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To: DOE, ETUCE member organisation in Greece

Brussels, 31 October 2017

Ref.: SF/vd/9918

Subject: ETUCE supports DOE in its fight for two-year public, free and compulsory early childhood education for all

Dear colleagues,

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 132 Education Trade Unions and 11 million teachers and education personnel in 50 countries of Europe. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of Education International, the global federation of education trade unions.

With this letter, ETUCE reconfirms its solidarity and support with you, who have been calling for the implementation of two-year public, free and compulsory early childhood education, and the enrollment of all children aged 4 to 5 years in public kindergartens in Greece.

ETUCE appreciates your efforts that have resulted in the Greek government's decision to respond to your demands and to introduce one year compulsory schooling as from 5 year old children in kindergartens in 2006.

However, it is with great concern that we note that thousands of children aged 2 to 3,5 years are excluded from public early childhood education and care. ETUCE is particularly worried about the fact that around 8,000 children of this age range have been out of kindergarten and nurseries in 2017.

ETUCE recalls that the ET2020 Strategic framework which is approved by all EU member states requires *at least 95% of children between the age of four and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education.*

ETUCE underlines that [...] "Education is a human right and a public good; it must be publicly funded and accessible to all. ETUCE advocates for an [ECE](#) curriculum or framework that is holistic and designed to meet the educational, developmental, nutritional, health and individual needs of children. Such a curriculum should be flexible and put the child at the centre of the learning and developmental process, valuing all kinds of activities that contribute to physical, psychomotor, cognitive, social and affective development" [...].

Together with you, ETUCE strongly believes that both individual and group learning experiences in public kindergartens that children gain in an organised education context of early childhood education creates the right conditions for their smooth transition to primary school. According to the [Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow](#), which were also adopted by the Greek Ministry of Education in 2011, ECE has a positive influence on

personal, social and learning progress of children. Early childhood education is essential to their school success, a better professional and social life and their future as a whole.

Acknowledging that education is a national competence and welcoming the Greek government's decision taken early in 2006, together with you ETUCE calls on the Greek authorities to invite you to the negotiating table in order to find a beneficial solution for the country.

It is under every governments responsibilities and duties to ensure the right and access to education for all starting from early childhood education and continuing with life-long learning strategies. We request that government officials relaunch negotiations for the sake of future generations in Greece.

ETUCE will continue to closely monitor the situation as well as supporting you.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Flocken". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Flocken
European Director