



# Resolution

## **Trade union engagement and activity in Europe: Mobilising for quality public education, for the benefit of students, and an enhancement of the status of teachers, academics and all education personnel**

Adopted by the ETUCE Special Conference, the Regional Special Conference of Education International, on 5-6 July 2022

Further to and consistent with the Resolutions adopted by the [8th EI Congress](#) in Bangkok in 2019, the [Resolutions](#) adopted by the ETUCE Conference in 2020 and the ETUCE Extraordinary Conference in 2021, this ETUCE Special Conference

Recognises and acknowledges the monumental efforts and ongoing professional dedication of teachers, academics and other education personnel during the period of the pandemic in continuing to seek to deliver quality and inclusive education despite the very real challenges faced.

### **Acknowledges that:**

1. Publicly funded quality and inclusive education is a fundamental prerequisite for societal and economic recovery, for the enhancement of the well-being of children and young people, for building solidarity and empathy, and for delivering a better future for Europe. It is ever more essential in times of crises, regardless of whether such have their origins in financial, health, environmental or political concerns. Quality and inclusive education prepares committed, critical-thinking and active citizens, provides a sense of belonging and equal opportunities in life, and ensures that no one is left behind in these turbulent times.
2. Quality and inclusive education is grounded in a highly valued, attractive and diverse teaching profession which plays a crucial role in education-led recovery, as highlighted in the ETUCE Resolution For an Education-led Recovery. Indeed, the value and importance of the teaching profession to society and the recognition of the important work of teachers, academics and other education personnel became evident in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and continues as societies prepare for the future in the context of digital transformation and the climate emergency.

- 35 3. Education trade unions in the European region have been, and continue, working tirelessly on  
 36 protecting the working conditions and equal opportunities of education personnel, fighting  
 37 for their rights and social justice, providing the necessary professional and psychological  
 38 support to their affiliates and enhancing the attractiveness and status of the teaching  
 39 profession.  
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- 41 4. In many countries the Covid-19 crisis has catalysed the trend on narrowing down education  
 42 to what only translates into a few easily measurable indicators or into education meant only  
 43 as direct preparation for the labour market. These trends contribute to the challenges the  
 44 profession faces as they lead us away from a more holistic view of education, preparing  
 45 children and young people not only for a working life, but first and foremost for a life as free,  
 46 independent and responsible citizens able to cope with the society and environment they live  
 47 in. These narrow views continue undermining the quality of education and the attractiveness  
 48 of the teaching profession.

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## 50 **Recognises that:**

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- 52 1. The teaching profession is experiencing significant attrition and retention challenges in many  
 53 European countries, resulting in a less diverse and less attractive profession. The challenges  
 54 have been further compounded in the last two years by the Covid-19 pandemic which has  
 55 had detrimental impacts on the status of the teaching profession. These include a major  
 56 teacher shortage, deterioration of working conditions and increased workload, including  
 57 challenges linked to digital and blended learning, precarious employment, increasing class  
 58 size, and casualisation of staff, increased teacher burn-out, mental health and wellbeing  
 59 challenges, higher work-related stress, a diminution of the status of the profession, and lack  
 60 of relevant professional development and support.
- 61 2. Societal concerns and problems such as poverty, racism and family-matters enter the  
 62 classroom with the students and complicate the work of the teachers. These have a profound  
 63 negative impact on the outcomes of education especially when schools do not receive enough  
 64 support to deal with the challenges they create.
- 65 3. Increasing trends towards unilateral decision-making by governments, neglect of social  
 66 dialogue, and violation of social partners' autonomy and of their rights to bargain collectively  
 67 are explicit obstacles experienced by some European education trade unions for many years.  
 68 And now, education trade unions face even more reluctance, or a lack of political willingness,  
 69 from education authorities and governments to conduct social dialogue while using the  
 70 COVID-19 crisis as an excuse.
- 71 4. The highly valuable contribution of teachers, academics and other education personnel during  
 72 the COVID-19 pandemic was not met at all with formal recognition, such as increased salaries,  
 73 concrete support or improved working conditions. Instead, some governments, in an attempt  
 74 to address the teacher shortage, used the crisis as an excuse to recruit temporary education  
 75 personnel without the regular qualifications that are usually required from teachers.
- 76 5. Privatisation and commercialisation are creeping into education, leading to casualisation of  
 77 the profession and precarious working conditions that strongly affect the quality of public

78 education, thereby risking pushing families towards private tuition or additional educational  
79 services and deepening the existing socio-economic and other gaps among students. An  
80 unattractive teaching profession and lack of support for teachers and other education  
81 personnel also make it impossible to attend to the particular needs of students, including  
82 students with special needs, students in multilingual and multicultural settings and students  
83 from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds and rural areas.

84 6. The COVID-19 crisis has also accelerated the use of digital technologies and artificial  
85 intelligence systems in education which gives rise to a series of challenges for the working  
86 conditions of teachers, academics and other education personnel, and risks jeopardising the  
87 academic freedom, academic agency and ultimately, the role of education workers. This also  
88 contributed to the emergence of new pedagogical practices which re-confirm the  
89 irreplaceable value of in-presence teaching and social interaction in education and exposing  
90 the unpreparedness of education systems for the use of digital technologies.

91 7. Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated already existing health and safety risks for  
92 teachers, academics and other education personnel (e.g., work-related stress, psychosocial  
93 hazards, cyberbullying and cyber harassment, inability to disconnect, etc.) and exposed the  
94 unsustainable and destructive way by which neo-liberal policies promote the survival of the  
95 fittest. It also highlighted the significant impact that environmental challenges and mitigation  
96 measures has on the European labour market and on workers' lives.

97 8. Furthermore, following Russia's attack on Ukraine, European education systems and  
98 education trade unions are facing further challenges trying to accommodate millions of  
99 refugees, mostly women and children, and also trying to scale up education for democratic  
100 citizenship with a view to ensuring that tolerance, solidarity and critical-thinking skills are  
101 employed in education and in society. when addressing the topic of this war.

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### 103 **Believes that:**

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105 1. The solution to the current multi-dimensional crisis that Europe finds itself in, requires a  
106 profound change in the social, political and economic organisation of our countries and  
107 societies, founded on principles of peace and solidarity. Quality and inclusive education based  
108 on an attractive, diverse and valued teaching profession is one of the keys to this  
109 transformation.

110 2. The dual role of education trade unions, and their legitimate right to be consulted in good  
111 time on all matters relevant to those working in the sector is a cornerstone and the only  
112 solution to address acute socio-economic issues in society. The respect for, and safeguarding  
113 of fundamental trade union rights and freedoms are essential pillars of a modern and  
114 democratic society, while effective social dialogue and the reinforcement of collective  
115 bargaining are essential prerequisites to guarantee adequate salaries, pensions and good  
116 working conditions that match the increased demands for quality learning and for a valued,  
117 attractive and diverse teaching profession.

- 118 3. Education trade unions work towards effective social recovery for a better future for  
119 education personnel, young people, society and the planet, and demand strong investment  
120 priorities in education and training, including in the framework of the recovery and resilience  
121 funds and policies, based on a democratic balance between the technocratic view of the goals  
122 and their sustainable accountability, starting from the support to the teaching profession as a  
123 pre-requisite for high quality and inclusive education.
- 124 4. Ensuring healthy and safe education environments and the well-being of teachers, academics,  
125 and education personnel – taking into account the long-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis,  
126 climate emergency and increasing digitalisation - is of paramount importance to preserve  
127 quality working and learning environments and enhance the status of the teaching profession.
- 128 5. An increasingly digitized, inter-connected and sustainability-oriented society and education  
129 system require from teachers, academics and other education personnel a complex set of  
130 skills and fundamentally different learning and pedagogical approaches. Among others, these  
131 include; interdisciplinary learning, a whole-school approach, a hands-on approach to  
132 practicing green and digital skills and competences, as well as the ability to assess and address  
133 the risks and opportunities associated with digital technologies and artificial intelligence  
134 systems for educational pedagogies. Therefore, education trade unions focus strongly on  
135 ensuring the provision of effective professional support to education personnel in order to  
136 ensure their preparedness for the profession with quality and inclusive initial education and  
137 continuous professional development, while respecting and enhancing national entry  
138 requirements and regulations to become a teacher.
- 139 6. The use of digital technology for educational purposes must be responsible and respectful of  
140 the applicable rules, in particular concerning intellectual property. These must take into  
141 account the right to disconnect (essential for the well-being of staff members), which already  
142 exists in some legal frameworks and agreements, and cannot be part of a conception of the  
143 digital tool as a control tool for students and staff members in education. In this regard, digital  
144 tools and resources should be used in a critical manner.
- 146 7. Equality, inclusion and respect for human rights in the education system are key factors for  
147 attracting a more diverse population to the teaching profession, improving its status and  
148 perception in society, and ensuring that teachers and other education personnel feel  
149 appreciated and supported. Initial and continuous professional development of teachers,  
150 academics and other education personnel, that is free of charge and takes place during  
151 working hours, on inclusive education plays a critical role in this.
- 152 8. Education trade unions should also address equality and inclusion in the context of trade  
153 union renewal with a view to accommodating the needs of education personnel from various  
154 backgrounds and to being the representative voice of all teachers, academics and other  
155 education personnel in the European region.

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157 **Asserts the commitment of ETUCE Member Organisations to:**

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159 1. Mobilise for an attractive, diverse and valued teaching profession based on the respect for  
 160 professional autonomy, professional ethics and academic freedom, by implementing the  
 161 ETUCE Policy Paper on Raising the Status and Improving the Attractiveness of the Teaching  
 162 Profession and by facilitating exchanges (including cross-border) of experiences and good  
 163 practices among affiliates and other education trade unions;

164 2. Strengthen the voice of education personnel in Europe and ensuring that the fundamental  
 165 role of the teaching profession in society is respected, acknowledged and promoted through  
 166 meaningful social dialogue, collective bargaining, and involvement in policy-making;

167 3. Continue to press governments and education authorities to increase investment and to  
 168 design public education budgets in a manner that provides sufficient, predictable and  
 169 sustainable resources even after the lifetime of the recovery plans and in a holistic, rather  
 170 than fragmented and project-based manner;

171 4. Continue to make government and public opinion aware that education must be a human  
 172 right and public good, supported by society as a whole and with long-term investment across  
 173 political mandates.

174 5. Continue to press governments to ensure sustainable, equitable and long term public funding  
 175 of research in order to enhance quality teaching in higher education, research-based  
 176 knowledge relevant to the teaching profession, as well as research to meet societal and  
 177 economic challenges

178 6. Campaign for better mechanisms of recruitment and retention in the teaching profession  
 179 based on attractive salaries, working conditions, work-life balance, and career pathways for  
 180 teachers, academics and other education personnel;

181 7. Protect and uphold national requirements of education personnel entering the teaching  
 182 profession while lobbying for the provision of quality and inclusive initial training and  
 183 continuous professional development to meet the professional needs of all teachers,  
 184 academics and other education personnel, including digital and green skills and competences,  
 185 as well as skills and competences for implementing inclusive education;

186 8. Address equality and inclusion in the teaching profession in a holistic manner and mainstream  
 187 it into all education trade unions' fields of work while looking at issues through different lenses  
 188 (e.g. urban/rural, public/private, geographic differences) as underpinned by the key priorities  
 189 set out in the ETUCE Action Plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;

190 9. Promote a stronger focus on democratic citizenship education in European education systems  
 191 with the view to ensuring that all education personnel are equipped to promote critical  
 192 thinking, democratic values, human rights and civic engagement, and that students and  
 193 education personnel enjoy safe and open learning and working environments based on  
 194 tolerance and mutual respect;

- 195 10. Lobby for improving the protection of the occupational health and safety, work-life balance  
 196 and well-being of education workers - including through national and European legal  
 197 frameworks - with particular attention to addressing psychosocial risks in the aftermath of the  
 198 COVID-19 crisis;
- 199 11. Advocate for further public accountability and effective legal frameworks to address the  
 200 deregulated activities of for-profit actors (e.g., EdTech companies) in the education sector  
 201 with the aim of preserving the public value of high-quality education for all;
- 202 12. Continue lobbying for the active involvement of education trade unions in each step of the  
 203 formulation of policies having an impact on education pedagogies and the status of the  
 204 teaching profession and engage more in conversations with politicians;
- 205 13. Engage in the design, assessment and implementation of national and European climate and  
 206 education strategies, including the European competence framework on sustainability;
- 207 14. Lobby education authorities to provide effective support and up-to-date high-quality  
 208 materials, guidelines and tools for teachers and other education personnel for the green  
 209 transition of education and education institutions;
- 210 15. Focus on trade union renewal by increasing engagement with young members and further  
 211 addressing the needs of those who have not been involved in trade unions, often at the  
 212 margins of the labour market, with the view to connecting with young people and developing  
 213 a stronger presence in different, but inextricably linked contexts, such as the workplace and  
 214 in the communities that young people are part of.
- 215 16. Further develop their skills and capacities to better communicate and advocate for the needs  
 216 of young members including leadership training amongst the younger generation of education  
 217 professionals.
- 218 17. Continue building awareness of the challenges and barriers that young teaching professionals  
 219 face in accessing the labour market and creating opportunities for addressing these  
 220 challenges/barriers via engagement in education trade unions.