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European Trade Union Committee for Education

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EI/ETUCE support ZNP in its demand for introduction of sex education and diversity in Polish education

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On 3 October 2016, thousands of women, among them many women teachers, took to the streets of Poland dressed in black in a nationwide “Black Monday” strike to protest against a new legislative proposal to ban abortion, thereby limiting women’s human rights in Poland.

In the previous week, Polish Members of Parliament had rejected a proposal to liberalise Polish abortion laws, submitting instead a proposal to completely ban abortion in the country. The penalties stipulated in the proposed law include a five-year prison sentence for women who abort.

As a signatory of the “Agreement to promote sex education for children and youth”, the Polish Teacher Union Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego (ZNP), one of EI/ETUCE’s member organisations in Poland, has been demanding the introduction of modern sex education in Polish schools for many years. The Agreement highlights *the introduction of sex education in schools that is universal, diligent, neutral from the point of view of the world and adapted to the age of the child*. The document also states *that sex education programmes should promote an assertive attitude and self-confident partnerships. In addition, it shows concern for all sex education programmes in public schools to be mainstreamed within a pluralist teaching model and demands that more professionals receive training to enable them to teach sex education [...]”*.

EI/ETUCE express their strong support of ZNP and its members, as well as the students and parents who participated in the recent protest. EI/ETUCE stand together with all those who were not afraid to raise their voice. Abolishing abortion would seriously breach women’s human rights, thereby undermining and violating the principles of non-discrimination and equality that are also inherent in the [EU Strategic Engagement on Equality between Women and Men](#) and integral to the spirit and content of quality education for all (as envisaged by Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals).

As social partners in the education sector, education trade unions should be committed to the introduction of sex education in schools. *“Schools should not only reflect but celebrate society’s diversity. Teachers and other members of school communities need to learn from each other. This can be done by improving the contents of curricula and textbooks, removing embedded gender and other stereotypes, and through improving organisational structures of schools [...]”* states the Joint ETUCE-ETUC-ILGA Statement against Homophobic bullying.

EI/ETUCE and its member organisations in particular advocate for high quality education, diversity and equality in the school community. The Polish Government should support the pillars of modern European society and together with other stakeholders in education, promote the introduction of sex education as a tool for developing a diverse, equal and open-minded generation that enjoys the right to think critically, and to take decisions freely.



5, Bd du Roi Albert II, 9th

1210 Brussels, Belgium

Tel +32 2 224 06 91/92

Fax +32 2 224 06 94

secretariat@csee-etuice.org

<http://www.csee-etuice.org>

European Director

Martin RØMER