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European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

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Statement

on March for Science

THERE IS NO SCIENCE WITHOUT SCIENTISTS

On April 22, 2017, a series of rallies and marches called the March for Science are due to take place in Washington, D.C. and in over 400 cities across the world, including many cities in Europe. The mission of the March is to call for science that serves the common good and democratic societies and for political leaders and policy makers to enact evidence-based policies in the public interest.¹ Some of the announced goals of the March for Science include cutting-edge science education, diversity and inclusion in all scientific fields, and support for scientists.

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) is the European region of Education International (EI) and represents 131 education trade unions in 48 countries. European member organisations of ETUCE, representing among other education personnel, academics and researchers in Europe, support the March for Science initiative and call for academic freedom, improved working conditions and increased public support for scientists.

Quality science only exists with the support for quality working conditions and fair employment for scientists. ETUCE member organisations are concerned that European scientists are increasingly threatened through European-level and national policies that focus on short-term research objectives, particularly on 'innovation and technology transfer'. Therefore, ETUCE member organisations call on governments and employers to move away from an agenda based on precarious employment, insufficient funding, limited academic freedom and a high level of inequality, especially as regards gender-related inequalities, in the research sector. Moreover, with the overall diminishing role of social sciences and humanities, opportunities at both European and national levels for these sciences are becoming limited.

Furthermore, ETUCE member organisations call on policy-makers and employers to ensure:

1. Scientific democracy which promotes public debate and the joint development of knowledge between researchers and civil society stakeholders. Scientific research that contributes to increasing knowledge in all fields is a guarantee of human intellectual, social and cultural well-being.
2. Academic freedom to undertake research and the autonomy of the scientific profession, which includes freedom of initiative and realisation of research, as well as the respect for diversity in research methods and approaches.
3. Better working conditions with stable jobs and decent wages in order to guarantee the above-mentioned freedoms and the successful development of science, research methods, scientists and academics.

¹ <https://www.marchforscience.com/>