

DRAFT Resolution

Defending higher education and research in an age of crises

Submitted for Adoption by the ETUCE Committee to the ETUCE Conference, the Regional Conference of Education International, on 26-27 November 2024

Further to and consistent with the Resolutions adopted by the [9th and 10th EI Congress](#) in Buenos Aires in 2024, the [Resolutions](#) adopted by the ETUCE Conference in 2020, the ETUCE Extraordinary Conference in 2021, and the ETUCE Special Conference in Liège in 2022, this ETUCE Conference:

Notes with concern that:

1. The cost-of-living crisis and pressures caused by the digitalisation and green transition of society have accelerated calls for higher education and research (HER) to prioritise labour market outcomes and links with the private sector.
2. Sufficient, long-term and predictable core public funding for HER is being superseded by funding that is short-term, competitive and unpredictable, while peer review of teaching and research is being displaced by quantitative metrics and 'accountability' measures. Such policies are fuelling the rise in short-termism and precarious employment, contributing to the erosion of academic freedom and threatening the quality of HER.
3. The costs of studying (i.e. learning material and higher tuition fees) and living costs for both national and international students and staff are limiting equal access to higher education institutions and increasing early drop out without graduation, thus creating greater social inequalities.
4. Increased political and ideological attacks on academics and higher education and research institutions are restricting essential freedoms to teach and research and undermining academic freedom, institutional autonomy, the self-governance of higher education teaching personnel and academic integrity.

- 35 5. Rising nationalism is making it much harder for international students and staff to study and
36 work in HER in Europe.
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38 6. Digitalisation, automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are developing at pace in the higher
39 education sector, with significant implications for academic job roles, and for intellectual
40 property rights, privacy, infrastructure and public responsibility.
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42 7. The continuing erosion of meaningful collective bargaining and social dialogue has
43 contributed to further salary erosion, as well as greater workloads, pay inequalities, precarity
44 and job insecurity in HER.
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47 **Calls on ETUCE and member organisations:**

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49 1. To demand increased public investment as a pre-requisite for quality and inclusive higher
50 education and research and to oppose cuts to higher education and research budgets.
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52 2. To advocate equal cooperation between higher education and research institutions and the
53 labour market and to challenge attempts by governments and companies to fund a limited
54 range of disciplines and research projects.
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56 3. To ensure that the protection and promotion of academic freedom and other fundamental
57 values such as institutional autonomy and staff and student participation in governance is
58 central to HER in Europe.
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60 4. To highlight the essential role of HER in strengthening democracy, fighting against hate speech
61 and violence, and contributing to peace and environmental sustainability.
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63 5. To push for meaningful collective bargaining and social dialogue at the national and European
64 level, including in developing areas like the digital and green transitions.
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66 6. To ensure a strong union voice in the HER work initiated by the European Commission, the
67 Council of Europe and within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, Bologna Process
68 countries).
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70 7. To continue to use the ETUCE's Higher Education and Research Standing Committee as a
71 means to develop trade union strategy on European policies affecting higher education and
72 research staff within the European Union and the Bologna Process countries, and to
73 strengthen solidarity among member organisations in the sector and beyond, including
74 sharing information, strategy and experience.