



Executive Summary

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The [ETUCE Report](#) is presented on the occasion of the CEE Round Table 2015, where teacher unions from more than 30 CEE countries gather to share information and to address common challenges.

The Report maps developments over the last 2 years; identifies some common trends and challenges in CEE countries in relation to 1) funding of education; 2) teachers' working conditions and trade union action; 3) social dialogue and collective bargaining; and 4) priorities for further action.

Funding of education

- **Public investment in education:** The economic and financial crisis has had a profound impact on education. According to data collected, two trends emerged, both of which led to reduced funding for education. First, the share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) invested in education was cut in many countries. Second, after 2008, the GDP declined. As a consequence, investment in education went down also in real terms. Recently, in connection with a – still fragile – economic recovery, funding of education has slightly increased in several countries (Azerbaijan; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Cyprus; Hungary; Kazakhstan; Malta; Ukraine; Tajikistan) as reported by teacher unions.
- **Reforms of national education systems:** Some of the challenges related to reforming national education systems pre-date the economic crisis. However, they have been intensified by the need to consolidate public finances. Education reforms were carried out in almost all the countries surveyed, with a good level of social partners' consultation/participation (73%). However, according to more than a half of respondents, when reforms were implemented, they increased privatisation.
- **Privatisation according to funding models:** Fully private and public-grant aided education institutions are the most commonly found in the region. Yet, the total number of public education institutions outnumbers private providers.
- **Privatisation according to education sectors:** Increasing privatisation is for the most part occurring in the sectors of early childhood education and higher education, followed by secondary education (general), primary schools and secondary VET.
- **Global corporations/consultancies:** 37% of responding unions are aware of the presence of global corporation/consultancies in their countries influencing education policy and the delivery of education products and/or schooling.

Teachers' working conditions and trade union action

- **Education workers in private education institutions:** According to the respective unions' Statutes or Constitutions, teacher unions have the possibility to organise education workers in private education institutions in almost all the countries surveyed. In BiH, BG, CY, EE, and TK, teacher unions are not allowed to recruit education workers in private education institutions. When looking at the rate of representation by affiliates working in private education institutions, however, it is, almost everywhere, very low (less than 20% membership except in MT – MUT – between 20 and 40% of membership).
- **Teaching profession:** Overall, the main challenges unions face in relation to the representation of the teaching profession are related to: recruitment and retention of teachers (60% of respondents), the emergence of parallel organisations claiming to represent teachers (14%), evaluation and continuous professional development of teachers (38%).
- **Salaries:** Over half of the unions indicate that teacher salaries are lower in comparison to the average salary of an employee in their respective countries. However, after having experienced years of cuts and freezes, salaries are starting to increase again according to one third of respondents.
- **Employment contracts:** Across all the countries surveyed, short-term contracts for teachers are a reality, although they are present at a low rate. A large majority of teachers are still employed with permanent employment contracts. On average, between 65 and 85% of teachers

have permanent contracts. Between 35 and 15% are employed with short-term contracts across the region.

- **Working time: On average, teachers** dedicate 60% of their working time to teaching; 21% to the preparation of lessons, 16% to performance of administrative tasks and only 7% to their professional development. Moreover, one fifth of the time needed to prepare lessons and for professional development is taken from teachers' private time (outside of working hours).

Social dialogue and collective bargaining

- **Social dialogue:** Across the CEE region, all the unions state that there are forms of structured and institutionalised social dialogue in their countries, except for Georgia – ESFTUG, Ukraine – VPONU, and Turkey – Egitim Sen. However, much effort is needed to make it more effective and efficient. Unions observed that governments tend to consult but without taking the positions of teacher trade unions into real consideration.
- **Collective bargaining:** Overall, 90% of respondent unions negotiate collective agreements, mainly at national, local and regional levels. The rate of education workers covered by collective agreements is high across the region (more than 60%) except in Turkey, Estonia and Lithuania (less than 40%).
- **Further challenges related to social dialogue:** The main concern of teacher trade unions is the lack of efficient and effective social dialogue. They are also concerned about inadequate involvement of trade unions in national education and training reforms and insufficient involvement of trade unions in negotiations concerning education workers' rights and working conditions, .

Priorities for further action in CEE

- **Current and future priorities:** Social dialogue – effective and efficient – and collective bargaining will be the main priorities to be addressed over the next 2 years together with the recruitment and retention of teachers and salaries and social protection.
- **CEENET tools:** Best-practices, experiences and information sharing through seminars and conferences is considered the most desired form of support from the CEENET. However, further attention should continue to be paid to supporting the capacity building process for social dialogue and collective bargaining. Other priorities include; training for trade union leaders; general training on (European) Social Dialogue, training for trade union trainers, the development of communication tools for sharing information and support in lobbying activities, and advocacy..