

RESOLUTION 2.8

ISSUES IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

Proposed by: Executive Board

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Considering that

1. Education is a fundamental human right and a public good with the primary purpose of developing each individual's potential and the further purpose of laying a solid foundation for a socially just, democratic and peaceful society;
2. It is therefore imperative in the course of defending human rights and strong social rights in Europe, to maintain and develop high quality education and training as the key to sustained economic recovery and strong economic growth, to national and European social cohesion and consequently to the future of European integration;
3. Quality education based on excellent staff and quality initial teacher training, continuously updated and innovative high standard teaching tools and resources, appropriate learning and teaching environments as well as sustainable public funding and investment is one of the prerequisites for ensuring that education as a human right is universal and reaches across society;
4. The right to work is a human right providing people the opportunity to sustain themselves and their families an economically independent and dignified life;
5. During the last years, this particular human right has been endangered through the economic and financial crisis which has had a severe impact on the labour markets in Europe and in particular on the employment situation in the education sector where many employees have lost their jobs, fear for their jobs or suffer from poor or even unprotected and precarious working and employment conditions;
6. Trade union rights are human rights ensuring that working people can legitimately claim for decent working conditions including fair salaries, good employee and pension benefits, a safe work environment and strong social rights;
7. Many teacher trade unions across Europe are increasingly under pressure to protect their members' labour, human and trade union rights and interests due to the widening social and economic gap in society, while at the same time they experience a gradual deterioration of social dialogue and even disrespect for trade union rights, not to say denial of collective bargaining rights;
8. Austerity measures still advocated by most European governments threaten the human right for education and the human right for work by hampering the urgently needed stimulation of economic growth and the creation of employment in Europe; the budget cuts in the education sector proposed or implemented by many national governments in Europe and presented as a consequence of the global economic and financial crisis severely affect the quality of education and access to it;

9. Education staff has a key role to play in the European education systems and thus the full enjoyment of labour and employment rights, decent working conditions, including an attractive salary, access to secure and fair pension schemes and social security provisions, opportunities for continuous professional development, health and safety provisions to prevent work-related hazards and diseases, are essential prerequisites for the provision of quality education;
10. Discrimination or disrespect for human rights in education must be addressed since equal treatment of all education staff, students and pupils regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, disabilities, religion or belief or social background is a fundamental principle;
11. The European region is unique in terms of its entwined supra-national institutions and structures, encompassing amongst others the Council of Europe, the European Union, the European Free-Trade Association, the European Economic Area, the Eurozone, the Schengen Area and the European Customs Union, which all have a significant impact on the daily lives of European people and on national education systems and policies within Europe;
12. The existing European and EU-related education policies, such as the Europe2020 Strategy, the Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework, the European Area for Higher Education and the Bologna Process, the European Area for Research, the Copenhagen Process for Vocational Education and Training, the Open Method of Coordination with its European benchmarking processes, the Erasmus + and Horizon2020 programmes and the EU quality and transparency tools such as the EQF, ESG for higher education, EQAVET, Europass, etc. have a major impact on national education systems;
13. The Treaty of the European Union clearly states the provision for social partners to participate in the process of developing policies and legislation; it also confirms the competence of the EU to encourage co-operation between Member States for the development of quality education and to support and supplement Member State actions, if necessary, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity (TFEU, Article 165); it furthermore stipulates shared competences on vocational education and training (TFEU, Articles 6, 41, 156 and 162 and Title XII).

Calls upon

14. European national and regional governments to always bear in mind that education is a fundamental human right which is above all a prerequisite for a socially just and peaceful society and to do everything in their power to ensure equal access to education for all;
15. European national and regional governments to uphold human rights at all times, to actively prevent any human rights violations and to effectively intervene when human rights violations are occurring;
16. European national and regional governments to maintain their central focus on people's human right to work and to make the maximum effort to preserve all existing workplaces and to create more and better jobs with the ultimate aim to stimulate the European economy and to create prosperity for everyone;
17. European national and regional governments to bear in mind that it is the working people's universal human right to form and join trade unions for the protection of their interests such as to achieve and to maintain decent working and living conditions;
18. European national and regional governments to respect, to protect and to promote workers' and trade union rights and to ensure that all education employees in Europe can freely and fully exercise them individually and through their trade unions;

19. European national and regional governments to acknowledge the important role and the impact of the sectoral social dialogue in education both at national and European level in shaping key policies which are of highest relevance for the future economic and social development in Europe such as labour market policies as well as education and training policies;
20. European national and regional governments and education employers to naturally, actively and consequently involve teacher trade unions as recognised and equal social partners in policy-making decisions that have an impact on the education sector with a view to protect their labour and employment rights such as seeking better working conditions and equal treatment for all education staff;
21. European national and regional governments to shift the focus of European economic governance (European Semester) from the sole principles of fiscal stability and cost competitiveness towards the improvement and promotion of the European social clauses and to involve teacher trade unions at national and European level in defining the objectives of budget allocations for education and training and in all stages of the education and training reform processes within the European Semester;
22. European and national policy-makers to adopt and implement appropriate policies to fully guarantee the European citizens' human right for education by developing high quality, equitable and sustainable education systems in Europe taking into account equality and gender balance and effectively preventing and eliminating all forms of discrimination and human rights violation;
23. European national and regional governments to apply fair and progressive measures necessary to increase further important investment in education, in order to provide high quality education services for all in Europe, and to prevent the privatisation and commercialisation of education services;
24. European national and regional governments and education employers to upscale the recruitment of highly educated and trained teachers at all levels of education and to facilitate mobility and recognition of education and training in order to contribute to skills development and employability and to further promote the integration and reintegration into work, learning and training.

Mandates

25. EI and the European Region, ETUCE, to promote and defend throughout Europe the principles stated in this Resolution, to interact with European and global institutions and to support related actions of affiliates at national and international level.