



**Occupational
Health & Safety**

Teachers' work-related stress:

Assessing, Comparing and Evaluating the Impact of
Psychosocial Hazards on Teachers at their
Workplace



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European Trade Union
Committee for Education

Employers in
Education

THE EUROPEAN
FEDERATION OF
EDUCATION
EMPLOYERS

Also available in French and German under the titles:

“Enquête européenne – Analyse, comparaison et évaluation de l’impact des risques psychosociaux sur les enseignant(e)s sur leur lieu de travail dans l’UE”

“Arbeitsbedingter Stress von Lehrern: Beurteilung, Vergleich und Bewertung der Auswirkung von psychosozialen Gefahren für Lehrer an ihrem Arbeitsplatz”

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Preamble

In November 2010 the ETUCE obtained from the European Commission a grant for the project “**Teachers' Work-Related Stress: Implementing the ETUCE Action Plan and the European Autonomous Agreement on Work-Related Stress**”.

With this project ETUCE has further contributed to its work on teachers' work-related stress, which focuses on establishing and carrying into effect the ETUCE **Action Plan** on Work-Related Stress and supporting the ETUCE member organisations to continue implementing the **European Framework Agreement on Work-Related Stress** signed by ETUC-UNICE/UEAPME in 2004.

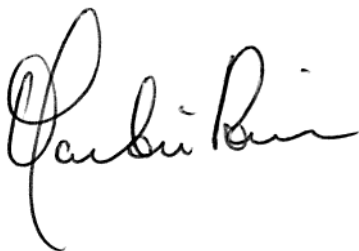
Teachers are among the professions reporting the highest level of work-related stress. Therefore, ETUCE believes that the issue of work-related stress requires a special attention from teacher unions, particularly within the context of industrial relations and social dialogue. Teachers' work-related stress is an issue to be dealt with within the social dialogue work programmes of all ETUCE member organisations. In this regard, this brochure has the purpose to be a useful tool in assisting ETUCE member organisations in implementing the Framework Agreement on work-related stress. Supporting the inclusion of psychosocial hazards in collective agreements in the education sector remains a highly important issue for national teacher unions and the ETUCE.

Furthermore, the issue of work-related stress is particularly important these days. In times of economic crisis work-related stress can increase and become an even bigger concern for the health and safety of workers. Long working hours, difficult working conditions, pressure, deadlines and in particular job insecurity are factors strongly affecting the level of work-related stress – not only in times of economic crisis. Therefore, it becomes even more important to focus on how to cope with the extra pressure.

On these grounds, this project was initiated to launch a **European-wide survey** to collect concrete information and facts on work-related stress amongst teachers with the aim to gather accurate and comprehensive data for the ETUCE and its member organisations to use in their on-going and future work on this Health and Safety topic.

The ETUCE **member organisations** have actively contributed to the outcome of this survey, in particular assisting the ETUCE Secretariat in finding the schools and teachers who participated in the European-wide survey. Obtaining the schools was an immense task and the ETUCE office greatly appreciates and acknowledges the effort of its member organisations in completing this task.

Martin Rømer



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1 Project Scope, background and purpose

On 8 October 2004, the European Social Partners signed the **European Autonomous Framework Agreement on Work-Related Stress** (WRS) – a document that constitutes the framework and an action oriented instrument for employers and workers to engage themselves in raising awareness of WRS as an occupational hazard and in preventing and tackling this problem at the work place. With this new WRS project, *Teachers' work-related stress: European-wide Survey - Assessment, Comparison and Evaluation of the Impact of Psychosocial Hazards on Teachers at their Workplace in the EU*, the ETUCE, as a recognised industry federation, seeks to follow up on its previous work of raising awareness on the Framework Agreement and its implementation in the education sector. Supporting the inclusion of psychosocial hazards in collective agreements in the education sector remains a highly important issue for national teacher unions and the ETUCE.

As former ETUCE projects on work-related stress have shown concrete up-to-date statistics and information on teachers' work-related stress are essential to ensure the implementation of the European Framework Agreement on Work-Related Stress in the education sector. They are equally important for the ETUCE member

Up-to-date statistics and information on teachers' work-related stress are essential.

organisations who have committed to continue their work on implementing the **ETUCE Action Plan**.

The ETUCE engaged the German research institution: the "Forschungsstelle Arbeits- und Sozialmedizin"

(**FFAS**) to conduct the survey. The FFAS, which has long-standing experience in setting up specific questionnaires for teachers assisted the ETUCE in collecting and processing the data gathered from almost 5500 teachers in the EU and EFTA countries. The overall survey results were presented at the Final Project Conference in Berlin, in November 2011.

1.1 *Stress, definition and causes*

Previous ETUCE projects on work-related stress have shown that psychosocial hazards can severely damage the working environment in schools and that the main stress factors for teachers are workload/work intensity, role overload; increased class size per teacher and unacceptable pupils' behaviour. These factors can lead to burnout/depression and emotional exhaustion, high absenteeism, sickness, sleeping problems and cardiovascular diseases/symptoms as major illnesses.

Although stress is a well-known phenomenon a specific definition has not been agreed upon. Nevertheless, there is a broad understanding that a disparity between alleged demands and the tools to handle these is embedded.

When a worker is exposed to risk factors at the workplace, stress reactions can appear. These reactions can be divided into three types: physiological, psychological and behavioural, and are called **stress indicators**. As such, they indicate the presence of stress hazards at the workplace. When stress reactions persist over a longer period of time without any preventive measure being implemented at the workplace - reduction in the number

and/or intensity of stressors they may develop into more permanent, less reversible consequences for the workers' health.¹

Work-related stress is not an individual weakness, but instead is an individual reaction to organisational and/or interpersonal problems at work. Therefore it has to be tackled at an organisational level. Furthermore it is a multi-causal problem that requires multi-dimensional solutions.

1.2 *ETUCE and Work-Related Stress projects*

Over the last four years the ETUCE has successfully applied for grants to conduct three different work-related stress projects. The first, aimed to improve expertise and to exchange information and best practices on teachers' work-related stress, as well as to **support teacher unions** on the implementation of the European Framework Agreement on Work-Related Stress.

This first WRS project identified **five main stressors** that affect teachers' daily work, most of them relate to school organisation and management: workload/work intensity, role overload, increased class size per teacher, unacceptable pupils' behaviour, bad school management and/or lack of support from management. This illustrates that school management should be involved in assessing the risk of work related stress.

A booklet, giving advice and explanation to ETUCE member organisations on the implementation of the Framework Agreement on WRS and the ETUCE Action Plan containing the policy guidelines for ETUCE and its member organisation on how to address this issue were elaborated.



The second project continued the work carried out in the first ETUCE work-related stress project focussing on the implementation of the Action Plan and supporting its member organisations in implementing the European Framework Agreement.

In the final project conference participants emphasised the importance of **involving employers** when tackling the issue and that they must accept their obligations to identify, prevent and reduce problems of work-related stress, both because they are legally required to do so and because of the overall social and economic benefits of a healthy and well-motivated workforce. The project findings demonstrated that concrete and current statistics but even more the legal obligation of a comprehensive risk

assessment including **specific measures against teachers' work-related stress** are a prerequisite for teacher unions when addressing and inserting this issue in their national social dialogue.

¹ From the ETUCE report: 'Report on the ETUCE survey on Teachers' Work-related Stress', from October 2007, page 9 (http://etuce.homestead.com/News/2008/March2008/DraftReport_WRS_EN.pdf).

1.3 *Aim and project objectives*

The inserted figure below provides an overview of the objectives of this ETUCE project:

- a) To **gather concrete and detailed data** in a European-wide study on how work-related stress affects teachers at their workplace; how teachers perceive psychosocial hazards and compare and evaluate the results at a European-wide level.
- b) To further support the inclusion of **psychosocial hazards** (focusing on WRS) in collective agreements in the education sector.
- c) To **support teacher unions** to become more pro-active in their national SD structures when dealing with and setting up strategies on **Health & Safety in schools**, in particular as regards preventing and tackling WRS and including psychosocial hazards in risk assessments in schools.
- d) To prepare the debate on this topic in the **European sectoral committee in education** and feed the results into the cross-sectoral debate with the aim to find an agreement at European level.

Figure 1-Objectives of the project

This project furthermore provided the possibility for the member organisations to share practical advice and exchange of experiences to help the national affiliates of ETUCE to further implement the European Social Partners' Framework Agreement, particularly at school level and to disseminate the results at cross-sectoral level for implementation. In addition, the survey results provide a statistical foundation for further discussion on **Health and Safety issues** and work-related stress in particular, within the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Education. An ETUCE Policy Paper has been developed and discussed at the Final project Conference and will be presented for the approval and adoption to the ETUCE Bureau and the ETUCE Committee.

The project was an opportunity for ETUCE member organisations to share practical advice and exchange of experiences

1.4 Project Structure

This ETUCE project on work-related stress amongst teachers and school staff was structured as illustrated by the figure (2) below:

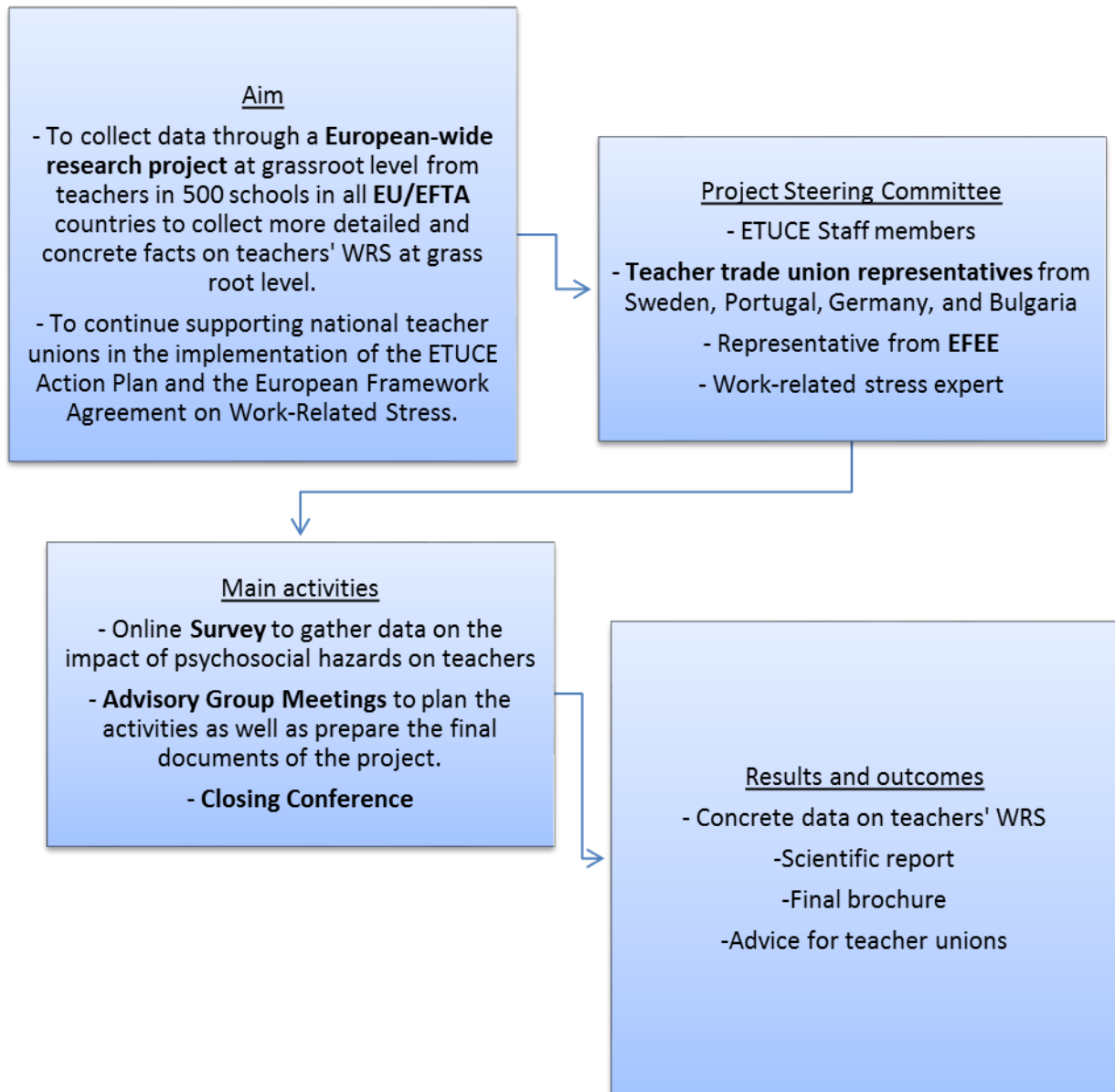


Figure 2 Project Overview

2 Methodology

This Work-Related Stress project focussed on three steps: measuring and documenting the impact of teachers' psychosocial hazards at their workplace, **defining priorities for action and evaluating** the results to improve the strategies for continued risk assessment in schools.

For the first part of the project a European-wide survey amongst teachers from schools across Europe was initiated. For this purpose ETUCE, prior to the beginning of the project sent out a Call for Tender for Subcontracting External Expertise for this particular project. The **Forschungsstelle Arbeits- und Sozialmedizin (FFAS)** was granted the task to conduct the research. The FFAS has previously made use of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire, the COPSOQ in a validation study and has great insight into the construction of a specific questionnaire for the situation of teachers, based on the COPSOQ.

The Work-Related Stress project focused on three steps: Measuring, defining priorities and evaluating.

2.1 The work-related stress Advisory Group

The six advisory group members formed the body guiding the project implementation and supported the study with their expertise and knowledge on teachers' work-related stress. Next to a member of the ETUCE staff, the Advisory Group consisted of experts from four teacher unions as well as one member of the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) respecting the geographical balance to ensure a transnational dimension.

The Advisory Group:



Kounka Damianova,
SEB, Bulgaria



Charles Nolda, EFEE,
Belgium



Ana Gaspar, FENPROF,
Portugal



Anders Eklund,
Lärarförbundet,
Sweden



Anne Jenter, GEW,
Germany

Figure 3-Advisory Group

3 The Work-Related Stress Survey

The overall aim of the survey was to provide **reliable and useful statistics** to support national teacher unions in their national Social Dialogue structures when they deal with Health and Safety issues in schools. The data also helps the unions to establish concrete and sustainable Health and Safety strategies in schools, especially for preventing and tackling WRS and including psychosocial hazards in risk assessment in schools. The survey data provides additional support to the ETUCE member unions to become more pro-active and to include psychosocial hazards and WRS in the social dialogue process at national level and in collective agreements in their respective country. At European level the collected data will help the ETUCE to further develop its policy paper on WRS (**ETUCE Action Plan**) and to support its work on the issue within the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Education.

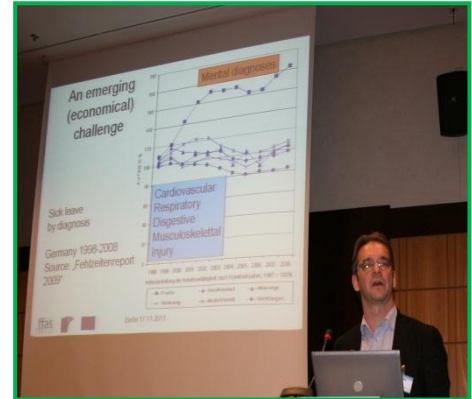


Figure 4-Presentation by Mr Nübling

The research institute developed with the input from the advisory group concrete instruments (**online-questionnaire, online-platform**) designed for the purpose of targeting the 500 European schools. The model for these instruments was the COPSOQ.

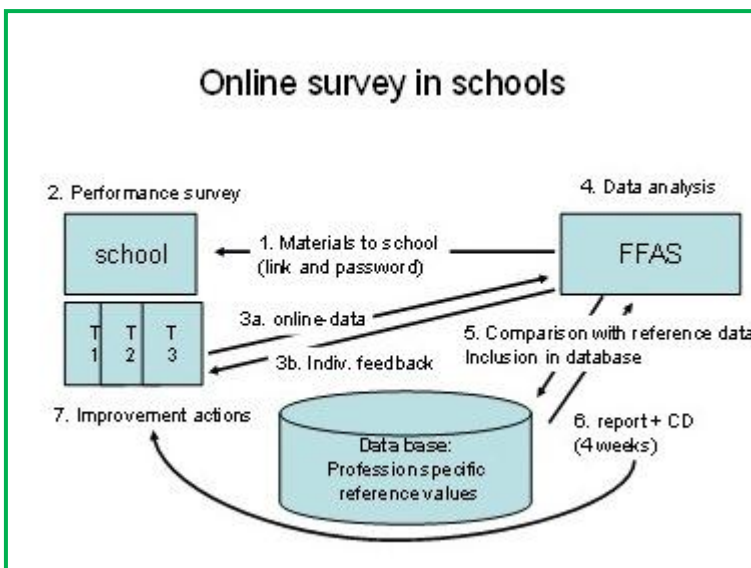


Figure 5-FFAS Survey Overview

The FFAS analysed and prepared the survey results, comparing the data also with external reference values (national/international means for teachers). The research outcome has been summarised in a report² and was presented at the Final Project Conference in Berlin in November 2011.

The inserted figure 5, demonstrates the course of action of the work carried out by the FFAS.

² The report produced by the FFAS on the ETUCE survey and results can be found at the ETUCE OSH website (http://teachersosh.homestead.com/Stress_III/Work-Related-Stress-III.html).

3.1 *Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire*

The tool used in the survey was a revised version of the **Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ)**; a comprehensive and highly respected questionnaire that enables a comparison of the results with results from other occupational groups. The COPSOQ was originally developed in Denmark, and is a scientifically validated method to assess psychosocial factors at work, in particular work-related stress.



Figure 6-COPSOQ Website

Currently the COPSOQ is used in about 15 countries in Europe and abroad; the FFAS is the German study centre. The FFAS adapted the COPSOQ method to the workplace “school” and has conducted studies on psychosocial hazards amongst teachers in both the region of Baden Württemberg and Bremen. In total, more than 3500 schools and 40000 teachers have participated in previous surveys using this instrument.

The ETUCE study comprised additional areas that distinguish the questionnaire from the questionnaire used in German schools. These teacher-specific factors include:

- Insecurity at work (re-integrated from COPSOQ standard)
- Trust and fairness
- Violence and verbal abuse

The questionnaire was translated in a first step from German (source language) into **20 target languages**³ to actively involve more than **30 European countries (transnational dimension)**. For scientific reasons and to avoid any language flaws, the translated questionnaire was then proofread in a second time by a native speaker who was not involved in the previous translation.

3.2 *Schools participating in the study*

The ETUCE member organisations greatly assisted the ETUCE secretariat in accomplishing the goal of gathering information on the impact of psychosocial hazards on teachers in 500 schools in the EU/EFTA countries. They identified one national coordinator per EU/EFTA country who would assist the ETUCE and project advisory group in identifying schools and respective teachers in their own country from the education levels of **primary and secondary education and Vocational Education and Training** who would participate in the Online-Survey.

The schools should be a balanced choice of schools in each country as concerns rural areas - cities and poor - wealthy regions. Additionally, the number of schools per country was supposed to relate to each country's population. The country overview is as demonstrated by figure 7:

Number of Schools	Countries
60	Germany, France, Italy and the UK
35	Poland and Spain
20	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland,
10	Cyprus, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Luxemburg

Figure 7-School Overview

Although these numbers amount to more than the anticipated 500 schools, previous experiences from the FFAS study in Baden-Württemberg, Germany showed, that approximately 50 % of the invited schools participated in the survey organised by the government. Therefore, a higher number of schools than statistically necessary to reach the targeted **500 schools** were included.

During the months of March and April the national coordinators contacted their national affiliates and managed to locate the schools for the survey. The coordinators submitted the list of these schools to the ETUCE secretariat, containing the number of teaching staff and of students.

30 National Coordinators assisted ETUCE and the Advisory Group to gather the targeted 500 schools for the survey

A separate username and password was created for each school. The coordinators sent these together with the link to the online survey to each school. So in each school the teachers used one password and login.

Immediately after the completion of the questionnaire the teacher answering received a feedback comparing their personal answers to a mean value of the results from teachers having completed the questionnaire so far.

To ensure the anonymity of the answers submitted, as well as for data protection reasons, only the answers from schools with more than five teachers participating in the online survey were summarised in a school report. The data from schools with less than five teachers participating contributed to the overall European report, but they did not receive the **school report**, for anonymity reasons. The individual school reports compared schools' results to the national mean value, as well as the overall European results.

The overall results from all participating teachers were included in the general survey report⁴ and presented at the final project conference.

³ French, Greek, English, Dutch, Danish, Czech, Estonian, Finish, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

⁴ http://teachersosh.homestead.com/Stress_III/Work-Related-Stress-III.html.

4 Final Conference

The Final Conference of the WRS project was held in Berlin, 17 to 18 November, 2011. The event gathered representatives from European education trade unions from ETUCE member organisations in the EU/EFTA and candidate countries and employers in education.

Over the two days, participants were presented with an overall view of work-related stress and its impact, focusing on people working within the field of education. The participants exchanged best practices and discussed their transferability to other national contexts. In a 'Walk-and-talk'-session the audience was able to propose and discuss possible amendments to the ETUCE Policy Paper on Teachers Work-Related Stress to be submitted to the ETUCE Committee in 2012.



Figure 8-Final Conference Participants

Mr Ronnie Smith, the ETUCE President, and Mr David Simmonds, President of EFEE⁵, welcomed the participants, followed by Mr Martin Rømer, the European Director of ETUCE, who highlighted the particular importance of this subject to the ETUCE. Further opening speakers included Mr Andreas Horst from the German Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs and Mr Ulrich Thöne, President of GEW⁶.

Mr Matthias Nübling (FFAS) presented the survey results, Malgorzata Milczarek from the European Agency for Occupational Health and Safety⁷ (EU-OSHA) and Ms Agnès Parent-Thirion from EUROFOUND⁸ explained their institution's work in this field. Ms Stefanie Kaempf from the Regional Administrative Authority in Freiburg,

Germany provided various practice approaches on how to make good use of the survey results⁹.

In a 'Walk-and-Talk'-session the conference participants were able to propose and discuss possible amendments to the ETUCE Policy Paper

Ms Kaempf explained how the Ministry of Education of Baden-Württemberg, based on a COPSOQ study amongst their teachers, set to work with school psychologists to combat work-related stress. The psychologists offer supervision for teachers, as well as training sessions focusing on conflict resolution, mediation in school conflicts, mobbing and coping with stress. Ms Kaempf highlighted various ways to work with the issue of work-related stress; whether on an individual level or in groups, schools or local level.

⁵ European Federation of Education Employers

⁶ Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft

⁷ <http://osha.europa.eu/en/front-page>

⁸ <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/>

⁹ All presentations can be found here: http://teachersosh.homestead.com/Stress_III/Work-Related-Stress-III.html.

5 Survey findings

This ETUCE survey has focussed on the causes of stress and the working conditions, rather than the stress reactions and symptoms. The major outcomes are described in the following sections¹⁰.

5.1 Descriptive statistics

In total **499 schools** participated in the online survey with **5461 teachers** submitting their answers. The target of collecting responses from teachers in schools from all the European countries invited was reached.

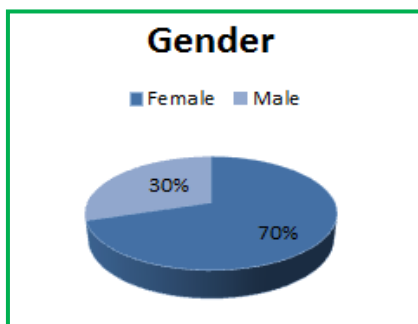


Figure 9-Gender

As background information the teachers participating in the survey were asked to provide their gender and age. Most respondents were female, with more than 70 % (71,8%) of the respondents being women (Figure 9). The majority of teachers in the survey are between 35 and 54 years old, although a

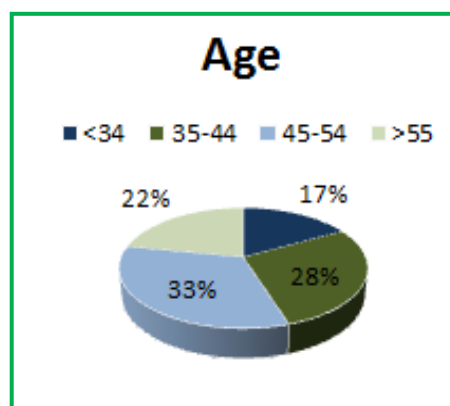


Figure 10-Age

large proportion is above 55 years of age which is demonstrated by figure 10. The youngest teachers participating are born in 1989 and the oldest in 1940.

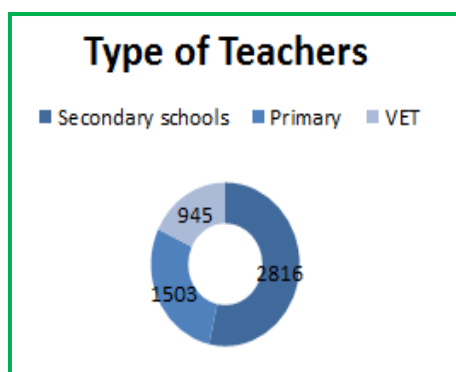


Figure 11-Type of School

54% of the respondents are employed in secondary education, while 29% are employed in primary education and 18 % in vocational education and training (VET) (Figure 11).

The size of the school (Figure 12), which the teachers are employed in, varies greatly from less than 300 pupils to more than 2000. Most teachers in the survey (30%) work

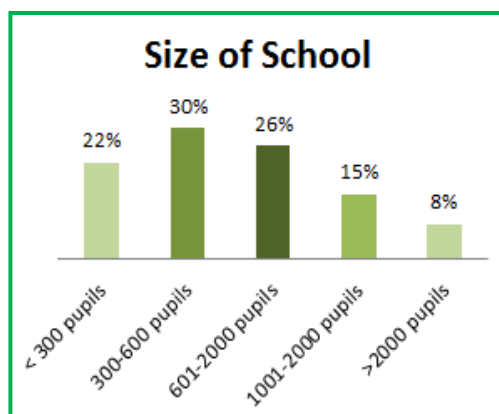


Figure 12-Size of School

in schools with between 300-600 pupils.

The respondents were almost all employed as teachers, although 10% represented management within the schools (Figure 13).

¹⁰ For a detailed description of the survey and the results, please visit the ETUCE OSH-website: www.edu-osh.eu.

The variety of years of experience was great; from 12 % having been employed less than 5 years to 6% having worked as a teacher or in school management for more than 35 years (Figure 14).

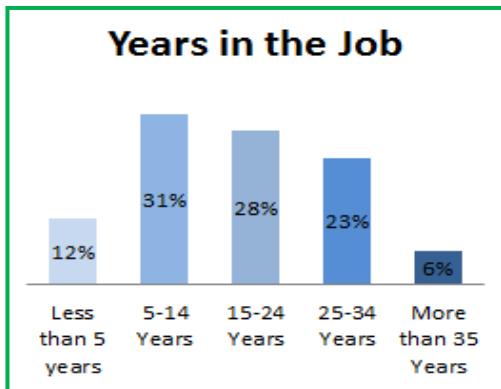
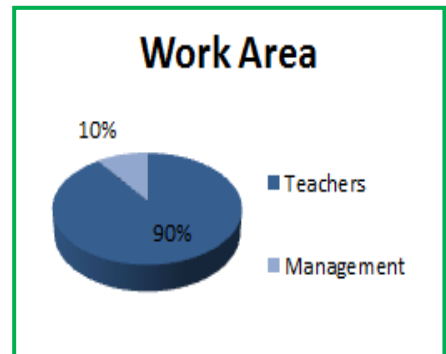


Figure 14-Years in the Job

Figure 13-Work Area



5.2 Psychosocial factors

To better understand which incidences cause stress the ETUCE questionnaire included the 36 COPSOQ standard aspects that assess the psychosocial work environment grouped into different sections: demands, influence and development, interpersonal support and relationship, trust and fairness and job insecurity. A section was inserted in the questionnaire that examined the teaching profession in particular, the teacher-specific factors, e.g. common educational vision, lesson disturbances, noise and voice strain, opportunities to relax, conflicts with parents, support from parents, teaching equipment, quality of conferences and meetings, subject support, verbal abuse and physical violence.

In the following a few of the measures, in which the largest difference across countries were found, are described. There are no correlations with factors of stress/burnout in these descriptions. These will be analysed in a later section.¹¹

Countries

For the COPSOQ standard scales¹² the factors with the highest differences between the countries are: 'Emotional demands', 'Role clarity', 'Quality of leadership', 'Feedback at work' and 'Insecurity at work'.

For the **'emotional demands'**, Denmark and Spain reported the lowest value, indicating that teachers from these countries stated that the emotional demands at their work place were not high, as opposed to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with the highest value.

COPSOQ Standard Scales Factors: 'Emotional demands', 'Role clarity', 'Quality of leadership', 'Feedback at work' and 'Insecurity at work'.

Teachers from Bulgaria feel most confident about the **clarity of their role**

as teachers providing an opposite to the Belgian, Dutch and British teachers who all had a low value, meaning that the clarity was low.

¹¹ For all the statistical values and explanations please read the full survey report, available from the ETUCE OSH-website (www.edu-osh.eu).

¹² All these scales are explained in details in both the questionnaire that was used for the survey, as well as the final survey report by the FFAS. All can be found at www.edu-osh.eu.

The differences between the answers on **'Quality of leadership'** were very big with teachers in France valuing the quality of leadership in their schools very low. The Romanian teachers on the contrary were pleased with the quality of leadership, which possibly also underlines that they are amongst the countries with the most positive response on **'Feedback at work'**. Here, Italian, Danish and Hungarian teachers expressed a more negative opinion.

The aspect of **'Insecurity at work'** also features as one of the scales in which larger differences can be found. To this particular scale it is quite relevant to consider the fact that teachers' employment contracts vary across Europe. Moreover teaching staff are not only worried about losing their job but are also concerned about dealing with new technology, to find a new job if fired or being transferred (questionnaire part B, 9; 1-4)

Teacher Specific Factors: 'Opportunities to relax', 'Conflicts with parents/employers', 'Verbal abuse' and 'Physical violence'

For the factors that were inserted as particularly important for teachers, the differences were most clear for: **'Opportunities to relax'**, **'Conflicts with parents/employers'**, **'Verbal abuse'** and **'Physical violence'**.

Spanish and Cypriot teachers have better opportunities to relax than the teachers employed in the German and Austrian school systems. Concerning **'Conflicts with parents/employers'** the Danish, Icelandic and Romanian teachers evaluate to have few conflicts whereas the Slovakian teachers report to be exposed to these conflicts more often than average.

The results reported here are the factors in which the differences between the countries were the largest.

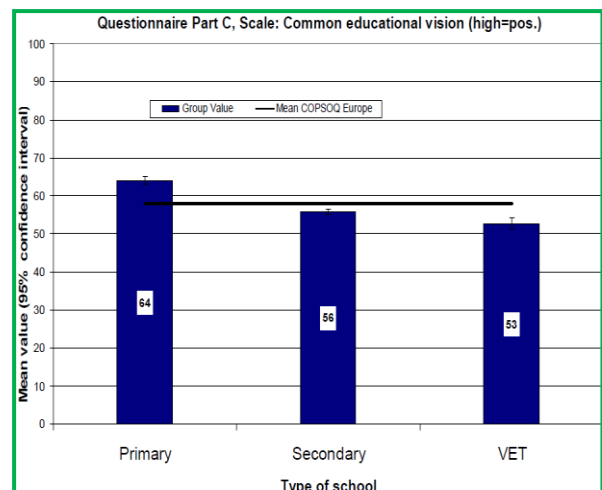
Values for the issue of **'Verbal abuse'** range from very low in Italy to remarkably higher than average in especially Latvia, Slovenia and Germany. Germany and Belgium were amongst the countries marking **physical violence** as a concern in relation to their work as teachers¹³.

The results reported here are the factors in which the differences between the countries were the largest. Some countries might have reported on other issues that influence their work, outlying all other countries, or at least were far from the average. These more precise results can also be found in the Survey report¹⁴.

Figure 15-Common Educational Value

Group results

When analysing the results by groups other differences become more evident. Again, the results highlighted rely on the perception of the respondents.



¹³ As the only country in the survey, the teachers from the Czech Republic participating in the ETUCE survey did not at all express problems with physical violence.

¹⁴ Can be found on www.edu-osh.eu.

Teachers from primary schools across Europe note a higher value on 'Common educational vision' (Figure 15),

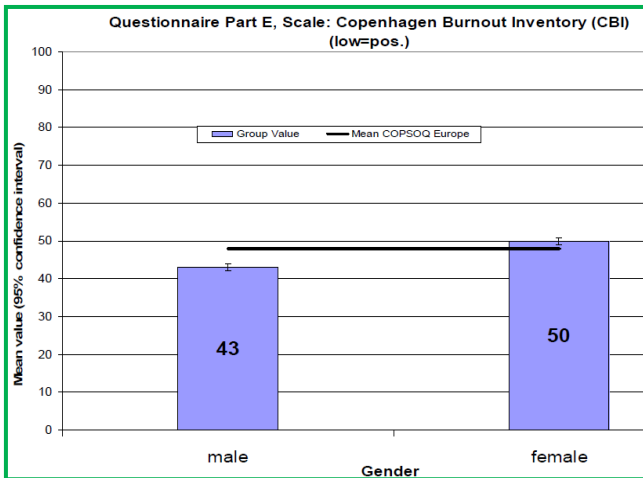


Figure 16-Gender variances

which is somewhat lower in both secondary schools and VET. The number of students in the schools also has an impact on this perception. The larger the school the less common educational vision is reported in the survey.

When analysing possible gender variances only small differences are found. When referring to 'Emotional demands' and the perception of personal burnout, female teachers refer higher values than their male colleagues, but the difference is minimal. (See Figure 16)

Differences between the age groups are most visible in teachers' perception of own 'General health state'; the younger group of the teachers reported a better self-evaluation of health. Nevertheless the noted differences are only small.

The amount of pupils in a class has an impact on a few factors, and teachers who teach many larger classes tend to report negatively on these scales. This includes factors such as: 'Quantitative demands', 'Work-privacy conflict', 'Noise and voice strain' and 'Opportunities to relax'.

As previously explained, 'Insecurity at Work' (Figure 17) contains various factors that can influence the self-evaluated level of insecurity. When regarded in relation to experience in the teaching profession, insecurity does not decrease over the years. The teachers with the most experience, nevertheless expressed the least insecurity, but the teachers with a work experience of 15 to 24 years reported to be most insecure. For the other groups, teachers with less than five years, with 5 to 14 years of experience and with 25 to 34 years expressed more or less the same level of insecurity, which is notably higher than the teachers with the most experience.

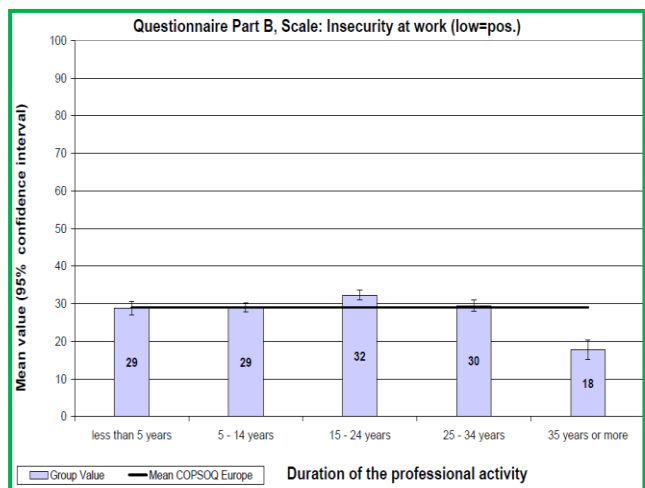


Figure 17-Insecurity at Work

5.3 Models on outcomes

For these interpretations of the results the FFAS used a general model of occupational medicine, psychology and sociology – the strain and stress model. In this model (Figure 18) it is understood that workplace factors have an influence on a person's reactions, such as stress or other outcomes.

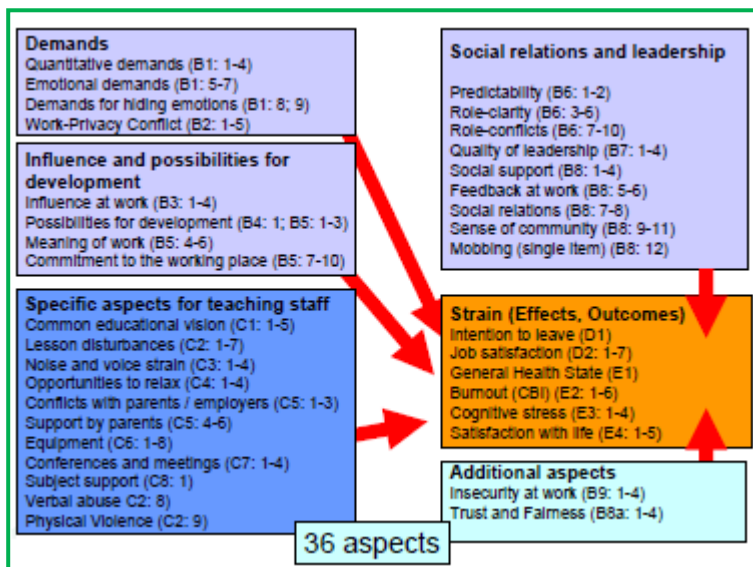


Figure 18-Models

As a starting point, the FFAS created a statistical model, looking at which important workplace factors were related to the outcomes – the ‘**strains**’¹⁵. To understand this model it is necessary to know that when looking for those factors which have the greatest impact, the method is to find the ones that have the strongest influence and not necessarily those aspects with the highest numerical values. Therefore, the purpose of this model is to highlight which factors are predominant for the outcome of work-related stress.

When conducting their analysis of the submitted answers the FFAS found that the outcome ‘**Job satisfaction**’ was the factor best explained by the workplace factors. Job satisfaction is believed to have an influence on a person’s reactions such as stress, and therefore a higher job satisfaction is presumed to decrease the chances of stress. ‘Trust and Fairness’ is the factor with that has the strongest impact on the outcome ‘job satisfaction’. Other factors with strong effect on job satisfaction are thus: ‘Sense of community’, ‘Meaning of work’, ‘Equipment’ and ‘Work-privacy conflict’. This suggests that a low value in these factors decreases the satisfaction of the job, and thereby a higher risk of stress is more likely.

The value ‘**Work-privacy conflict**’ is the only factor that correlates with all the six outcomes of ‘Strains’ (both positively and negatively). A high score in ‘Work-privacy conflict’ is related to low job and life satisfaction, lower self-rated health, a higher intention to leave, higher degree of burnout symptoms and cognitive stress symptoms. This indicates that compatibility of working and private life is evident for a low value in the ‘Strains’ factors.

A higher job satisfaction is presumed to decrease the chances of stress.

The ‘**Meaning of work**’ factor influences four of the strains underlining how teachers in the survey that have a positive response to this matter are more satisfied with their job and their life and further demonstrate a better health status.

For the strain ‘**Burnout**’, the FFAS used the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI¹⁶) to measure the results from the ETUCE survey. Here, it was found that a part from the already mentioned effect of the ‘Work-privacy conflict’, then influencing is also ‘Emotional demands’, Noise and voice strain’, ‘Insecurity at work’ and ‘Commitment to the work-place’.

¹⁵ ‘Intention to leave’, ‘Job satisfaction’, ‘General health state’, ‘Burnout’, ‘Cognitive stress’ and ‘Satisfaction with life’.

¹⁶ The CBI is a questionnaire measuring the degree of physical and psychological fatigue, which includes three sub-dimensions of burnout: personal, work-related and client-related burnout.

As previously explained the version of the COPSOQ questionnaire that was used for the ETUCE survey contained **teacher-specific factors**. Amongst these the scale on noise and voice strain is the factor influencing most models – all concerning health related outcomes. This means that the noise in the classroom as well as the strain on the teachers' voice has a great influence on the health and wellbeing of teachers.

5.4 Summary of survey results

From the results obtained through the survey it has become evident that some factors are more prone to cause stress amongst teachers than others. These vary from country to country, by type and size of school and over age, but provide an overview of the current situation for work-related stress amongst teachers.

From the previous ETUCE survey on work-related stress from 2007 the issue of **workload** was already known as a stress factor. Here, the workload and role overload of teachers were found to be the main stressors (stress factors). This highlights how the amount of work together with the multiplications of areas of responsibility and roles constitute the main stressors for teachers. From the new ETUCE survey the issue of quantitative workload does not in itself have a direct statistically proven influence on the strain factors. But, when the tasks of work conflicts with private life it becomes evident that this is a factor that for the participating teachers influences their daily wellbeing.

The factor that has the greatest influence on the **perception of job-satisfaction** is the issue of 'Trust and Fairness'. A lack of trust in the work carried out, as well as an uneven distribution of tasks between the teachers will foster a feeling of lack of trust and fairness at the work place and cause a higher chance of the teachers not being satisfied with their job.

The overall survey results only reinforce the importance for the ETUCE to maintain its focus on the issue of work-related stress.

The overall survey results only reinforce the importance for the ETUCE to maintain its focus on the issue of work-related stress amongst teachers. The results will further support the work of ETUCE in including psychosocial hazards, in particular work-related stress, in collective agreements in the education sector and support teacher trade unions to engage more pro-actively in their national social dialogue with the employers.

6 Best-practice examples

Three ETUCE member organisations presented their **best practices** to provide examples on how teacher unions can contribute to combat work-related stress.

Michelle Olivier, from the **French member organisation SNUipp - FSU**¹⁷, elaborated on how the previous years' reforms have increased work-related stress amongst teachers in French primary schools.

In order to combat the rising problem SNUipp – FSU in September 2010 established, in cooperation with CNAM¹⁸, a working group to focus on the issue of work-related stress.



Figure 19-Michelle Olivier

¹⁷ Syndicat National Unitaire des instituteurs, professeurs des écoles et PEGC

¹⁸ Conservatoire national des arts et métiers d'Ile-de-France

This working group has since amongst other things written two articles for the magazine "Fenêtre sur Cours", carried out a national survey and a conference on the topic. A video will be presented in 2012. The dilemmas of teachers in their daily work are going to be discussed in working groups which will also examine necessary criteria that ensure a safer working environment for teachers.

The Employee Assistance Programme provides different supports to help employees when they may need it including the prevention and/or management of stress. The main elements of the programme include access to:

- ◆ **The Employee Counselling Service (ECS)**. Available via line manager and/or Resource Personnel; the employee support team or confidential self referral.
- ◆ **24/7 confidential helpline (ECS)** which can be used to access confidential advice or to arrange counselling on 0800 389 7851
- ◆ **Cognitive behavioural therapy** which is a clinically and research-proven therapy for mental health problems and life issues.
- ◆ **Health benefits scheme** where employees have the option to join a not-for-profit scheme.
- ◆ **Financial advice** via Money Matters.
- ◆ **Physiotherapy**
- ◆ **Discounted complementary therapies**
- ◆ **Occupational health support**, for example, health checks and medical assessments
- ◆ **Early intervention** support ensures employees who are absent with a psychological absence are aware of the support and help available to them.
- ◆ **Training** for managers to assist with sensitive discussions with employees.

The Scottish example, provided by Ms Fiona Dalziel from SSTA¹⁹, puts a focus on how to **move away from punitive methods** and instead work around a more health centred method ensuring that the causes of work-related stress are recognised and understood by school managers and that school managers are committed to prevent work related stress through effective and sensitive management.

The approach is multifaceted, including the unions, the school leadership and the teachers. It includes many different aspects,

Figure 20-Slide From SSTA

including forums for employees, access to health treatments, and physiotherapy. From the inserted slide (Figure 20) part of the programme, which is called 'Employee Assistance Programme' is further explained.

Ms Ilze Trapenciere provided a good practice a from the Latvian member organisation²⁰.

LIZDA created a support programme for teachers, founded on a preparation phase in which teachers themselves had an opportunity to provide ideas for the programme. The programme activities include professional training, support and supervision for school teams, individual consultations with a psychologist and a lawyer if needed. The methods focussed on group discussions, homework, meditation, music and dance, as well as other ways of combatting stress.

Ms Trapenciere explained how the teachers involved in the project expressed a **great knowledge of stress**, but that they prior had lacked information and support as how to deal with it.

What did we do:

- Training on stress management for LIZDA members at three regions of Latvia (3 months cycle)
- Regional summer school for LIZDA members
- LIZDA conference "Work environment and quality of education"
- Activities for stress reduction at "Health promoting school network" (140 schools in Latvia)



Figure 21-Slide from LIZDA

¹⁹ Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association

²⁰ Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employee

7 Practical recommendations

Resulting from the survey findings and the best practices presented, the participants at the final project conference in Berlin gave recommendations for inspiring and effective measures for preventing, eliminating and reducing problems of work-related stress. The ETUCE secretariat **has summarised the most relevant points raised:**

The COPSOQ has proven a good and reliable instrument to identify those factors that lead to work-related stress at every individual teacher's workplace (school). The results of the survey must be considered within their



Figure 22-Recommendations

respective national and the European context and addressed at national and European level.

It is evident that work-related stress is not an individual weakness, but results from organisational and/or interpersonal problems at work. At school level, the COPSOQ results should therefore be discussed with all actors, teachers and their representatives, education employers, parents and student representatives to draw up a school risk assessment process that includes psychosocial hazards to identify the school's major stress factor(s) and to jointly develop measures to prevent and abolish these factors. Such measures can range from awareness raising among teachers, local authorities, school managers, union leaders, etc. to effective

organisational and structural measures such as, e.g. training on and provision of mediation, coaching, improving leadership competences, stress management, national and European health and safety legislation and other methods to strengthen the stakeholders' commitment to address and mitigate the issue of work-related stress.

At national level, the survey findings can be used in the **social dialogue systems and collective bargaining** which are the main instruments for applying national legislation. These instruments need to be respected throughout the education system as they underpin the correct implementation of European legislation on Health and Safety of Workers. Only by involving both education employers and teachers in risk assessment of teachers' work environment can psychosocial hazards such as work-related stress be successfully prevented, eliminated and reduced. It is therefore necessary to include and monitor the prevention of psychosocial hazards in the national Health and Safety strategy. This is particularly important because Healthy and safe working conditions are fundamental social right²¹. In addition Health and Safety in schools is directly linked to quality education and as such a priority of ETUCE.

Teacher Unions need to address work-related stress as one of their priority issues in their union agenda activities.

Teacher unions need to address work-related stress as one of their **priority issues** in their union agenda of activities. The updated ETUCE Action Plan on Teachers' Work-Related Stress and the European Social Partners'

²¹ European Social Charter (revised), Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 18.X.1961, Part II, Art. 3.

Framework Agreement on Work-Related Stress provide guidance for the ETUCE member organisations on how to actively combat psychosocial hazards in schools and how to address the matter to ensure the recommendations are fully implemented.

The prevention and reduction of work-related stress should be made a priority issue on the agenda of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education aiming towards concrete applicable results for education stakeholders. Offering furthermore national and local stakeholders a European platform for exchange and good practice examples on successful prevention, mitigation and reduction of psychosocial hazards in the education working environment, the ETUCE Health and Safety website: www.edu-osh.eu is open for further contributions.

The prevention and reduction of work-related stress should be made a priority issue on the agenda of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education.

8 Policy paper

The result of this ETUCE work-related stress project is a policy paper on the prevention, mitigation and reduction of teachers' work-related stress.

The paper addresses working conditions, working culture and ethics, the work-privacy conflict and outlines union and employer tasks in the prevention and reduction of work-related stress amongst teachers. It describes how the ETUCE and its member organisations will seek to improve national policies and national legislation on occupational health and safety with an emphasis on stress.

The **ETUCE policy paper** is to be presented to the ETUCE Bureau and ETUCE Committee and will be taken up in the forum of the European Social Dialogue Committee in Education.

9 Project Overview

November 2010	Received notice about the granted project.
November/December 2010	ETUCE releases a call for tender for subcontracting external expertise to conduct the online survey, as well as a tender for translation services in relation to the questionnaire. The grantees are respectively the FFAS and Bouchat Translation Unit.
December 2010	First Advisory Group meeting , Brussels
December 2010	The search for national coordinators starts. Each country is asked to provide a national coordinator who will find the schools in his or her country. The number of schools is different in every country, related to the population etc. The coordinator is a representative from ETUCE member unions.
February 2011	The COPSOQ questionnaire is translated into all 20 languages requested.
March 2011	Second Advisory Group meeting, Brussels. The Final Conference is being discussed and planning begins. National coordinators start the school recruitment
April 2011	The test-survey is launched inviting all the country coordinators to test it in order to improve the final version.
May-June 2011	The ETUCE survey on Work-related stress is launched and teachers from all over Europe who have been recruited by the national coordinators submit their answers to the ETUCE COPSOQ website created by the FFAS.
September 2011	Third Advisory Group meeting , Brussels. The projects Final Conference is being finalised. The invitation is send out and the last speakers are being found. The Policy Paper is drafted.
November 2011	Final Conference , Berlin. The survey results are being presented and conference participants discuss the results and give input to the Policy Paper.
December 2011	Fourth and final Advisory Group meeting, Brussels. The project brochure is finalised and send to translation as well as printing

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ETUCE Teachers' Occupational Safety and Health Website:

www.edu-osh.eu

The ETUCE's European-wide survey on teachers' work-related stress:

<https://www.teacher-copsoq.eu/index.php/survey/4>

11 Acronyms

COPSOQ	The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire
FFAS	Freiburger Forschungsstelle Arbeits- und Sozialmedizin
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EFEE	European Federation of Employers in Education
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education
EU	European Union
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
EUROFOUND	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
FENPROF	Federação Nacional dos Professores
GEW	Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft
LIZDA	Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employee
SD	Social Dialogue
SEB	Syndicat des Enseignants Bulgares
SNUipp-FSU	Syndicat National Unitaire des instituteurs, professeurs des écoles et PEGC
SSTA	Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WRS	Work-related stress



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