

# PRESS RELEASE



## **COLLECTIVE LITIGATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LUXEMBOURG NO COMPROMISE POSSIBLE BEFORE THE NATIONAL CONCILIATION OFFICE**

On February 13, the first meeting before the National Conciliation Office (NOC) took place in the context of the dispute between the International School of Luxembourg asbl (ISL) and the trade unions OGBL and LCGB.

The joint and separate discussions in employer and union groups lasted two and a half hours, with no notable result.

As the representatives of the employer presented their file, the union representatives were astonished to hear that the last employer proposal for a new faculty scale, from November 2019, was no longer on the table. Furthermore, the employer stated that the first proposal, dating from May 2018, which introduced a separate scale for future teachers was the only one to be considered. The May 2018 proposal included enhanced early career wages at the expense of the career itself, which would increase in the number of years to arrive at the same end of career salary. This would result in a reduction in the yearly average increase from 3.02% to 2.04%. This reversal was all the more surprising for the unions since the first proposal was not part of the dossier submitted to the NCO.

Most surprising was the employer party's declaration that they themselves did not consider their own November 2019 proposal as legitimate from the beginning, that it was simply a result of not having any other options, in their view, due to the Unions' rejection of their previous May 2018 two-tiered proposal.

Though the employer party repeated its insistence that the school is not financially stable for the long term, they did not accept the union's proposals to reduce expenses or increase income - save on expensive outsourced consultation, remuneration of non-CBA staff (11% of the salary budget for 6.8% of the staff) or review the tuition fees, which currently are the lowest of the North Western European Council of International Schools (NECIS) for the Upper School and one of the lowest overall. The employers' representatives did not want to move from their position of focusing almost exclusively on teacher salaries to ensure stability.

The unions had already taken enormous steps to find a solution with the employer during the negotiations, by renouncing their initial demand to increase the wages of all categories of staff by 2%. The unions now insist on their last proposal which consists of increasing salaries in the early steps of the scale in order to accommodate the employer's stated desire to do so and lengthens the career in order to reduce the average annual increase to 2.26% which negatively impacts neither the future nor the current teachers. This claim would imply an increase of 0.51% in the payroll, and is therefore far from the unions' initial request.

The OGBL, as spokesperson for the negotiations, and the LCGB hope to find a solution with the employer on February 27, 2020, the date chosen to continue the negotiations as proposed by the NCO.

Until then, ISL staff will refrain from organizing new pickets - there have been 11 in recent weeks - but work to rule will continue. This implies no additional or optional collaborative meetings outside of regular meeting hours, no consultation with students before or after school hours, lunch or break, no extra extracurricular engagement, coaching and other paid duties, no e-mail communication outside of school hours with students, parents or colleagues, no letters of recommendation, no additional work of any kind.

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The conciliation procedure will be closed either by the signing of the new collective agreement, or by the declaration of non-conciliation. If a settlement has not been reached by June 4, 2020, either of the parties may declare non-conciliation, which will open the right to strike.

**Communicated by OGBL and LCGB**

**February 14, 2020**

