



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación  
Bildungsinternationale

**Mr. Antonis Samaras**  
Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic

Email: [pressoffice@primeminister.gr](mailto:pressoffice@primeminister.gr)

Brussels, 17 May 2013

**Re: Uphold the civil rights of Greek teachers**

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Prime Minister,

Education International (EI), the Global Union Federation representing 30 million teachers and education workers worldwide – including the Greek Federation of Secondary State School Teachers (OLME), the Greek Primary Teachers Federation (DOE) and the Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Associations (POSDEP), urges your Government to uphold the civil rights of teachers in the interest of the Greek education system.

EI gives its full support to the Greek teachers and their union in their call to maintain their right to strike. Greek teachers fight to maintain their rights in the workplace for the quality of education.

Changes imposed as part of the conditions for Troika financial support, under the terms of the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) and its subsequent revisions, have fundamentally altered the bargaining structure, dismantling a system which had evolved since 1990.

Public sector workers have so far enjoyed the right to strike. Your Government's attempt to prevent trade unions from exercising a right to strike action equals to eroding the basic civil and democratic rights of teachers.

EI and its members have always believed that recommendations from international institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, European Union or development banks, should take into account the obligations of States concerning International Labour Organisation Conventions.

Collective agreements must be respected and any economic-stabilisation measures, particularly in relation to labour standards and wages, are only admissible on condition that they have been subject to prior consultations with workers' organisations and are applied as an exceptional measure and limited in time.

The austerity cuts imposed to Greece are effectively destroying the welfare state with tragic consequences for education and society as a whole. EI and its European organisation, the ETUCE, already condemned the heavy wage and pension reductions, the expected mass lay-offs of teachers, the education budget cuts and other measures which jeopardise the future of the Greeks. Austerity has undermined trust in joint solutions at European level. Time has come to restore public confidence by reversing austerity and boosting public investment, including investment in education.

EI calls on the Government of Greece to strengthen democracy by listening to the social partners through improved institutional social dialogue.

Yours sincerely,

Fred van Leeuwen  
General Secretary

Copy: Mr. Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos, Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports - [minister@minedu.gov.gr](mailto:minister@minedu.gov.gr)