

FUURT's response to the draft By-Laws of the European Regional Structure

As a general comment FUURT is opposing the suggested changes in the form that these are formulated in the consultation document. However FUURT finds the initiative of the German and Austrian unions and the response of EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen as an interesting possibility that enables further work on this organizational aspect. But at the same time FUURT is concerned by the divide between countries / unions which originates from this reorganization of ETUCE from an autonomous body to an internal organ, or "brand", within EI.

The balance between integration and autonomy of ETUCE are important also in the relations with the EU and with the European labor union movement, especially ETUC. FUURT finds it to be absolutely crucial that we also in the future are guaranteed that we have proper representation on the European level in the relations with European Union. ETUCE has a preferential position with the European Commission in the field of education and ETUCE has also been successful in initiating and building a Euro level social dialogue in education. The momentum must be kept up in order to safeguard this preferential position and this achievement. Moreover ETUCE is not just a "brand" that simply can be shifted to some other body. To FUURT ETUCE represents efficient interest representation on European level. The proposed title regional director instead of general secretary is not an improvement in this context. Also the different formulation that refers to our common European body in the future (ETUCE) as regional body gives the impression that it is not an autonomous body with a clear European identity but simply an extension of a global NGO.

FUURT is also concerned how ETUC will react to the new structure. (We are getting mixed signals on how ETUC will react to this new body.)

These aspects are in sense self evident but they reflect our concerns how the restructuring might be perceived by euro level counterparts and how the environment will react. FUURT has been astonished that the preparatory work to some extent only has been seen as an internal matter. FUURT wants to refocus on and get more information how and in which way the influence on the European level is improved by the restructuring. Simplified answers like that we would speak with one voice is not what we are asking for.

FUURT is engaged in higher education and we are faced with the fact that our counter parts on European level are becoming stronger because they are increasing their investments and strengthening their organization. Also the development in the European higher education area (EHEA) and the European research area (ERA) are very rapid. This development requires that we respond to them on the European level.

In this response FUURT has only focused on the most pressing issues.

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RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Views on the draft By-Laws of European Regional Structure

Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö OAJ does not find the proposed By-Laws satisfactory for the following reasons:

The scope of the By-Laws has been broadened by adding regulations of secondary importance and making unnecessary changes. The By-Laws should include only matters necessary for the main structure.

The leader of the ETUCE Secretariat must continue to be the ETUCE General Secretary. The proposed title is not clear in European Union context. The ETUCE General Secretary has to be appointed by a democratic body elected by the ETUCE Member Unions.

The ETUCE must continue to have its clear autonomy to advocate the interests of European Member Unions in Europe.

The size of the democratic bodies must not be increased. They are already quite large. In case needed for an item a person can be invited to a meeting.

The current proposal does not bring such an integrated structure OAJ has sought for. The Committee/Executive Board should discuss a new proposal which would be acceptable for all.

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