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Press release | 17.02.2017

EU institutions must end exploitation of interns

Ombudsman rules EEAS trainees must receive a fair allowance

The European Ombudsman has today delivered her judgement on unpaid internships with the European External Action Service (EEAS)*. She has recommended that the EEAS pay all of its trainees an appropriate allowance to allow greater access for young people from all backgrounds.

Commenting on the judgement, **Terry Reintke**, Greens/EFA employment spokesperson and co-president of the youth intergroup, said:

*"We need to end the exploitation of interns as cheap labour and we need to do it now. It is a shame that EU institutions seem to forget their warm words on youth empowerment quite easily when it comes to internships. The judgement of the European Ombudsman has to be a wake-up call for all EU institutions; the rights of locally-hired interns have to be in line with local labour laws. By not enforcing effective measures, the EU tolerates the precarious conditions of millions of young people in Europe. As Greens, we call for quality internships that are paid and based on a signed agreement with fair working conditions and established learning content. If we do not act now, the social marginalisation of young people in Europe will proceed. This is why we strongly support the global intern strike, which will take place on the 20th of February**. We want to send a clear message: no more unpaid internships within the EU institutions."*

Notes

*The EEAS employs every year more than 400 unpaid interns in some 140 European Union delegations based in third countries. In March 2014, the European Ombudsman received a complaint from an unpaid intern working in an EU delegation arguing that the EEAS acted wrongly by failing to offer remuneration for certain internships.

** EU interns will demonstrate on Monday 20th of February (the UN day for social justice) from 12.30 to 13.30 at Schuman to call for an end to unpaid internships in Brussels. Terry Reintke will be there to support the claims of the interns. A 2013 survey by the European Parliament's Youth Intergroup revealed that one in three interns in MEP offices was paid less than €600, while one in 10 was not paid at all.

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Responsible MEPs



Terry Reintke

Co-President

Contact person



David Weir

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