

A social agreement to ensure the development and sustainability of Estonian education

By sharing the idea that high-quality, accessible education with stable funding is of strategically decisive importance for the well-being of the Estonian people and society, the parties to this agreement highlight the key objectives for ensuring the sustainability of education. It is high time to take decisive action against the chronic underfunding, lack of professional offspring, work overload and unstable research funding in the Estonian educational sector, which severely undermine the future of the Estonian society and state. We support a proactive long-term strategy with sufficient financial cover to ensure the salary security of education workers currently as well as in the distant future.

1. The undersigned stand for **increasing the state funding of the salary fund of general education teachers as well as the state funding of higher education to at least 1.5% of the GDP** and maintaining the funding at least at the same level in the future. To this end, the 2021 state budget strategy has to contemplate the achievement of the target level within three years by adding equal parts every year.
2. In addition to sustainable funding, the parties view **free higher education in Estonian** as a public good that must be ensured general access.
3. Increase in state funding must ensure motivating work conditions (incl. job and salary stability) for all education workers, and their duties must fit into the working time set forth by law.
4. The undersigned support the appreciation of the teacher profession in society:
 - **A career system must be developed** which motivates people to become a teacher and continue working in this profession.
 - **The salary of a nursery teacher** must remain linked to the salary of a school teacher and form at least 90% of the latter's minimum salary.
 - It is important to consider vocational teachers equal to general school teachers and **increase trust in vocational education** – a vocational school diploma must ensure the opportunity to continue studies in higher education.
5. **Student scholarships and grants** must be adjusted to changes in the cost of living.

Signed by:

Federation of Estonian Student Unions

Estonian Educational Personnel Union

Council of Academic Unions (trade unions of the University of Tartu, Tallinn University, the Estonian University of Life Sciences and Tallinn University of Applied Sciences)

UNIVERSITAS Federation of the Trade Unions of Estonian Higher Education-, Research and Development Institutions

Estonian Young Academy of Sciences

Estonian School Students Councils' Union