



# 3ª CONFERÊNCIA NACIONAL ENSINO SUPERIOR E INVESTIGAÇÃO

Afirmar o papel estratégico  
do Ensino Superior e da Ciência

Presentation to Fenprof 2011

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Thank you for the invitation

3 headlines:

Situation in DK

ETUCE statement

HERSC and the supportive environment

But before starting it is importance for me to say that the developments we have heard from Spain, Ireland and France are taking place in all European countries at the moment. Mergers, reduction of collegiality, focus on employability and marketisation is unfortunately the general agenda all over Europe - and it is in fact a global phenomenon.

Another observation on the basis of Jean Pauls speech is the fact of the growing importance of research in the developments of the modern society. We must take the need of the economy into consideration when we discuss developments in modern universities. So we need to find a balance which can protect the academic core at the same time as we take the new fact into consideration.

## **DK**

Not as deep economic crisis as here in Portugal, but also a high deficit on public budget. The crisis in Danish HE is rather because of ridiculous governance structures than because of lack of funding and reduction of public investment.

I strongly support the idea of creating an alternative view and a public debate on the economic policy. We have asked a group of economists to analyse the dynamic effects of public investments and they seem to be much higher than the effects of tax

cuts and stimulation of the private consumption. We need to establish research based arguments for an alternative development than the neo-liberal answer. I have several times heard media being nervous on whether the markets would have confidence in the ability of the politicians in Europe to create a solution to the economic crisis, but I have unfortunately never heard anyone expressing the opposite, whether we and the politicians we have elected can have the confidence in the solutions presented by the market who created the problems in the first place.

### **Debate in ETUCE**

A statement on the economic crisis was passed at the last meeting of the European Committee, last month.

The statement include the following paragraph, which I think also stress the importance of creating a public debate on alternative solutions:

"it is the duty of trade union organisations, in particular of the teachers, holding a special responsibility in society, to combat the right-wing populists parties taking advantage of the current climate of confusion to push their nationalist agenda. The ETUCE believes in a policy based on solidarity and fairness recognising the need for solutions to regulate the financial market avoiding a complete panic and destabilisation of the European economy."

And in the next paragraph it says:

"Education is not only facing the consequences of the crisis; it is facing the consequences of the lack of vision and courage of policymakers. We must assert yet again, that education as a core investment for the future of Europe is a key part of the solution to the economic crisis. Slashing education and other public services at this time is not only unfair and unhelpful: it is actually deepening the crisis and causing long-term damage to our economic prospects and the fabric of our societies. The economic crisis is being used in a number of countries to impose deeply ideological and controversial neo-conservative policies as if they were objective responses to crisis."

### **HERSC**

Most focused on the supportive environment which the ministers recognise the need for in the latest Bologna-communique. I understand that the chair of the accreditation agency who spoke yesterday was saying that there are no trade union involvement in the Bologna process. Well that is wrong as EI has been a consultative member since 2005 on the same basis as the students in ESU and the rectors in EUA.

The Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Declaration on the EHEA in March 2010, recognized the need for 'a more supportive environment for the staff to fulfill their tasks...' The staff unions welcomed this commitment, and we have prepared a paper which could explain the concrete initiatives needed.

We have identified 18 specific characteristics of the supportive environment, but in summary they are aimed at creating institutions and higher education systems based on:

- Collegiality
- Academic freedom
- Adequate and appropriate resources and infrastructure
- Professional development
- Institutional autonomy within a public sector paradigm

These key principles are essential to the sustainability and relevance of higher education and research and the achievement of the Bologna goals - they are rooted in the historic role of universities and their complex relationship to society, but they are NOT backward looking. Rather they are essentials for the continued capacity of the EHEA to fulfill the wide and complex range of the expectations – scientific, cultural, social and economic – which we go on placing on it.

Last, I will also mention the latest communication from the European Commission, on the so-called modernisation of European HE. The EC has a very narrow view of the mission of HE as only being the basis for enhanced competitiveness and make the European economy to recover from the crisis. It is of course true that knowledge is of growing importance in the economy and that the Labour market need a well educated workforce. But as mentioned before, the mission of universities is broader than this. We need a balance between the market and the academic core which is the base for critical thinking, intellectual challenges and blue sky basic research.

Allies in defending the basic values are the CoE, ESU and UNESCO.

We talk a lot about knowledge but what happened to wisdom?

Thank you!