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ETUCE – European Trade Union Committee for Education
Education International - European Region

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To: Valentina Ilic, President of the Teachers Union of Serbia (TUS)
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Solidarity with the ETUCE member organisations TUS, SSS-Serbia, NTTU in Serbia

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) expresses its solidarity with the Teachers Union of Serbia (TUS), the Autonomous Union of Employees in Science and Research of Serbia (SSS-Serbia), and the Nezavisnost Teachers Trade Union (NTTU), for the strike on 26 September.

ETUCE stands firmly behind TUS, SSS-Serbia, and NTTU and their dedication to defending the rights and well-being of educators and the quality of education in Serbia. The salaries of employees in education are 11% lower than average salaries of all employees in the country and have historically ranked among the lowest in Europe.

ETUCE has been following with concern the development of the social dialogue in Serbia. We support the effort of TUS, SSS-Serbia, and NTTU to create awareness among government, inter-governmental agencies and the citizens of Serbia that providing quality public education for all is one of the fundamental pillars of a just and equitable society.

ETUCE reminds that sustainable public financial resources are essential for education and training systems to perform and provide quality education to the future generation. Together with its member organisations in Serbia, ETUCE insists on the importance of increasing the salaries and reimbursement of ancillary expenses for all categories of employees in education. For teaching to become an attractive profession for highly qualified teaching professionals, decent salaries need to be ensured for all teachers and researchers according to the principle of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value. All teachers should have the highest level of qualifications and be



paid appropriately, i.e. no less than the equivalent salary level of other professionals who have tertiary level qualifications.

ETUCE fully supports the effort of its member organisations TUS, SSS-Serbia, and NTTU to make the teaching profession more attractive, in particular, to stop the brain drain among young people. The education system in Serbia cannot bear anymore the influence of politics on the recruitment process, it rather needs to ensure higher salaries and better and more inclusive working conditions to attract and retain skilled and passionate teachers and other education personnel.

As Serbia is a European Union candidate country, we also wish to remind of the role and the position that social partnership plays in the EU, as recognised in the recent European Commission Communication “Strengthening social dialogue in the European Union” [COM(2023) 40 final] and in the proposal for Council Recommendation on the same matter [023/0012(NLE)]. ETUCE supports TUS, SSS-Serbia, and NTTU and insist on the correct implementation of principle no. 8 on social dialogue and involvement of workers of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in line with ILO Convention No. 144 and Recommendation No. 152 on Tripartite Consultation.

Ensuring a high-quality educational process requires energetic, creative and motivated teachers with employment stability, decent and competitive salary, and balanced workload. To achieve this, the government of Serbia must engage in a meaningful and positive social dialogue with trade unions.

In wishing you success in your struggles, we wish to emphasise once again that ETUCE stands firmly in solidarity with TUS, SSS-Serbia, and NTTU.

In solidarity,



Susan Flocken
ETUCE European Director