

Joint Recommendations

Developed by EFEE and ETUCE in the framework of their joint project:

European Social Partners in Education Promoting Environmental Sustainability in School Learning, Teaching and Management

Adopted by the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education in December 2023

INTRODUCTION

Recognising the need for joint social partner initiatives in this field, the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) and the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) developed Joint Recommendations on how to promote environmental sustainability in school learning, teaching and management, in the framework of their joint project “European Social Partners in Education Promoting Environmental Sustainability in School Learning, Teaching and Management”. The project was carried out in 2021-2023 in light of the joint work programme of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE), and takes into account the joint work conducted in the course of the ESSDE Committee meetings.

AIM

The recommendations are aimed in the first instance at education employers and education trade unions in Europe and their affiliates to be addressed at three levels: European, national and local level for specific actions. They aim to assist the social partners in education and their affiliated members in developing concrete approaches and actions to promote environmental sustainability in school management and leadership, teaching and learning, as well as in including environmental development priorities in the social dialogue and joint social dialogue initiatives. Rather than providing a one-size-fits-all approach, this set of recommendations should be understood as a tool to be assessed against and adjusted to the national, regional and local settings.

Abbreviations:

EC	European Commission
EES	Education for Environmental Sustainability
EGD	European Green Deal
ESSDE	European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education
EU	European Union

ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ITT	Initial Teacher Training

Recommendations

As climate emergency and environmental issues impact everyone's working and living environment, and education plays a crucial role in implementing a social and mental change to address this impact, **European social partners in education (EFEE and ETUCE) commit to promoting and improving education for environmental sustainability, contributing to the work on the green skills and competences at European level and uniting their efforts towards ensuring the successful design and implementation of Education for Environmental Sustainability with meaningful social dialogue on the national and European levels.**

At the national level and while working with their members at regional and local levels, social partners in education make a commitment to:

1. Work jointly in a spirit of collaboration on education policy, teaching, learning, and school management and leadership, with regard to Education for Environmental Sustainability (EES) ensuring that EES is presented in all social dialogue agendas.
2. Ensure a long-term vision in education policy and to secure targeted and sustainable funding for EES to provide relevant and up-to-date resources and tools, as well as professional support for teachers and school leaders for the implementation of EES.
3. Seek to build alliances between each other and other stakeholders in education (e.g. students, parents, non-governmental and civil society organisations) to support the implementation of EES, as well as with people with particular interest and expertise in the area.
4. Commit to developing together with the European Commission a "[selfie](#)" tool on environmental sustainability for educational institutions, including all social and economic dimensions of EES as part of democratic citizenship education.
5. Adopt the practice of issuing nationally approved joint statements and recommendations on EES.
6. Promote the exchange of good practices and knowledge among the social partners in education regarding the enhancement of environmental sustainability in school learning, teaching and, management and leadership. This could be accomplished through the creation of a platform for dialogue and sharing on approaches to the

embedding of EES in curricula, teaching methodologies, pedagogy, school planning, organisation, management, joint social partners' initiatives, and other relevant areas.

7. Ensure that teachers, school management and leadership, and other education personnel are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies and practices on EES at school/institutional, local/regional, national and European levels.

In relation to supporting school management and leadership, the social partners in education commit to:

1. Encouraging, supporting and developing a culture of professional trust, in relation to EES, among the school community, facilitating social dialogue and discussions where all stakeholders are heard, listened to, and heeded.
2. Promoting the implementation of EES in an inclusive, cross-curricular whole-school approach which involves the relevant education stakeholders (e.g. parents and families, local communities, and as appropriate, scientists, civil society organisations, etc.).
3. Ensuring that schools are open to supporting civil society in cultivating a "learning community" through meaningful outreach to local community organisations in their endeavour to promote environmental sustainability.
4. Supporting and encouraging teachers in their mission to challenge and facilitate students to be critical thinkers enabling them to confidently address the threat of environmental change.
5. Advocate actively for allocation of funding to promote and implement EES.
6. Collaborating with local authorities on the quality of school buildings, organisation of the canteens, and other elements of the school infrastructure to ensure that it is environmentally sustainable.

In relation to supporting teaching, the social partners in education commit to:

1. Advocating for the provision of high quality, focussed CPD on EES for teachers and, school management and leadership free of charge and within their working time.
2. Advocating for ITT programmes across all EU teacher training institutions to adopt an approach conducive to helping future teachers and, school management and leadership acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and awareness to implement EES in a cross-curricular and transformational manner.
3. Advocating for a review of teacher workload from the perspective of facilitating the implementation of EES in a manner that provides teachers with sufficient time, space and resources.
4. Promoting the provision of infrastructure with access to outdoor spaces for enabling students to appreciate all aspects of EES.
5. Recommending that issues of socio-economic, gender and ethnic inequality and, educational disadvantage be fully addressed in the pedagogy of EES. An awareness

of how these factors resonate with the challenges of environmental change is necessary in order to implement an inclusive education.

6. Recommending that teachers are encouraged and supported to adopt a pedagogy for EES that is transformational rather than instrumental, adopting a variety of approaches from that of cross-curricular to the provision of a dedicated curricular subject on EES to develop specific scientific, technical, technological, research, legal and ethical expertise.
7. Recommending that professional and legal protection in accordance with national law be put in place for teachers, as it can be envisaged that certain individuals, groups, organisations may well challenge and contradict the science on climate change and environmental breakdown meaning that teachers could be legally vulnerable.
8. Supporting the promotion of student-oriented teaching where their wellbeing and, physical, social and psychological development is taken into account. This is best accomplished through acknowledgement and affirmation of student voice.

In relation to supporting learning, the social partners in education commit to:

1. Ensuring that all learners have a right and access to EES irrespective of their age, academic abilities, ethnicity, citizenship and socio-economic and other backgrounds.
2. Ensuring that learning and teaching methodologies are adapted to students' backgrounds and needs as well as allowing for their meaningful participation and co-learning with their teachers.
3. Ensuring that the underpinning principles of inclusion, tolerance, equality and justice inform the curriculum and pedagogy.
4. Ensuring that opportunities are provided for students to develop an empathetic relationship with nature that goes beyond factual information.
5. Ensure that learning for EES is cross-curricular, collaborative and transformational, so that students are educated not only for employment, but also to be: environmentally literate; critical thinkers; and capable of understanding the science, sociology and political impact of environmental change.
6. Ensure that the EES curriculum challenges the culture of consumerism and, equips students with the capacity to understand what information, information sources, and commentary are trustworthy.

