

Brussels, 30 JUN 2017
A(2017)1051718-2864395

Ms Emily O'Reilly
European Ombudsman
France

Subject: Your recommendation in case 454/2014/PMC of 15 February 2017

Dear Ms O'Reilly,

As most major diplomatic representations in the world, including many of the European Union's Member States, the Delegations of the European Union have a tradition of offering traineeships to young graduates and students. This has proven to be very valuable, both for the trainees and the EU Delegations where they undertake their internship. The former have been able to gain professional experience in a multinational context, with a view to improving their chances of employment. At the same time, a motivated trainee who contributes with fresh views is an asset for any Delegation.

In this context, I have taken good note of your recommendation of 15 February 2017 about the EEAS traineeship programme in EU Delegations. You refer, in particular, to the principle of non-discrimination. I have since decided to restructure the programme so as to address your concerns, in particular regarding the need for the institution to take into account the socio-economic situations of the various trainees. In the meantime, the EEAS has temporarily suspended the recruitment of new trainees in Delegations, unless financially covered by a third party (see attached note of 28/02/2017).

I have made a proposal to the budgetary authority to provide 2018 credits for the traineeship programme in Delegations. Furthermore, in order to render traineeship opportunities available to as broad a range of persons as possible, the EEAS is at the same time increasing the number of partnerships between Delegations and Universities.

Thus, under the new draft scheme, traineeships would be offered:

1. To trainees who will be remunerated by the EEAS, provided that the EEAS receives the requested resources from the budget authority; a specific selection procedure will be established.
2. To students, in the framework of an agreement with a local university, who undertake a compulsory or recommended training period as part of their course and are already residing in the place of training.
3. To trainees receiving financial support from a university or another institution but located elsewhere in the world.

I am confident that the revised programme will provide equal access to internships to all qualified candidates without discrimination.

I would like to make sure that the EEAS will continue to provide unique opportunities to young people interested in EU external relations, as shown by the overwhelmingly positive reactions of former trainees, some of which have been successful in embarking on a professional career in the EEAS or other EU Institutions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Mogherini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Federica Mogherini

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



DG Budget and Administration
The Director-General

Brussels,
EEAS/DG BA/HR.2

NOTE TO THE ATTENTION OF HEADS OF EU DELEGATIONS

Subject: Decision by the European Ombudsman - Instruction to suspend all future unpaid traineeships in EU Delegations

On 15 February 2017, the European Ombudsman issued an opinion (enclosed with this note) which concludes that the EEAS sustains maladministration by not paying trainees in Delegations. The decision is the result of a year-long investigation following a complaint by one of our unpaid trainees in a Delegation.

During the procedure, the EEAS has repeatedly presented its arguments in favour of maintaining this opportunity, given its importance for Delegations and for the trainees themselves. We have also proposed some adaptations in order to find a compromise (see attached). Although our intervention resulted in a lighter decision, the Ombudsman still concluded that there was maladministration and asked the EEAS to respond to her opinion by 15 May 2017.

Following the decision, the press in Brussels and beyond has reported about this case, and the HR/VP's spokesperson has received numerous questions.

While we are assessing the situation and looking at the different options, I am asking all Delegations to suspend all future recruitments of unpaid trainees.

Ongoing recruitments that have already been accepted by HQ or are at an advanced stage of finalisation may still be carried out. Unpaid trainees currently working in Delegations will be able to continue their work until the end of the agreed period. No extensions will be granted.

Delegations having agreements with third parties (such as Universities) will need to inform them that they will not be in a position to accept trainees for the moment, unless paid by the third party.

I am fully aware of the importance of trainees in many delegations and of the difficulties this situation will generate. I trust, however, that I can count on your full cooperation in this matter.

I will make sure that the Heads of Delegations are properly informed and consulted, directly and through the Bureau, on a more detailed proposal for the way forward.

Thank you for your understanding.



Gianmarco Di Vita

Encs: Recommendation Ombudsman in the case 454/2014/PMC
Note to Ombudsman with EEAS proposal: Ares(2017)414286

Cc: H.M. Schmid, J.C. Belliard, P. Serrano, C. Leffler, L. Knudsen, K. Vervaeke,
E. Hrda, G. Wiegand, T. Mayr Harting, N. Westcott (EEAS)
F. Panzetti, A. Vannini (Cab HR/VP)