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ETUCE

European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

European education community against the large scale violation of Turkish education employees' rights

ETUCE expresses its outright indignation to the recent unacceptable developments in Turkey. More than 15,000 Turkish education employees, among them EGITIM SEN members, have been dismissed from their duties by the Turkish government based on suspicions about their alleged involvement in the Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation (FETÖ). The Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK) has prohibited all academics from travelling abroad until further notice.

ETUCE urges the Turkish government to immediately cease its aggressive and repressive actions against Turkish citizens, in particular education employees. In the international arena and the European education community, teachers and their education trade unions strongly support and stand with their Turkish colleagues. The violation of human and fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression and speech and academic freedom is a crime against universal international legislation. Such acts undermine the values of European society that every country applying for EU membership should cultivate and promote. ETUCE reminds the Turkish government that these dictatorial and undemocratic activities have repercussions on children and young people in Turkey and their future life. Therefore the Turkish government's behaviour influences the future of the country as a whole. By repeatedly turning a deaf ear on the voice of society, the Turkish government undermines the education system and deprives children and young people from receiving high quality education. Moreover, it cultivates aggression, disrespect and misunderstandings and thus limits their capacities to build constructive dialogues.

On 5 July 2016, ETUCE already [called upon](#) its member organisations **to protest** together against the illicit abuse of power by the Turkish government that undermines democracy, justice and academic freedom in Turkey with a view to stop the investigation of the files of 25 academics, among them 15 EGITIM SEN members, for signing the peace statement 'We will not be a party to this crime'. On 13 July 2016 the investigation of the files of the Turkish academics by the Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK) foreseen on 20 July 2016 was postponed for an indefinite time.

Today, ETUCE and its member organisations are deeply dismayed and resent the escalating nature of the Turkish government's actions against the education sector, the people working therein as well as against students and children.

ETUCE and its member organisations believe that education is a public good. Therefore no government may nor should prevent its citizens from receiving education. Moreover, governments should support and guarantee the provision of high quality education in particular by respecting education employees' rights and freedoms, including the right to raise their voices.

ETUCE and its member organisations **urge** the Turkish government to:

- *cease all repressive actions* against Turkish education employees that are explicit acts of dictatorship and undemocratic behaviour;

- *respect and guarantee academic freedom and quality education for all* by involving education employees in all decisions concerning the education sector and recognising education trade unions as professional organisations;
- *guarantee the provision of education employees' decent working conditions* by putting an end to prosecution and dismissals of Turkish teachers and improving the work environment;
- *guarantee the development of a democratic society* by respecting human rights, fundamental freedoms such as the freedom of expression and speech and the rule of law and justice.

ETUCE and its member organisations across Europe advocate for high quality education and teachers' decent working conditions. The strong voice of the education community must not be ignored and neglected. As a government wishing to cultivate a democratic, open-minded and sustainable society, the Turkish government should respect the calls of millions of teachers and academics and show an example of democratic and fair governance.

ETUCE and its member organisations consider taking further immediate actions should the Turkish government continue to neglect demands of millions of education employees across Europe.



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**The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 131 Teacher Unions and 21 million teachers in 48 countries of Europe. 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.*