

## BRITISH AND IRISH GROUP OF TEACHERS' UNIONS

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Ronnie Smith  
President  
EI Pan Europe Structure  
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Dear Ronnie

### **CONSULTATION ON REVISED EUROPEAN BY-LAWS**

The British and Irish Group of Teachers Unions (BIGTU), representing all the EI-affiliated unions in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation by the Pan-European Structure of Education International and the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) on revised by-laws for the Pan-European structure.

The unions in the BIGTU have been concerned at the continuing and in some instances, increasing difficulties caused by the dual trade union decisionmaking, secretariat and representational structure which the Pan-European Structure of EI and the ETUCE have operated. We are convinced that the EI European Conference in making the changes it agreed in 2003, fully intended that those changes were intended to lead to a fully integrated structure. The need for such a single structure is now overwhelming. For these reasons, all the unions in the Group have consistently supported the measures proposed by the Pan European Bureau to achieve an integrated structure, and strongly supported the proposals brought forward by Lararforbundet and a large number of other unions which formed the basis for discussion at the EI Pan European Conference in Warsaw in November 2009. We were deeply disappointed that, while gaining a substantial majority of votes cast, they narrowly missed the 2/3 necessary for implementation. There is a clear will for change which we strongly support.

Therefore the BIGTU now welcomes the decision of the Bureau to circulate a revised set of draft by-laws and that of the Pan-European Committee/ETUCE Executive Board to endorse the draft for circulation as a basis for further consideration and discussion within and between affiliate unions. We appreciate the considerable amount of work undertaken by the Bureau in producing these revised proposals. While the revised draft by-laws are less extensive in scope and ambition than those which so narrowly failed to pass at the Warsaw Conference, the unions in the BIGTU believe that, regarded as a coherent and complete package, the revised draft by-laws represent a viable and robust means of delivering an effective governance and management framework for the Pan-European Structure in the longer term. The proposals now fully deal with the issues in relation to staffing, the relationship between the ETUCE and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and other concerns expressed during the Warsaw Conference. The proposals form a coherent package which should enable the EI Pan European Structure to finally set these constitutional issues to rest and focus once again on the urgent policy and campaigning tasks that face us all.

The British and Irish Group of Teachers Unions therefore looks forward to the specially convened Pan-European Committee/ETUCE Executive Board meeting on 15 June 2010 and to the draft by-laws being submitted for ratification by an extra-ordinary Regional Conference in November 2010. We strongly hope that they will be adopted unamended as they are the product of such intensive and inclusive consideration, and now form a coherent package. The timetable for action on this issue set out in your letter of 17<sup>th</sup> March is realistic but reflects the urgency that all unions in our Group, and we believe, probably all those in the European region of EI, now feel about this issue.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Paul Bennett  
Secretary to the Group

**Group members: Ireland - ASTI, IFUT, INTO, TUI United Kingdom - ATL, EIS, NASUWT, NUT, SSTA, UCU, UTU**