

Draft 10th World Congress resolution:

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY AGAINST RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND EXTREMISM IN EDUCATION

Proposed by ACT/Philippines, AFT/United States, CNTE/Brazil, CTERA/Argentina, FENPROF/Portugal, FLC-CGIL/Italy, GEW/Germany, NASUWT/United Kingdom, SNES-FSU/France and ZNP/Poland

The 10th Education International (EI) World Congress, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 29th July to 2nd August 2024:

- (1) Recalls the EI resolution on “Education for Democracy” adopted by the 8th EI World Congress in 2019;
- (2) Reaffirms the concern about the state of democracy in the world and the need to identify the threats to democratic values;
- (3) Emphasises the critical role of education trade unions in outlining the contribution which quality education for all can make to reinforce democratic values in society.

The 10th World Congress notes that:

- (4) In the last five years we have seen far-right political parties succeed in various ways across the world;
- (5) The expansion of far-right ideologies has been accompanied by far-right led assaults on parliaments, government offices and trade unions;
- (6) As economic crises and social inequalities deepen, there is a danger that there will be a further rise of right-wing populism, autocratic regimes and antidemocratic alliances in countries globally;
- (7) Many education unions now consider right-wing populism and extremism to be one of the major challenges they face and are at the forefront of local responses fighting against authoritarian forces;
- (8) Right-wing populist narratives can creep from the public debate into the playground and the classroom. As children’s exposure to social media grows and these narratives spread on such platforms, views such as hostility towards migrants and refugees, promotion of

misogynistic, racist and reactionary influencers, attacks on minority groups and the LGBTQ+ community increase. Covid and Climate Change denialism are also increasingly likely to make their way into school discourse;

- (9) Education personnel are currently targeted by far-right groups, they are openly abused and they regularly experience parental attacks, inspired by far-right ideology, such as 'book-banning' campaigns;
- (10) Students are being urged by the far-right to denounce teachers who express a political opinion and to report 'left wing indoctrination' in the classroom to special hotlines;
- (11) Researchers are threatened by far-right groups who deny facts, e.g. on the climate crisis, and question academic freedom;
- (12) The violent manifestation of far-right politics is having a dangerous impact on students and young people, both in the rise of hatred and abuse in schools, and also in terms of attacks on peaceful protest.

The 10th World Congress asserts that:

- (13) The global growth of the extreme far-right is a grave threat to democracy and a particular threat to trade unions;
- (14) Any anti-trade union legislation must be resisted;
- (15) Actions by governments to undermine and remove the right to protest must be opposed.

The 10th World Congress recognises:

- (16) Education unions' efforts to support their members to deliver quality education for all children;
- (17) Education unions' engagement in civil society alliances to promote democracy and to build community-based school cultures;
- (18) Education unions advocating to strengthen civic and political education;
- (19) Education unions working with national and international partners to tackle extremism and the far-right;
- (20) EI's commitment to supporting education unions to respond to right-wing populism and extremism, the enforcement of anti-discrimination education laws, and the promotion of diverse, inclusive and supportive education systems.

The 10th World Congress mandates EI to:

- (21) Build a campaign to respond to the impact of the growth of the far-right on teachers and education;

- (22) Establish an online global forum of Education trade unions to document local campaigns and case studies; discuss strategies to respond to right-wing populism; and to act as a resource for education unions to oppose the rise of fascism;
- (23) Work together with other Global Union Federations to develop joint campaigns and strategies to tackle the growth of the far right, their attacks on democracy and workers' rights.

Proposed amendments

Amendment 1: STEs-i/Spain

- 1. In paragraph (9), insert a new sentence "These attacks question professional autonomy and seek to impose an educational censorship that restricts the freedom and rights of children and youth." After the last words "' book-banning' campaigns;".

Amendments 2-4: UEN/Norway, STU/Sweden, OAJ/Finland and DLF/Denmark

- 2. In paragraph (21), replace "Build a campaign" by "Organize"
- 3. In paragraph (22), delete "Establish an online global forum of Education trade unions to document local campaigns and case studies;"
- 4. In paragraph (23), delete "join campaigns and"