



Portfolio of activities of the Trade Council 'Education, Training and Research' (EDUC)

Who does the Council represent?

The Trade Council Education, Training and Research is made up of representatives from various European unions whose members all work in education at all levels (from basic to higher education).

How does the Trade Council work?

The Council's working methods conform to the structures of the umbrella organisation CESI and are adapted as challenges arise relating to European education policy in general and national education policy in particular.

The work of the Trade Council can be subdivided into four key categories:

- 1) Information supplied by external experts and professionals, either from the field of education or education policy, enabling the members of the Trade Council to form an opinion on topical issues.
- 2) Information provided by peers regarding national problems with regard to teaching and education.
- 3) Discussion on pedagogical, didactic and psychosocial themes connected to the area of education.
- 4) Drafting of opinion pieces on European education policy.

The Trade Council concentrates both on school staff and on the wider school community, above all its pupils. This is why it does not just focus on teachers' working conditions but also on the learning environment for the pupils, their course of study, the curriculum, teaching methods, extra-curricular activities and research.

The union representatives in the Trade Council EDUC therefore have access to information and the opportunity to exchange views on a European platform, to make contact with the European institutions and incorporate these experiences into their day-to-day trade union work. For some years, the members of the Trade Council have also had the opportunity to represent CESI in the European social dialogue for education.

What are the goals and tasks of the Trade Council?

Although education policy is subject to the subsidiarity principle, which means that the European institutions cannot issue mandatory directives in this field, it is worth noting that, across Europe, national reforms have been launched in order to bring things into

Confédération Européenne des Syndicats Indépendants

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line with the demands of the European institutions. Whether we're talking about the Lisbon Treaty or the Europe 2020 project, to give just two examples, these views on the world of education have prompted a large number of governments to press ahead with reforms, which, given that they are rather often poorly conceived, have had a harmful impact on teachers and pupils alike. Moreover, cuts have dealt a hammer blow to the education sector, even if national governments claim that they are continuing to invest in the young people's futures.

In some European countries, teachers' working conditions are getting worse. It's not just their salary which is taking a hit. Respect for the school as an institution continues to wane because support from the state as an employer is lacking. As for pupils, they are no longer receiving the kind of quality education necessary for developing a critical mind and building a solid sense of identity, as the ultimate goal is often too utilitarian and focused entirely on the demands of the labour market.

A subject which also plays an important role in terms of education is that of demographic challenges. In this context, emphasis is not placed on issues of recruitment but rather on keeping people in work. To what extent can we improve working conditions in such a way that more teachers continue to work and don't take early retirement? Are there ways to involve, in a sensitive and constructive way, those teachers who, following illnesses such as burn-out, are unable to teach? What can be done to strike a balance between the sexes and age groups, given that it is important for young people to be taught by men as well as women and by an equal number of younger and older teachers?

To summarise, the Trade Council Education Training and Research is committed to standing up for quality education and teaching which focuses on the intellectual and physical development of young people and which highlights humanist training which allows every pupil to develop his/her talents and build his/her own identity.

The Trade Council focuses on the following areas:

- Basic education
- secondary education
- higher education
- professional training
- further professional training and lifelong learning
- initial and further teacher training
- school management
- teachers
- headteachers
- socio-educational staff

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- staff providing psychological support

Issues dealt with and recent focal points for the Trade Council:

- student and teacher mobility in Europe
- the quality of teaching and training
- fighting against pupils/students dropping out
- new technologies in teaching and education
- demographic challenges – recruiting and holding on to teachers
- the role and image of teachers in the 21st century
- the fight against radicalisation – establishing and passing on values

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