



No Xy Lo

Numéro 22 (EN)–May 2012

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U4U CREATES "U4U REPS", A SPECIAL BRANCH FOR OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE REPRESENTATIONS

At last, our colleagues in the EC Representations in the Member States will have their direct say and be heard by the Staff Committee and representatives.

Taking into account the wish expressed by many colleagues in the Representations, U4U has decided to create "U4U Reps", a department dedicated to them, their specific situations, problems and expectations.

We are already planning meetings with the staff in the Reps, video-conferences, a special publication and a dedicated mailbox.

"U4U Reps" is coordinated by Ruben Mohedano-Brèthes, U4U Secretary for Communication & Proximity and U4U representative in DG COMM, **and Paulo Ruivo Galvao**, from the Rep in Lisbon.

If you are interested in this new way of making your voice heard, if you wish to be informed of our activities, to join or to share your issues and ideas, do not hesitate to call or write directly to the co-Presidents.

We will keep all of you directly informed.

CONTRACTUAL AGENTS –KEEPING OUR PROMISES

One major breakthrough of the negotiations for the Statutes reform was to agree with administration on:

1. The extension up to 6 years of the CA contracts having a finite duration;
2. The possibility that all Contractual Agents could pass an internal competition.

Listening to the requests of the Cooperate of Contractuals (Collectif des Contractuels), U4U fought hard in order to keep them in their posts until the time of the implementation of the reformed Statutes in order to enable them to benefit by these more favourable conditions.

This is a common thought amongst all the unions as it looks after the fundamental interests of our colleagues who are contractual agents.

It should be noted that every month, **one hundred contractual agent contracts are ending.**

U4U asks the administration to implement immediately these new contractual conditions to keep AC in their posts.

GERMANY: 6.3% INCREASE FOR THE CIVIL SERVANTS + ANNUAL BONUS

The German Minister of Internal Affairs, Hans-Peter Friedrich, announced that state and regional representatives and the unions agreed for a salary increase for civil servants in the order of 6.3%,

This salary increase will take effect during a period of two years for the two million officials concerned. The agreement ends conflicts and strike threats submitted by, amongst others, the civil service union ver.di, which was asking for a 6.5 % salary increase.

In addition to this salary increase, **the end of the year annual bonus of the German civil servants will be increased from 30 to 60% of their monthly salary.**

The German civil servants benefit thus from the healthy German economy: the unemployment rate is at an all time low at 7.2

RESTRUCTURING & OFFICE MOVES: U4U COMMITS

A large number of Directorates General are again subjected to a triple state of uncertainty: restructuring, reduction of resources and office moves.

Alerted by colleagues – namely during our decentralised meetings – as well as by representatives in the DGs, U4U is determined and committed for extended activities to the benefit of all colleagues in all the DGs concerned.

As you will see below, **we shall give you regular updates of the situation**, our interventions and the results.

IN DG COMP

Many colleagues in DG COMP contacted U4U some weeks ago to share with us their concerns relating to the moving of your DG to the Madou building.

Further to direct contacts and meetings with them, we drew the attention of the Director General of DG COMP to the issues raised on March 5. Mr Italianer replied diligently and we met

Ms Bénoliel, the Director of Registry and Resources on March 23, to discuss all the points in a frank and direct way.

Ms Bénoliel assured us that all the security measures needed to protect the confidentiality of DG COMP's work are being discussed with the OIB and DG HR's Security Directorate and will be implemented in due time.

Concerning the safety of our colleagues who have to bring confidential documents to the Berlaymont sometimes late in the evening, possible solutions will be assessed, such as a further development of electronic transfers.

The total available space seems to be sufficient to host the meeting, archive and IT rooms needed. The meeting rooms accessible to external visitors will be duly secured.

More generally, all the staff in DG COMP should permanently be kept informed, both directly and through their Directors with whom Ms Bénoliel will continue to hold regular meetings.

A generic mailbox COMP MOVE TO MADOU has now been created to receive your questions, concerns and comments.

However, we also wanted those who prefer to share their issues anonymously to be able to do so. We therefore agreed with the Director of Registry and Resources that all colleagues could directly write to U4U (REP-PERS-OSP-U4U@ec.europa.eu) who will keep in touch with DG COMP management.

U4U will continue to pay the closest attention to the actual conditions of this moving and to keep you informed.

IN THE EXECUTIVE AGENCY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Cuts planned in the Erasmus 4 All programme and most importantly the transfer to the National Agencies of the management of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) will seriously affect the **EACEA's Contractual Agents**.

There are 3 large units which will be affected and no less than **150 CA colleagues**.

U4U repeats its request for the Contractual Agents to benefit from mobility between Agencies on the one hand and Agencies and DGs on the other.

In the days to come, **UFU will demand to meet with the EACEA management and will then inform the staff concerned.**

IN DG ECHO

It appears that the last restructuring, 1 March 2012, was announced without any real priority discussion, without really explaining the reasons and without publishing middle management posts (deputy heads of unit, heads of sector).

U4U will be going there to see what happened/is happening.

IN DG COMM

To date, no explanation has been given to the colleagues of DG COMM with regards to their imminent move to the L56 building (space problems, refreshment facilities, parking, etc.) as well as a probable restructuring.

U4U will be asking management for a meeting.

A REMINDER ON THE PLANNED MOVES

Let's remember that 8 to 9,000 colleagues will need to change offices and/or buildings in 2012. This is one of the biggest moving operations ever to take place.

The main moves will be:

These extended moves bring about a number of problems such as cost, waste of time, environmental aspects, transport, personal difficulties, etc.

U4U will follow this file very closely.

CRÈCHES: DO NOT LET THIS BECOME A HABIT

Parents of children attending the crèches received a note from OIB informing them that, during the Easter holidays, depending on both the presence of nursery staff and children, class-groupings could be made.

One could understand this logic in exceptional circumstances. But is it really exceptional given that the crèches are under-staffed basically permanently?

The grouping of classes for such young children, is not an optimal educational practice and is even discouraged via recommendations the Commission itself has made in relation to this subject.

The grouping of classes or sections within nurseries must remain exceptional. The staffing-levels of nurseries must regain a level sufficient to ensure a high-quality service.

THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS:

The total budget for 2013 is 288.5 million euro. The Commission to honour its legal obligations, contributes 174 million (in the form of a balancing contribution).

But this budget does not allow the schools to maintain an excellent level of teaching.

Support for weaker or special needs pupils has been reduced to a minimum. The reduction in class sizes, approved by the Board of Governors recently, will not be applied. In general, all expenses will be examined and reduced.

Austerity makes one crazy! The most idiotic proposals are in circulation: a Trade Union proposes to get rid of the kindergarten classes, a Parents' Association attacks Category III pupils, others propose that the Commission only funds students of Category I, and even then, only those whose parents are civil servants. One can imagine the consequences that such a proposal would have if implemented, on the availability of seconded-teachers by the Member States ...

Finally, in Type II schools, the Commission refuses, despite its written commitments, to fund all Category I pupils, to only take into account the children of its own staff. Member States want to link their contributions to the percentage of their nationals in the European School System, which is illegal.

In recent years, the European Schools system has been reduced to a state of impoverishment. Teachers find themselves without even the means required to ensure a bare minimum level of

teaching quality. Not to mention the ongoing problem of overcrowding in Luxembourg, Brussels, Varese and elsewhere.

Parents, who are knowledgeable of this situation, vote with their feet, and for more than 50% of them, their children are registered in other schools. The real purpose of the European School System is violated when the Board of Governors refuses almost automatically, any access to children of international organizations established by EU countries.

The European Parliament, meanwhile, regularly comments on the greatness of the European Schools, displays great ambitions for them, until, being the budgetary authority, it has to approve the budget ...

Let's save the European Schools' model, let's fight against under-investment in the Education of our children, this is a battle we will continue to fight together, whilst avoiding putting the various categories of users of the System, against each other.

SHARING PROGRESS: A METHODOLOGICAL MODEL

With a logic of vicinity and responsibility, of involvement and participation in the decision process, U4U advocates participatory methods of change management and their encompassing all processes of restructuration and reform.

Resorting to participatory methods of change management is still a novelty and not only within the Commission.

But in these times of uncertainty, of never ending re-structuration and of pressurized staff, a true, sincere and efficient commitment of all colleagues within the European institutions to the organisational structures and activities at the core of their professional activity appears to be crucial.

This even more so as our public service benefits from the provision and the willingness to get involved of colleagues at every level who are well qualified and often over-qualified for the positions they occupy.

Participatory management therefore is a model of teams and individuals animation aiming towards raising their involvement and contribution to the progress of the organisation. It rests on the taking into account staff expectations and yearnings.

It is thus based in the foremost respect of the human being at the core of the organisation. It advocates communication, dialogue and delegation of power.

Involvement is quite more than just the motivation to accomplish certain tasks. It signals the level of intellectual and emotional commitment of staff towards their institution, their DG, unity or sector as much as towards their goals, vision, values and objectives.

Key to involvement is the creation of an environment wherein everyone can be free to share own energy, effort and capacity for the sake of the entity's performance instead of merely doing so within the context of one's individual working role.

Staff involvement is a priority whenever human resources diminish and an increase of the organisation's performance is requested. A high level of commitment from staff is key for helping the organisation to face those challenges.

Participatory change management rests on 5 main principles:

- Staff mobilisation, by attitudes and by structures

- An active policy of staff development
- Power delegation: trust and shared responsibilities
- Problem resolution at the appropriate level
- Regulatory mechanisms (right to error, self-control)

Members of staff involved in a process of participatory change management, influence, inspire and lead the others.

Participatory management theory is simple. Still there is a need for the willingness to put it in place within the Commission as, for an involvement process to be effective, all that is needed is management taking up the initiative and showing the way.

It is thus upon management at every level to favour and to value staff involvement. U4U will keep on acting this way.

COMMISSION CANTEENS: U4U QUESTIONS MRS. SOUKA

May 2011, 3,000 colleagues signed a petition requesting healthier food leading by the example and following the Commission guidelines and recommendations.

With the perspective of the new call for tenders for the catering in the Commission, U4U called the attention of Madam Director General upon

- the required coherence in food matters among implemented policies and practice within the institutions, and namely the Commission
- the increasing number of vegetarian colleagues and of those suffering from food allergies
- the need to secure the quality of service in the Commission canteens at a reasonable price

U4U expects that the next contractor will need to conform to a number of criteria relating to the origin of staples, to their cultivation and to transformation practices respectful of their intrinsic nutritional value.

We have thus requested a meeting with Mrs Souka to discuss the way in which these concerns could better be taken into consideration.

We will make the point on the outcome of the meeting in these pages.

EU COMMISSION LACKS APPEAL

Several media and namely the EuObserver of last 26th of March have reported on the Commission difficulties to recruit qualified staff, in particular economists:

"So few people are applying for jobs in the European Commission that the official in charge believes it will soon no longer be possible to guarantee a high calibre workforce where all member states are fairly represented. EU commissioner Maros Sefcovic, in charge of administration, says salaries for the commission are too low to be attractive to candidates from rich member states.

"For some time we are facing quite a serious problem recruiting people from so-called high-wage economies," he said Monday (26 March). Sefcovic notes that he himself has interviewed "several high civil servants" from "high-wage economies" who have made it through the commission's staff hiring process only to turn down the job in the end because national civil services pay more.

The situation risks becoming "structural" by the end of this decade, by which time around 60 per cent of managers will be coming to retirement age but are not being sufficiently replaced. But the problem is not just a long term one. The commission is also having immediate difficulty getting top economists to fill an extra 59 posts in its Economic and Financial Affairs department (DG ECFIN)."

ELECTION OF STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

The next elections to the Commission Staff Committee in Brussels will take place on June the 12th.

This election round will be of special relevance, regarding in particular this year political background and the political and numerical weight of the Commission in Brussels.

But they will not be held easily, the schedule being very tight.

In particular, after the first reading by the EP of the reform package, the Council's entry into play risks creating a serious conflict, and more so as several countries continue their anti-European drive and their attacks against the public service.

Union for Unity(U4U) will make its utmost to promote synergies with a view to build a common list with the forces with whom we share practices and analyses, as we have been doing during the last three years in Luxemburg, Ispra and the External Service. The overhaul of union practices and representation, which are essential to the efficient defence of the staff and of the institutions, needs also the regrouping of the union forces.

Thus each time that our vision and orientation could persuade other colleagues and organisations we should favour the united expression of a union project unifying and of proximity, for Europe and for its citizens.

The next three months will show what is in store for us.

GRASPE CONFERENCES

On May the 10th, conference with debate on the European public service will take place on occasion of the publication of the books "La Fonction Publique Européenne" (collectif, éditions de l'ENA) and "Le Champ de l'Eurocratie" (collectif, sous la direction de Didier Georgakakis, éditions Economica).

From 12:45 to 2pm. Rue de la Loi 80, Big room of Staff Committee.

Information, reservations and other conferences organised by U4U (French only):

<http://www.u4unity.eu/trainingFR1.htm>

VISITORS CENTRE IN CHARLEMAGNE: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Upon a number of inquiries, the opening of a new visitors centre in Charlemagne would cause the suppression of meeting rooms which are essential to the Commission's work. This would be even more serious as the Commission would be vacating the Borschette premises.

Nevertheless, we have been reassured that no meeting room would be sacrificed to this project and that only some catering areas would be used for the purpose.

To be continued...

FINANCIAL BALANCE OF THE JOINT SICKNESS INSURANCE SCHEME

Following a number of polemics on this topic, the PMO administration board has put in place a working group to shed some light on the financial situation of the JSIS.

The report that has just been published is very cautious about the evolution of the financial balance at short and medium term. It establishes year 2018 as a potential breaking point, when the scheme will have ended its reserve, as opposed to 2017 in a previous report.

The text points to the exceptionality of the 2004-2010 period from several points of view: major reform of the staff regulations, major widening and review of the implementation guidelines concerning the distribution of the reserve slice that had become too large not to elicit envy from Member States.

It makes the point on the 2011 operational deficit (5,81 million euro, i. e. 2,3% of the operational expenses, financial revenues not included) lower than the one on 2010. It is also 2/3 lower than the one for 2009 and ¾ lower than the 2008 one.

The scheme's accounting balance (including financial revenues) is of 10,01 million on the plus side.

These good results follow the increase of the JSIS contributions, the fair management of the financial reserve by ECFIN that resulted in 15,83 million (against 9,66 million in 2010) and the standard increase in expenditure (3,3% as for 2009)

U4U will keep informing you on this fundamental question.

UNION FOR UNITY – U4U

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