Education trade unions in times of COVID-19 and beyond

Overview of responses to the ETUCE Survey
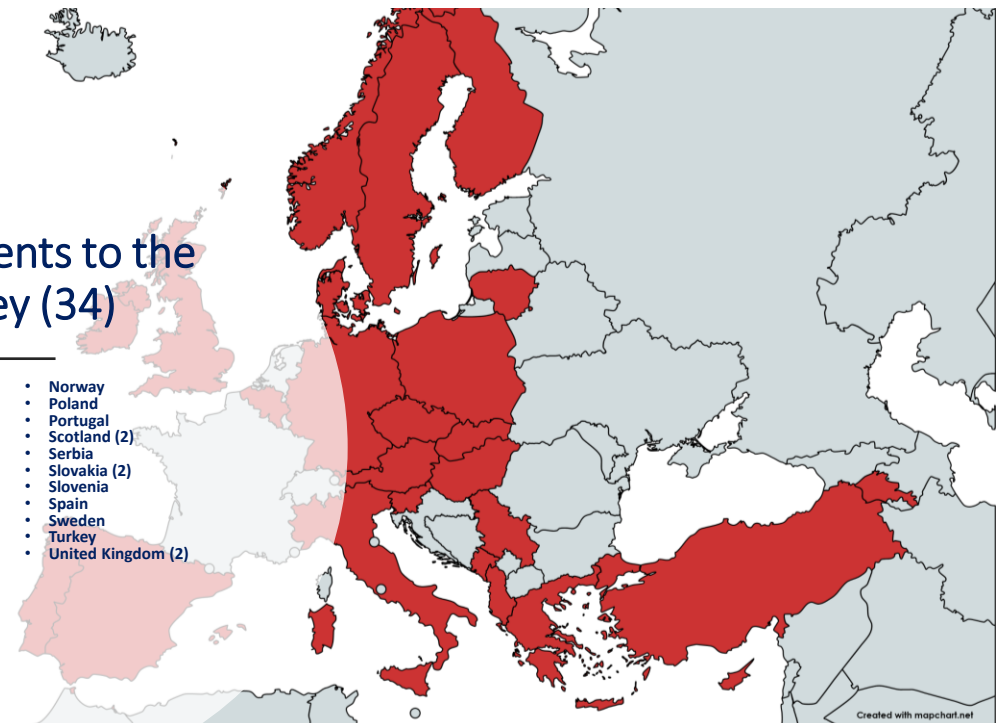
12 March 2021

1

Respondents to the survey (34)

- Albania
- Armenia
- Austria
- Belgium
- Cyprus (3)
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Finland
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland (3)
- Italy (2)
- Lithuania
- Montenegro
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Scotland (2)
- Serbia
- Slovakia (2)
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Turkey
- United Kingdom (2)

Created with mapchart.net
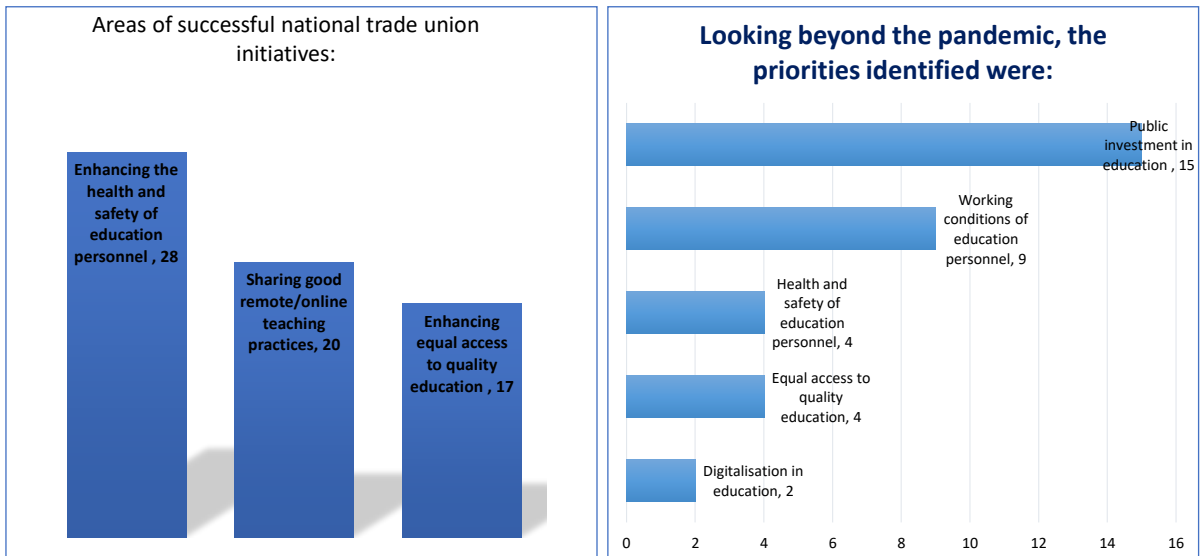
2

Schools closures: State of play

As of February 2021, respondents indicated that education, in their countries was:

- Taking place **partially** remotely (21)
- Taking place **entirely** remotely (6)

	Taking place partially remotely	Taking place entirely remotely
Respondents indicated that education was taking place in their countries:	27	7
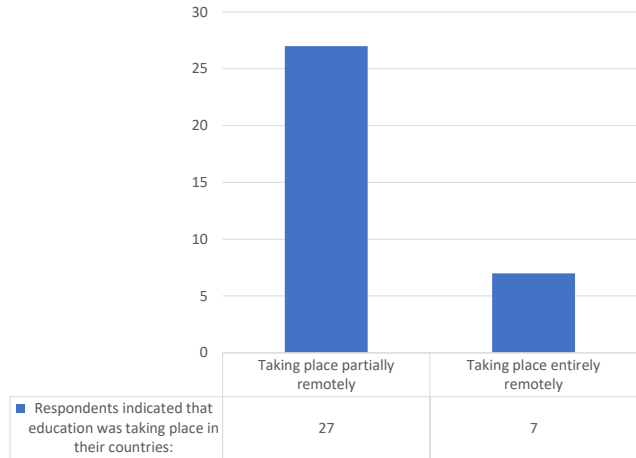
3

Experiences of national trade unions during the pandemic and beyond

Areas of successful national trade union initiatives:

Enhancing the health and safety of education personnel , 28

Sharing good remote/online teaching practices, 20

Enhancing equal access to quality education , 17

Looking beyond the pandemic, the priorities identified were:

Public investment in education , 15

Working conditions of education personnel, 9

Health and safety of education personnel, 4

Equal access to quality education, 4

Digitalisation in education, 2

4

How can ETUCE best support the work of national member organisations?

Pie chart:
- Sharing information about sister organisations' actions throughout the pandemic 40%
- Organising experiences sharing events among member organisations 29%
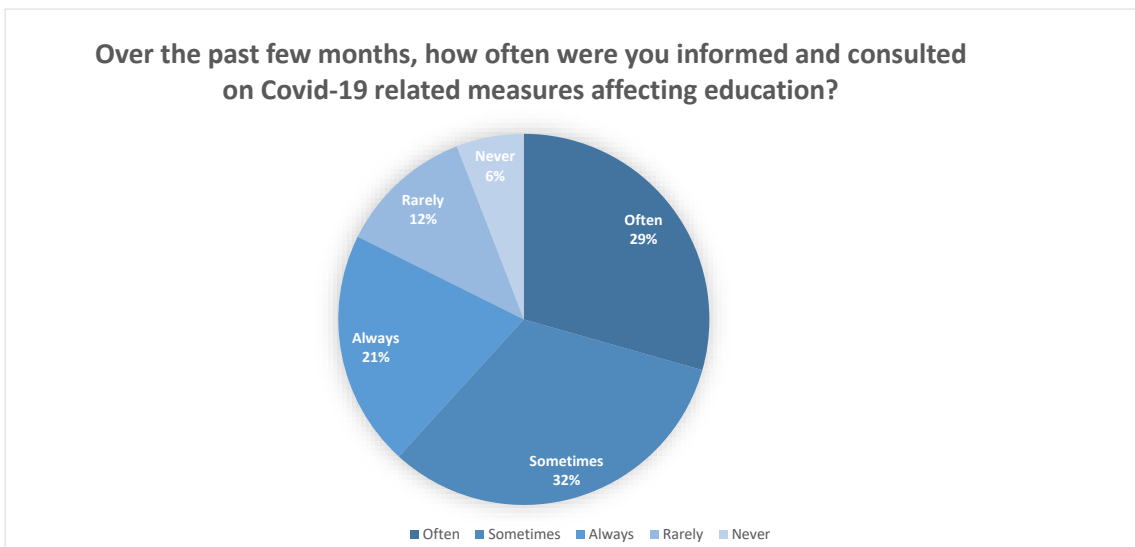- Updates on policy developments at European level 23%
- Other 8%
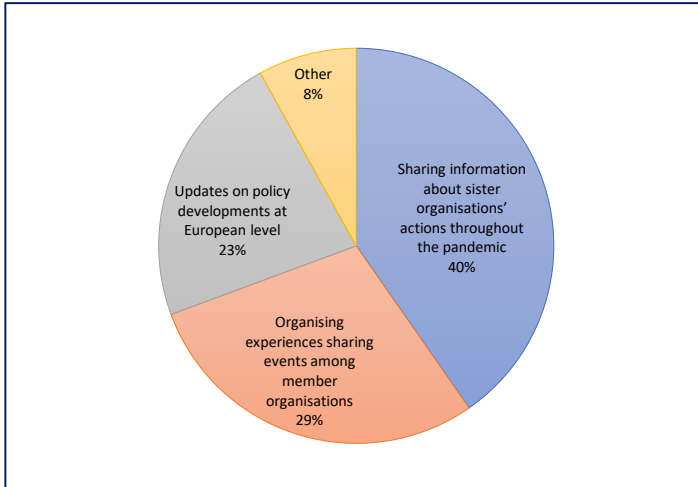
Other responses included:

- Lobbying at European level for **stricter regulations on safety measures in workplaces**; **coordinating union activities** on multinational private education firms.
- **Advocating** to the European Commission for **priority access to vaccination for education personnel**
- Addressing the topics of **digitalisation in education**, **working conditions** of education personnel, **increased workload** of teachers in recent years, **Health and safety** of education personnel, and **equity of access to quality education.**

5

Information and consultation of national education trade unions on Covid-19 related measures

Over the past few months, how often were you informed and consulted on Covid-19 related measures affecting education?

Pie chart:
- Often 29%
- Sometimes 32%
- Always 21%
- Rarely 12%
- Never 6%

■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Always ■ Rarely ■ Never

6

Areas of focus of national social dialogue – Working conditions

Concerning working conditions, on which of the following areas did national social dialogue mainly focus
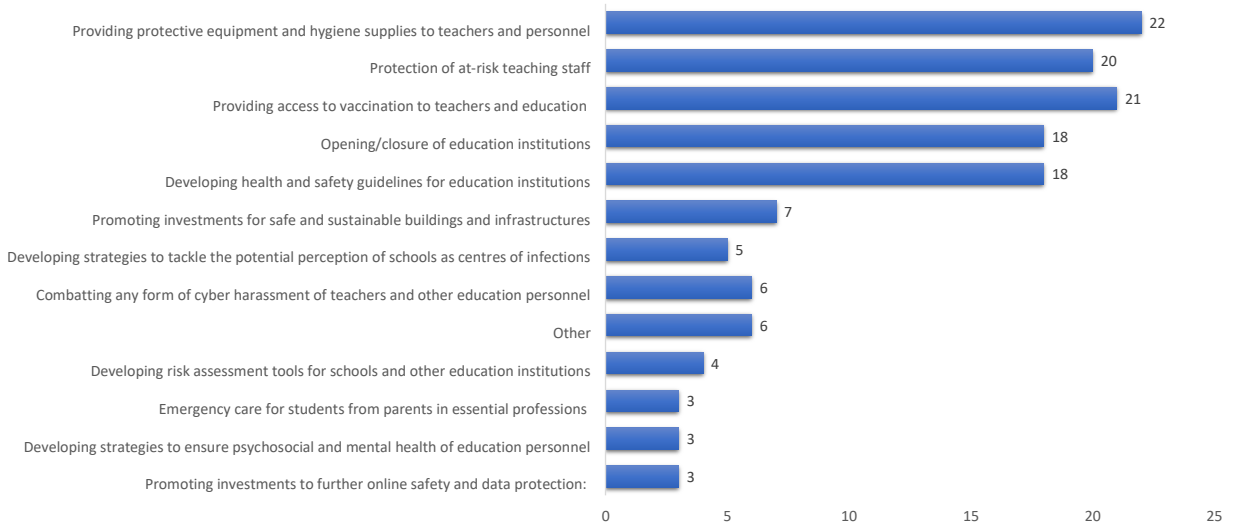
Area	Value
Increased workload	18
Virtual/hybrid working environment	16
Shortage of teachers	12
Other	9
Work life balance/right to disconnect	8
Recruiting education support personnel	5
Shift of holiday/working time	4
Gender segregation/extra burdens for teachers with caregiving responsibilities in families	2
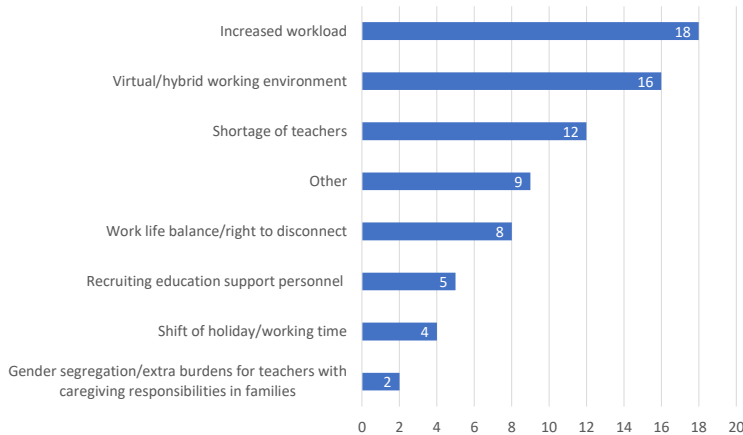
Other responses included:

- **Increased workload for teachers** working virtually and **Additional time** needed for **preparing work**, **marking** and **preparing feedback for pupils** (Scotland)
- **Insufficient provision of health and safety protection tools** for employees, **Late and confusing announcement** of measures, **Discriminatory approach** at introduction of measures related to re-opening of schools (Slovakia)
- Campaigning for **teachers and school staff vaccination** (UK, Poland)
- **Safe reopening of schools** and other education institutions, **Access to devices and broadband** for both teachers and pupils, Health and safety of **pregnant teachery, Priority vaccination** for teachers (Ireland)
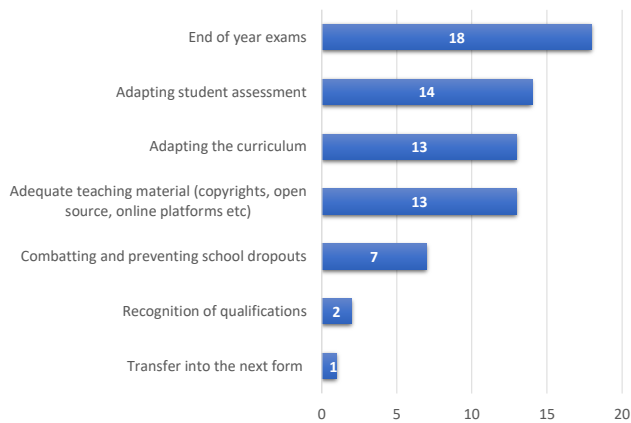
7

Areas of focus of national social dialogue – Occupational Health and Safety

Area	Value
Providing protective equipment and hygiene supplies to teachers and personnel	22
Protection of at-risk teaching staff	20
Providing access to vaccination to teachers and education	21
Opening/closure of education institutions	18
Developing health and safety guidelines for education institutions	18
Promoting investments for safe and sustainable buildings and infrastructures	7
Developing strategies to tackle the potential perception of schools as centres of infections	5
Combatting any form of cyber harassment of teachers and other education personnel	6
Other	6
Developing risk assessment tools for schools and other education institutions	4
Emergency care for students from parents in essential professions	3
Developing strategies to ensure psychosocial and mental health of education personnel	3
Promoting investments to further online safety and data protection:	3

8

Areas of focus of national social dialogue – Professional issues and professional development

End of year exams — 18
Adapting student assessment — 14
Adapting the curriculum — 13
Adequate teaching material (copyrights, open source, online platforms etc) — 13
Combatting and preventing school dropouts — 7
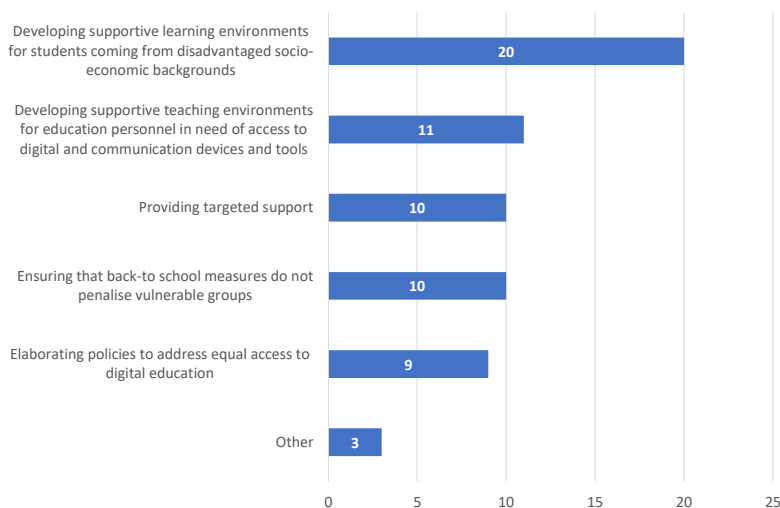Recognition of qualifications — 2
Transfer into the next form — 1

Concerning professional development, areas of focus or concerns included:

- New digital online resources, TV streaming, webinars, however, **without dialogue and implemented partially** (Spain)
- Lack of **centralised professional development** (Scotland)
- Need for Investment **in infrastructure to ensure equity of access and increase teachers' competence and confidence** in using technology in an ever-increasing digital world (Ireland)
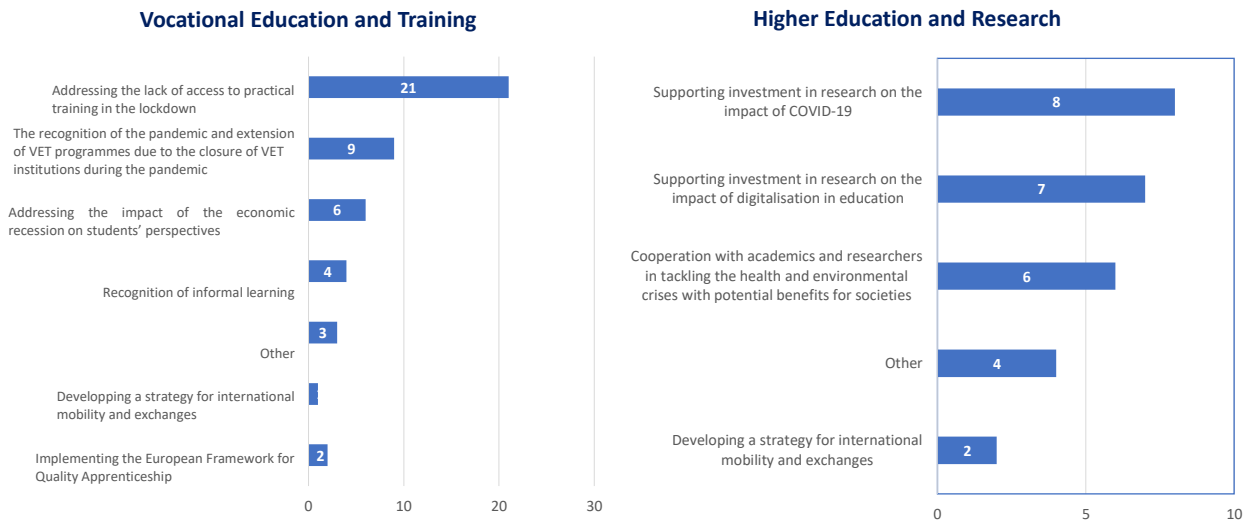
9

Areas of focus of national social dialogue – equality and inclusion

Developing supportive learning environments for students coming from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds — 20
Developing supportive teaching environments for education personnel in need of access to digital and communication devices and tools — 11
Providing targeted support — 10
Ensuring that back-to school measures do not penalise vulnerable groups — 10
Elaborating policies to address equal access to digital education — 9
Other — 3

Other areas of focus included **additional support for children with special education needs** and/or those who failed to engage with remote learning and therefore regressed during the period of school closure, **providing equipment and devices to all students** with various local groups collaborating to deliver devices to children and young people without access to devices (Ireland)

10

5

Areas of focus of national social dialogue – Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education and Research

Vocational Education and Training

Addressing the lack of access to practical training in the lockdown	21
The recognition of the pandemic and extension of VET programmes due to the closure of VET institutions during the pandemic	9
Addressing the impact of the economic recession on students' perspectives	6
Recognition of informal learning	4
Other	3
Developing a strategy for international mobility and exchanges	1
Implementing the European Framework for Quality Apprenticeship	2

Higher Education and Research

Supporting investment in research on the impact of COVID-19	8
Supporting investment in research on the impact of digitalisation in education	7
Cooperation with academics and researchers in tackling the health and environmental crises with potential benefits for societies	6
Other	4
Developing a strategy for international mobility and exchanges	2

11

Priorities identified to be addressed within national social dialogue structures in the next few months, regarding Covid-19 related measures

- **Investment in education and education recovery:** Education Recovery Plans, Investment in teacher employment and training, Addressing the impact of the economic recession on students' perspectives, public investments in quality education infrastructure including working and salary conditions of employees, Hiring emergency contingent of education personnel;

- **Working conditions of teachers, including:** Recognition of additional workload of education personnel and adequate remuneration, Work-life balance, Right to disconnect, Stress, Cyber safety, Stability of interim teaching staff, improvement of working conditions of VET teachers, Class sizes, Shortages of teachers;

- **Equal access to quality education for all, including:** Tackling early school drop-outs, providing access and equipment to all the students, Addressing vulnerable groups and socio-economically disadvantaged pupils, support to close the gap that has widened between students during the last year;

- **Health and safety, during and beyond the pandemic, including:** Vaccination programmes for education workers, Support for the Mental health and wellbeing of teachers and pupils, professional development for teachers in the area of wellbeing, social, personal and health education, risk assessment with the involvement of employee representatives;

- **Digitalisation in education, including:** increased investment in digital infrastructure and broadband, initial digital training and continuous professional development for teachers, Supporting education personnel with digital tools, resources and equipment, Ethical use of data and AI, Free and open source technologies available to teachers and students, independent from private ed-tech companies.

12