9th October 2016

**World Teachers Day**

**Teachers Must be Respected Through Pay and Conditions Urges MEP**

Today – World Teachers Day – in saluting a profession, which constitutes an invaluable service to society in Ireland, it was regrettable that 50% of all young teachers are employed on temporary or part-time basis.

This was stated by former secondary school teacher and Independent MEP Marian Harkin, when she urged the Government to considerably increase their efforts to meet the theme of World Teachers Day: “Valuing Teachers, Improving their Status”.

Marian Harkin said: “This years’ theme is “Valuing Teachers, Improving their Status”. It is also the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers and the first World Teachers’ Day (WTD) to be celebrated within the new Global Education 2030 Agenda adopted one year ago.

“The roadmap for the new agenda highlights the fact that teachers are fundamental for equitable and quality education and, as such, must be “adequately trained, recruited and remunerated, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems”.

“Unfortunately, in Ireland many young teachers are faced with temporary and short-term contracts. Approximately 35% of Irish secondary teachers are employed on a temporary or part-time basis, compared with an OECD average of 15 per cent. However, for teachers under the age of 30 that figure rises to 50%.

“As well as that, many young teachers, as well as other public servants, are on a reduced salary compared to colleagues who began teaching in 2010. As an MEP and a former teacher, I believe in equal pay for equal work. That is why I raised the current situation in Ireland with the EU Commission on two separate occasions. Unfortunately, their response concluded that this issue needs to be dealt with in Ireland and does not fall under EU competency.

“The Department of Education along with the Department of Expenditure of Reform have engaged with some teaching unions recently and agreed to resolve the issue of pay for new entrants post 2011 beginning in 2017. Unfortunately, equal pay for equal work will not be restored for all teachers. The Department needs to review this immediately as teachers provide a fundamental service to our education system”, Marian Harkin concluded.

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