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ETUCE – European Trade Union Committee for Education
Education International - European Region

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ETUCE position on the role of education in the Conference on the Future of Europe

Adopted by the ETUCE Committee on 7-8 November 2022

Background

The **Conference on the Future of Europe** was a “citizen-led series of debates and discussions” that ran from April 2021 to May 2022 and enabled people from across Europe to share their ideas and help shape the future of the European Union. Its conclusions are presented in [a final report](#). The conclusions highlight that more equal conditions and rights on education should be ensured to the European citizens and for this the EU’s competence on education could be extended.

Following this, the **Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) of the European Parliament** adopted an [opinion](#) which suggests that certain aspects of education be a shared competence in a certain way:

“Requests amending [Articles 4](#) and [6](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) to introduce shared competences in the field of education, with its corresponding change in [Articles 165](#) and [166](#) TFEU, at a minimum in the field of citizenship education, highlighting that the exercise of that competence by the Union shall not result in Member States being prevented from exercising their competence;”

This Opinion will feed into a Report of the **Constitutional Affairs Committee of the EP (AFCO)** which will be adopted in April 2023 on the Future of Europe. This report can propose to the Council of the EU to open the process of convention to reopen some Articles of the Treaty for revision.

ETUC and its **Working Group on the Conference of the Future of Europe** is closely monitoring the process and adopted a [position](#) on demanding to reopen the Treaty on certain core issues. ETUCE has been contributing to [the work of ETUC](#) on the Conference of the Future of Europe.



The following position paper represents the views of ETUCE – which represents 125 education trade unions within 51 countries – on the role of education within the policy development following the Conference on the Future of Europe.

1. We remind that education is a human right and a public good and Article 14 of the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) must be respected. This defines the Right to education such as:
*“Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training. This right includes the possibility to receive free compulsory education. The freedom to found educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles and the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions shall be respected, in accordance with the **national laws governing the exercise of such freedom and right.**”*
2. Education is a national competence as it is based on different cultural developments and traditions, and social dialogue structures. Unity in diversity is an essential principle of the EU, and Articles 165 and 166 already gives a strong role to the European Union to provide platform for the national decision makers on education to improve quality of education by learning from each other.
3. ETUCE is concerned that the European Commission via the European Semester Process and via EU funds (RRF, Erasmus+, ESF+, etc) has already a strong competence in allocating EU budget to jointly agreed EU policies on education and by this it has already a strong influence on national education policy.
4. This is the reason why ETUCE is strongly against to making education a shared competence in the EU Treaty. If a convention is decided by the Council, we ask not to open Articles 4 and 5 to education and not to change Articles 165 and 166.
5. ETUCE demands a strong role given to the European Sectoral Social Dialogue of Education in developing and implementing EU policies in education.
6. ETUCE will continue working with ETUC on the revision of the Treaty on education in relation to the Conference on the Future of Europe.

