



**LIETUVOS AUKŠTŲJŲ MOKYKLŲ
PROFESINIŲ SAJUNGŲ SUSIVIENIJIMAS**
**ASSOCIATION OF LITHUANIAN TRADE UNIONS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION**

to:

Martin Rømer
European Director
European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5
9th Floor
B1210 Bruxelles
Belgium

Kaunas, Lithuania,
March 8, 2012

Dear Mr. Martin Rømer,

The European Social Dialogue in Education is a crucial element for the achievement of the goals of the EU 2020 strategy. This process should bring together European employers and employees in education to discuss how to meet the challenges facing the sector and how to conduct the reforms. Therefore, the evidence of the recent higher education reform, which was carried out in Lithuania, showed the lack of proper collaboration and social dialogue between the employees of the universities from one side and the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science.

By this letter we, Association of Lithuanian Trade Unions of Higher Education (ALTUHE-FLESTU) intend to support recent complaints of Lithuanian teachers' trade union (LETU-FLESTU) concerning the collective bargaining and artificially created situation of absence of the National employer for the school and university teachers in Lithuania. Also we would like to pay attention and to provide concrete evidence about the deviations from the commitments of the Lithuanian Government and especially Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science in implementing Lithuania's obligations to the European Union and to other international organisations.

Mr. Andrius Kubilius the Prime Minister of Lithuania, in his letter of April 22, 2011 to the President of the European Council Mr. Herman Van Rompuy signed document with "Lithuania's commitments under the Euro-Plus-Pact in 2011". Both Programmes, The Human Resource Development Operational Programme - Priority "Quality Employment and Social Inclusion" and "State Education Strategy Implementation Programme for 2003-2011" are mentioned as prerequisites for Lithuania's commitments. This means that Lithuanian Government took obligation to implement the commitments in the spirit of the partners' inclusion and the dialogue.

Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour and European Social Fund Agency in Lithuania have launched a national call for proposals under the measure „Promotion of social dialogue” of the first priority „Quality employment and social inclusion” in March 2011. We, as

Association of Lithuanian Trade Unions of Higher Education (ALTUHE-FLESTU) have prepared the application for the mentioned project and have been considering that participation in such project contributes to wider social dialogue. We have invited Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science to be a partner in this project, which was focused on the collective bargaining agreements. However, despite our multiple requests and after long period of oral and written communication with the Minister Mr. Gintaras Steponavicius and Vice Minister Ms. Nerija Putinaite they have rejected proposal and have refused to participate in the project. As the result our trade union has lost opportunity to submit this collaborative project for financing, because participation of the employers as partners from the National level was one of the main requirements.

Another major issue we are concerned at the Lithuanian universities is the plan of restructuring the network of Lithuanian universities. The Government (Ministry has initiated the proposals) is planning to merge some number of universities in the nearest future. We support the need of reforms and innovations. However, this reform is carried out without proper transparency and without involvement of representatives of employees into discussion. In addition, as a paradox Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, being the major actor and coordinator of education system reforms, refuses to act as the National employer for the school and university teachers in Lithuania, and even ignore participation in the activities on social dialogue of the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE).

We consider that the facts mentioned in this letter are violation of the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997). This is why we ask for your intervention, advocacy through EU institutional frameworks and ILO or UNESCO mechanisms in solving above mentioned problems of the social dialogue in our country.

Sincerely,

Prof. Artūras Stimbirys



Co-Chair of Federation of Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Unions (FLESTU)
Chair of Association of Lithuanian Trade Unions of Higher Education (ALTUHE)