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Your Excellency,

On behalf of Education International's 30 million members worldwide through 392 teacher unions in 172 countries and territories, I write to condemn the Danish Government's decision to push an emergency act through Parliament which will unilaterally force through the employers' demands. The breakdown of collective bargaining in a country well known for its well-established social dialogue institutions is a tragedy.

The Government is de facto radically changing the collective agreement for teachers by allowing school heads to impose individual worktime and preparation time on teachers without negotiation and agreement. This development is bypassing important opportunities for educational improvement and equity.

EI research on the impact of the economic crisis on collective bargaining shows that financial constraint is often used by countries as a convenient justification to suspend or modify existing collective agreements. Settlements are imposed, new legislation prohibiting collective bargaining for public sector, including teachers are advanced. This weakening of the role of tripartite consultative bodies is a central part of certain governmental agendas to undermine trade union rights and social dialogue.

The International Labour Organisation in its last report on Collective Bargaining in Public Services notes that *"collective bargaining, far from damaging the quality of public services or being contrary to general interest, is in fact an instrument that can lead to a harmonious work environment, more effective and efficient services and, above all, to decent working conditions that respect the dignity of public employees."*

At the OECD/EI International Teacher Summit in April 2013, OECD clearly stated that *"The better a country's education system performs, the more likely that country is working constructively with its unions and treating its teachers as trusted professional partners."* Virtually all the top performing countries on international education measures have strong teacher unions, including Finland, Japan, Canada, Australia. Until recently, Denmark was part of this League.

Danish teachers and their unions fought to maintain their rights in the workplace out of their primary concern for the quality of education. Danish teacher unions stand for what is best for their students.

EI and the international education community express outrage at the Government's ultimatum and failure to resort to good faith negotiations to solve the issue between teacher unions and the Local Government Denmark (LGDK). EI fully support the actions of our Danish colleagues as they mobilise for quality public education.

Yours sincerely,

Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary