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# ETUCE

## European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

### **An appeal from the European higher education and research unions to defend Europe's scientific, humanities and academic potential**

*Submitted by the Standing Committee for Higher Education (HERSC) and approved by the ETUCE Committee on 13 – 14 October 2014*

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)<sup>1</sup> represents 129 unions in Europe, i.e. more than 11 million members from all levels of the education sector in 45 countries. Following the meeting of the Higher Education and Research Standing Committee of ETUCE on 9-10 October, the ETUCE Committee adopted the following appeal on 13-14 October 2014.

Higher education and Research has a central role to play in democracy and can make a vital contribution to developing and diffusing knowledge for the benefit of the future of graduates and the whole society, to solving the social, environmental and economic problems of our societies and to providing a critical analysis of society.

However, Higher education and Research are under increasing threat because the European-level and national policies aim at focusing on the short-term objectives of research, particularly on innovation and technological transfer, as the only responses to the economic crisis.

These policies are based on the management model of the private sector that implies a profit motive, a focus on the ideology of the market, and competitive funding for research institutes/bodies and staff.

These result in:

- precarious employment including short term, poor working conditions,
- the loss of academic freedom,
- the foundations of research being under attack.

Stable and secure scientific jobs are being reduced. Recruitment is drying up. Retirements are being pushed back. Precariousness is everywhere and young researchers and higher education teachers are the primary victims, with many being forced to turn their backs on an academic career. Europe's education and research potential is under threat and it will lead to a weakening of its research, and R&D, potential.

In line with the resolution "[Fighting the crisis, an essential contribution of Higher Education and Research](#)" adopted by the ETUCE conference in Budapest in 2012, ETUCE member organisations express their support for the demands and struggles of higher education and research employees emerging in different European countries to protect Higher Education and Research. These are becoming the victims of austerity policies, particularly in the countries of South, Central and Eastern Europe. Examples of actions of employees of the higher education and research institutes are: "Science en Marche" in

<sup>1</sup> *ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at the EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of Education International, the global federation of teacher unions.*

France, “Carta por la ciencia” and “Marea Roja” in Spain, “Per la scienza, per la cultura” in Italy, “Manifesto em favour do emprego científico” in Portugal, and “Scrisoare către Prim-ministrul Ponta” in Romania.

In accordance with the demands set out in our [Budapest resolution](#), we call the European Union institutions and each European country to take action for:

- Solidarity within the European Union and throughout Europe that will enable the balanced development of Higher Education and Research ;
- An ambitious, multi-year recruitment plan for Higher Education and Research staff based on secure employment as a prerequisite of quality education;
- A significant increase in core funding for Research Institutions/Bodies and Higher Education Institutions;
- A policy for the development of all areas of research, guaranteeing diversity in subjects and in approaches to research , the respect of research methods, together with appropriate time frames and academic freedom for individuals and higher education and research institutions;
- A policy of eliminating inequality, in particular gender-related inequality;
- The restoration and development of a democratic approach and a team spirit within Higher Education Institutions and Research Institutions/Bodies.

We call on all Higher Education and Research staff in our respective countries to mobilise for joint days or periods of action before the Ministerial Conference and Bologna Policy Forum in Yerevan on 14-15 May 2015.