

Subject: Locally recruited teacher's plea

Date: 2018. October 26. 13:02:51 CEST

Dear European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, Mr Oettinger,
Dear Director-General for Human Resources and Security, Ms Souka,
Dear President of the Board of Governors of the European Schools, Mr Batsilas,
Dear Secretary General of the European Schools, Mr Marcheggiano,
Dear Deputy Secretary General of the European Schools, Mr Beckmann,
Dear Head of Human Resources of the European Schools, Mr Stéphane Depret,
Dear Head of the Pedagogical Development Unit of the European Schools, Mr Munkácsy
Dear President of Eeb1 APEEE, Kathryn Mathé

We, the Staff Representatives of the Locally Recruited Teachers (LRT) of the European Schools would like to bring to your attention the impact and consequences at school level of the recent directive to open all possible posts currently filled by Locally Recruited Teachers for potential secondment by the member states.

This directive will, in at least one case, mean the potential loss of almost 45 percent of the entire teaching staff at one of the schools (More than 60% in a school if you consider Berkendael as a school). Collectively amongst the schools, the number of lost positions could be considerable and this at a time when the European School System is growing rapidly and seeks to retain and recruit qualified local teachers.

It will have long-lasting and irrevocable effects at both school and individual levels throughout the European School system, for both locally recruited and especially those seconded staff wanting to continue as LRT after secondment.

It will have an impact on the schools' ability to retain and recruit qualified locally hired teachers. Perhaps most importantly, it will have a damaging effect on our school communities and on the education we provide.

By sending this mail to you and other highly placed colleagues, we hope to communicate the consequences the full, indiscriminate application of this directive will have.

The sheer number of posts advertised has a potentially catastrophic impact in two areas:

1. The impact on schools and the education of their children.
2. The impact on the professional, personal and family lives of the high number of teachers concerned.

Currently in schools amongst LRT uncertainty is rife, insecurity is deep, indignation widespread, dismay and disbelief paramount, but our resolution to seek a way forward, unwavering.

IMPACT AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL:

The ability to impart a high-quality education due to;

- Loss of continuity and accumulated experience; colleagues deeply involved in the organisation of projects, events, trips, curriculum initiatives etc.
- Loss of 'native' speakers and curriculum specialists,
- Loss of teachers adapted, integrated and functioning at a high level within the schools.

- The effect on the normal day-to-day management of the schools for the directors with a disillusioned, fractured team-spirit and having to face the difficulties of replacing qualified, experienced, well integrated, high performing members of their teaching teams.
- For pupils, a rupture in the continuity of their learning, as new teachers try to adapt to the curriculum, rigours and workload of the ES system
- A loss of expertise in teaching and implementing the European Baccalaureate Exams
- Alongside the ancillary staff, the LRT form the backbone and institutional memory of the schools largely due to their having committed to a life in the country/city of the school.
- The breakup and fracturing of departments and working partnerships between both seconded and locally recruited staff
- Budgetary concerns arising from increased HR needs as some locally recruited staff leave voluntarily due to climate and job insecurity
- Time and budgetary loss due to legal disputes resulting from the schools' varied and disharmonized practices on which teachers are made redundant in the case of secondment and when they are notified.
- Continual instability within the system due to difficulties with recruiting secondments from member states with teacher shortages, better working conditions, etc.

IMPACT AT THE PROFESSIONAL LEVEL:

- The rupture of the professional and personal dedication given over time to developing: the curriculum, school initiatives, educational projects, relationship with pupils/families.
- LRT often undertake professional development and take responsibility for school initiatives that have much longer fruition even than nine years.
- LRT are a group at the very least often as highly qualified and experienced, (at times more), and often have a deep personal and professional stake in the school.
- The inability of many LRT who reside in the Member States which host the schools to leave or "return" as they are citizens or residents.
- LRT are not seeking to become 'detaché'. They simply seek the security, continuity and recognition which allow them to fulfill the vocation of teaching.

IMPACT AT THE PERSONAL LEVEL:

- The ES system is unique and the skills to work in it are not easily transferable to other schooling systems.
- LRT have committed to the country and to the school for the long term. They have no post to 'return' to.
- Homes; like many seconded teachers locally recruited teachers have committed to their posts through buying homes and property in their communities - perhaps impossible to maintain without that post.
- Schooling and education of children- impossible for locally recruited teachers to maintain their children in the schools they have known for many years (often, all their lives) and in which they flourish.

THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS AT AN IMPASSE:

LRT reps. raised and discussed this issue at length at the EUROPEAN SCHOOLS INTER-SCHOOL TEACHING STAFF COMMITTEE (ISTC) on 10th October 2018. In the spirit of working together to support the evolution of the ES in the medium and longer term, the LRT and Seconded teachers on the ISTC have begun elaborating an analysis and summary of the many joint challenges both teaching groups face.

It could be argued that the ES system has evolved;

1. An **initial** stage based uniquely on secondment, - with initially a much smaller number of schools and fewer member states.
2. A **second** stage based on nine-year secondments. During this second stage (at which we may now be reaching a crucial point) the role of Locally Recruited Teachers has become increasingly necessary and indispensable to the effectiveness of the schools.
3. A **possible third** stage - If there is a will to consider evolving the statutes to reflect this reality -with a mixed system that resolves certain common problems to both LRT and seconded; stability, continuity, salary conditions and contracts, professional development etc.

IDEAS FOR ENSURING CONTINUITY AND STABILITY

1. To offer integrated, long-standing, committed LRT a real 'indefinite' contract.
2. To consider the negative effect of low salaries on recruitment, retention, and morale. Particularly so for Primary/Nursery and locally recruited teachers. In 2011, salaries were reduced by approximately 1/3 reducing the EU School's salary budget.
3. As is becoming evident, there is an increasing issue with teacher recruitment. The schools need to be able to both attract and retain a healthy mix of teachers - both recently qualified and experienced. A more fundamental targeted salary increase across all schools would allow for this.
4. It is possible that we now need to find this **third stage** and that with foresight and a deep commitment to finding a way forward, the sacrifice of valuable professional staff can be avoided.

A first, essential step to allow this way forward is to: **FREEZE THE CURRENT DIRECTIVE.** Whilst acknowledging the scale of unfilled seconded posts **DO NOT PROCEED** any further **with IMPLEMENTATION OF SECONDMENT.**

“In a Union of equals, there can be no second-class workers,” said Jean-Claude Juncker at his annual State of the Union speech in September 2017. The current directive contradicts President Juncker’s speech and the underlying principles of fairness and dignity for all Europeans that our institutions and the union itself are founded upon.

We implore you to consider more carefully this directive as its real-world results will not be beneficial to our school communities, to teaching and learning and to our students.

We hope that by making you aware of the current directive, you can review the implications that it has on the future of our schools and urge the Office of the Secretary General of the European Schools to reconsider its implementation.

We sincerely hope that the recipients will find this letter constructive and helpful in moving the European Schools system towards one more adapted to the reality of the people working in it and more resilient to the future challenges.

Sincerely,

██████████ Secondary LRT representative, Brussels 1

██████████ Nursery/Primary LRT representative, Brussels 1

In collaboration with the Representatives for the Locally Recruited Teachers from The European Schools of:

Alicante, Bergen, Brussels 2, Brussels 3, Brussels 4, Karlsruhe, Mol, Luxembourg 1, Luxembourg 2, Frankfurt, Munich, Varese.

P.S. As Dylan Thomas, the Welsh poet said:

*The hand that signed the paper felled a city;
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country;
These five kings did a king to death.*

We trust those with influence to bear both the ideals of Mr. Juncker, and the words of Dylan Thomas close to their hearts as they respond to our concerns and not 'do to death' the unassuming kingdom of the LRT, at the heart of the ES.