



**Thank you Ms Mogherini,  
but we need concrete steps on funding and fairness**

***Global Intern Coalition statement on EU High Representative Mogherini's response to EU Ombudsman ruling against unpaid internships in EEAS delegations***

After a long battle and protests from interns, EU High Representative Federica Mogherini has responded to the [EU Ombudsman's demand](#) that unpaid traineeships in EU external delegations must end. The Global Intern Coalition, along with its member organisations and partners (see list below), welcomes this acknowledgment that unpaid traineeships are damaging and unfair.

In a positive first step, High Representative [Mogherini agrees](#) that there are concerns about discrimination, and announces plans to request new funding and create a paid traineeship programme. Nevertheless, Mogherini's reply leaves many important questions open and we need to know more details about the announced plans. With this in mind, the Global Intern Coalition is pleased to present several observations on the EEAS response.

1. **These positive steps are the result of endless efforts and hard work from a coalition of organisations and individuals.** Special thanks go to the brave intern who brought the case to the Ombudsman. Without this complaint the EEAS would likely have continued to offer unpaid traineeships in its delegations, a practice which it had defended numerous times. Thanks must also go to the solid network of NGOs, both inside and outside the Global Intern Coalition, which kept up the pressure and momentum through numerous protests, social media and press outreach.
2. **The EEAS proposal is interesting, but the funding situation is very unclear.** It is necessary make financial resources available so that the EEAS can set up and deliver a fair and quality paid traineeship programme in its delegations. This programme must incorporate a transparent recruitment process, clear learning content and sufficient financial support to cover living costs at the trainee's place of work, along with relocation to/from the delegation. Building this programme requires substantial funds. The draft 2018 EU budget includes a proposal to increase funding for EEAS delegation staff costs. However, in correspondence with the Brussels Interns NGO, the EEAS stated that this budget line is not exclusively for traineeships. This leaves the funding situation very unclear. If the programme is planned to be up and running by 2018, there is an urgent need to allocate the necessary money.



3. **The use of university partnerships and external funding must not undermine fair and transparent recruitment.** High Representative Mogherini suggests that not all delegation trainees will be on the EEAS payroll. There are also plans to take “students, in the framework of an agreement with a local university” and “trainees receiving financial support from a university or another institution but located elsewhere in the world.”

These suggestions raise serious questions about how the EEAS intends to ensure that traineeship opportunities are open to as wide a range of candidates as possible and that the selection process is fair and well regulated. Recruitment cannot be limited to young people with support from a handful of elite universities or foundations, but must be based primarily on the merit of the candidate irrespective of the availability of external sources of finance. **Potential trainees able to access external funding must not be preferred during the application process.** To guarantee this, the availability of external funding should not be asked about until after the selection of the candidate.

4. **Local students or trainees with external funding must also be able to participate in the traineeship without discrimination.** Local students and externally-funded trainees must be receiving financial support of at least the same value as that provided to EEAS-funded trainees. If this is not the case then the EEAS should cover the difference and make the funder aware that the support is insufficient. This will ensure that trainees are open to all, and that trainees can commit fully to their placement.
5. **Other EU and international institutions still take huge numbers of unpaid trainees.** The Ombudsman ruling is clear: unpaid traineeships in international institutions are discriminatory, unfair and bad practice. This does not apply only to EEAS delegations, but also to the European Commission and European Parliament, which both take **hundreds of unpaid trainees** per year. The same arguments are equally relevant to the UN and its agencies, where trainees have long been fighting for equal access to internship programmes. The alarming rate of youth unemployment cannot be solved by forcing young people in vulnerable positions to accept unpaid positions! Moreover, international institutions that serve diverse populations must ensure that the opportunities offered by traineeship programmes are accessible to young people from a wide range of backgrounds.



The Global Intern Coalition and its partners will continue carefully monitoring developments at the EEAS, and calling on other bodies to deliver fair and quality traineeship programmes. We acknowledge and welcome High Representative Mogherini's positive initial response, and stand ready to advise the EEAS as they build a traineeship programme that is transparent and rewarding. Backsliding is not an option, and the time has come for the EEAS and other international institutions to stop their hypocrisy and start paying their hard-working trainees.

***Statement developed for the Global Interns Coalition, by:***

