

asked to submit progress reports which later will form the basis for the elaboration of the Commission's and the Council's Joint 2008 Progress Report on the Education and Training 2010 process.

The National Progress Reports are in this sense a matter of great importance and teacher unions' involvement in the elaboration of these reports is crucial in order to capture the full picture of the progress achieved. The European Council Spring Summit 8-9 March 2007 underlined *'the key role of social partners and the necessity of their ongoing and active contribution towards the Lisbon objectives.'* Unfortunately the social partner involvement is not a matter of course in all Member States and ETUCE encourages its member organisations to keep seeking influence on the elaboration on the reports by requesting governments to enter into a dialogue on this issue.

Autonomous Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work



The European Social Partners: UNICE, CEEP, UEAPME and the ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC) concluded on their negotiations on an autonomous framework agreement on harassment and violence at work on 15th December 2006. ETUCE participated in these negotiations as part of the ETUC negotiation team and has pushed for a clear text incorporating the situation with student/pupils' violence against teachers (violence by a third party). Negotiations have been difficult on this issue as the different negotiation parties had different mandates.

Despite the sometimes tough negotiations, a concrete framework agreement has now been reached. Although the framework agreement does not fully respond to ETUCE's concerns in the education sector in relation to the issue of harassment and violence at the work place by third parties, ETUCE strongly supports the framework, in particular as it has the potential to bring about improvements in countries where harassment and violence at work is not yet recognised as an issue to be put on the agenda of the national social dialogue.

Dealing with harassment and violence at work

The aim of the framework agreement is dual: to increase the awareness and understanding of employers, workers and their representatives of workplace harassment and violence, and to provide them with an action-oriented framework to identify, prevent and manage problems of harassment and violence at work.

The issue of workplace harassment and violence is then a mutual concern of both employers and workers and the dealing with the problem is a shared responsibility. In a number of countries, this will be a decisive step forward in addressing this issue as the employers are

given a co-responsibility for tackling violence and harassment at work. Another step forward is the fact that it is recognised that trade unions should be involved in solving the problems at all stages.

To address the problem, the agreement emphasises that awareness-raising measures and appropriate training of managers and workers are crucial in order to reduce the likelihood of harassment and violence at work. According to the framework agreement, enterprises need a clear statement outlining some guidelines for procedures to be followed where cases of harassment and violence arise. Such procedures should ensure that all parties involved will get an impartial hearing and fair treatment, that the necessary discretion to protect the dignity and privacy of all is kept, that complaints will be dealt with without undue delay and that the victim will receive support and help with reintegration if necessary.

Harassment and violence from third parties

As harassment and violence at work can take many different forms, some may be more easily identified than others, the framework agreement outlines some definitions. Harassment occurs when one is repeatedly and deliberately abused, threatened and/or humiliated in circumstances related to work while violence occurs when one is assaulted in circumstances related to work. The definitions mainly address the workers and managers at workplaces.

Different forms of harassment and violence at work can be described as:

- physical, psychological and sexual;
- incidents or more systematic patterns of behaviour;
- taking place amongst colleagues, between superiors and subordinates or by third parties such as clients, customers, patients, pupils etc;
- ranging from minor cases of disrespect to more serious acts.

The question of violence from third parties is not excluded from the framework agreement but is not thoroughly dealt with either. When implementing the agreement at national level, the national social partners are able to conclude both cross-sectoral and sectoral agreements complementing the framework agreement in a manner which takes note of the specific needs of the social partners concerned. This gives the national social partners the opportunity to further include the aspect of violence from third parties when they implement the agreement nationally, and ETUCE also encourages its member organisations to take the issue of violence from third parties into account in their national implementation of the framework agreement.

Implementation of the framework agreement

The framework agreement commits the members of UNICE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC) to implement it in accordance with the procedures and practices specific to

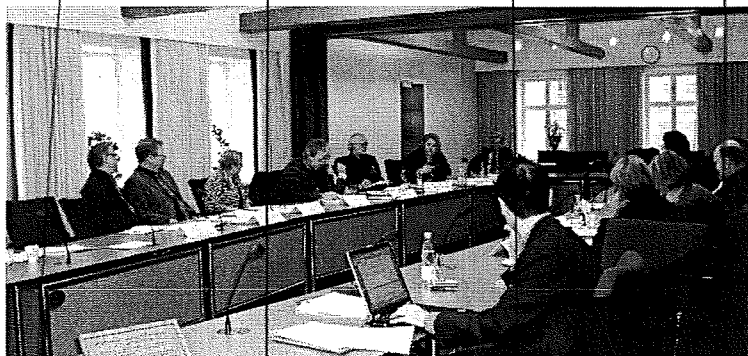
management and labour in the national context. The exact implementation of the agreement will be carried out within three years.

At the EI/ETUCE bureau meeting on 12 March 2007 it was decided that ETUCE will support the framework agreement. The ETUC Executive Committee adopted the framework agreement at their meeting on 20-21 March 2007.

[Read the entire Framework Agreement](#)

ETUCE Social Dialogue Conference on 4-5 June 2007

The work towards establishing a sectoral social dialogue in education is well in progress. The series of ETUCE regional seminars on the theme "Towards a European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education", launched in the autumn of 2006 in Central and Eastern Europe, has now entered its second phase with four seminars organised in the spring of 2007 in Western and Southern Europe.



Two regional seminars have already been held in Copenhagen on 1 March and in Brussels on 19 March, gathering teacher unions and employers' representatives from respectively the Nordic countries, the Benelux, and France. Two additional regional seminars will be held in Malta on 20 April and Berlin on 23 April, gathering social partner representatives from respectively Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Malta and Croatia and from the UK, Germany, Austria and Ireland.

This phase of the process will be concluded with a Status Conference welcoming both employers and teacher unions from all EU and EFTA countries in Brussels on 4-5 June 2007. The aim of the conference is to gather everyone involved in the process and take stock of progress so far towards the establishment of a sectoral social dialogue in education.

The ETUCE Executive Board in April is expected to discuss new developments and mandates for the process to continue into a more concrete phase in autumn 2007.

All information about ETUCE's social dialogue process is available on the dedicated website www.edu-dialogue.eu