Situation in the higher education sector in France

The 5th World Congress of Education International (EI), meeting in Berlin (Germany) 22 to 26 July 2007 was,

• informed that the French government has decided to present to the French National Assembly as soon as July 23 a bill about “Universities Freedom and Autonomy” and that it is necessary to have it passed urgently.

• Informed that all the French higher education and research unions (SNESUP-FSU, SNTRS-CGT, SNCS-FSU, SNASUB-FSU, SNEP-FSU, CGT-INRA, FERC-Sup-CGT, UN-CGT-CROUS, SUD Education, SUD Etudiant, SUD-Recherche-EPST, Sup Recherche-UNAS, SNPTES-UNAS, A&I-UNSA, SNPREES-FO) adopted on July 11 a common statement “the Cordeliers declaration”.

“In favour of a public service policy for higher education and research”

The signing organisations are convinced that the French higher education and research system must change fundamentally and must be better financed to be able to face the challenges of the 21st century.

In order to achieve this change, it is necessary to launch a large debate involving all the scientific communities, and beyond them, the whole society. It is for this reason that the signing organisations strongly and urgently oppose the passing of the bill about “Universities Freedom and Autonomy”.

With the state abandoning one of its responsibilities, with the recruitment of more and more precarious personnel, with the concentration of power in the hands of the university President, this bill endangers the very existence of a public service of higher education and research, which is necessary for the development of long term policies meeting the needs of society, particularly a broader access to higher education.

They ask for either the withdrawal of this Reform Bill or its suppression

The 5th EI World Congress expresses its solidarity and support to the French unions who have signed the “Cordeliers declaration” to defend both public higher education and the rights of students and higher education personnel.