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Report on the first Working Group meeting of 21 July 2020 on the Education and Childcare allowances reform

Dear colleagues,

On the 21st of July, Staff Representation (SR) had a 1st meeting in the Working Group (WG) Education and Childcare allowances.

A few days before the meeting, SR received documents from the administration detailing their plans – yet these documents were marked “Confidential”. We have requested that the President lifts the confidentiality¹ such that we can publish them separately. In the meantime, we feel the urgency to give you a brief overview of the main ideas underpinning the proposed reform, which we present in this publication.

Timeline

The timeline is extremely ambitious. The SR was informed during the 1st meeting on the 21st of July about the tight timeline foreseen by the administration to discuss this reform. A further meeting of the WG is possibly planned towards the end of August/ early September. At the request of the SR, the administration recognised the need for further WG meetings that would take place until the end of September, aiming at the final proposal being submitted for opinion to the GCC on the 1st of October and for decision to the Administrative Council in December. The reform would come in effect for the school year 2021-2022. This leaves your SR with minimal margins for discussion.

N.B.: Just before this report was sent for publication the administration [announced on the intranet](#) on 30.07.2020 that the timeline would be extended such that the reform would be implemented for the school year 2022/2023.

The starting point

It's our understanding that the administration wants to provide some form of education and childcare allowances irrespective of the nationality of the staff member. Though the SR finds this in itself laudable, it should not be to the detriment of staff being already eligible for these allowances, and especially not to the detriment of the children's health and wellbeing.

The SR therefore requested during the meeting to receive as a first input to the discussion an analysis underlying this reform proposal including:

- (i) a financial analysis depicting the actual financial situation per site (including all school costs as e.g. subsidies by countries as Germany, France, Netherlands) and a clarification of the increasing costs between 2017 and 2018 in The Hague
- (ii) a financial analysis on the burden shifted to parents according to the proposal

¹ [Link](#) to the Open Letter to the President

- (iii) a psychosociological study on children when changing school/school system/friends/environment/etc.

The proposal by the administration

The administration's proposal foresees that all staff with dependent children at any place of employment, irrespective of nationality of the staff member, their family situation or the actual situation in that place of employment is eligible for the following allowances:

- (i) Children from 0-4 years: all existing childcare allowances are replaced by a lump sum called "*young child benefit*" of €346 per month per child, irrespective of the job group and grade, family situation or whether any costs are incurred². Expatriation allowance supplement of around €104 per month is abolished.
- (ii) Children from 4-18 years (primary and secondary education)³:
- School fees for ESM and ESH are paid directly by the EPO
 - School fees for any other schools are paid in the form of a lump sum up to a certain amount:
 - max. €11.158 for Primary schools
 - max. €13.389 for Secondary schools
 - School costs under €500 will not be reimbursed

Irrespective of the above, parents will receive a monthly lump sum of €112 per child to compensate for any other cost (e.g. after school care, transportation, miscellaneous costs). All other provisions are abolished, including subsidies previously provided for breakfast and afterschool clubs, kids camps, as well as the education allowance supplement as previously mentioned.

The SR further asked if the administration verified the proposal with the EPO's diversity & inclusion (D&I) goals. The administration stated that giving the same lump sums to all staff members irrespective of job group, grade or nationality would fall under the goals of D&I.

- (iii) Children from 18-26 years (post-secondary education)⁴:
Tuition fees for post-secondary education are refunded up to 70%, with a maximum of €11.158.
Additionally, parents will receive a monthly lump sum of:
- €149 if your child is living at the parents' home; or
 - €521 if your child is not living at your home.

The current variation in the maximum tuition fee depending on whether board and lodging is included in the fee is abolished.

All above amounts will be adjusted annually, according to the salary adjustment procedure and not to the real increase of education costs. Over time, this will further deteriorate the education and "young child" allowance at the expense of staff.

² More details in the annexed document, reflecting representative losses or gains depending on example childcare situations

³ More details in the annexed document, specific for the various schools in The Hague & situations

⁴ More details in the annexed document, where the comparison of current and proposed post-secondary education allowance is compared

Open points raised in the first meeting

- (i) Transitional measures
The length and provisions for a transitional period are to be determined. The documents received by the administration are silent about any transitional measure. However, during the 1st meeting, the administration stated they are ready to consider a transitional period of 2-6 years, so that children will be allowed to finish their education cycle within the current allowance schemes. The administration however stated they are not ready to consider any longer period allowing children to finish the entire schooling (primary & secondary education) under their current system nor to make any provision for siblings.
- (ii) Provisions for children with special needs
Provisions and/or supplemental allowances for children with special educational needs are unknown today – both under the proposal for the new regulations and during a transitional period.
- (iii) Involvement of other international schools
Whether or in how far other international schools, e.g. in The Hague area have been informed about and/or are in any way involved in discussion with the EPO is not clear. The administration mentioned during the meeting that the European School in The Hague (ESH) could handle receiving all EPO pupils, however failed to give any further detail.

The SR has already received many e-mails and calls from your side and it is evident that these proposed reforms have caused an unprecedented degree of unrest and emotion among colleagues, who are justifiably worried about the impact this reform would have on their family's situation.

We therefore urge all staff to send your concern/ feedback/ questions to your manager, as well as to the administration at educationandchildcare@epo.org (SR WG members do not receive these emails) and copy in your Staff Representatives!

Only with your feedback and support, we will be able to defend you and your family's position.

Your Staff Representatives

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Annex

Example cases to show the result of the proposed childcare allowance reform in The Hague***

	Applicable per child (0-4 years) per month				
	Day care cost (1)	Current allowance	Proposed allowance	Difference in allowance	Proposed cost borne by parent
Expat (G7 or above) with child in full-time day care	€2.226	€1.106	€346	-€760	€1.880
Non-expat (G7 or above) with child in full-time day care	€2.226	€1.002	€346	-€656	€1.880
Expat with child without childcare costs	€0	€104	€346	€242	€0
Non-expat with child without childcare costs	€0	€0	€346	€346	€0

	Applicable per child (4-12 years) per month				
	Out-of-school care cost (2)	Current allowance	Proposed allowance	Difference in allowance	Proposed cost borne by parent
Expat (G7 or above) with child in out-of-school care	€1.180	€354	€0	-€354	€1.180
Non-expat (G7 or above) with child in out-of-school care	€1.180	€354	€0	-€354	€1.180

(1) The example given is for true colours day care for 5 days / week, 52 weeks / year.

(2) The example given is for true colours out-of-school care 5 days / week, 52 weeks / year.

(3) KOT is not considered since eligibility varies significantly amongst staff members.

Example cases to show the result of the proposed education allowance reform in The Hague

	Applicable per child per year					
	School fees	School costs including subsidies (6)	Current allowance (5)	Proposed allowance (5)	Difference in allowance	Proposed cost borne by parent
European School (4)						
Primary	€6.812	€12.000	€6.812	€6.812	€0	€0
Secondary	€10.218	€18.000	€10.218	€10.218	€0	€0
International School (4)						
Primary	€7.329	€13.000	€7.329	€7.329	€0	€0
Secondary	€8.840	€17.000	€8.840	€8.840	€0	€0
British School (4)						
Primary	€15.615	n.n.	€15.615	€11.158	-€4.457	€4.457
Secondary	€20.850	n.n.	€20.850	€13.389	-€7.461	€7.461
American School (4)						
Primary	€21.425	n.n.	€21.425	€11.158	-€10.267	€10.267
Secondary	€22.890	n.n.	€22.890	€13.389	-€9.501	€9.501
French School (4)						
Primary	€9.273	n.n.	€9.273	€9.273	€0	€0
Secondary	€9.958	n.n.	€9.958	€9.958	€0	€0
German School (4)						
Primary	€8.660	n.n.	€8.660	€8.660	€0	€0
Secondary	€8.660	n.n.	€8.660	€8.660	€0	€0

	Applicable per child (18-26 y)		
	Current allowance	Proposed allowance	Difference in allowance
Expat with child in post-secondary education (7)	Up to €11,158 per year fees and €521 per month	Up to €11.158 per year fees and €521 per month	€0
Non-expat with child in post-secondary education (7)	€0	Up to €11.158 per year fees and €521 per month	Up to +€11.158 per year fees and +€521 per month

(4) Where multiple fees are set for different years within the primary and secondary cycles, the higher is quoted. Enrolment and capital fees are not considered in these representative examples.

(5) The current reimbursement of travel plus a lump sum for miscellaneous costs of 93€ have been replaced by a lump sum of 112€ per month.

(6) The figures in this column are rough estimations. The subsidies by the Dutch government and the city council of The Hague of previous years are known, and therefore included in the overview. The premises of the International and European School The Hague are property of the City of The Hague and are not included in the school costs, because the values are not known to us. The subsidies by the respective governments to the French and German school are not known in detail and are therefore not included in the overview.

(7) The example given is for a student living away from home, wherein the tuition fee does not include board or lodging. The tuition fee is reimbursed at a rate of 70% up to a cap of 11 158€.

* these are first rough figures only, but they give an idea about the disastrous impact of the reform

** a detailed calculation will have to be made e.g. on the impact per job grade or for children with special needs etc.

Example cases** to show the result of the proposed childcare allowance reform in Munich*

	Applicable per child (0-4 years) per month				
	Day care cost	Current allowance	Proposed allowance	Difference in allowance	Proposed cost borne by parent
Expat (G7 or above) with child in full-time day care					
Bilingual crèche Munich Nymphenburg	€1.450	€757	€346	-€411	€1.104
Bilingual crèche Fily & Stoffl	€1.244	€664	€346	-€318	€898
Bilingual crèche Phorms München	€1.197	€643	€346	-€297	€851
FPO crèche (to become cheaper, subsidised by Munich as from 2020)	€875	€498	€346	-€152	€529
Bilingual crèche Infanterix Neuhausen	€865	€493	€346	-€147	€519
Public crèche	€162	€177	€346	€169	-€184
Non-expat (G7 or above) with child in full-time day care					
Bilingual crèche Munich Nymphenburg	€1.450	€653	€346	-€307	€1.104
Fily & Stoffl	€1.244	€560	€346	-€214	€898
Bilingual crèche Phorms München	€1.197	€539	€346	-€193	€851
FPO crèche (to become cheaper, subsidised by Munich as from 2020)	€875	€394	€346	-€48	€529
Bilingual crèche Infanterix Neuhausen	€865	€389	€346	-€43	€519
Public crèche	€162	€73	€346	€273	-€184
Expat with child without childcare costs	€0	€104	€346	€242	€0
Non-expat with child without childcare costs	€0	€0	€346	€346	€0

	Applicable per child (4-12 years) per month				
	Out-of-school care cost	Current allowance	Proposed allowance	Difference in allowance	Proposed cost borne by parent
Expat (G7 or above) with child in out-of-school care					
Rund um die Familie (for ESM)	€510	€334	€0	-€334	€510
Lycée Jean Renoir (Etude surveillée)	€113	€155	€0	-€155	€113
Public Hort	€133	€164	€0	-€164	€133
Non-expat (G7 or above) with child in out-of-school care					
Rund um die Familie (for ESM)	€510	€230	€0	-€230	€510
Lycée Jean Renoir (Etude surveillée)	€113	€51	€0	-€51	€113
Public Hort	€133	€60	€0	-€60	€133

Example cases to show the result of the proposed education allowance reform in Munich

	Applicable per child per year					
	School fees	School costs including subsidies	Current allowance	Proposed allowance	Difference in allowance	Proposed cost borne by parent
Expat with child in school						
European School (school fees are for Category III private pupils)						
Primary	€5.336	€16.739	€5.336	€5.336	€0	€0
Secondary	€7.277	€16.739	€7.277	€7.277	€0	€0
Lycée Jean Renoir						
Primary	€4.257	n.n.	€4.257	€4.257	€0	€0
Secondary	€5.710	n.n.	€5.710	€5.710	€0	€0
Phorms München (school fees are based on gross income, here for G8-1)						
Primary	€6.068	n.n.	€6.068	€6.068	€0	€0
Secondary	€8.271	n.n.	€8.271	€8.271	€0	€0
International School of Starnberg						
Primary	€16.450	n.n.	€11.141	€11.158	€17	€5.292
Secondary	€21.434	n.n.	€11.141	€13.389	€2.249	€8.045
Non-expat with child in school						
European School (school fees are for Category III private pupils)						
Primary	€5.336	€16.739	€5.336	€5.336	€0	€0
Secondary	€7.277	€16.739	€7.277	€7.277	€0	€0
Lycée Jean Renoir						
Primary	€4.257	n.n.	€0	€4.257	€4.257	€0
Secondary	€5.710	n.n.	€0	€5.710	€5.710	€0
Phorms München (school fees are based on gross income, here for G8-1)						
Primary	€6.068	n.n.	€0	€6.068	€6.068	€0
Secondary	€8.271	n.n.	€0	€8.271	€8.271	€0
International School of Starnberg						
Primary	€16.450	n.n.	€0	€11.158	€11.158	€5.292
Secondary	€21.434	n.n.	€0	€13.389	€13.389	€8.045

	Applicable per child (18-26 years)		
	Current allowance	Proposed allowance	Difference in allowance
Expat with child in post-secondary education	Up to €11,141 per year fees and €519 per month	Up to €11,158 per year fees and €521 per month	€41
Non-expat with child in post-secondary education	€0	Up to €11,158 per year fees and €521 per month	Up to +€11,158 per year fees and +€521 per month

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** a detailed calculation will have to be made e.g. on the impact per job grade or for children with special needs etc.

Example cases to show the result of the proposed education allowance reform in Vienna***

	Applicable per child per year					
	School fees	School costs including subsidies (6)	Current allowance (5)	Proposed allowance (5)	Difference in allowance	Proposed cost borne by parent
VIS - Vienna International School (4)						
Primary	€19.232	n.n.	€19.232	€11.158	-€8.074	€8.074
Secondary	€22.740	n.n.	€22.740	€13.389	-€9.351	€9.351
DIS - Danube International School (4)						
Primary	€20.411	n.n.	€20.411	€11.158	-€9.253	€9.253
Secondary	€25.717	n.n.	€25.717	€13.389	-€12.328	€12.328
American School (4)						
Primary	€18.408	n.n.	€18.408	€11.158	-€7.250	€7.250
Secondary	€21.560	n.n.	€21.560	€13.389	-€8.171	€8.171
French School (4)						
Primary	€5.253	n.n.	€5.253	€5.253	€0	€0
Secondary	€5.253	n.n.	€5.253	€5.253	€0	€0

* these are first rough figures only, but they give an idea about the disastrous impact of the reform

** a detailed calculation will have to be made e.g. on the impact per job grade or for children with special needs etc.