



European Sectorial Social Dialogue in Education

Plenary meeting 25 October 2011

Minutes

Chair: David Simmons, EFEE

Keynote speech

Mr George Zisimos of the Cabinet of Commissioner Vassiliou, gave a speech on the priorities of the European Commission regarding education, with a specific focus on the newly published Communication on modernisation of higher education and research. He stressed that despite education is and will remain a national competence, the EU has had many achievements within the education field, e.g. the popular Erasmus program and the Bologna process. The Commission believes, he continued, that investment in education is a crucial element for the European economy to exit the current economic crisis. The Commission has proposed that within its budget for 2014 to 2020, the support to education, sports and youth would increase by 73 %, as well as an increase of 43 % for research activities.

Mr Zisimos also highlighted three professions that are keys to an effective education system: teachers, school leaders and educators of teachers. The Commission has scheduled to publish a communication on support for these three key professions next year. He finished by stressing the importance of social dialogue and cooperation among the social partners and other stakeholders to develop the best education systems.

Presentation of joint projects

The chair welcomed Susan Flocken, policy coordinator at the ETUCE secretariat, who presented four joint projects of ETUCE and EFEE.

- **Current projects:**
 - Work-related stress
 - Third-party violence
- **Future projects:**
 - Social partners concerned about violence in school
 - Preventing early school leavers by the use of ICT in school

Bianka Stege, General Secretary for EFEE, presented two joint projects: one project on leadership and governance, where the final conference had just been held, and one future project on (self) evaluation in schools. The latter is intended to support the work the ESSDE Working Group 1 on quality in education and will be submitted to the Commission in February 2012. David Poissonneau, policy coordinator at the ETUCE secretariat, presented the joint project on recruitment and retention in the education sector, which has just been launched. Stephen Cooper from the EFEE presented the joint project aiming at the social partners to assess the feasibility of setting up a skills council for the education sector. This project should start in early 2012.

Open discussion on themes for new work program

Martin Rømer, the European Director of ETUCE, started by congratulating the ESSDE for its work over the last year. The first work program was ambitious, everything has not been covered throughout the last year, but taking into consideration the young age of the committee and the EFEE as an organisation, the number of joint projects and statements produced throughout the last year is honourable. Then he presented the trade unions' view on the new work program.

- **Occupational diseases**

The trade unions are still concerned about health and safety in a broader way, and noted the potential to link this to the joint projects (e.g. working conditions of teachers close to retirement could be linked to the recruitment and retention project). A focus could be on occupational diseases; however it would be profitable to first do a desk research to assess what has been found already in this area.

- **Sectoral agreement on work-related stress**

Martin Rømer expressed the wish to continue the work on work-related stress with the purpose of making a joint sectoral agreement with the EFEE on stress to supplement the cross-industry agreement that exists already.

- **Public/private**

It would be profitable to work on a common definition on what constitutes privatisation, especially in light of the economic crisis.

- **Promotion of social dialogue**

In light of the economic crisis, many examples of violation of social dialogue have appeared, therefore it would be valuable to examine how we can support and promote the value of social dialogue at the national level.

The trade union side would give low priority to the mapping of education systems that was part of the old work program, since other institutions with better access to this information are already doing this.

Martin Rømer also informed the plenary that ETUCE and EPSU have decided to set up an internal working group on how to include non-teaching staff in the social dialogue.

Finally, he noted that the new work program should cover a small number of subjects to give priority to.

Bianka Stege from EFEE then commented on the suggestions from the trade unions side. She agreed with Martin Rømer that the EFEE needs to work on its representativeness at the level of higher education and research. She was positive towards the suggestion of public/privatisation. The EFEE members had not

discussed the health and safety issues and they would like to do this among themselves before coming back with a comment on this.

When the floor was opened to Q&As, both sides welcomed the proposal of making a joint European statement on the value of the social dialogue at national level. One EFEE member did not think that it was necessary to do anything further than what has already been done at cross-industry level about health and safety.

The chair concluded the discussion by noting that the themes put forth during the discussion were broad themes, and that it is now up to the steering committee to narrow them down to more specific themes.

Reports from WGs

Bianka Stege from EFEE presented the work of the WG1 on quality in education.

Camilla Vendelboe-Hagesen from KL, Denmark, presented the work done in WG2 on demographic challenges. She also explained how the work of the WG has been forwarded to the project on recruitment and retention in the education sector.

David Poissonneau from ETUCE presented the work done in WG3. He explained how this WG is different from the other two since the purpose of the WG is to explore the possibilities of setting up a social dialogue within Higher Education and Research. The WG have been concentrating its work on what makes up an attractive career in higher education and research and it will continue this work by focusing on three themes: gender equality, mobility and the environment of early career researchers. He also noted that the ETUCE soon will publish a response to the Commission's Communication on modernising higher education and research explained earlier by George Zisimos.

See the reports in [annex](#).

Responses to the Green Paper on the Professional Qualifications Directive

Both sides agreed that mobility is to be supported by the social partners in education but also that the Directive does not cover the obstacles to mobility. Recognition of qualifications is not the most important obstacle to mobility; it is more a matter of differences in pension systems, social security systems, culture, and language. Furthermore, both sides were concerned that this matter was not handled by the DG Education and Culture, and thereby by the ministers of trade and not the ministers of education.

Both sides also noted that they were open to make joint responses to other Directives in the future.

Martin Rømer furthermore explained how ETUCE have been writing to national ministries of education explaining how their national competence is being violated by this Directive. He urged the members of the Plenary do to the same, but quickly as the vote in the Parliament is in mid-December. He also suggested that EFEE and ETUCE should approach the Commissioner for Education and Culture together in order to support her in the claim of getting this subject treated by the ministries of education and not the ministers of trade. The EFEE agreed with this position.

Calendar for 2012

Stefaan Ceuppens from the European Commission outlined the programme for the following year, 2012:

- January: WG1
- February: Steering Committee
- March: WG3
- May: Steering Committee
- June: WG3
- September: Steering Committee
- October: Plenary Meeting

Dates will be fixed on a later stage by DG Employment.

Annexes

- Overview EFEE-ETUCE projects (EN-FR)
- (3) Reports working groups (EN-FR)

Participants 25/10/2011

ETUCE Participants in the ESSDE Meeting - 25 October 2011		
<u>Country</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>First name</u>
CY	Savva	Stefanos
CZ	Dobsik	Frantisek
CZ	La Sala	Zdenka
DE	Schaad	Ilse
DK	Lange	Dorte
FI	Lahtinen	Nina
FR	Ritzenthaler	Albert
IT	Dal Pino	Maria Lucia
LT	Babrauskiene	Tatjana
LU	Ries	Claude
MT	Bonello	Kevin
NL	Hoogenboom	Ben
NO	Thomassen	Astrid
PT	Dias Da Silva	Joao
RO	Cornea	Alexandra
SK	Mlcousek	Michal
UK	Smith	Ronald
ETUCE General Secretary	Rømer	Martin
ETUCE Secretariat	Poissonneau	David
ETUCE Secretariat	Bech Lindgren	Cecilie
EPSU Participants in the ESSDE Meeting - 25 October 2011		
DE	Schwiegershausen-Güth	Maya
UK	Richards	Jon
CESI Participants in the ESSDE Meeting - 25 October 2011		
EU	Migliori	Marcella

EFEE Participants in the ESSDE Meeting - 25 October 2011		
<u>Country</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>First name</u>
BE	Cherifi	Ghezala
CY	Solomou	Loizos
DE	Klassen	Gerhard
DK	Vendelboe Hagensen	Camilla
HU	Somogyi	Laszlo
IE	Moriarty	Michael
IT (EFEE Vice-Chair)	Pontieri	Maria
MT	Micallef	Joseph
NL	Bochem	Luud
NO	Smit	Malin
SE	Stävberg	Henrik
UK (EFEE Chair)	Simmonds	David
EFEE General Secretary	Stege	Bianka
EFEE Consultant	Nolda	Charles
EFEE Ass. General Secretary	Cooper	Stephen
EFEE Ass. General Secretary	Haasová	Ingrid