



# ETUCE

## European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

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### **Statement by ETUCE on the situation in Portugal**

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The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), representing 141 teachers' organisations and 11 million individuals from 45 European countries, wishes to express its concern about the current situation in Portugal.

The ETUCE has received reports from its member organisations in Portugal that the government has decided not to implement some aspects of a collective agreement that was signed in 2010. Also, the government has determined to reduce teacher salaries significantly (as decided for other workers of the public sector), to decrease hours in the curriculum and to increase the number of students per class in VET courses. These measures, implying a significant degrading of teachers' working conditions, pose a severe threat to the Portuguese education system and will hinder Portugal in reaching its commitments within the Europe 2020 Strategy. Moreover, this move has been undertaken by the government without any consultation about those issues with the teacher organisations.

While understanding the necessity to tackle the public deficit, the ETUCE emphasizes the need to respect the collective bargaining system, and stresses that the choices to be made in implementing the cuts are critical and should not put the Portuguese education system at risk.

Within this context, the ETUCE,

- Having regard to the Directive 2002/14/CE from the EU Parliament and the Council of 11 March 2002 which establish a general framework for consulting employees in the European Community and invite the employers in the EU member states to consult the employees, including at a sectoral level, on any issue likely to impact on their working conditions;
- Having regard to the latest conclusions from the Council of the European Union on the role of education and training in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy (14 February 2011), stressing that *"Investing efficiently in high quality, modernised and reformed education and training is urgent because it will both lay the foundations for Europe's long-term prosperity and also, by providing people with more and better skills and competences, help to respond in the short term to the effects of the crisis"* (5505/11, I:1)
- Having regard to the Council Conclusions on the New Skills for New Jobs Communication (COM 2008 868), underlining the necessity of investments in education and training (9 March 2009);
- Having regard to the Joint Declaration from the European Social Partners in Education *"Investing in the Future"* (18 January 2011);

1. Urges the Portuguese government to implement the collective agreement that was signed in 2010, and to refrain from cutbacks in education;
2. Invites the Portuguese government to engage in a comprehensive and sustainable dialogue with the teachers' organisations, in all matters concerning teachers' working conditions and the education system as such, in order to find a collectively constructed solution to the current situation ;
3. Reiterates its full support for the Portuguese teachers and their trade union organisations FENPROF, FNE and SINDEP.

On behalf of the ETUCE,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ronnie Smith', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the bottom right.

Ronnie Smith,

President

**Brussels, 23 February 2011**