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Most principals remain members of the teachers' organisation that they belonged to as teachers, while others choose to join an organisation which exclusively represents school leaders. In many countries both types of organisation exist side by side and it is not uncommon that there is tension or conflict between them. This is of course not so difficult to understand since one has to recruit its members from the other.

The reasons why school leaders are organised the way they are could vary depending on national legislation, tradition and culture but quite often it is because school leaders have been recruited among teachers and they wish to stay in contact with the profession and the colleagues in their teachers' organisation. These organisations are often large and strong and have the power to influence decisions in the area of education which will affect teachers, students and school leaders. Indeed many of today's teachers' organisations were once initiated and developed mainly by school leaders.

Those who choose to join an organisation which represents only school leaders see an advantage in the fact that trade union action is about nothing else than school leadership issues. Sometimes there is also a more or less real contradiction between teachers and school leaders; much depending on to what extent the school leader can be regarded as the representative of the employer. The way in which this contradiction is perceived obviously affects the choice of organisation.

In the teachers' world organisation, Education International (EI) several types of organisations exist; teachers organisations with school leaders, teachers' organisations without school leaders and exclusive school leaders' organisations. Sometimes they are affiliated to the same national trade union confederation, sometimes not. It is natural that EI has some different types of organisations since we have united all the teachers' world organisations in EI, which today represents 30 million teachers, school leaders and other personnel at all levels of education in 170 countries. EI is the self-evident dialogue partner in education matters to such important international bodies as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, the World Bank and OECD. For example the OECD is now consulting EI for the future developments of PISA and during the two last days EI together with the OECD and the US Education Department has been the co-organiser of the International Summit on the Teaching Profession in New York on the theme "Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders".