

Resolution on

Setting the priorities to develop the ETUCE Action Plan for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Adopted by the ETUCE Special Conference, the Regional Special Conference of Education International, meeting in Athens on 27-28 November 2018

Further to and consistent with the Resolutions adopted by the 7th EI Congress in Ottawa in 2015, the Resolutions adopted at the ETUCE Conference in Belgrade in 2016, this ETUCE Special Conference

Noting that:

1. Rapid changes in modern society related to globalisation, increased migration and diversification of the population, technological progress and digitalisation, deterioration of the environment and climate, the rise of extremism, populism and xenophobia, and the intensification of poverty and social exclusion, compel education trade unions to look carefully to the future, in order to prepare their members to address these and other actual and ever accelerating challenges to equality in society and the world of work.
2. Despite the overall progress in addressing inequalities in 21st century society, the lack of funding for inclusive education persists and many equality topics and challenges still remain outside of national and European social dialogue in the education sector. There is a vast amount of evidence based and scientifically proven material available on the subject of inequality and inclusive education. It should be accessible to all stakeholders, as well as integrated and fully used in collective bargaining, opening the debate to more than economic issues.
3. Despite the fact that women often have better educational outcomes than men and have a tertiary education attainment rate which is considerably higher, segregation in study fields for women and men remains a serious issue in current educational systems at all levels, especially in vocational education and training.
4. Horizontal and vertical gender segregation persists in the teaching profession with the number of female education personnel gradually decreasing from early childhood and primary education to higher education and research, as well as with women still under-represented in leadership positions, as well as with a high percentage of women taking up and working in part-time employment.
5. Education trade unions also experience a lack of female leaders due to a range of factors including work-life balance and unequal distribution of caring responsibilities between men and women, as well as the organisational culture of trade unions and the fact that in many trade unions leading positions are volunteer-based and unpaid.
6. Thousands of women, men, and children arriving in Europe seeking shelter and protection from wars, persecution and the violation of human rights in their home countries, face challenges such as; little or no access to education(especially in the first several months after their arrival in EU countries); the lack of school resources that meet the needs of migrant and refugee students; the refusal to recognise their professional qualifications and skills.
7. In recent years, radicalisation, violence, extremism, xenophobia, and hate speech have risen across the whole of Europe, posing a threat to the safety of its citizens and challenging the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the EU's fundamental values of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, solidarity, and respect for human rights.

Shaping The Future of Europe: The Role of Education Trade Unions

8. Today, LGBTI students and education personnel in Europe still experience prejudices, bullying and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity both inside and outside of school, which undermines their fundamental human rights, including the right to education.
9. The inclusion of children with special needs into local schools continues to be a challenge for, amongst other reasons, cuts to funding in the education sector, with learning groups comprising of too many children and teachers often being left alone in classes, without additional support personnel and without adequate training.
10. Due to the lack of diversification, the teaching force does not sufficiently reflect the diversity of society, and this deprives students of, amongst other things, a broad range of role models. This situation is often also reflected in the membership of education trade unions.

Believing that:

11. Public education should be high quality, inclusive, culturally and socially diverse, and accessible to everyone regardless of the student's gender, sexual orientation, abilities and educational needs, economic status, ethnic origin, language, religion, and migratory and citizenship status.
12. Education system should help to realise the full potential of every student, be a strong tool in the fight against extremism, populism, xenophobia, and all kinds of discrimination, and should prepare tolerant, culturally and gender sensitive citizens with solid democratic values. In addition, schools should be free of bullying and discrimination and provide a safe place for everyone to learn and teach.

Reaffirms:

13. The importance of enhancing the representation and participation of women in decision-making in all education sectors and research; creating better work-life balance regulations in Europe, with a more balanced distribution of caring responsibilities between men and women, and tackling the existing gender pay gaps.
14. That the ongoing gender stereotyping in our daily lives, publicity and media must be stopped.
15. The value of educational integration of migrant and refugee children, young people and adults at all levels of education.
16. The significant role that education personnel and education trade unions play in combatting religious intolerance, discrimination against, and harassment of, migrants and refugees(as well as ethnic minorities in Europe e.g. the Roma community) within schools, workplaces and wider society, as well as in ensuring their integration in society.
17. That in our pluralistic and globalised societies of today, education is a crucial tool in tackling extremism, radicalization, violence, and intolerance through the promotion of civic education, citizenship and universal values of democracy, tolerance, freedom and non-discrimination.
18. The importance of achieving equality both for LGBTI students and teachers with the view to creating safe, secure and inclusive learning environments for all.

19. The absolute right of children and adults with disabilities and special needs to have access to specialised teachers and other education staff who are trained and able to respond to their specific needs and to support their learning with adequate tools and programmes.

In order to build a comprehensive and sustainable strategy for ensuring equality in future education and society that can be applied by all member organisations and is based on concrete actions, the ETUCE Special Conference mandates the ETUCE Committee, with the advice of the ETUCE Standing Committee for Equality and ETUCE Equality Working Group, to design and propagate an ETUCE Action Plan for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion focusing on the following priorities:

20. Promoting and supporting efforts to establish effective social dialogue in all countries with discussions about equality as an integral part of the collective bargaining agenda;
21. Increasing sustainable public funding for inclusive and quality education;
22. Incorporating inclusive teaching and the teaching of democratic values and active citizenship as part of the initial and continuous professional development of education personnel;
23. Raising awareness on equality issues addressing different strands of discrimination, including work-life balance and gender roles in caring responsibilities;
24. Raising awareness of how, in different national contexts, legislative frameworks have an impact on the construction of learning environments, on the school infrastructure, and on the editing of teaching materials and curricula;
25. Campaigning for and contributing to reforming legislative frameworks, as well as learning environments linked to school infrastructure and teaching materials and national school curricula, to ensure equality in education for teachers and students alike;
26. Working in (non-financial) partnership with the whole school community, such as parents, families and local bodies, to support the work of education personnel in inclusive learning environments while ensuring that the public funding of education is not replaced by private funding;
27. Lobbying for clear, concrete guidelines on combatting harassment and discrimination within the education system;
28. Encouraging the establishment of networks for under-represented groups feeding into the work of trade unions' democratic structures;
29. Lobbying for adopting gender education as a necessary part of curricula at all levels of the education system, which would enable both girls and boys, women and men to understand how constructions of masculinities and femininities and models for assigning social roles shape our societies, influence relationships, life choices and career.