



October 30, 2020

Ms. Marie Royce
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: Moratorium on growth in the Au Pair program

Dear Ms. Royce:

The Alliance for International Exchange would like to thank you for your continued efforts to clarify that Federal regulations of the Au Pair program preempt state and local laws. That timely clarification is critical to maintaining the program as one focused on cultural exchange and administered by the U.S. Department of State.

We also request clarification from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs regarding the moratorium on growth in the Au Pair program published in the Federal Register on October 9, 2020. We suggest that the Bureau provide a date certain for its expiration.

When describing the moratorium, the Bureau states that it "restricts the size of the category to calendar year 2019 program participant levels." We are assuming the Bureau is referring to sponsor allotments for 2019 and request clarification of the Bureau's definition.

Additionally, we ask the Bureau to provide more clarity on the process regarding the aforementioned category review. The Bureau and au pair sponsors have previously exchanged information and ideas about the new regulation for the Au Pair program. Please let us know if the Bureau is exploring new areas for regulation, what key areas you might be reviewing, and whether the Bureau will reengage program sponsors during this review period.

We note that the Federal Register announcement does not indicate a specific timeframe for the moratorium on the Au Pair program, rather only that it will be in effect for the time it takes to complete the ongoing program category review and next steps. As you know, such reviews often take many years. For example, a new regulation of the Au Pair program has been in development for over six years. Moreover, past Bureau moratoriums on Summer Work Travel in 2011 and a range of privately funded programs in 2017, both of which were meant to be short, became long-term restrictions. Given that history, we urge the Bureau to provide a date in January 2021 by which the Bureau will lift the moratorium.

This past year has been extremely difficult for most sponsors of privately funded exchange programs. Au Pair sponsors, like others, see growth in 2021 as a potential way to rebuild after the hardships of this year. A moratorium that extends into next year could make it more difficult for sponsor organizations to bounce back.

As the Bureau continues its category review, we hope you find helpful a recent Au Pair report commissioned by the Alliance and issued by EurekaFacts. It reaffirms that Au Pair is an



exceptionally run program that achieves the Bureau's mission of fostering cultural exchange and increasing greater mutual understanding between peoples. That is true because the Bureau and Alliance members have a long history of working together to strengthen this important program. We look forward to that continued collaboration.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ilir Zherka", written in a cursive style.

Ilir Zherka
Executive Director