



ETUCE

European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

Education International
Internationale de l'Education
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<http://www.ei-ie.org>

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Statement by ETUCE on the situation in Greece

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), representing 135 teachers' organisations and 12.8 million individuals from 45 European countries, wishes to express its concern about the current situation in Greece.

The ETUCE has received reports from its member organisations in Greece that the Greek Ministry of Education has announced the merging of 1933 school units, which implies the closing of 1056 schools, leading to a loss of 3000 teaching positions and a dramatic lowering of the quality of education in Greece. These changes have been put forward without any prior substantial dialogue with the teacher trade unions.

While understanding the necessity to tackle the public deficit, the ETUCE emphasizes the need to undertake any change affecting the education workforce through social dialogue with the teachers' organisations, and stresses that cutbacks on education is not the right answer to the challenges Europe is currently facing due to the economic crisis.

Within this context, the ETUCE,

- Having regard to the Directive 2002/14/CE from the EU Parliament and the Council of 11 March 2002 which establish a general framework for consulting employees in the European Community and invite the employers in the EU member states to consult the employees, including at a sectoral level, on any issue likely to impact on their working conditions;
- Having regard to the latest conclusions from the Council of the European Union on the role of education and training in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy (14 February 2011), stressing that *"Investing efficiently in high quality, modernised and reformed education and training is urgent because it will both lay the foundations for Europe's long-term prosperity and also, by providing people with more and better skills and competences, help to respond in the short term to the effects of the crisis"* (5505/11, I:1)
- Having regard to the Council Conclusions on the New Skills for New Jobs Communication (COM 2008 868), underlining the necessity of investments in education and training (9 March 2009);
- Having regard to the Joint Declaration from the European Social Partners in Education *"Investing in the Future"* (18 January 2011);

1. Urges the Greek government to refrain from cutbacks in education;

2. Invites the Greek government to engage in a comprehensive and sustainable dialogue with the teachers' organisations, in all matters concerning the education system as such, in order to find a collectively constructed solution to the current situation;
3. Reiterates its full support for the Greek teachers and their trade union organisations OLME and DOE.

On behalf of the ETUCE,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ronnie Smith', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Ronnie Smith,

President

Brussels, 30 March 2011