



EUROPEAN SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN EDUCATION

Working Group

24 September 2018

Draft Minutes

Chair: ETUCE

1. Opening of the meeting

The agenda of the meeting was adopted. The adoption of the minutes of 24 April 2018 are postponed due to their unavailability.

2. Key note speech: The European Higher Education Area, the Bologna Process and the “European Universities” – the role of teachers and school leaders: achievements since 2015 and the way forward

Vanessa Debiais-Sainton (VDS) reported (see [annex](#)) on the main outcomes of the Ministerial Conference (Paris-May 2018) which gathered the Ministers of the 48 countries involved in the Bologna Process. In order to foster implementation of agreed key commitments (structuring higher education trainings in three cycles; compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and quality assurance), they adopted a structured peer support approach supported financially by Erasmus+. The Bologna follow-up group (BFUG) was mandated to implement, coordinate and monitor the adopted peer support approach.

In follow up of the Gothenburg social summit in November 2017, the Commission has presented a first set of measures in January 2018 addressing notably key competences for lifelong learning and digital skills. It proposed a [second package of measures](#) in May 2018 to further boost the role of youth, education and culture policies. VDS underlined three key initiatives relating to: the automatic recognition of diplomas; the creation of a student card which could boost learning mobility; and the proposal to set-up European Universities as networks of existing universities to boost cross-border cooperation. The latter concept will be tested through a pilot and will be mainstreamed in the next programmes if successful.

Participants mainly discussed the concept of European Universities which is welcomed as an ambitious agenda although it raised some concerns relating to brain drain, the geographical distribution of European Universities and the potential impact for some countries where funding relates to the number of students.

Practical aspects regarding the jurisdiction under which European Universities staff members will operate were discussed as well, given that legal frameworks (e.g. for protecting academic freedom, etc.) diverge among EU member states. Lastly, participants raised concerns about the importance of including as many universities as possible in the network, so as to prevent making the higher education institutions not part of the European Universities network from becoming second or third-tier universities.

3. Modernising Higher Education: the impact of digitalisation and internationalisation on staff and institutions

Kinga Szuly recalled (see [annex](#)) the renewed EU agenda for higher education adopted by the Commission in May 2017 which identifies four key goals for European cooperation in higher education: (1) Tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development; (2) Building inclusive and connected higher education systems; (3) Ensuring higher education institutions contribute to innovation; and (4) Supporting effective and efficient higher education systems. It also defined a set of 20 actions to work towards those objectives. The ET2020 Higher Education working group aims to help Member States in furthering policy development through mutual learning and the identification of good practices in education and training. Her presentation was followed by comments of the EFEE representative in the ET2020 Working Group, Heikki Holopainen (AFIEE, Finland) focusing on the impact of digitalisation and internationalisation on staff and institutions in HE, and the ETUCE representative in the Working Group: Karin Amossa (SULF, Sweden).

Participants discussed the need to engage staff, notably through the involvement of social partners, in designing new ways of teaching. They also highlighted the need for stable and decent working conditions, as well as continuous professional development to be able to follow academic and technological developments. Participants shared good practice examples and raised concerns related to the adaption of teaching and research to ICT developments, the integration of ICT in the design and delivery of higher education institutions and courses, the opportunities for lifelong learning in HE via digital tools, and the risk stemming from commercialisation of higher education and the use of ICT.

4. Plenary discussion on how social partners can contribute to ensuring supportive working environments in higher education and research: can we identify a common understanding?

Agnes Roman (AR) recalled some findings from the Eurydice report 2017 which highlights a number of challenges in higher education (e.g. decreasing employment opportunities and permanent contracts, gender inequality). EFEE and ETUCE then exchanged on the challenges encountered in their countries (temporary positions; requirement to "teach and research"; project-based funding; maintain academic freedom; recognition of researcher careers within social dialogue; wage-gaps between higher education institutions; public funding for R&D) and provided a number of good practices (Guarantee permanency after 2 years of work; code of good practice; develop workforce policy with trade unions (at local level); review of contract types answering to the diverse needs of academic staff) on how social partners contribute to supportive working environment.

5. Ensuring equality in recruitment, retention, and in diverse career pathways in higher education – the current progress

Eurydice is a network of 42 national units based in all 38 countries of the Erasmus+ programme. Their reports show how countries tackle challenges at all education levels and provide information to decision-makers. Daniela Kocanova presented (see annex) the 2017 report "[Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Academic Staff Report](#)" which explores the current realities for academic staff within a changing higher education landscape. The data used is mainly qualitative and gathered from the Eurydice national units. It is complemented by information collected through surveys to academic staff trade unions and quality assurance agencies and some quantitative data from Eurostat and the European Education Tertiary Register (ETER). Example of findings highlighted in the report are that women continue to remain under represented in academic career or that doctorate are legally required for certain staff categories in most countries.

Based on the involvement of trade unions through surveys, EFEE has asked to be involved in any further survey in the future. Participants expressed their wish to expand the scope of the analysis to researchers.

6. Public and private developments in Higher Education and Research funding

Francesca Maltauro (EAC, unit B1) reported on the new legislative proposals made by the European Commission for spending programmes including Erasmus+. The latter incorporates findings of the mid-term evaluation which highlighted some areas for improvement in the current programme (simplification, focus more on inclusion, better use of digital opportunities, more synergies with other EU funded projects, address new emerging priorities such as radicalisation). The European Commission has proposed to double the budget for Erasmus+.

Maria Palladino (EAC-unit C1) presented (see annex) the University-Business Forum which already celebrates 10 years of existence. This is a platform for a structured dialogue between stakeholders which features two major outcomes: (1) a knowledge alliance to foster innovation through cooperation (supported by annual calls for proposals); (2) the initiative "HE Innovate" which is a self-assessment tool for HE institutions to identify their weaknesses/strengths and develop a strategy to further improve innovation.

Edward Ricketts (RTD-unit A5) presented the future programme "Horizon Europe" and the willingness to increase synergies with other union programmes e.g. with the ESF or Erasmus+.

The workers' delegation expressed concerns about the risk for public-private partnerships in higher education and the mix of research and innovation under the new Horizon Europe proposal.

7. The way forward for ESSDE WG on Higher Education and Research – How to advance the work of the Working Group?

Workers and employers voiced many ideas for furthering the work of the Committee on Higher Education: joint project on HE focusing on capacity building and teaching in HE; prepare to provide input to consultation documents on the pilot of European Universities. Social partners agreed to pursue those exchanges at secretariats level.

8. AOB

Trade Unions raised concerns about the [Plan S](#) presented by the European Commission early September which aims at accelerating the transition to full and immediate Open Access to scientific publications. They claim for more consultation on the topics of academic freedom or copyright and intellectual property issues. The point of view of employers to Plan S was however rather positive.

Annexes

- Point 2 – Bologna Process
- Point 3 – ET2020 and Renewed Agenda
- Point 5 – Eurydice
- Point 6 – University-Business Partnership

List of participants 24/09/2018

<u>Employers</u>	<u>Workers</u>
<p>EFEE Mr Daniel WISNIEWSKI (EU) Ms Fransiska AL-MANSOUR (SI) Ms Helen FAIRFOUL (GB) Mr Victor GALEA (MT) Ms Heikki HOLOPAINEN (FI) Mr Laurence HOPKINS (GB) Mr Johan HUYSE (NL) Ms Sarah KIK (EU) Mr Leonidas NEOKLEOUS (CY) Ms Barbara NOVINEC (SI) Ms Elise PELTIER (BE) Mr Nives POCKAR (SI) Mr David SIMMONDS (GB)</p> <p>13 employer representatives (6 women, 7 men) (2EU, 4 EU-13, 8 EU-15)</p>	<p>ETUCE Ms Susan FLOCKEN (EU) Ms Karin AMOSSA (SE) Mr Jan BOERSMA (NL) Ms Paola CAMMILLI (EU) Mr Rob COPELAND (GB) Mr Tiago DIAS (PT) Mr Andrei FRANK (EU) Mr Danijel GRAFENAUER (SI) Mr Tomasz GRYZCAN (PL) Mr Frank JONES (IE) Mr Patrick MONFORT (FR) Mr Jorunn Dahl NORGDARD (NO) Ms Ingrid OTTO (DE) Ms Agnes ROMAN (EU) Ms Dita STEFENHAGENA (LV) Ms Hanna TANSKANEN (FI) Mr Tom VANDERSTEENE (BE)</p> <p>CESI Mr JesusDaniel SANTOS (ES) Mr Tomasz KOGUC (EU)</p> <p>19 worker representatives (7 women, 12 men) (5EU, 3 EU-13, 10 EU-15, 1 Non-EU)</p>
<p><u>European Commission</u></p> <p>Ms Isabelle LAURENT (EMPL.A.2-European Social Dialogue) Vanessa Debiais-Sainton (EAC-B1 - Higher Education) Kinga Szuly (EAC-B1- Higher Education) Francesca Maltauro (EAC-B1- Higher Education) Maria Palladino (EAC-C1 - Innovation and EIT) Edward Ricketts (RTD-A5 - Better Regulation and Innovation Principle)</p>	