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Pan-European Structure

STATEMENT BY EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL AND ETUCE ON THE SITUATION IN ROMANIA

Brussels, 29 April 2009

The Pan-European Structure (PES) of Education International, which includes 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 Romania.

The Romanian authorities recently announced their intention to cut public expenditure by 1% of GDP in order to fulfil the requirements of the International Monetary Fund to access support funding. Though this decision builds upon the necessity to tackle public deficit, the choices to be made in implementing the cuts are critical.

Within this context, the PES:

- Having regard to the Education policy coordinated at the European Union level since 2000 under the overall Lisbon Strategy;
 - Having regard to the latest key messages on Education and Training issued by the Council of the European Union (19 February 09, 6666/09), stating notably that *"It is precisely in times of economic difficulty that the key strategic importance of sustaining open and efficient, high-quality education and training systems(...) must continue to be emphasised."*;
 - Having regard to the latest EU Presidency's Conclusions from the Council of the European Union (19/20 March 09), which has confirmed the priority given to appropriate investments in education (7880/09: 16);
 - Whereas decent working conditions and opportunities for career development for teachers are broadly recognized as a requirement for a high-quality education system;
 - Whereas any policy impacting on the teachers' working conditions has to be collectively negotiated with the teachers' organisations;
 - Whereas the current economic crisis results from a combination of egotistic and dangerous behaviours among the private financial and business world and the laissez-faire policy of national governments;
 - Whereas the national efforts to reduce the public deficit and fulfil the IMF requirements for accessing support funding have to be shared by all actors in the economy, first in line being those who led the economy into the crisis;
1. Urges the Romanian government to avoid any budget cut that would endanger the education system and the teachers' working conditions;
 2. Invites the Romanian government and the other employers' organisations in education in Romania to engage in a comprehensive and sustainable dialogue with the teachers' organisations covering all aspects of teachers' working conditions;

3. Calls on the Romanian government to coordinate the national budget reduction effort along with the social partners in all sectors in order to spread the burden of the collective cost of the crisis;
4. Reiterates its full support for the Romanian teachers and their trade-union organisations FSLE, FSI "SPIRU HARET", ALMA-MATER and FEN-Romania.

On behalf of the Pan-European Structure,

Ronnie Smith

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronnie Smith", with a horizontal line extending from the bottom right of the signature.

President