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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION

**Report on the Second Regional Peer Learning
Activity of the ETUCE Project**

*“Teacher trade unions in solidarity for healthy and safe
workplaces in the economic crisis”*

Lisbon, 3 June 2013



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DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.*



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«Rapport de la première activité d'apprentissage entre pairs du projet du CSEE: Les syndicats d'enseignants solidaires pour des lieux de travail sains et sûrs dans un contexte de crise économique ” »

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1. Introduction

The second Peer Learning Activity (PLA's) of the ETUCE Project "Teacher trade unions in solidarity for healthy and safe workplaces in the economic crisis" was held in Lisbon on 3 June 2013. The event gathered representatives from teacher trade unions from south western European countries.



Both PLA's organised in the framework of this project examined different national approaches regarding the prevention of psychosocial hazards and reconciliation of work and family life in times of the economic crisis and discussed and developed suggestions for concrete policy recommendations.

The recommendations will be further discussed at the Closing Conference on 10-11 October 2013.

2. Project description

In November 2012 the ETUCE – EI European Region Conference had clearly identified the need for further work on the impact of the crisis on teachers' working conditions, which is why the secretariat developed the initiative described here.



This one year EU funded project has the main objective to strengthen solidarity between teacher unions in Europe in support of maintaining and promoting healthy and safe working conditions, in particular as regards the prevention of psychosocial hazards and reconciliation of work and family life in times of rising pressure due to the economic crisis. The aim is to increase the well-being and safety of teachers and other education employees as prerequisites for quality education. Above all, the project seeks to identify whether the crisis and the changes implied by it on education staff's working conditions, have an impact on the health and safety of education personnel and to develop a set of concrete and practical recommendations for teacher unions in Europe and the affiliated teachers and education employees, on how to promote healthy and safe working conditions in times of crisis.

The main activities carried out in this project were:

1. Online Survey
2. Teacher union interviews
3. Two Regional Peer Learning Activities for representatives from teacher unions
4. Closing Conference to discuss practical recommendations on how to promote healthy and safe working conditions in times of rising work pressure due to the economic crisis.

3. Project Overview

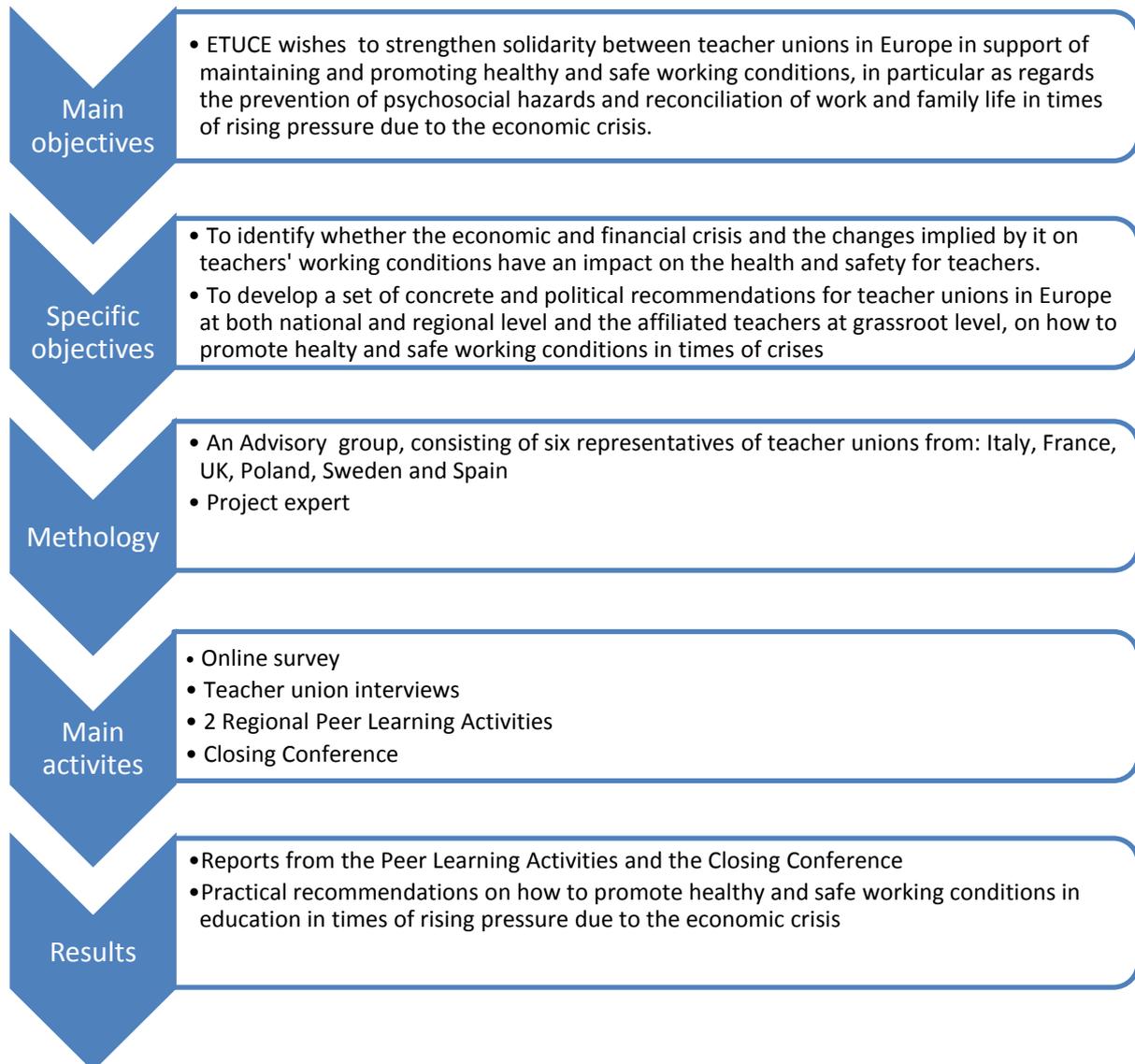


Figure 1: Project Overview

4. Advisory Group

The project is led by an advisory group consisting of representatives from six teacher unions from six different countries (Rossella Benedetti, UIL Scuola – Italy, H el ene H emet, UNSA – France, Darren Northcott, NASUWT – UK, Monika Konczyk, Solidarnosc – Poland, Anders Eklund, L ararf orbundet – Sweden, Patricio Perez, FECCOO – Spain) providing a geographical spread of teacher unions across the EU. The advisory group meets with regular intervals to provide their knowledge and direct the implementation.



M. Konczyk



P. Perez



H. Hemet



A. Eklund



R. Benedetti



D. Northcott

5. Online Survey

To find out whether teachers' well-being is more or differently affected during the economic crisis, in particular in regards to the psychosocial impact of the crisis on teachers' health, and the reconciliation of work and family life in times of rising pressure, ETUCE launched an online survey and followed up with interviews of selected unions. The ETUCE Secretariat invited all its member organisations to participate in the survey, stretching from 4 March to 30 April 2013. The survey was developed in close cooperation with the project expert Salvador Moncada from ISTAS, the Union Institute of Work, Environment and Health, Spain. 40 % of all ETUCE member organisations¹ replied to the online survey.



S. Moncada

The interviews conducted with 23 member organisations² from 8 target countries³ showed special attention to the trade union strategies and actions of teacher trade unions in facing austerity measures, as well as the experiences that the teacher unions have had concerning their actions. The interviews as well as the survey tell of an increase in union mobilisations.

The interviews also indicated that trade union actions have not been able to reverse the budget cutbacks, but that union actions have achieved some limitations to measures like workforce reductions or increase of teaching hours. All in all the interviewees agree that the

¹ Member organisations that answered the online survey: GOD-Lehrer; HESUEBH; SEB; DLF; EEP; FERC CGT; SNES/FSU; Sgen-CFDT; SNUipp; UNSA; OLME; FDSZ; KPSZT; SEHUN (PSZ); KI; ASTI; INTO; NKOS; VBE; SER; CGSP ENSEIGNEMENT; CSC-Enseignement; KSN; SKOIW; ZNP; FECCOO; FETE-UGT, STES-I; Fuurt; CISL SCUOLA; FLC; UIL Scuola; CGIL; OZPSAV, ESTUS; DAU-SEN; KTOEOS; KTOS; L ararf orbundet; MUT; UEN; NASUWT ; UTU-UK; NUT; SSTA; ATL; FENPROF; FNE; SINDEP; UCU; AOB; LIZDA; FLESTU

² Organisations interviewed:

ATL; EIS; FLC-CGIL; FECCOO; FENPROF; FERC-CGT; FETE-UGT; FNE; KSN; L ararf orbundet; NASUWT; NSZZ Solidarno c; NUT; OLME; SINDEP; SGEN-CFDT; SNES-FSU; SNUipp-FSU;; STES-i; UCU; UIL-Scuola Solidarno c; UNSA-Education

³ Target countries: Poland, Spain, UK, Sweden, Portugal, Italy, Greece and France.

challenge unions are facing nowadays, are the ultra-liberal policies and that it is extremely difficult to change these.

For further information on the survey and interviews see the report of the First Regional Peer Learning Activity of the ETUCE project.

6. Presentations

ETUCE had invited two speakers to the second PLA. The first presentation was given by **Mr. Angelo d'Errico**, an Occupational Epidemiologist from Turin University on "the impact of psychosocial hazards on education workers' health: Does Europe need a different approach in the context of the crisis?"



A. d'Errico

Mr. d'Errico concentrated on causes and consequences of work-related stress. Fig. 5 shows that individual characteristics as gender, age, competitiveness and education all have related consequences, covering risks for work-related stress, stress reactions and long term consequences.

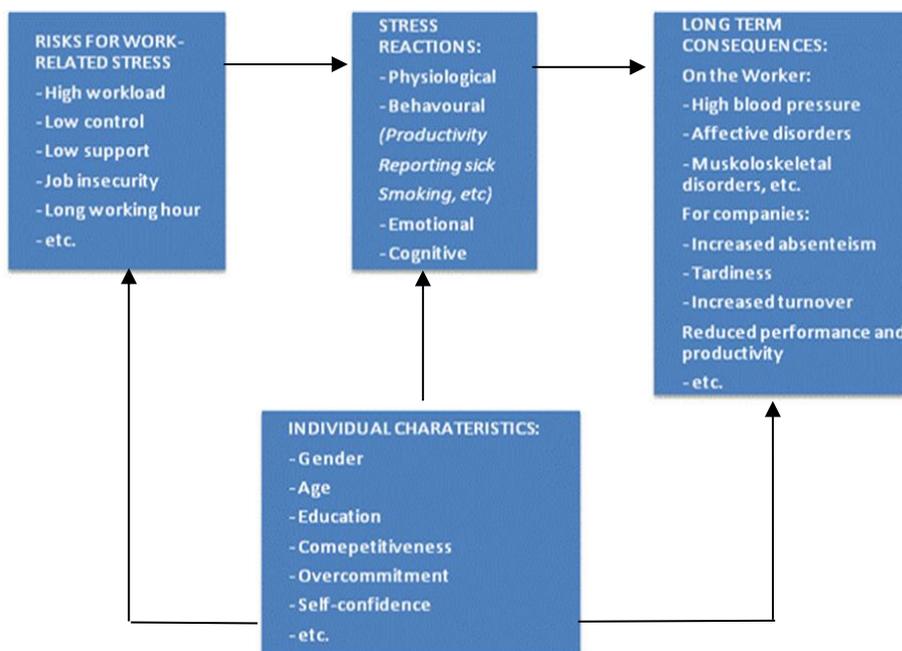


Figure 2: Model of causes and consequence

According to Mr. d'Errico, working conditions that are potentially stressful can be linked to time or to the working activity content. Long working hours, compulsory overtime and fast work pace as well as insufficient time to meet deadlines often is the causing conditions that are potentially stressful. Working conditions linked to activity can be seen within a frame of poor autonomy, influence at work, control, low use of skills, poor opportunities of acquiring new knowledge, high mental effort, uncertainty or ambiguity of tasks or job demands etc.

Balance between effort and reward is important in a healthy job. The effort-reward model (Figure 3) suggests as a stress determinant the imbalance between high job demands and low rewards, the latter distributed through three remuneration systems: money, esteem and career development including job security. The imbalance between reward and effort will be

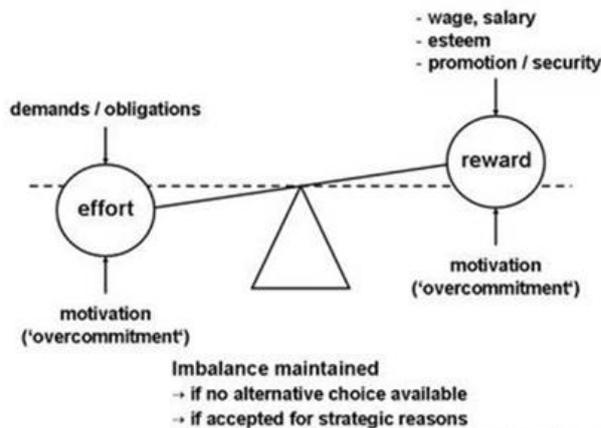


Figure 3: The effort-reward model

maintained if there are no alternative choices available or if the job is accepted for strategic reasons. So a lack of reciprocity, in terms of high workload and low gains, would produce negative health effects.

“Overcommitment” refers to a personal characteristic implying excessive work engagement and need of approval from others and would enhance susceptibility of workers to effort-reward imbalance.

Research has proven that stress at work is associated with a number of physical and psychological negative effects at individual level, effects covering cardiovascular diseases, mental health problems, musculoskeletal diseases and immunological problems. Furthermore, he emphasised that teachers on average are more exposed than other workers when it comes to psychosocial factors especially concerning emotional demand, need for hiding emotions and work-family conflict.

Mr. d’Errico closed his presentation by pointing out that poor mental health, burnout and cardiovascular diseases are the health related outcomes of greatest concern among teachers, which should be prevented targeting exposure to the psychosocial factors mentioned above, as well as providing more resources to the teachers in terms of organisational and psychological support.

The second speaker was **Ms. Hanne Würtzen** from the National Research Centre for the Working Environment, Denmark. She focused on the “psychosocial risk management in the education sector and the role of social partners in translating occupational health and safety policy into practice”.



H. Würtzen

Ms. Hanne Würtzen took a point of departure in the Danish Balance Project⁴ from the National Research Centre for the Working Environment (NRCWE). The purpose of the Balance Project is to identify and secure new ways to secure or enhance the work-ability of individuals suffering from a reduced psychological well-being. The project strives to develop a multi-pronged intervention aiming at maintaining or strengthening the work-ability of workers suffering from mental health problems. The

Balance Project focus on three points 1) to reduce the risk of severe psychological health

⁴ At this point information on the project exists only in Danish:
<http://www.arbejdsmiljoforskning.dk/da/projekter/fastholdelse-af-arbejdsevne-og-arbejdstilknytning-blandt-folkeskolelaerere/formaal>

problems by detecting the exposed workers early on 2) to maintain or improve the work-ability for workers with reduced mental health 3) to strengthen the possibility for individuals with reduced mental to continue to work.

According to Ms. Würtzen a review of international research literature including the QOPSOQ shows that interventions focusing on retention of workers with mental health problems is most efficient if the intervention is not only focusing on the exposed worker but at the same time involves the colleagues of the exposed worker. Furthermore, the speaker underlined that international research shows that a systematic modification of work has the highest effect on the work-ability. The intervention of the Balance Project combines five intervention components with partly overlapping target groups in each of the participating schools. The argument for this lies in the combination of intervention methods that effectively reduce symptoms and prevent long-term sick leaves and early resignation. The interventions will be carried out during one year in each workplace and data will be collected for one additionally year.

Providing the example of teachers in Denmark, she highlighted that teachers' psychosocial work environment is worse than that of other sectors because teachers often have to be available outside working hours, they work in an emotionally demanding job, witness bullying and in some cases teachers themselves are victims of work-related violence and experience threats at work. Other factors she mentioned were unclear objectives in the job and not enough feedback or instructions from leadership and lack of information making the teaching profession difficult and stressful.

On the more positive side the Danish teachers experience that their work gives them more self-confidence, a feeling of meaningful work and they feel involved and important. This leads to a work environment that is healthier than that of other job groups in Denmark.

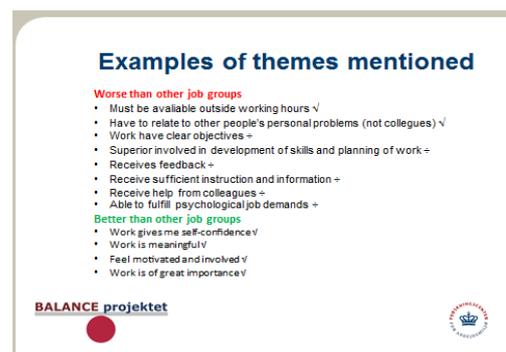


Figure 4: Examples of themes

7. Working Groups and Plenary Discussion

In two working groups, the participants had the opportunity to discuss the results of the survey, the interviews and exchange good practices on healthy and safe workplaces during the crisis. The overall focus was to develop concrete policy recommendations and to present the recommendations in the plenary discussion session. The results from the two working groups (Figure 9) should not be understood as the finalised policy recommendations, but as 'working recommendations'. The importance of standing together as unions and influence key policy stakeholders of the new Health and Safety policy framework was highlighted as well as maintaining the verve for common and single union action. Furthermore, it was underlined that definitions of teacher standards are necessary along with a formulation of

common challenges. Additionally, emphases on being careful not to allow employers to use the crisis as an excuse for additional cuts in education were made.

EU-level	National level	General level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for solidarity • Common vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards for teachers should be defend • Create a platform to share idears on how to deal with challenges • See Europe as one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media campaigns – including concrete data from reliable sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a positive image of education staff's work life • Provide legal advice to staff (strict minimum tasks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unions need to contribute and be visible • Common activities • Defend education as a public good <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good practise

Figure 5: Temporary policy recommendations

8. Sum-up

The Second Regional Peer Learning Activity of the ETUCE *Project "Teacher trade unions in solidarity for healthy and safe workplaces in the economic crisis"* held in Lisbon on the 3 June 2013 provided the opportunity for the union representatives to consult the results from the online survey as well as the teacher union interviews and to discuss these in the context of two presentations made by Mr. Angelo d'Errico, an Occupational Epidemiologist from Turin University, on *the impact of psychosocial hazards on education workers' health: Does Europe need a different approach in the context of the crisis?* as well as Ms. Hanne Würtzen from the National Research Centre for the Working Environment, Denmark on the *"psychosocial risk management in the education sector and the role of social partners in translating occupational health and safety policy into practice"*. The teacher representatives drafted suggestions for policy recommendations on promoting healthy and safe working conditions, in particular as regards the prevention of psychosocial hazards and reconciliation of work and family life in times of rising pressure due to the economic crisis. The drafted recommendations are to be discussed at the Closing Conference in Madrid on 10 October 2013.



9. Abbreviations

ETUCE – European Trade Union Committee for Education

EU – European Union

FECCOO – Federación Enseñanza CCOO

FFAS - Freiburg Research Centre on Occupational and Social Medicine

ISTAS - Instituto Sindical de Trabajo, Ambiente y Salud (Union Institute of Work, Environment and Health)

LOMCE – Spanish education law

NASUWT - National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers

OSH – Occupational Safety and Health

PLA – Peer Learning Activity

COPSOQ - Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire

UIL-Scuola - Unione Italiana del Lavoro Scuola

UK – United Kingdom

UNSA - Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes

For a comprehensive list of ETUCE member organisations, please follow the link:
http://etuce.homestead.com/ETUCE_MO.html



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