



DG RTD: Staff cuts during major restructuring

1. The outsourcing of the assessment and management of the Horizon 2020 research projects to the executive agencies and other organisations (e.g. JU, etc.) is in the process of involving a reduction of DG RTD staff responsible for project management. The RTD wants to develop its strategic resources to strengthen the research and innovation policy ("DG policy"). These staff cuts affect the Administrative and Financial Units (AFU) in particular. These Units will soon be reduced from 7 to 3 (and eventually to just one at the end of Horizon 2020), while their workforces, according to the available information, will be reduced from 200 to around 130, between 2017 and 2019.

2. This reduction is all the more sensitive as it is taking place in a context of overall cuts in the Commission's workforce, meaning that the loss of 70 AFU jobs for the DG RTD is clear-cut and cannot be offset by staff increases elsewhere. In other words, the 70 members of staff concerned in the AFUs of the DG RTD will mostly have to be redeployed outside of the DG RTD.

3. The AFUs contain several skills profiles in relation to the legal, financial, budgetary, audit and specialist functions for experts or calls for tender, in addition to the administrative support for these functions. In theory, the staff most affected by the elimination of the contract management tasks are the financial officers, along with the legal officers and those staff responsible for audit tracking. We are therefore mostly, but not exclusively, talking about staff in AST, CA GF III or CA GF II grades, i.e. those in financial, legal or administrative support jobs.

4. As regards skills transfers, two possibilities can be considered:

4.1 The executive agencies depend on the DG RTD as they perform exactly the same tasks for Horizon 2020 as those the DG RTD carried out for PC7, provided that the regulatory possibility of transferring officials as temporary agents remains available and provided also that the Contract Agents (CAs) concerned have CAST EPSO (CA staff coming from the AMI cannot apply for the agencies unless a system enabling them to take CAST tests has been planned and organised);

4.2 The other Directorates-General with staffing needs related to those profiles, either as CAs or officials. Such skills are particularly useful in the External Relations DGs (DEVCO, ECHO, TRADE, NEAR, FPI) and where there have been recent staff increases. They appear to be more difficult to plan in other DG groups where there have been significant staff cuts since 2014, except for DG HOME (and to a lesser extent JUST).

5. In U4U's opinion, a movement on such a scale in a period of general staff cuts at the Commission cannot be left to the decentralised responsibility of the DG concerned alone. Furthermore, the scope of the planned restructuring qualifies it as a "major restructuring" in the sense of the recent communication from the Commission on the organisation charts currently the subject of the social dialogue. Measures should therefore be taken that are suited to the scale of the task.

6. The scale of the task can be defined by the following characteristics:

6.1 There must be cooperation with other DGs to find suitable posts for the 70 DG RTD staff members concerned;

6.2 It is necessary to establish a relevant and fair selection system for these 70 staff members out of a total of 200 people.

6.3 The 130 remaining in 3 units must be reorganised internally, which also means finding alternative posts for 3 heads of unit.

7. On the first point (6.1), the DG HR should be given joint responsibility for this restructuring. The DG HR, together with the DG RTD, should take all necessary steps to identify the relevant financial, legal and administrative support posts in the executive agencies and DGs. These 70 posts should be frozen in a "temporary job market", also in the executive agencies, for the restructuring period, and be clearly advertised as posts open to the staff concerned in the AFUs and the DG RTD.

8. On the second point, the DG HR should be made jointly responsible for the selection of staff for mobility. The DG HR recently gained good experience of this process during the centralisation of the HR functions in the AMCs within the Commission. The DG HR (especially its career transition experts) and the DG RTD in cooperation with the DGs concerned which have available posts should organise a *Chambre d'Ecoute* to receive voluntary candidates for mobility. Without a sufficient number of voluntary candidates with a suitable profile, or if they are clearly not the right fit for the DGs that need staff, an active policy to screen for suitable profiles should be implemented in collaboration with the DGs concerned, to identify the profiles they require among the staff of the AFUs of the DG RTD.

9. On the third point, simple solutions should be implemented that do not prejudice the staff of units that will lose their heads of unit. An internal *Chambre d'Ecoute* at the DG RTD should be able to identify the best or adequate individual solutions working within the existing constraints.

10. The three stages of this restructuring should be accompanied by a clear and specific communication to reassure staff about the objectives and resources applied to find professional solutions relevant to the 70 colleagues in the AFUs of the DG RTD.

11. The restructuring of the AFUs of the DG RTD can therefore become a fully fledged pilot operation for the redeployment of staff between DGs, which will determine how such redeployments are managed in the years to come.

(June 2017)