



**EUROPEAN SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN EDUCATION**

**Working Group 3: Higher Education and Research**

**Meeting 29 September 2014**

**Minutes**

Chair: Andreas Keller (ETUCE)

**1. Opening of the meeting – Approval of the draft agenda**

The agenda of the meeting was adopted.

Topic 1: WG3 follow-up project “Supporting early career researchers in higher education in Europe – and the role of employers and trade unions”

**2. Introduction to and background of the joint project on “Supporting early career researchers in higher education in Europe – and the role of employers and trade unions”**

Bianka Stege (BS) and Helen Fairfoul (HF) introduced the first topic of the meeting by recalling the work of WG3 on HE&R over the past 2 years, addressing such issues as mobility, careers and gender. The aim of the currently ongoing project is to further develop some of these issues and provide balanced, high quality evidence to feed the debate. Riku Matilainen (RM) pointed out that the preliminary results of the project raise quite some questions.

**3. Presentation of preliminary results of the joint project on “Supporting early career researchers in higher education in Europe”; in particular the reports from the interview visits to Cyprus, Finland, Hamburg (German State), Italy and the UK will be discussed**

Laurence Hopkins and Geoffrey White gave a comprehensive overview of the Early Career Researchers (ECR) project, including its objectives and research questions, the current state of play and emerging findings, based on the literature review and 5 national case studies (see presentation in [annex](#)).

During the ensuing (lively) debate, the workers' representatives raised questions about the, in their opinion, too positive overall picture that emerges from the preliminary findings, as presented by the researchers.

The researchers welcomed the contributions, confirmed that these would be duly taken into account, but also stressed that the preliminary findings are based on existing research (e.g. the MORE2 survey<sup>1</sup>) and on interviews with stakeholder in the countries under review.

It was agreed to continue working together on developing and improving the findings and to try to find a "common language" for the reporting. Delegates were asked to provide suggestions in writing, including for the literature review.

It was agreed that the research report would be finalised after the final project conference (on 21 November). In the margins of the conference, discussions will also be held on the elaboration of a possible joint ESSDE outcome. Both sides confirmed that they believe that an agreement on a joint outcome should be possible – and desirable, as it would demonstrate the ESSDE capacity of producing real added value for its members.

#### **4. Presentation and discussion on possible joint ESSDE outcome on the topic of supporting early career researchers in higher education**

See point 3.

Topic 2: ETUCE's policy papers on Early stage researchers/doctoral candidates and on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

#### **5. Presentation of the policy papers**

Jens Vraa-Jensen (JVJ) briefly introduced the two ETUCE policy papers on topics that have been discussed in the ETUCE standing committee on HE for several years already, and which are expected to formally adopted by the ETUCE in November.

Referring to the first bullet on the second page of the Quality Assurance paper, BS expressed hope that employers *can* contribute to quality in education. Also responding to other remarks, JVJ explained that the aim of the QA paper is to stress the key role of the teachers, as quality is created in the classroom in the interaction between teachers and students; he nevertheless acknowledged that importance of the overall framework in which the teaching takes place and the role of other personnel in supporting the students' learning.

It was suggested that the paper on Early stage researchers could inform the conclusions of the ECR project.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.more-2.eu/www/index.php>

### Topic 3: Linking the work of ESSDE WG3 with the ET2020 working group on Modernisation of Higher Education

#### **6. Modernisation of Higher Education / Focus and work programme of the ET2020 working group**

Klara Engels-Perenyi presented the activities of the ET2020 working group on the modernisation of HE, including its mandate, composition, working methods and work programme (see presentation in annex). Representatives of European social partner organisations, including EFEE and ETUCE, participate in this working group.

Responding to delegates questions/remarks, she acknowledged that education has a broader role than just equipping people for professional life, but explained that the Modernisation Agenda has to take account of the current very high youth unemployment rate; in this context, the focus is put on transferable skills and how the EU and Member States can improve quality of HE as a key driver of innovation and competitiveness. The ET2020 working group is part of the Commission's Open Method of Coordination and contributes to evidence-based policy-making. For example, on the basis of a recent peer learning activity, recommendations were formulated to MS and to HEIs regarding changes at the level of higher education systems with regard to specialisation, consolidation and territorial development to improve efficiency.

#### **7. Discussion on how we could link our work in the ESSDE with the work of the ET2020 working group on Modernisation of Higher Education**

It remains to be discussed how the links between the different fora could be developed.

#### **8. AOB**

JVJ proposed for the ESSDE to discuss the recently established pan-European pension fund for researchers and notably the possible conflicts with existing collective agreements. The secretariats were asked to further enquire about this topic.

#### Annexes

- Point 3 – Presentation Supporting early career researchers in higher education in Europe – Emerging findings
- Point 5 – ETUCE policy paper on Early Stage Researchers/Doctoral candidates (EN, ES, FR, DE)
- Point 5 – ETUCE policy paper on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EN, ES, FR, DE)
- Point 6 – Presentation ET2020 Working Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education

List of participants 29/09/2014

<u>Employers</u>	<u>Workers</u>
<p><b>EFEE</b></p> <p>Ms Helen FAIRFOUL (UK) Ms Mariya FARTUNOVA (BG) Mr Laurence HOPKINS (UK) Ms Sarah KIK (EU) Ms Eva ÖQUIST (SE) Mr Andreas PAPOULAS (CY) Ms Nina PÄRSSINEN (FI) Ms Bianka STEGE (EU) Mr Geoffrey WHITE (UK)</p> <p><b>9 employer representatives</b> <b>(6 women, 3 men)</b> <b>(2 EU, 2 EU-13, 5 EU-15)</b></p>	<p><b>ETUCE</b></p> <p>Ms Karin ÅMOSSA (SE) Ms Joëlle CASA (IT) Ms Isabelle DE MECQUENEM (FR) Ms Natasa DREU (SI) Ms Vesnica GARASIC (HR) Mr Mike JENNINGS (IE) Mr Andreas KELLER (DE) Mr Riku MATILAINEN (FI) Mr Manuel PEREIRA DOS SANTOS (PT) Mr Lasse RASMUSSEN (EU) Ms Alexandra RÜDIG (EU) Mr Linas SUMSKAS (LT) Ms Hanna TANSKANEN (FI) Ms Ilze TRAPENCIERE (LV) Mr Jens VRAA-JENSEN (DK)</p> <p><b>CESI</b> Ms Elisa CIANI (EU)</p> <p><b>EPSU</b> Ms Penny CLARKE (EU)</p> <p><b>17 worker representatives</b> <b>(10 women, 7 men)</b> <b>(4 EU, 4 EU-13, 9 EU-15)</b></p>
<p><u>European Commission</u></p> <p>Mr Stefaan CEUPPENS (EMPL.B.1) Ms Klara ENGELS-PERENYI (EAC.C.1 – Higher education: Modernisation Agenda; Erasmus+)</p>	