

Report on EI/ETUCE¹ Seminar on Teacher Education

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Bled, Slovenia

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This seminar on the future of teacher education (TE) in Europe closely followed meetings between EU education ministers and ETUCE officials in which the ministers agreed for the first time that TE should be considered within the framework of higher education, and in accordance with the Bologna agreement. In other words, entry to the teaching profession should in the future be accredited at master's level. While this principle has yet to be agreed by the EU commission, a number of European countries are already building towards the model. The case for TE at master's level was outlined in an opening address by Professor Ingid Cargren, Stockholm Institute of Education.

The primary purpose of the seminar was to discuss a draft of the ETUCE policy paper 'Teacher Education in Europe' (circulated to IFUT Council and branches in February 2008). Among the themes explored were: European TE policy; initial TE with particular emphasis on the aspiration towards master's level entry to the profession; the role of teacher educators; recruitment and retention of teachers; teachers' CPD; TE and today's society.

The seminar was attended by representatives of national teacher unions at primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Irish representatives included Angela Dunne and Deirbhile Nic Craith, INTO and JOF for IFUT). An overall increase in the number of delegates from university teachers' unions was noted and welcomed. An important subtheme to emerge from the seminar was the importance of increased dialogue and cooperation between teachers and teacher educators. Issues of partnership and examples of good practice in this regard were explored in separate presentations by Professor Marco Snoek, Amsterdam Insititue of Education and Professor Kari Smith, University of Bergen.

The seminar divided into different groups to consider in detail the contents of different sections of the draft report. At a plenary session, delegates were invited to make further proposed amendment via email. It was anticipated that the policy paper for ETUCE and its affiliates will be completed following the next ETUCE executive meeting in April 2008. The policy paper may also be published as a public document, as an interest in its contents has been expressed by the EU Commission.

John O'Flynn

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¹ Education International/European Trade Union Committee for Education