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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION  
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION

**Report on the first Training Seminar  
of the ETUCE and EFEE Project**  
***Social Partners Promoting Decent Workplaces  
for a Healthier Working Life***

**Madrid, 11 December 2015**



Egalement disponible en français sous le titre:

*Rapport du premier séminaire de formation du projet conjoint CSEE-EFEE 'Les partenaires sociaux favorisent des lieux de travail décents dans l'éducation*

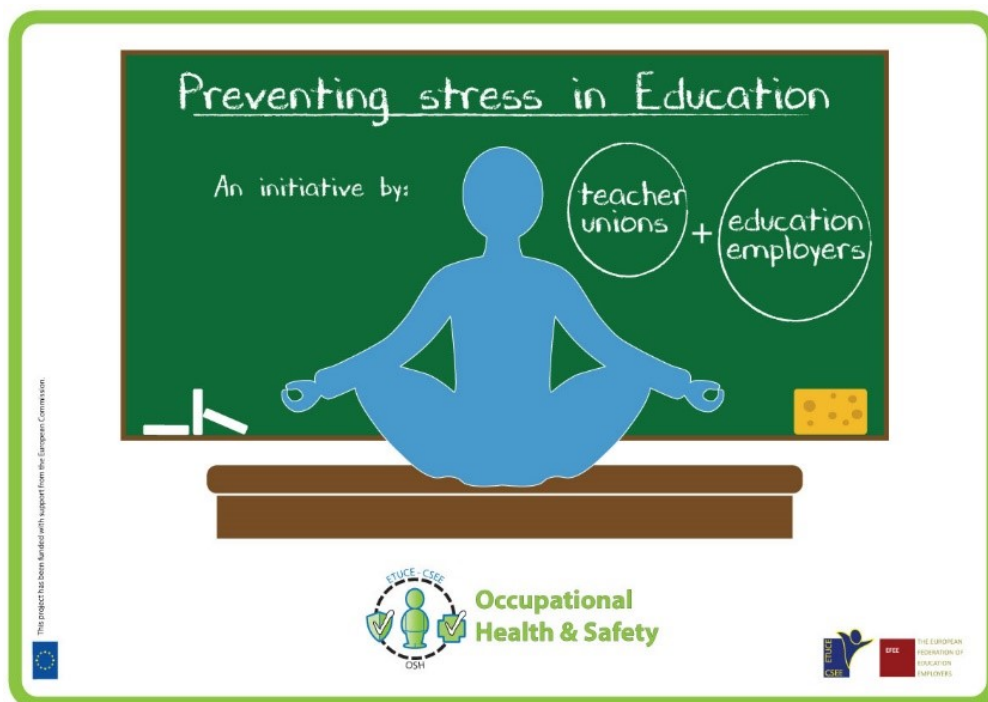
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## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Project Overview .....	5
3. Project description .....	6
4. Advisory Group.....	7
5. Aim of the Training Seminar .....	7
6. Presentations.....	7
6.1. <i>Addressing Risks of Psychosocial Hazards and Work-related Stress in Education – The European View</i> .....	8
6.2. <i>Main Results of the Research Project</i> .....	8
6.3. <i>Example from the Case Study in Romania</i> .....	9
6.4. <i>Example from the Case Study in Finland</i> .....	10
7. Working Group Sessions and Plenary Discussion.....	11
8. Abbreviations .....	13

## 1. Introduction

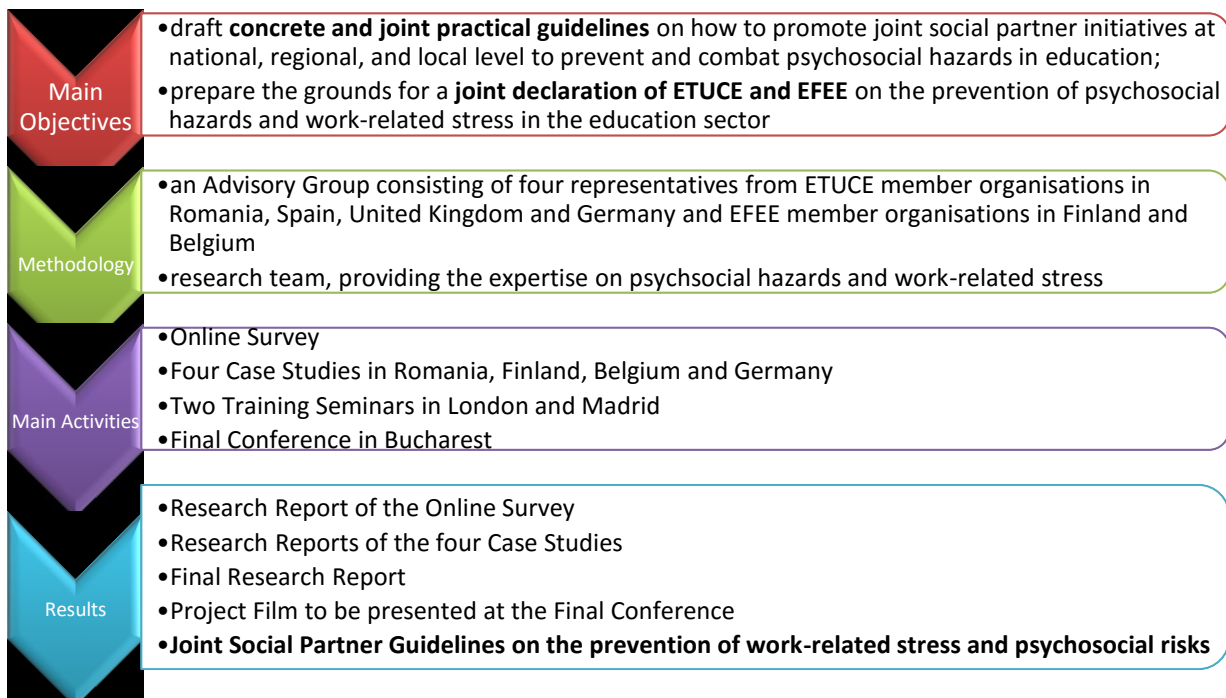
The first training seminar of the project *'Social Partner promoting Decent Workplaces in the Education Sector for a Healthier Working Life'* took place on 11 December 2015 in Madrid, Spain. The project seeks to identify concrete ways to prevent work-related stress and psychosocial hazards and to promote social partner initiatives at a national, regional and local level. The project follows up on the *EU Strategic Framework of Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020* and the *Joint Social Partner Commitment for a Healthier Working Life*, which both recognise the fact that work-related stress and psychosocial hazards have a negative impact on health and impose a significant financial burden on individuals, organisation and societies.

It is organised by the European Social Partner Organisations for the Education Sector ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee for Education) and EFEE (European Federation of Education Employers). The project acknowledges the special challenges and burdens that are faced by teachers, school leaders and education staff regarding psychosocial hazards, such as conflicts with third-party and high emotional demands. The project is carried out with the financial support of the European Commission.

The participants in the training seminar discussed, identified and commented on the basis of the outcomes of the presented project activities, ideas for joint social partner guidelines to prevent psychosocial hazards and work-related stress.

The guidelines will be further discussed at the second training seminar on 29 January 2016, in London, United Kingdom and at the Final Conference in June 2016 in Bucharest, Romania.

## 2. Project Overview



### 3. Project description

The project is carried out by ETUCE and EFEE, aiming to support teachers, school leaders and education staff on the prevention of psychosocial hazards and work-related stress. Work-related stress and psychosocial hazards is one of the most damaging hazards, which affects the health of both teachers and school leaders as the social partners in the education sector have recognised in previous projects.

The project is supported by a research team, which has carried out the online survey among member organisations of ETUCE and EFEE about steps taken to prevent psychosocial hazards. They have accompanied the study delegations in the case studies to Romania, Finland, Belgium and Germany. The aim of the case studies was to identify concrete measures to prevent psychosocial hazards and work-related stress. During the case studies, the study delegation has visited several primary and secondary schools, which are known for their good practice on psychosocial risk prevention. The teachers' and school leaders had the opportunity to present the measures they have implemented. Furthermore, the study delegations interviewed experts and representatives from teacher unions, employer organisations, health and safety inspectors, representative of local authorities and ministries. The outcome of the case studies is summarised in the case study reports, which are available in several languages, such as English, French, Romanian, Finish, German and Spanish. The film team accompanying the study delegations is preparing a project film. The film is to be presented at the final conference in June 2016 in Bucharest, Romania.

The projects' concrete objectives are to draft joint social partner guidelines on how to promote joint partner initiatives at national, regional and local level to prevent and combat psychosocial hazards in education. Ultimately, it aims to prepare the ground for a joint social partner declaration by ETUCE and EFEE on the prevention of psychosocial hazards and work-related stress in the education sector.



*Bianka Stege, General Secretary, EFEE*

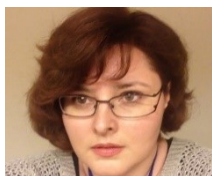
#### Project Specific Objectives

- Collect evidence on existing occupational health and safety legislation, social partner agreements and measures, and actions undertaken at school level as regards the prevention of psychosocial hazards and work-related stress in an online survey;
- identify in a series of case studies practical and concrete ways to prevent and combat work-related stress in education with a focus on joint social partner initiatives;
- further support the inclusion of preventive measures against psychosocial hazards and work-related stress in collective agreements in the education sector;
- support teacher unions and employers' organisations to become more pro-active in their national social dialogue structures when dealing with and setting up health & safety strategies in schools;
- support the debate on this topic in the European sectoral social dialogue committee in education;
- draft concrete and practical guidelines on how to promote joint social partner initiatives at national, regional, and local level to prevent and combat psychosocial hazards in education;
- prepare the ground for a joint declaration of ETUCE and EFEE on the prevention of psychosocial hazards and work-related stress in the education sector.



#### 4. Advisory Group

The advisory group is responsible for carrying out the planning, organisation and evaluation of the project. They provide their expertise according to the project requirements.



Alexandra Cornea, FSLE  
(ETUCE), Romania



Ute Foit, VBE (ETUCE),  
Germany



Stéphane Vanoirbeck,  
SEGeC, (EFEE), Belgium



Sarah Lyons, NUT (ETUCE),  
United Kingdom



Patricio Perez, F.E.CC.OO  
(ETUCE), Spain



Tari Aho, AFIEE (EFEE),  
Finland



#### 5. Aim of the Training Seminar

The first training seminar of the project addressed experts on social dialogue and occupational health and safety from ETUCE and EFEE member organisations from Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, FYROM, Greece, Italy, Luxemburg, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain and Turkey. They learned about the outcome of the online survey, the case studies carried out during the project and data compiled at European level regarding the prevention of psychosocial hazards. Special focus was given to the results of the case studies in Romania and Finland. Based on the project results and the participants' experience at national level they discussed and collected ideas to prevent psychosocial hazards.

#### 6. Presentations



Francisco Javier Gomez Garcia, Health & Safety Coordinator, STES-I; Fernando Alvarez, Health and Safety Coordinator, FETE-UGT; Francisco Javier Torres Fernández Health & Safety Coordinator CC.OO

**Bianka Stege, General Secretary of the EFEE**, opened the meeting and highlighted the importance of the prevention of psychosocial hazards for the education sector. **Fernando Alvarez, Health and Safety Coordinator, FETE-UGT**; **Francisco Javier Torres Fernández, Health & Safety Coordinator CC.OO** and **Francisco Javier Gomez Garcia, Health & Safety Coordinator, STES-I** gave opening speeches and emphasised the increasing burdens for teachers and school leaders in relation to psychosocial hazards and work-related stress.



## 6.1. Addressing Risks of Psychosocial Hazards and Work-related Stress in Education – The European View

**Tim Tregenza**, Network Manager of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU OSHA) presented information on psychosocial hazards and work-related stress in Europe, with a special focus on the education sector. He explained the measures implemented at European level to prevent occupational health and safety.

Work-related stress is defined as ‘demands at work, which are beyond the worker’s capacity to cope with’ and the negative outcomes can range from emotional to physical and mental ill-health. He explained the results of the European Survey of Enterprises on Emerging Risks (ESENER), which was carried out for the second time in 2014. In the education, health and social work sectors, employees and employers have to deal with difficult third-parties (pupils and parents), and long working hours. In the education sector are more procedures in place to deal with bullying and harassment and to prevent work-related stress compared to other sectors, such as IT and transport. He highlighted that it depends to a great extent, on the national governments whether there are plans and measures in place.



*Tim Tregenza is Network manager at EU OSHA.*

## 6.2. Main Results of the Research Project



*Clara Llorens is member of the research team accompanying the project.*

**Clara Llorens**, researcher at the institute ISTAS (Union Institute of Work, Environment and Health), presented the outcome of the online survey and the case studies.

She explained that 40 ETUCE and 19 EFEE member organisations participated in the online survey. The largest number of answers indicated that the success factors for a project are: ‘sufficient resources, cooperation of social partners and allocation of sufficient time’. Areas of the most successful initiatives were the collection of data on

teachers’ work-related stress, the reduction of job insecurity and the improvement of the relationship between teachers and parents.

During the case studies in Romania, Finland, Belgium and Germany eight schools were visited to interview teachers and school leaders. Furthermore, the study delegation interviewed representatives from ministries, local authorities, teacher unions and education employer organisations and health and safety inspectors. They were interviewed with a semi-structured questionnaire, which means that the researchers had only bullet points prepared as questions – allowing both the interviewer and interviewee to respond to previous questions and answers and to encourage a fluent conversation. The group and individual interviews encouraged the interviewees to speak openly about the measures they have implemented to prevent psychosocial hazards.

An overview of the results of case study reports is set out in the following table:<sup>1</sup>

	Case Study Romania	Case Study Finland	Case Study Belgium	Case Study Germany
<b>Risk factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unreasonable bureaucracy;</li> <li>• vast curriculum;</li> <li>• disproportionate class sizes</li> </ul>	high demands on teachers and school leaders (e.g. high expectations from parents, extra-curricular activities)	high turnover of teachers new to the profession (due to e.g. recruitment conditions, gap between teacher training and practice)	increasing demands due to school reforms – implemented with the same timeframe, same teacher training and not enough non-teaching staff
<b>Measures at National Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rebuilding national curricula;</li> <li>• reducing reporting bureaucracy;</li> <li>• Recruiting more teachers</li> </ul>	ensuring a safe learning environment (e.g. labour inspectorate, Social Partners developed information and mass training programmes)	E.g. granted ‘coloured’ hours for mentoring programmes; funded training to become a mentor, developing a toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• psychosocial risk assessment,</li> <li>• training activities for teachers/ school leaders;</li> <li>• ‘Education and Health programme’</li> </ul>
<b>Measures at School Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participative working teams;</li> <li>• peer learning for teachers;</li> <li>• arranging timetables to allow rest time</li> </ul>	E.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collegiate and co-operative leadership model,</li> <li>• integrating psychosocial risk prevention in schools’ everyday life process,</li> <li>• ICT and E-Mails replying rules</li> </ul>	mentorship programmes (support purpose, empowering, organising training and other activities)	E.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear distribution of work;</li> <li>• teaching oriented leadership;</li> <li>• participative working teams;</li> <li>• advanced training for school leaders and teachers</li> </ul>

### 6.3. Example from the Case Study in Romania

**Carmen Ioana Radu**, language teacher at the Princess Margaritha School in Bucharest in Romania presented the steps taken by her school to combat work-related stress. The primary and lower secondary school is situated at the border between two districts, with different economic and social backgrounds and has 1145 pupils and 72 teachers.

She explained that there are many stress factors for teachers and school leaders, such as, big class sizes, excessive paperwork and the budget cuts during the economic crisis.



*Carmen Iona Radu works as a language teacher and as a vice school leader at the Princess Margaritha School, Bucharest*

<sup>1</sup> The results of the case studies can be looked up in the case study reports on following website: <http://www.csee-etuice.org/en/policy-issues/teachers-health-and-safety/work-related-stress/932-social-partners-promoting-decent-workplaces-in-the-education-sector-2014-2015>

#### Measures taken to prevent work-related stress:

- **Team Work**
  - Colleagues exchange teaching tools and materials and support each other in case of problems with parents or pupils.
- **Active Committee for Health and Safety** (consists of school leader, union representative and other teachers, representative from the local authorities)
  - in every school there are obligatory committees for health and safety
- **Exchanges with European stakeholder and schools**
  - exchange programmes (e.g. with the Leonard DaVinci programme) for teachers;
  - organising an International Symposium to which International and European partners are invited;
- **Training Courses for Teachers**
  - the programmes are funded e.g. by the EU
- **Powerful Parents Association**
  - the association supports the teachers to provide decent learning/ teaching conditions;

#### 6.4. Example from the Case Study in Finland



*Patricio Perez is member of the project advisory group and member of the study delegation to Finland.*

**Patricio Perez**, representative of the ETUCE member organisation F.E.CC.OO and member of the study delegation of the case study to Finland presented the results of the Finish case study. Due to other obligations, it was not possible for teachers or school leaders from the Finish case study to participate in the training seminar. A representative from the Finish Teacher Union OAJ provided additional information regarding the prevention of psychosocial risks in Finland.

Although the Finish education system has many advantages for its employees, teachers and school leaders deal with certain risk factors. Due to the high standards in particular in the case study schools, they experience high demands, as they are faced with high expectations from parents and motivated students. Furthermore, the increasing communication demands with parents, teachers' and school leaders' high commitment to their jobs, the extracurricular demands, the pressure to adapt to continuous innovation and large schools in which teachers have rarely contact persons can all affect health.

#### Measures taken to prevent work-related stress:

- **High trust in teacher's abilities**
  - teachers and education staff can influence decision making processes
  - teachers are seen as experts in the education system
- **Team Work**
  - Subject Meetings in which teachers can share their teaching tools, materials and experience
- **Cooperative Leadership Model**
  - involving teachers, school leaders, education support staff in the decision making processes
  - the flat hierarchy enhances communication between colleagues

## 7. Working Group Sessions and Plenary Discussion

The working groups had to explain whether each organisation had developed a strategy to prevent psychosocial hazards in the education sector and discussed first ideas for joint social partner guidelines on the prevention of psychosocial hazards in education at European, national and local level. During the plenary discussion, they further debated their strategies and ideas for guidelines. The outcome of both are summarised thematically in the following chapters.

The participants highlighted that the **social dialogue model is one of the strengths of Europe**. Therefore, it should be supported and further developed. It is necessary to implement measures; therefore **different guidelines need to be adopted to the different decision levels, e.g. national authorities and schools**. The **communication is important** to ensure that the European level targets and addresses the challenges at national and local level. A proposal was to strengthen the collaboration among stakeholders in the education sector; **working groups with special focus on psychosocial hazards** at all levels should be set up. They could promote the importance of the prevention of work-related stress.

The guidelines should be **useful, practical and easy to be implemented**; otherwise, the member states/schools will not be able to implement them. **Good practice examples accompanying the guidelines** make them easier to implement and better to understand. As an example the guidelines can **propose measures of psychosocial risk assessment** (such as the COPSOQ-Questionnaire), as risk assessment in many countries is more focussed on physical risks.

As some member states have already implemented legislation on work-related stress, the **guidelines should be based on the occupational risk legislation** and not try to reinvent the topic. The national laws that exist in some European member states should be **transformed into action**.

The guidelines should enhance the **development of tools and instruments for the prevention of psychosocial hazards on the education sector** – to address the particular risks for the sector.

Furthermore, the guidelines should define **clear responsibilities and a clear timeframe**.

The status of the education sector should be strengthened in terms of the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Teachers and school leaders should **benefit from a high social status** in every European member state, as a higher recognition of their work would improve their working conditions.



The **role of health and safety inspectors** is important, as they are experts in the prevention of work-related stress and psychosocial hazards. The guidelines should therefore highlight and strengthen their role (especially in the education sector).

Schools could be supported by **educational support staff** (e.g. social workers), so that teachers are able to concentrate themselves on teaching. This means that **inclusive measures should be implemented with sufficient financial and personnel resources**, so that education institutions are not left alone to implement national laws.

It should be obligatory for teachers to have a **master degree**, so that they are not only trained content wise but also in terms of teaching tools and measures. During **initial teacher training, teachers should get prepared** for hazards they might face in their working life. More information about psychosocial hazards

would make it easier to address emerging risks and to provide guidance for colleagues on how and when to speak about these issues openly. This would also clarify the extent to which colleagues can be on sick leave, due to psychosocial illnesses. As in many cases, they are not recognised as such, with the **result that the affected people continue to work instead of seeking (medical) help.**



In daily working life, it is often difficult to address psychosocial hazards, as employees may fear the condescension of their colleagues or of their employers – in some case they might even be in danger of being fired. The guidelines should therefore emphasize a **working environment of trust**, in which teachers and school leaders are **able to talk about psychosocial hazards**. The importance of **team work** should be highlighted in the guidelines.

This would not only make it easier for teachers and school leaders to address problems openly, they can also **reduce workload** by exchanging teaching material and teaching tools.

Teachers could entrust themselves to trained mentors. **Mentorship programmes** can support new colleagues but also experienced colleagues who may need advice. These programmes should only be able to assist colleagues and not assess them, in order to avoid teachers being reluctant to accept help from mentors.

Furthermore, teachers and school leaders should have the opportunity to attend in continuous professional development with the focus on psychosocial hazards and work-related stress.

The guidelines should propose that schools implement **clear rules and times for teachers and school leaders when dealing with third parties** (e.g. pupils and parents). This would make sure that rest time and working time is strictly separated. Although parents can be a source of work-related stress, they can also support the work of teachers and school leaders. It is therefore important to **help parents recognise the hazards of work-related stress and include them in the prevention.**

Education staff needs places to prepare and follow up on school lessons, to relax and to exchange thoughts with colleagues in their school. **Staff rooms** improve their well-being, schools should therefore establish such rooms.

## 8. Abbreviations

CC.OO	Comisiones Obreras
EFEE	European Federation of Education Employer
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education
F.E.CC.OO	Federación de Enseñanza Comisiones Obreras
FSLE	Fédération des Syndicats Libres de l'Enseignement
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OAJ	Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö
SeGEC	Secrétariat Général de l'Enseignement Catholique
SPs	Social Partners
VBE	Verbund Bildung und Erziehung
WRS	work-related stress







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