

**Cónaidhm Éireannach na Múinteoirí Ollscoile**

**Irish Federation of University Teachers**

**PRESS STATEMENT**

**4 SEPTEMBER 2009**

## **IFUT RELEASE POLICY DOCUMENT ON GOVERNMENT'S EMPLOYMENT POLICY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **The Government's Employment Policy for the Higher Education Sector is Illegal**

It is in direct conflict with at least two clear and explicit judgments of the European Court of Justice (see attached briefing document).

### **The Government's Policy is Politically Stupid**

At a time when the rest of the Government is trying to demonstrate that the EU is good for workers, the Minister for Education is deliberately ignoring the commitments Ireland has made arising from the EU Directive regarding fixed-term contracts of employment.

### **The Government's Policy is Contradictory and Unworkable**

In times of recession it makes economic sense for young people to remain in or return to education. The figures show that more people want to get into higher education now. In the past few months the Minister, with great fanfare, announced not one but two new schemes to encourage jobless people to return to university. Yet, at the same time, this same Minister is slashing the number of staff who should teach these new entrants.

### **The Minister's Policy Will Lead to Higher Drop-out Rates**

With less staff and more students class, sizes will see huge increases. There will be less time for the kind of individual attention needed to keep the maximum number of students in college, especially in the difficult early months of adjustment.

### **The Minister's Policy is Anti-Democratic**

With fewer resources, universities will be forced to cut back on access programmes designed to increase participation rates from those groups traditionally under-represented in our universities.

### **IFUT Will Oppose These Policies**

IFUT will oppose these attacks on the Higher Education Sector. We will work with our colleagues in the other teaching unions and we will also work with our colleagues in the wider trade union movement through the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. We expect that we will get widespread support for any action that may be necessary including, possibly, at European level.

### **IFUT Seeks The Support of University Management in Resisting These Cuts**

IFUT recognises that the university managements have been put in an almost impossible situation by the Minister for Education. However, they must not allow themselves to be instruments for the breaching of European employment law and, even more crucially, they must not in any sense be willing participants in a hugely damaging policy with regard to the education sector which they serve.