

ETUCE-EFEE Declaration on the European Parliament Elections 2024

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), jointly underscore the paramount significance of the upcoming European elections in June 2024. These elections stand as a pivotal moment that will decisively shape the trajectory of education across Europe.

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 123 education trade unions, i.e. more than 11 million teachers and other education personnel at all levels of education across Europe. ETUCE is recognised as a European Social Partner for education at EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is also the European Region of Education International (EI), the global education trade union.

The European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) is an organisation established in 2009 to represent the interests of employers in the strategic and highly diverse European education sector. It represents education employers in all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education and research. This includes 62 different national organisations, such as education councils and ministries of education, associations of VET colleges and universities and local and regional authority employers' organisations. EFEE strives to represent the whole of the diverse education sector and is recognized by the European Commission as an official European social partner.

Europe is currently challenged with a severe teacher shortage, see [Education and Training Monitor 2023](#). In order to address this challenge, there is a need to consider the evolution of the profession, taking into account the current demographic shifts in both teacher and pupils' populations and other impacts, such as societal, economic, digital and environmental transitions. We need to look into improving the working conditions, working time arrangements, salary and pensions schemes, reducing high workload, work related stress, and psychosocial risks. Furthermore, while designing the teaching profession we need to enhance attractive career progression pathways for teachers or more flexible access. These factors inexorably take their toll on the attractiveness of the teaching profession, engendering shortages. This has an impact on the quality of education and its inclusivity for young European citizens and students, across the whole of the European Union.

In light of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Education Area 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, prospective Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) must prioritise the enhancement of education quality and equal access to education throughout Europe. In this context, ETUCE and EFEE call on future Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to address these challenges by promoting initiatives aimed at increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession and the recognition of teaching professionals in society. They must make concerted efforts to ensure decent working conditions in education workplaces, while championing initiatives on occupational health and safety standards

The European Union and its member states need to cultivate deeper cooperation and effectuate substantive improvements within the framework of the Bologna Follow-Up Process and the European

Higher Education Area. Governments need to emphasise safeguarding academic freedom, augmenting the recognition of teaching within higher education and research spheres, and fostering an environment conducive to exchange and collaboration.

ETUCE and EFEE invite future MEPs to defend the principles of social dialogue and collective bargaining, which serve as bedrock pillars of democratic participation in education policymaking. The erosion of these principles threatens the integrity of democratic governance within the education sector and must be vigorously fought. Supporting social dialogue in education within EU Member States and candidate countries is of paramount importance as it fosters collaboration among social partners in shaping educational policies and practices. By ensuring the active participation of all parties, social dialogue promotes inclusivity, equity, and transparency in decision-making processes, ultimately enhancing the quality and relevance of education systems.

The ongoing reform of the EU economic governance puts at risk the capacity of Member States to make adequate investments in education endangering the fundamental principle of universal access to education. ETUCE and EFEE expect future MEPs to display a firm commitment to safeguarding high-quality education from the influence of profit-driven interests.

In parallel, ETUCE and EFEE call on future MEPs to promote inclusive education for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, which is essential for fostering social cohesion, reducing inequalities, and unlocking the full potential of every learner. By providing equitable access to quality education, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, abilities and educational needs, economic status, ethnic origin, language, religion, and migratory and citizenship status, inclusive education promotes diversity, tolerance, and mutual respect within society. It equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities needed to thrive and contribute positively to their communities, thus building a more just and inclusive society for all. In the current historical context in Europe, it is especially crucial to focus on building inclusive and safe learning and teaching environments with a democratic culture of peace, tolerance, and cooperation, that would nourish an education for building peaceful and inclusive societies.

Governing the digital and green transition in a democratic manner, while engaging social partners, remains imperative for ensuring that these transformative processes are equitable, sustainable, and beneficial for all. This participatory approach not only enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of transition efforts but also fosters social cohesion and resilience in the face of complex challenges posed by digitalisation and climate change.

ETUCE and EFEE call upon prospective MEPs to demonstrate unwavering commitment and resolute leadership in advancing the cause of education, social dialogue, and democratic governance across the European continent. Only through concerted and collaborative efforts can we forge a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

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