prevent these, ensuring the prevention becomes part of the curriculum in schools and by establishing dedicated gender equality departments which would deal with reports on gender-based violence and harassment towards teachers, trainers and other education personnel and provide guidance and legal support if necessary;

Members of the project's Advisory Group welcomed the outcomes of the initiative and thanked everyone for their feedback. The issue of gender equality should stay high on the unions' agenda and the discussed topics should enable the members to improve their work in the national context.

The conference was closed by **Rossella Benedetti**, Chair of the ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality, who noted that by participating in projects on gender equality, providing inputs that feed into policy documents, education trade unions are making a step further into their evolution as citizens of this big continent. She also reminded that finding the solution that is good for everyone requires from people to understand that different countries have different contexts and different specificities, and to be able to look at the same issue from different angles. She underlined the importance to share experiences with each other and to learn from good practices in other countries.





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