



RELEX

LOCAL AGENTS – PENSION FUNDS

Selfishness and inequality

The evolution of the administration of the European Parliament over the last few months has, in many ways, prefigured the snares and pitfalls that could befall the Commission if staff are not vigilant over the forthcoming European and trade elections in June. When it comes to selfishness, disputes over the Staff Regulations and social inequality, the Commission seems to be blissfully unaware. R&D, however, has reacted to this, and submits the following claims:

Me first...

The principal objective of the mini-reform of the Staff Regulations for Parliamentary Assistants was to enable them to qualify for **sickness insurance** and the **pension scheme**, and to align the Regs with social and fiscal legislation. In doing so, with a degree of connivance on the part of the Commission and only a few months away from the European elections, the Parliament also spread a modesty sheet over years of social and fiscal practices that were unedifying and were taken up by the gutter press.

Now it is **MEPs' supplementary pension scheme** that has hit the headlines. That supplementary scheme is in deficit to the tune of €120 million as a result of risky investments, and European taxpayers are being asked to pick up the bill. The Court of Auditors has been complaining that the fund has no legal standing for years, but neither the budgetary authority nor the guardian of the treaties appears to be bothered by this.

R&D is not opposed to the fund being consolidated, but makes the point that Local Agents of the European Commission in Delegations have been calling for such a fund for 18 years, but nothing has ever been done about it.

While 800 MEPs get together to make good the deficit, over 3500 Agents have been waiting for a social gesture from their employer for 18 years.

Social inequality upgraded to founding principle of Europe?

R&D acknowledges the gravity of the situation, and has reacted by calling on the Commission to intervene. We also call on staff to vote accordingly. **R&D**'s demands focus on a number of issues:

1. The Commission must not sell cheap its monopoly on the right of initiative

The Commission must not repeat the mistake it made in 2004, and must reject out of hand any proposal that runs contrary to the founding principles of our Staff Regulations. MEPs are going to ask the Commission to give them a legal basis to guarantee their pension?

Alright. But the Commission must ensure that its agreement is shaped by the following demand:

1. defend the **method of salary adaptation** for officials, Contractual Agents and Local Agents, and not touch the pension scheme;
2. a **dependency insurance scheme** for all staff;
3. a **pension fund** for outside-the-Union staff that will guarantee them a decent pension, and a **sickness insurance scheme for retired Local Agents**;
4. an **accident insurance scheme** for all retired colleagues.

2. The Commission must fulfil its role as guardian of the Staff Regulations

Although one of the promises of the Kinnock reform was that the Staff Regulations would be consistently applied in Institutions, experience over the last few years has shown that the EP has always applied the Regulations more “creatively” than the Commission (e.g. immediate, unconditional attestation of C staff; the application of promotion rates; regrading of temporary agents; the fairly savage titularisation of temporary staff; and regrading rates for Contractual Agents similar to the rates used for officials).

R&D calls on the Commission to a clear, simple, transparent choice: either it applies the EP's creative staff-friendly measures to all staff in other Institutions in order to ensure equal treatment including resources earmarked for social policy or it should bring an action before the Court of Justice with a view to stopping the parliamentary administration's abuses.

R&D demands that Institutions apply the Staff Regulations in the same way irrespective of the Institution or workplace. R&D also calls on staff to make their voices heard in the forthcoming European elections and Local Staff Committee elections in Brussels. They will be an opportunity to send either a clear message to our Institutions and representatives that we want a solidarity-based Europe – or that we are prepared to tolerate a Europe based on scams and social inequality.

Pour adhérer à R&D/To join R&D Bruxelles : envoyer ce talon à /send this stub to **R&D**, J-79 09/232,

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