

## Joint ETUCE/EFEE Declaration

### Towards a Framework of Action on the attractiveness of the teaching profession

The purpose of this Declaration is to create a solid basis for the continuation of the dialogue process between the European Social Partners in education, EFEE (European Federation of Education Employers) and ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee on Education), aimed at building a shared sectoral approach for a Framework of Action on enhancing the attractiveness of the teaching profession in society, thereby addressing definitions, challenges, principles and possible actions to jointly undertake to this end.

This approach stems from eight years of sectoral social dialogue work, by which means the education social partners have recognised the central role of social dialogue and capacity building, mutual trust and cooperation, engagement and communication<sup>1</sup> to address new and emerging educational challenges across Europe. Already in 2017, EFEE and ETUCE recognised that the joint capacity building process meets the common aim of the parts at a *“strong and efficient social dialogue for the benefit of people working in education institutions at all education levels and for the final benefit of students and their families”*<sup>2</sup>. In particular, EFEE and ETUCE have worked jointly during the years 2013-2018 on three European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) capacity building projects<sup>3</sup>, which have brought

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<sup>1</sup> Joint ETUCE/EFEE Statement on Promoting the potentials of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue (2016) and Final Report of ETUCE/EFEE “European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting the potentials of their dialogue through knowledge transfer and training. The ESSDE capacity building project II”.

<sup>2</sup> Joint ETUCE/EFEE Statement on Promoting the potentials of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue (2016).

<sup>3</sup> *“European Education Social Partners striving for sustainable influence on European education policy building through knowledge through successful social dialogue. The ESSDE Capacity Building project III” (VS/2017/XXXX), “European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting the potentials of their dialogue through knowledge transfer and training. The ESSDE capacity building II” (VS/2015/0032), “Promoting the potentials of the European sectoral social dialogue in education by addressing new challenges and exploring experience and knowledge”*

the European and national social partners around the table in twenty EU countries and two EU-candidate countries<sup>4</sup>, as well as in the course of three final conferences in Brussels (Belgium), Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and Sofia (Bulgaria).

In light of current and emerging challenges in the field of education and training, including teacher shortages experienced by several EU countries, with the present Declaration, the education social partners at European, national, regional and local level are committed to continue building their capacity to participate effectively in social dialogue and to meaningfully participate in education policy making contributing to change, and promoting the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Europe as part of quality and inclusive education systems.

### **Context and Challenges**

The process of relaunching social dialogue, aimed at enhancing its role across all EU Member States was initiated by the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, announcing a ‘new start for social dialogue’ already in March 2015. A joint statement was signed in 2016 by the European institutions and the European cross-industry social partners underlining the role of European social dialogue as a significant component of EU employment and social policy making. During the lifetime of the joint *“ESSDE capacity building project III - European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting the potentials of their dialogue through knowledge transfer and training”*, 2017-2018, the European leaders have endorsed the European Pillar of Social Rights, creating a new momentum for social dialogue as a key practice conducive to growth. The importance of education in achieving many of the key goals of the Pillar is emphasised by the European Commission and Council’s discussion on the [future of education](#) at the occasion of the Gothenburg summit on 17 November 2017, aimed at making Europe a front-runner in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. In that respect governments give education a key role in “ensuring resilient economy, social cohesion, active citizenship and identity”.

Education is a key institution for both fairness and economic prosperity. The [“Paris Declaration”](#) on adopted by the European Union Education Ministers in March 2015<sup>5</sup> emphasises the key contribution education makes to personal development, social inclusion and participation, also by means of ensuring inclusion and combating inequalities, empowering teachers, and by strengthening children’s and young people’s ability to think critically and to exercise judgement particularly in the context of the internet and social media. Where education is given priority, both societies and economies prosper. Faced with increasing societal demands and Europe’s growth objectives, the European Sectoral Social Partners in Education, recognised as representatives of the two sides of industry in the education sector under Article 154-155 of the EC Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), recognise that the

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(VS/2013/XXX). This work was supported by the European Commission through the Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations budget line.

<sup>4</sup> Croatia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Romania, Montenegro, Estonia, Serbia, Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Spain, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal.

<sup>5</sup> Informal meeting of European Union Education Ministers, “Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education”, 17 March 2015, Paris.

sector is confronted with a number of challenges to make high quality, equitable and inclusive education systems fit for the future and key drivers for sustainable development. These include: demographic changes, technological changes, societal changes and political changes (namely, multi-level governance systems, e.g. the European Semester, the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework, the European Education Area 2025).

Despite the fact that the teaching profession has the potential to contribute to social equality across Europe, it became clear from the social partners' conference in Sofia (June 2018) that in Europe there are common challenges of a teaching profession facing shortages, low attractiveness, recruitment issues, and retention challenges. Quality teaching by well-trained and supported teachers is at the heart of quality education. Adding to these challenges, it is also necessary to re-think teaching and learning environments in the light of the mentioned rapid developments in our societies.

### **Aims and Priorities**

**EFEE and ETUCE deem it of utmost importance to continue their joint efforts to find common solutions to make the teaching profession more attractive for society to benefit from, within quality education institutions that are inclusive, learner-centered, and sustainable organisations.**

With this Declaration, that serves as letter of intend to start the process of developing a Framework of Actions on the attractiveness of the teaching profession, EFEE and ETUCE aim to further follow-up on their commitment made in the ESSDE Work Programme 2018-2019 to jointly work on contributing to tackling teacher shortages. Furthermore, we wish to build further on the issues identified as priorities for joint action in the course of the European and national social partners' round tables and during the final conference in Sofia (June 2018), which are: promoting decent workplaces and enhancing occupational health and safety; equity and equality in education; and supporting teachers, trainers, school leaders and education support personnel.

These topics are not 'new' to our work as European Sectoral Social Partners in Education. On the contrary, they have formed the backbone of our joint work since the early days of existence of the ESSDE (founded in 2010). However instead of focusing on these issues as 'stand-alone' topics, we now aim to apply a more holistic vision and use them as foundation for our continued joint capacity building work to effectively engage in social dialogue at all levels contributing to making the teaching profession more attractive.

With this Declaration we commit ourselves to move to the next step and to further explore the elements that contribute to answering this question and prepare the ground for the development of a joint Framework of Actions.

These elements include issues directly linked to the teaching profession:

1. Promoting the development of a teaching profession based on professionalism, appropriate professional autonomy, aspiration and teamwork as well as on sustainable quality employment

and working conditions, career prospects and rewards including fair pay, in the context of other attractive career paths and of the economic conditions of the given Member States, and stimulating the diversity of career opportunities;

2. Supporting teachers, trainers, school leaders and other education support personnel particularly through investment in quality and effective initial teacher training and continuous professional development.

And broader issues that have a direct impact on the (changing) role and demands on teachers, trainers and school leaders in our education systems:

3. Promoting inclusion, equity and equal opportunities including gender equality in education by focusing on the growing need for the development of democratic and inclusive school cultures and catering for the needs of all learners;
4. Promoting inclusive, learner centered, sustainable, and decent workplaces, including enhancing occupational health and safety, and work-life balance;
5. Promoting full digital literacy and considering the impact of ICT on education;
6. Promoting investment for quality education and training including in education infrastructures.

Furthermore, as also emphasised in the final report of the ESSDE Capacity III building project, EFEE and ETUCE recognize the added value of studying further the impact of recruitment and retention practices in European countries on the attractiveness of the teaching profession and the existence of teacher shortages.

### **Role of the social partners and commitments**

Having in mind the above elements identified as crucial, the European education social partners and their members commit to continue and to strengthen their capacity building at European and at national level for a stronger sectoral social dialogue with a view to jointly work towards raising the attractiveness of the teaching profession by means of:

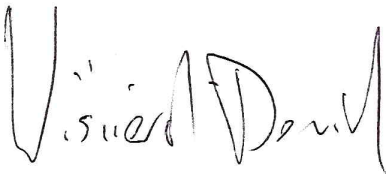
- Exploring the possibilities of jointly developing an Framework of Action on the attractiveness of the teaching profession;
- Raising awareness in society on the importance and value of the teaching profession, within quality education institutions that are inclusive, learner-centered, and sustainable organisations, and its contribution to future societies;
- Continuing to identify, address and find solutions for barriers and gaps for capacity building for effective social dialogue at European and at national level;
- Continuing to develop joint actions to advocate and to build social partners' capacity to participate effectively in policy and decision making in education at all levels;
- Exchanging good practices and facilitating the information exchange among members.

### **Conclusion**

EFEE and ETUCE, the European Social Partners in Education commit themselves to actively promote this declaration at European level and through their member organisations at national, regional and local level.

This declaration has been adopted by the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) Plenary on 19 November 2018.

Brussels, 19 November 2018.

Handwritten signature of Daniel Wisniewski in black ink.

Daniel Wisniewski  
General Secretary  
EFEE

Handwritten signature of Susan Flocken in blue ink.

Susan Flocken  
European Director  
ETUCE