

ETUCE – European Region of Education International **DRAFT Strategic Programme 2025- 2028**

Fighting for the future of public education in a social Europe!

Submitted for Adoption by the ETUCE Committee to the ETUCE Conference, the Regional Conference of Education International, on 26-27 November 2024

In line with our 2024 Conference, organised around the theme of “Fighting for the future of public education in a social Europe”, this programme sets out the high-level strategy and aims of ETUCE, which are:

- *Building member organisation and collective capacity;*
- *Strengthening campaigning and bargaining activity;*
- *Influencing public policy on education to improve outcomes for students and enhance the status of the teaching profession; and*
- *Advocating strongly for democratic and just societies, acting in solidarity where and when required to defend human and trade union rights.*

These aims chime with the priorities of Education International as outlined at the recent 10th World Congress and will inform the development of a detailed ETUCE work programme across the 2025-28 mandate.

BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING EDUCATION TRADE UNIONS

The need for strong education trade unions, across all sectors, has seldom been greater. Education remains the foundation upon which a better future can be built but this can only be achieved if the standing of teachers is raised. The collective strength of teacher trade unions is a powerful weapon in the fight to achieve this aim and so continuing to build our organisational and campaigning capacity is paramount.

Raising the status of teachers

- Carry forward the key features of ETUCE's campaign on promoting the attractiveness of teaching profession and raising the status of teachers
- Seek increased empowerment of teachers through professional autonomy and academic freedom
- Campaign on the right to continuous professional development and quality initial teacher training
- Highlight the impact of teacher shortages to a wider public audience

Promoting Decent Working Conditions

- Expose the worsening of teacher wellbeing; its causes and the consequences for teacher recruitment and retention
- Reinforce the work on prevention of violence and harassment in education
- Work towards the national implementation of online interactive assessment tools (OiRA) in early childhood education and higher education
- Advocate the regulation, reduction and keeping of working time
- Enforce and protect the right to strike
- Fight casualisation and precarisation of work throughout all education sectors
- Conduct research on teachers' working time, salaries, pensions, working conditions

Encouraging Trade Union Renewal

- Further build member organisations capacity on working with young members

- Strengthen the representation of young members, women, and other underrepresented groups in union governing bodies
- Promote networking and knowledge sharing among ETUCE member organisation to build a collective capacity for trade union renewal
- Seek funding opportunities for training on trade union renewal

Making Solidarity more effective

- Collaborate with relevant actors, e.g. ETUC in addressing issues of trade union rights and human rights
- Continue supporting member organisations, upon their request, with solidarity letters protest letters to their respective governments or social partners
- Continue organising missions to support member organisations in cases of emergency (e.g. fact finding, awareness raising, coordinated and joint conflict solving, etc.)
- Continue organising broader campaigns to bring issues arising from conflicts to the attention of member organisations and relevant stakeholders and to increase the support to member organisations concerned by ongoing problems
- Continue the work in the Central Eastern European Network with a view to further promoting member organisations capacity–building and mutual exchanges in the region

PROTECTING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Despite the importance of public education being laid bare by the covid experience, the reality is that the rhetoric of an education led recovery is not being matched by the necessary spending. Indeed, in some areas public education has come under attack from those who primarily see education as a potential market, to be exploited. It is imperative, therefore, that education trade unions fight to defend and promote public education as a societal good, which demands public investment.

Promoting Public Investment in Education (fighting privatisation)

- Campaign for increased public investment in education

- Identify, denounce and fight the use of neo-liberal, market and business driven ideology and approaches in education leading to commercialisation, privatisation and marketisation of education
- Strengthen alliances with social partners and civil society
- Identify, denounce and fight any attempt to impose austerity measures on public education including an increased search for private investment and involvement, and corporate style management practices in education
- Promote, together with other relevant actors, an alternative economic narrative based on
- strong public services and aimed at social progress and to fight for fair taxations systems that avoid tax evasion and tax fraud

Ensuring access to Early Childhood Education as a right

- Give visibility to ETUCE member organisations in Early childhood education and promote the exchange of good practices amongst education trade unions in the sector.
- Improve the status and attractiveness of ECE staff by taking influence on decision- makes at national and local level as well as on the EU institutions.

Further developing Vocational Education and Training

- Advocate for the Improvement of the status of VET and adult education staff by influencing governments and decision-makers in education and training, including via the cooperation with ETUC

Defending Higher Education and Research

- Seek to improve the status, recruitment, retention of higher education and research staff:
- Promote the protection of fundamental values in higher education and research
- Advocate for reliable career paths and permanent jobs for permanent task for academics, eradicate precarity in the sector

Shaping the impact of digitilisation and AI in education

- Further develop an education trade union understanding on the impact of new technologies in education (digital tools, platforms, artificial intelligence (AI) systems, generative AI,
- immersive learning
- Seek to strengthen collective bargaining capacity of education trade unions regarding digitilisation trends in education
- Promote the development new teaching/learning pedagogies link to AI / digitilisation
- Build an education trade union strategy on collective bargaining for digital rights
- Advocate for the elaboration of robust legal frameworks as regards Artificial Intelligence in
- the education sector (e.g. in light of the upcoming Council of Europe's legal framework on AI in education)

Promoting Education for environmental sustainability

- Promote and give visibility to trade union initiatives on developing concrete actions on including environmental sustainability in education trade unions

FIGHTING FOR A SOCIAL EUROPE

Across Europe, we have seen the growth of far-right parties espousing racist policies and ultra nationalist rhetoric. Some have even achieved electoral success. Throughout history, the trade union movement has stood against such evil and we need to do so again. As Education trade unions, we also have an opportunity in school, colleges, and universities to give students the necessary skills and information to reject such ideologies.

Defending democracy and human and trade union rights

- Explore and address the role of education trade unions in addressing the far-right discourse in their respective national contexts and in education systems

- Further build the capacity of member organisations to support teachers and other education personnel with tools and methods to deliver and practice democratic citizenship education
- Seek to mobilise our collective strength in campaigning and demonstrating against attacks on democracy and human and trade union rights

Promoting inclusion, equality and diversity in education

- Seek to ensure that education at all levels is predicated on best practice in areas of inclusion, equality and diversity

Strengthening social dialogue in education

- Support ETUCE member organisations in strengthening and building social dialogue capacity, especially in countries where social dialogue and collective bargaining are weak
- Impose an ambitious trade union-driven agenda in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE)
- Campaign against EU measures which marginalise social dialogue