

EFEE

THE EUROPEAN
FEDERATION OF
EDUCATION
EMPLOYERS

EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR
EDUCATION – COMITE SYNDICAL
EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION



Joint ETUCE/EFEE Statement on

Promoting the potentials of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education

The European Social Partners in Education, EFEE (European Federation of Education Employers) and the ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee for Education), have worked jointly during the years 2014-2016 on the project *“European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting the potentials of their dialogue through knowledge transfer and training. The ESSDE capacity building II”*. This work is supported by the European Commission through the Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations budget line (VS/2015/0032). Committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of their dialogue, the European Social Partners in education drew on the experience acquired through their first joint project on the matter *“Promoting the potentials of the European sectoral social dialogue in education by addressing new challenges and exploring experience and knowledge”*, in 2013-2014.

The joint capacity building actions aim to develop a strong and efficient social dialogue for the benefit of people working in education institutions at all education levels as well as for the benefit of pupils and students. Acknowledging the common challenge to promote social dialogue based on strong social partnership, EFEE and ETUCE agreed to focus specifically on enhancing the capacity of social partners in those countries with a weaker tradition of social dialogue, and/or where social dialogue in education had increasingly come under pressure as a result of the economic crisis.

In the two-project initiatives, EFEE and ETUCE recognised the vital need to promote the ESSDE potentials and to further improve their social dialogue at European and national level with a view to:

- **Improving knowledge and understanding** of the concept of the European Social Dialogue, a significant component of the European Social Model; and of the specificities of different social dialogue models across Europe, based on national traditions and competences;
- **Improving representativeness** – Enhanced expectations of the capacity of the European sectoral social partners derives from the legitimacy of the parties involved in the process which therefore require to be consulted, to negotiate agreements and to participate in policy and law making.

EFEE and ETUCE continue to improve the balance regarding the level of representativeness within the ESSDE Committee.

- **Improving communication and linkages** – The way forward for the Social Dialogue in Education at European level widely depends on the ability of EFEE and ETUCE to increase the flow of information and degree of cooperation between the European and the national level. Social partners are committed to support their national member organisations to give voice to the needs of their affiliates, with a view to ensuring that the relevant concerns addressed within the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee reflect the national issues;
- **Improving autonomy** – It is widely recognised that the economic crisis and budgetary constraints in several EU Member States have resulted in an increased trend towards unilateral decision making at the expenses of the social partners' autonomy, especially in the public sector. At times of major challenges for Europe and for its member states, the European Social Partners share the commitment towards advancing the principle that a well-functioning social dialogue is the prerequisite for overcoming successfully the effects of the economic crisis and to further advance the democratic ownership of reforms and legislative measures impacting the education environment.

The European Social Partners in Education therefore commit themselves to:

- Further promote the work of the European Social Dialogue in general, and of the ESSDE in particular, by building-up on the progress made, by ensuring the continuation of the engagement with national/local partners, by improving the knowledge and coordination between the various levels, the sharing of information and peer-learning, as well as by enhancing the communication between the European and national social partners in education;
- Use the opportunities of the European process of re-launching the Social Dialogue and of the ESSDE Work Programme to enhance their dialogue and the quality of the debate, including within the European Semester process;
- Continue to involve their respective members in capacity building activities and projects aimed at:
 - Promoting sectoral social dialogue in education based on clear objectives, mutual trust, respect and cooperation;
 - Reinforcing the coverage and representativeness of the ESSDE Committee;
 - Contributing to strengthening and supporting national social dialogue and collective bargaining in the education sector;
 - Provide constructive contributions to the diverse European policy initiatives having and influence on the education sector by addressing jointly the themes agreed in the ESSDE Work Programme 2016-2017.
- Actively promote this statement at national, regional and local level, respecting national and regional structures in the education sectors.

The European Social Partners in Education also invite the European Commission to help Member States with the implementation and monitoring of effective social dialogue in education; to ensure the involvement of the (European) Sectoral Social Partners in Education in policy-making in education.

This declaration has been adopted by the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) Plenary Meeting on 8 November 2016.

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