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## **MEDIATION BRIEFING**

### **Child care leave for substitute teachers**

A large number of substitute teachers submitted complaints to the Ombudsman in recent years, protesting against inequalities in terms of parental leave schemes, which exist in relation to their colleagues employed as permanent teachers.

As early as 2010, the Ombudsman had highlighted the severe deficits and inequalities in the institutional framework provided for maternity protection and work life balance, resulting in the level of maternity protection for substitute teachers being significantly lower than the protection afforded to teachers under a permanent employment relationship.

It should be noted that substitute teachers, while being recruited, in principle, to cover temporary needs, systematically cover part of the fixed and permanent needs of education and may remain in the status of substitutes for a long period of time. In 2018 the Ombudsman received a particularly large number of complaints on this issue and stepped up his intervention, with a letter to the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and notification to the competent Minister.

The document made a concrete proposal for the introduction of parental leave for substitute teachers. On 15.1.2019, a meeting was held between the Deputy Ombudsman for Equal Treatment and the Secretary General of the Ministry. Finally, the Ombudsman's proposal was accepted by the Ministry and incorporated into Article 26 (Parental Leave for substitute teachers) of Law 4599/2019 (Government Gazette, Series I, No 40/A).

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