



## Joint ETUCE/EFEE Statement

### On Multiculturalism, Democratic Citizenship and Social Inclusion in Education

#### Quo Vadis Europa, Quo Vadis Education

*Brussels, 2 December 2019*

Four years after the Education Ministers of the member states of the European Union adopted the “[Paris Declaration](#)”<sup>1</sup> and a year after the Council of The European Union issued a [Recommendation](#) on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching<sup>2</sup>, the European Social Partners in Education wish to address with this Statement joint principles, challenges and actions to **enhance democratic citizenship, non-discrimination and inclusion in schools.**

This joint statement is to create a solid basis for the continuation of the dialogue between the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), the European Social Partners in Education, on how to enable and to provide appropriate support to teachers, trainers and other education personnel, school leaders, academic staff and employers in education to cope with challenging and sensitive tasks. Social Partners in Education have a crucial role to play in ensuring that the future generations learn about democratic citizenship, tolerance and inclusion, and are able to practice these values every day. To this aim, social partners in education need to be involved as fully recognised partners in the inclusion debate at European, national, regional and local level.

This Statement builds on the joint work carried out as part of the project “*EU-CONVINCE*”<sup>3</sup> involving ETUCE, EFEE, and the European School Heads Association (ESHA), and on the elements enshrined in their *Joint Statement on Inclusive Schools Within the Context of Diverse Societies* (2019). In this Joint Statement, ETUCE, EFEE, ESHA, the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) and COFACE Families Europe perceive diversity as an added value and recognise “*that the key role of education is to realise the full potential of every student*”, regardless of their cultural or economic background, gender,

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<sup>1</sup> Informal meeting of European Union Education Ministers, “Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education”, 17 March 2015, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (2018/C 195/01), 22 May 2018.

<sup>3</sup> EU Common Values Inclusive Education (2018-2020), co-funded by the European Commission under Erasmus+ Programme, DG EAC No. 592113-EPP-1-2017-1-BE-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN.

sexual orientation, abilities and educational needs, economic status, ethnic origin, language, religion, and migratory and citizenship status. Thereby, the *Joint Statement on Inclusive Schools Within the Context of Diverse Societies* further elaborates on the Paris Declaration's aspiration regarding the key contribution education makes to personal development, social inclusion and participation, also by means of ensuring a genuine inclusion and combating inequalities, empowering teachers, trainers and other education personnel, school leaders and academic staff, and by strengthening children's and young people's ability to think critically and to exercise judgement particularly in the context of the internet and social media.

This Statement, additionally, feeds into the ETUCE and EFEE Joint Declaration "*Towards a Framework for Action on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession*" (2018). The education social partners underline in their declaration their full commitment to the "*promotion of inclusion, equity and equal opportunities including gender equality in education, focusing on the growing need for the development of democratic and inclusive school cultures and catering for the needs of all learners*"; as well as to the "*promotion of inclusive, learner-centred, sustainable, and decent workplaces*" because they have a direct impact on the (changing) role and demands on teachers, trainers and other education personnel, school leaders, academic staff and employers in education in education systems.

### **Context and challenges:**

Faced with increasing social demands and diverse society, the European Sectoral Social Partners in Education, recognised as representatives of the worker organisations and of the employer organisations in the education sector under Article 154-155 of the EC Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),

Acknowledge that:

- Providing all children with equal access to high quality inclusive education which realises their full potential, requires **sufficient and sustainable resources** for schools and other education institutions;
- In order to stimulate pupils and students to reach their full potential, it is key to offer quality education, which cherishes diversity and puts their interests, talents and competences at its centre.
- Social inclusion in education should be addressed with the understanding of a wider **context of poverty** and exclusion, exacerbated in Europe in recent years and intensified by exclusionary policies, with a recovery that leaves any people behind even more and impacts the educational outcomes of already disadvantaged students;
- Exclusion, discrimination and inequality in education have to be addressed from an intersectional dimension taking into account that students might experience even stronger exclusion when it is based on several grounds (e.g. different cultural or socio-economic background and gender, disability and country of origin), at the same time it should be noted that there are differentiated complexities within these broad characteristics;
- Education institutions, teachers, trainers and other education personnel, school leaders and academic staff, need to be supported and well equipped to create democratic and inclusive

learning environments that aim to include all learners and to achieve equity in education, to make intercultural dialogue work, and to enhance the recognition of the value (or resource) that diverse groups bring about;

- Shortages of teachers, trainers, school leaders, and of other education personnel witnessed across many European countries have to be addressed through enhancing the **attractiveness of the teaching profession**, strengthening the recruitment and retention in education, as well as ensuring supportive working environments and conditions.
- The presence of education social partners, civil society and other stakeholders in education is fundamental to address the challenges Europe is facing;
- All this within the right to education as stated in article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

### **Role of the social partners and commitments**

Having in mind the five key elements identified in the Joint Statement on Inclusive Schools Within the Context of Diverse Societies (2019) as essential for the implementation of inclusive education, the European Education Social Partners and their members at national, regional and local level commit to continuing and strengthening their joint work to enhance multiculturalism, democratic citizenship and social inclusion in education by means of:

- Promoting education policies that address all students, enhance understanding of democratic values and diversity as a resource for society;
- Considering in their social dialogue and in partnership with other sectors and actors (including health policy, housing policy, social benefits, etc.) the underlying causes of segregation, exclusion, discrimination, xenophobia and radicalisation;
- Calling for increased core public investment and increased EU funding solidarity towards schools in disadvantaged areas of Europe;
- Discourage exclusionary and segregated school practices that openly breach and defy European common values and call for financial disincentives;
- Promoting and upholding sustainable employment for education workers and education employers, relevant and sufficient professional development and support, and career opportunities for leaders, teachers, academics, and other personnel in education to address the holistic needs of individual students across the medium-term; and for a better supply of qualified professionals that reflects our multicultural society;
- Promoting and considering the five elements identified in the Joint Statement on Inclusive Schools Within the Context of Diverse Societies (2019) for the implementation of inclusive education in their dialogue at European, national, regional, local and institutional level.

### **Conclusion**

EFEE and ETUCE, the European Social Partners in Education commit themselves to actively promote this declaration at European level and through their member organisations at national, regional and local level.

This joint statement has been adopted by the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) Plenary meeting on 2 December 2019.

Brussels, 2 December 2019

Handwritten signature of Daniel Wisniewski in black ink.

Daniel Wisniewski  
General Secretary  
EFEE

Handwritten signature of Susan Flocken in blue ink.

Susan Flocken  
European Director  
ETUCE