

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MEMORANDA POLICIES ON EDUCATION IN GREECE

The consequences of the memoranda policies implemented in Greece by the government and the troika (EU-IMF-ECB) are dramatic. The measures passed under the 3rd memorandum are a strong blow against working conditions, salaries, pensions, social insurance system, education and public goods. It is one more step leading to workers' impoverishment and to a profound downgrading of our life.

The major consequences are the following ones:

1. **Education spending has been reduced by 33%** (2009-2013) with dramatic consequences on public schools and on teachers' meagre salaries. According to the new and updated mid-term programme (!), spending on education will be reduced by 14% until 2016. Within 7 years time public spending on education will be reduced by **47%**.
2. The implemented policy is leading to **teacher impoverishment** through continuous cuts in salaries, pensions and lump sums. Our salary cuts have reached **45%** (in newly appointed teachers) and lump sum reductions have reached **38%**.

According to the study of KEMETE (Research and Documentation Centre of OLME), the salary of the newly appointed teacher in the upper secondary education in Greece is equal to 19% of the teacher's salary in Luxemburg, to 45% of the teacher's salary in Spain, to 53% of the teacher's salary in Cyprus, and to **56% of the corresponding EU average teacher salary**. From 2009 until 2013 there has been a reduction of the annual net teacher revenue ranging from 4.740 € for married couples with 33 years of experience up to 6.870€ for the newly appointed teachers. This reduction ranges from 21% up until 45%. However, the new salary reduction as of the first day of 2013 based on the recently voted taxation system it is not counted. According to the Eurydice Network data, the highest gross annual teacher salary in the upper secondary education amounts to the Euro zone average of 48.690€ whereas in Greece amounts to 25.756 €. This is slightly higher than Malta, Estonia, and Slovakia. As far as the introductory salary is concerned, Greece is in one of the last positions, above Estonia and Slovakia, reaching 14.104 € as opposed to the Euro zone average of 28.939 €.

3. **The disciplinary law became stricter.** (Law 4057/12, Law 4093/12). As a result schoolteachers are brought to disciplinary councils and before the case had reached a verdict teachers are immediately suspended! If a teacher is brought to the disciplinary council even for the "offence" of "misconduct that occurs inside and/or outside the place of employment" is suspended.
4. **In both Primary and Secondary Education there has been a 12% reduction in the number of teachers** (2010-2012) while **substitute teachers face dismissals** leading to reductions by **87%**, from 15.000 in 2011-12 to 2.000 in 2013-14. Next summer, the expected mass retirement of teachers and the zero recruitments policy will lead to a shortage of teaching staff in the following school year. We would like to point out that this is the first time that the school year ends with vacant teaching posts (there is no reaching staff to cover 32.000 teaching hours in secondary education).
5. The planned **increase of teaching hours** (estimated savings are included in the Law 4127/13), **the compulsory transportations** (Law 37848/10), **teacher mobility** (Law 4093), **the increased number of students per classroom** and **the new mergers of classes and schools** will result in an increased workload and the **re-allocation of permanent posts** across the country. The consequences on the teachers' working conditions, family life and the teaching process will be immense.

In Greece, there are still teachers who teach in up to 6 schools, being obliged to travel thousands of kilometers. In general, most countries tend to reduce the weekly teaching time in secondary education. **The average teaching time per week in Europe is 19,1 in Lower secondary education, and 18,4 in Upper secondary education whereas in Greece is 18,5** (Eurydice Network data, KEMETE comparative study).

EVALUATION

The draft Presidential Decree concerning "Teacher evaluation", the draft Law on the "Quality Assurance Agency for Education", law 4024/11, the new disciplinary law and the OECD report on Greek Education (2011) provide a framework according to which teacher evaluation is **related to wage development, grade advancement and teacher dismissals**. It is obvious that the government and the political leadership of the Ministry of education **have declared war on teachers**.

All along with the teacher evaluation, **school evaluation or school self evaluation** is promoted which is expected to lead to **school categorization, school degradation** and finally to **school closures**. The evaluation plan is directly related to a new competitive school offering cheap and low quality training and fragmentary, superficial knowledge. The so-called **school self evaluation is related to the internal evaluation of schools and the individual teacher evaluation**. According to the OECD report "self-evaluation must be organised so that it is comparable between school units and so that it can be validated and supplemented by external evaluation".p.49.

Provided that the most extreme type of school unit evaluation is adopted **in relation to students' performance**, it would lead to school categorisation and school competition, poisoning thus both teacher and social relations, differentiating funding means, inviting sponsors "from the back door", forcing parents to finance school operation and gradually leading schools to closure. OECD "recommends that Greece designs a national system of student assessments that can be used, as appropriate, at multiple levels: the individual student, the classroom, the school, the region and the system.....Part of this strategy may consist of developing large-scale standardized tests..." p.45.

Also, the promoted evaluation aims mainly at the concealment of the state responsibility over Public education status and the **transference of responsibilities to teachers** blaming them for school problems, malfunctions and vacancies. As Article 9 of the draft law of the Ministry of Education on the "Quality Assurance Agency for Education" and the OECD report envisage, **students' performance will be taken into account in teacher evaluation and teacher retention at school!** "It is critical that evaluations have **meaningful consequences** to those evaluated, as it is the only way to ensure that they are taken seriously". Adding that "evaluation of teacher performance can also be used to determine career advancement, reward good performance or **establish sanctions** of underperforming teachers. In doing so, it also helps schools **to retain effective teachers** and makes teaching an attractive career choice". p.46

Despite the fact that all those related to education are well aware of the social parameters determining to a large extent school performance it is obvious that **this policy clearly aims at the thorough manipulation of teachers** through evaluation. In this way teacher evaluation will affect the very essence of the teaching profession, manipulating its consciousness and undermining pedagogical freedom and independence which are the basic prerequisites of the existence and operation of the Public school.

One of the major consequences of implementing the Ministry plans on evaluation would be **the destruction of teacher working conditions** leading teachers towards individual work contracts. **Competition and the transformation of human relations within the school environment into a state of "jungle"** would be the outcome of this policy which will affect the education process. According to the (law 4024/11) on professional development and pay scale, it is not enough to be 'good' and "efficient" teacher, it also needs to **surpass ones own colleagues** to achieve professional development and grade evolution.

Evaluation **has already been determined**, since there is a specific percentage of teachers' promoted from one degree to another regardless of the number of teachers being evaluated "positively". For example, a maximum of 70% of teachers would be promoted from grade C to grade B, and a maximum of 30% from grade B to grade A! It is obvious that by keeping down grades only 50% out of the total of teachers would reach grade B and only 15% grade A! According to article 7, paragraph 7 of the law 4024/11 a specific percentage of those to be promoted might be **reduced** every 2 years by a Ministerial decision "**on the basis of budgetary capabilities**". However, we should not forget that according to the memorandum Laws there a freeze on professional development until 2015. It is clear that **evaluation is based on strictly budgetary criteria** aiming at keeping down teachers' pay scale.

It is **outrageous** the fact that in paragraph 6 of article 8 of the Law 4024/11, a negatively evaluated teacher is "punished" and is not entitled to promotion in the next 2 years. Furthermore, a teacher not promoted for two consecutive times runs the risk of being dismissed or downgraded at a lower grade by the administrative council (article 95 of the Law 3528/2007).

The Presidential Decree and the legal framework for the evaluation aim at **teacher control and punishment**. As a result, within a framework characterized by teacher manipulation, inadequate scientific support and poverty, any continuous scientific and professional development sounds as a joke. The draft presidential decree does not envisage anything towards teacher development. Teacher training is non-existent because it costs and falls out of the scope of the Ministry's interests. The preamble of the draft Presidential Decree states that "**its implementation entails no expenditure under the national budget**".

The evaluation framework imposed under the draft Presidential Decree designates that **the Headmaster and the school advisor** act as judges whose reports determine the fate and development of teachers. By granting such authorities to **individual administrative bodies** they create the terms and conditions of a top-down, arbitrary and subjective educational choice.

The scientific role of school advisors is undermined and they are transformed into ideological imposition mechanisms of the dominant educational attitude, dismissing teachers and determining their wage development.

The democratic function of the School Board is undermined since its role is reduced to countersigning the Headmasters decisions.

The creation of a **vertical hierarchical structure contributes to a climate of fear and competition in school**, destroys any form of cooperation establishing an increasing administrative control of schools and teachers and produces a bureaucracy beyond belief.

Through the provisions of the Presidential Decree interpersonal relations, expectations, pedagogical climate within classrooms, classroom organisation and other **qualitative elements are being quantified in an arbitrary and non scientific way**. This means that the risk of subjective evaluation is high making it possible for a practically undetectable, arbitrary action on behalf of the evaluator.

Rejecting the Ministry of Education plans on evaluation is **not just a Trade Union request** concerning teachers only. **It is matter of interest for the educational community and society as a whole**. The Ministry of education claims that this evaluation will improve our education system. **However, it is more than obvious that this policy is not leading to the improvement of the Public school. It has dramatic consequences** such as the continuous reduction in education spending, school mergers and closures, abolition of supportive educational structures and libraries, abolition of all types of supportive teaching, reduction in the number of teachers, recruitment of substitute teachers, and vacant posts up until the end of the school year. **As a Trade Union movement we declare that we are undertaking all those measures to stop the implementation of teacher and school evaluation, staying true to the decisions of the general assemblies and conferences of our sector. Our collective resistance will cancel both the Government and Troika plans.**

18.000-22.000 less permanent posts in Education

While education has been the target of an attack emanating from a tripartite government and directed to the society through the Mass Media around the topic of evaluation-manipulation, the Ministry continues planning both class and school mergers (and the consequent loss of permanent teaching posts). More specifically, the following examples will show the consequences of this process part of which is the recording of classroom capacity in schools.

In primary education **185.863** pupils are enrolled and allocated in **9.524** classrooms in the Attica prefecture. The average number of pupils per classroom is 20. An increase of the average by 25 pupils per classroom will restrict classes to **7.434** that is, **2.086 less classes** resulting in **62.580 less working hours per week** which correspond to **2.845 teaching posts** approximately. Provided that we calculate the two hour work increase (announced by the Ministry of Education or even an increase by 3 hours) then the results will be as follows:

In the same region with the same number of pupils, a two hour work increase results in a reduction of 1082 teaching posts, that is a total of (2.845+1082) **3.927** posts.

Likewise, in secondary education similar issues are at stake (adding the fact of difficulties arising from teacher specialties and geographical particularities to be taken into account). The overall picture leads to the conclusion that we should expect a reduction of **12.000** (mild version) up to **16.000** (extreme version) permanent teaching posts. In the above mentioned number the reduction of permanent posts is not calculated due to school mergers. In this case we should take into account **225.000 less teaching hours per week** that is, **10.230 teaching posts approximately**. The reduction of some of these posts coincides with the posts reduced due to class mergers and school mergers. Therefore, we could end up to an appalling number of **18.000-20.000 reduced permanent posts** approximately which are not related to evaluation. Furthermore, the midterm programme refers explicitly to teacher mobility with the **Ministry transferring teachers for official purposes, regardless of their permanent post, everywhere within the state limits** as from May 2013, after the announcement of the general transferences. The strategic goal of the government and the Troika to dismiss thousands of Civil Servants is implemented through

school and class mergers, through the increase in working hours and through evaluation. Indeed, it is not incidental the fact that Troika is putting pressure on the direction of dismissals. They are asking for blood here and now.

Reduced number of teachers –increased number of students. School mergers, squeezing of classes and less appointments and recruitments affect unemployed teachers. In the last 3 years (2010-2012) approximately 1500 primary and secondary education units have closed down. The Ministry of Education is planning to reduce the number of school units even further in the school year 2013/2014. The mergers will be based on an increase of the number of students per classroom up to 28-30. This implies a significant reduction of permanent teaching posts. The Ministry is also planning a considerable reduction in teacher recruitments and appointments for the new school year. The vacancies will be filled by the increase of teaching hours of those already in service.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TEACHER APPLICATIONS FOR RECRUITMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION	More than 70.00
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TEACHER APPLICATIONS FOR RETIREMENT IN 2013.	More than 4.500
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TEACHER PERMANENT APPOINTMENTS IN 2013/14	450 approximately
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SUBSTITUTE/TEMPORARY TEACHERS RECRUITMENT IN 2013/14	Approximately 10.000 less than last year

The draft Law on “the Approval of updating the Mid-term framework of the Financial Strategy 2013-2016” envisages a reduction in the recruitment of substitute teachers and an increase in the number of teaching hours. Specifically, it refers to “a reduction in substitute teachers through teaching hours increase in order to save 103 million Euros from 2013 up until 2014. This means that the government intends to vanish more than 10.000 substitute teachers which have taught all over the country minimizing their hopes for a permanent appointment. Furthermore, the appointment of permanent teachers will not exceed the 10% of those retired.

PERMANENT TEACHERS' APPOINTMENTS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE LAST 12 YEARS (2001-2012)		
YEAR	NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION	NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION
2001	3.100	3.885
2002	3.080	4.341
2003	4.361	2.698
2004	5.294	2.939
2005	5.286	2.954
2006	5.062	2.933
2007	3.931	3.665
2008	4.321	3.515
2009	2.786	2.770
2010	1.425	1.400
2011	133	413
2012	40	185

This situation gets new evidence for the 160.000 primary and secondary teachers. A) Permanent teaching posts are reduced. More than 2.000 primary and secondary teaching posts will be lost after school mergers and closures.

B) The prospects of recruiting teachers are getting worse, especially for the graduates and of those graduating from the Pedagogical Departments in particular. Mergers reduce dramatically the number of classes, and as a result teachers are made redundant being able to find schools only in distant areas within the same prefecture and/or in other prefectures (all these are envisaged in the new law on teacher mobility).

THOUSANDS OF PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY TEACHERS IN A STATE OF SHOCK.

According to the data of the Ministry of Education, the total number of the pre-primary and primary candidate teachers in the Substitute Teacher Recruitment Lists for the school year 2013-2014 amount to 16.000 approximately.

NUMBER OF TEMPORARY PRIMARY/PRE-PRIMARY TEACHERS IN THE 2013/2014 SUBSTITUTE TEACHER RECRUITMENT LIST		
	Primary Education Teachers	Pre-primary Education Teachers
With points	2.219	4.309
Without points	5.051	4.417
Total	7.270	8.726

During this school year 5.000 substitute teachers have already been hired whereas, 3.936 primary teachers and 7.122 pre-primary teachers in the substitute teacher recruitment list remain unemployed. The bleak prospects for 2013-2014 are due to the 0% appointments of permanent teachers and the recruitment of a scant number of substitute teachers. As a result, there will be an increase in the number of unemployed pre-primary and primary teachers. Likewise, a large number of substitute teachers will remain permanently unemployed.

HOW MANY STUDENTS FIT IN THE CLASSROOM?

For the first time, the Ministry of Education obliges schoolmasters to report their estimates on the number of students per classroom! As the relevant document issued states "we are highlighting your obligation to comply with the relevant circulars issued by the Ministry of Education reminding that any abstain from filling in, updating and finalizing data is considered an infringement of duty". It is obvious that the Ministry of education wants to infringe the legal student/teacher ratio on the basis of the headmasters' estimates allocating 1,5 m² for every primary, lower and upper secondary student! This means that in a 50 m² classroom fit 33 students regardless of the fact that School Construction Regulation on fire safety has set standards at 2m² per student.

Both teachers and students are well aware that in most cases school buildings do not meet the contemporary education requirements as long as they do not include neither a multipurpose classroom nor a school library or a chemistry lab since they have all been transformed along with the warehouses into teaching classrooms.

Clumping students in classrooms downgrades teaching process even further with negative consequences on the education of children from the lower social strata. In addition, a rapid increase of diseases is expected in a time where access to health facilities and structures is getting worse. Accidents are expected on a daily basis and living conditions for students are aggravated. **We demand the complete overthrow of this policy, of this government-EU-IMF structure which destroys public school and condemns students to poverty.**

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