



Bratislava, January 23rd 2016

In early January, the Slovak Teachers Initiative announced a state of strike emergency. The reason is the ignorance of the long-term demand to ensure an adequate education funding from the Government of the Slovak Republic. The Strike Committee sees this fact as a reason to declare an indefinite strike.

The Slovak government ignores the teachers' call to ensure continuous overall improvements in education and its financing. The strike was preceded by many actions pointing at the bad situation in education, which remained unnoticed.

The aim of the strike is to induce the Government of the Slovak Republic to respect the right of employees guaranteed by Article 36 of the Constitution to fair and satisfactory working conditions and to sufficient remuneration for their work, offering them a decent standard of living.

The gross salary of young teachers is approximately € 650, based on OECD statistics. In comparison with the neighbouring V4 countries, the pay scales of teachers in Slovakia related to the HICP (Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices) increased only by 1.91 % between 2009 to 2014. In the same period the pay scales of teachers in the Czech Republic following the same methods increased by 26.96 %, in Hungary and Poland by 11.3 % and 6 % respectively.

At the same time many schools in Slovakia need reconstruction and new equipment desperately and they lack teaching resources. The equipment bought with the European Union money helped only a small number of schools and schools which should be helped from the state resources suffer.

Another demand of the striking teachers is a change in the teacher education system, which is not effective in fostering their own development.

"The position of Slovak teachers in society and their social state is alarming, education is a minor priority of the Slovak Government and the expenditure on education is far below the OECD average. The continuous increase of the teachers' salaries has not increased the attractiveness of the profession, as the starting salary remains at the level of workers with completed secondary education. Teachers in Slovakia earn only about a half of the salaries of other employees with a university degree," said Vladimír Čermáček, one of the members of the Strike Committee.

"Unfortunately, political intimidation of the schools and teachers wanting to participate in the planned strike occurred recently," he added.

Since any mutual agreement hasn't been reached, teachers in the Slovak republic will start an indefinite strike on January 25th, at 11:00 on the SNP square in Bratislava. Over 11 thousand teachers from around 700 schools are registered to participate in the strike. All the teachers support the Call of the Slovak Teachers Union from October 10th 2015, which states:



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We call on the Government of the Slovak Republic to immediately:

1. Increase the pay scales of all the teaching and professional staff in regional education by € 140 from January 1st 2016 and further € 90 from January 1st 2017;
2. Increase the 2016 budgets of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport and the Ministry of Interior by € 400 million in order to solve the existing differences in the equipment of schools by teaching resources and thus ensure that all children (and their parents) have equal quality of education;
3. adopt the amendment to Act no. 317/2009, which would reintroduce the possibility to get credits for verification of competence and skills, stop the seven-year validity limit of credits, introduce the opportunity to gain credits for further university education, studying abroad and creative activities, and at the same time create a commission at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport with the participation of professional teacher organizations, which would review the system of continuous education respecting the current state analysis and the best practice from other countries.

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