

Front Commun interinstitutionnel de la représentation du personnel

JOINT INTER-INSTITUTIONAL FRONT OF THE STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

“PACKAGE 4” THE REAL REFORM TO BE UNDERTAKEN

Proposals from the Joint Front of the Staff Unions of all the Institutions made outside the framework of the Commission’s proposal for reform of the Staff Regulations

The Reform of the Staff Regulations is being presented by the Commission as justified by the requirements of the present-day situation and tuned to various registers such as showing a good example to the Member States, reducing costs, renewing the salary adjustment method, pleasing the press and public opinion...

The Staff Unions, gathered as a Joint Front, do not agree with the Commission’s false motives and refutes the need to re-open the Staff Regulations.

Nevertheless they are ready to negotiate with the Commission in order to at least temper the most negative aspects of her proposals, to defend the action capacities of the Institutions, to improve the working conditions and the career prospects of staff and to counter the vague desires of the Council.

The European civil service has already gone through drastic and long lasting restrictive measures to create savings during the 2004 Reform.

The economic and budgetary arguments do not seem to us to be the real reasons for this reform. The motivation is more political: there is an underlying desire to reduce the size of the European Civil Service and to weaken it.

This new reduction is unjustifiable for an organisation whose size is already reduced and who is constantly called upon to deal with new tasks, new fields of action and new responsibilities. Just as a reminder: Staff expenditure represents less than 3% of the community budget.

The Staff Unions reject the political argument by which the salary adjustment method (the “Method”, which expires end 2012) and the pension contribution method (which expires mid-2013) automatically necessitate the revision of other aspects of the Staff Regulations.

Finally, in the midst of the budgetary, financial, economic and social crises caused by the inability of the national political decision makers to regulate the global financial markets, the Commission needs to convince the Member States to strengthen the only instrument able to help them confront this situation: the European civil service.

In fact, the European civil service remains the only instrument able to make the European Union function and the only entity with the necessary dimension, the competence and the legitimacy to bring viable solutions to the crisis being faced by a number of Member States. The speech of President Barroso on the EU reflects a salutary recognition of this fact, even if it comes late in the day and has not yet been transposed into concrete actions.

Also, instead of the draft presented by the College of Commissioners, proposal which greatly weakens all the Institutions and their staff, the Staff Unions are proposing to the Commission an alternative, more effective approach, which allows for the preservation of the current and future action capacity of the European civil service and to maximise the use of these resources.

The proposals of the Staff Unions address three priorities:

- Investment in the staff
- Simplify and improve the administrative structures
- Improve the management of European public policies

1. Invest in the staff, the primary wealth of the European institutions

1.1 A more dynamic management of the workforce

The political declaration of a 5% reduction of the workforce does not make sense today. As already the myth of “zero growth” in staff numbers, accompanied by an increase in their capacities, these announcements do not correspond to a political choice (enlargement, increase in the number of agencies and jeopardising the European civil service), but above all they totally discredit the public authorities.

Instead, we would like to propose that the institutions begin to apply flexibility in the management of the entire workforce during this period of the next financial perspectives. These positions need to be maintained on the roster and as the administration of the European Parliament has emphasised, remain available to respond to urgent needs and to the new political priorities which are likely to emerge. It is essential that the institutions retain the capacity to respond and to react rapidly and efficiently.

The European institutions need to adopt a more dynamic and rational approach to the management of their staff at all levels.

The modernisation of the careers policy should translate, within the framework of a genuine social dialogue, into the adoption of a five-year action plan, accompanied by concrete measures.

When resources are limited, priority should be given to the management of existing capacities within the institutions.

A better equal opportunities policy for all, and particularly for our female colleagues, the young and those over 55 years of age, needs an increase in the means available from SCOP or any other service dedicated to careers advice in other institutions, by the creation of specific career paths and by a policy of identifying particular talents and through mobility.

This active policy of continuous follow-up and a true management of careers become all the more urgent now that the Commission is proposing to increase the age of retirement to 65.

1.2 The failure of externalisation-privatisation of tasks

Externalisation/privatisation has been a complete and costly failure. Given the margins charged by private contractors, the services of external staff (especially in the field of IT and language training) have been costlier than that of permanent civil servants.

The re-internalisation of the security and catering services is a necessity. The Court of Auditors has itself internalised the guarding functions, thereby making a saving of €400,000 per year (for two buildings). The integration of the Clovis crèche in Brussels has, according to the administration, generated a benefit of more than one million Euros per year. The European Parliament has itself also internalised its security and accreditation services.

The Staff Unions ask that the language teachers be integrated into the European School of Administration, which would be socially justified and would permit substantial savings to be made.

They also ask for the internalisation of the security and firemen staff. This would be in the interest of the Institutions, as well as permitting legal obligations to be met with cost savings.

1.3 Put an end to jeopardising staff

The introduction in 2004 of the category of contract agents has brought about profound changes in the staff structure of the Institutions, notably within the Commission, in the Executing Agencies, the Delegations, offices, etc.

If such a category of staff is indispensable for the sound operation of the Institutions, resorting to temporary staff for permanent tasks has greatly weakened the European civil service, notably within the Commission, where there are some 6,000 contractual agents, of which about half are on open-ended contracts.

The contract length of limited duration CA should be extended to 6 years.

At the same time rigorous internal competitions should allow the best elements to be retained within the European civil service, which would constitute a socially just measure as well as generate savings.

It would be advisable to identify or to finalise the analysis to identify “Core” and “non-Core” tasks, so that the permanent tasks can be undertaken by civil servants. Permanent tasks should have permanent staff!

The jeopardising of CA colleagues should not be exploited to become a pretext to embark on the most massive contract-based recruitment ever undertaken for functions which have always been part of the European civil service!

Whilst the Reform is being presented as limited and linked to the present economic situation, no less than 7,500 civil service positions for secretarial staff will irreversibly be transformed into CA posts, thereby depriving these colleagues from the opportunity of ever acceding to civil service posts!

The situation of Temporary Agents within the agencies is also generating problems. Their importance and their permanence are recognised by the Institution which proposes to create an ‘n’th category – AT 2f. Their cost is equivalent to that of civil servants. Certain agencies are likely to become permanent and yet the statute of civil servant is denied to these staff. This makes no sense at all!

2. Simplification and better management of administrative structures

2.1 Put an end to the waste of resources

The European civil service is paying today for the rash political decisions of the Member States, most particularly regarding the permanent sites of the Institutions and Agencies. It is evident that their dispersal does not provide any added value and considerably drains the European budget. Since 2004 their number has exploded, thereby significantly weakening the Commission as an institution.

Not only do these agencies operate in isolation, but frequently they increase the costs by multiplying the horizontal administrative structures (human resources, IT, etc.)

The Staff Unions requests that a screening of the operations of the 48 agencies be undertaken. The Staff Unions ask that before any new agencies are created serious thought be given to regrouping the control agencies in one site, which would rationalise the social structures (crèches, schools, nurseries), would reduce the carbon footprint generated by repeated missions, improve the service to staff and the administration of rights, and the creation of European Schools.

In this way the number of Directorates General and services would have to be reduced as much as possible. A DG should not exist if it does not reach a critical mass of staff.

2.2 Restructuring of DGs and Directorates

A restructuring and a simplification of DGs is necessary. In the Commission for instance, rather than multiply the DGs on the basis of the number of Commissioners or on the number of portfolios that need to be artificially created to please the Member States, administrative efficacy should be the order of the day so as to avoid duplication, conflicts of authority and of expertise, and waste.

In this context the coordination role of the DG HR services and of the Secretariat General need urgently to be strengthened. It should be possible to detect and eliminate duplication of functions, to promote synergies within and between DGs (for instance the creation of a common audit service for all the Structural Funds) and to mutually benefit from services.

In the same way, the rationalisation of support services is a priority. About 8,000 persons (one out of three colleagues) undertake administrative and support functions and another 3,000 or so provide financial support. The modernisation of procedures and the re-centralisation of tasks should allow a significant reduction of these numbers. A number of resources could thereby be gradually redeployed to functions in support of policy making, where there a crying needs for more staff. In this context the proposed reorganisation of the JRC is an example which absolutely needs to be followed.

The rationalisation of the human resources functions (some 600 staff, i.e. 13 per DG or 1 for 56 staff members) would also allow for the redeployment of resources.

It would also be necessary to rationalise the managerial functions (today some 1,400 Heads of Unit, 250 Directors, and more than 2000 Heads of sector/teams). Within such an environment as that of the Commission, with highly qualified staff, it is necessary to have a more 'fluid' hierarchy. The coordination of teams could for instance be undertaken by experienced colleagues who also cover technical aspects, not only coordination.

2.3 Ensure a better level of cooperation between certain services of the Institutions

Certain activities or mandates should be managed in a more coordinated fashion by the Institutions.

In the selection of staff, and with the greatest respect for the provisions of Annex III of the Staff Regulations, EPSO should improve its services by making optimal use of joint juries, by better planning of needs, by improving the use of the list of successful candidates, by organising

competitions and the selection of contract agents twice a year. The Institutions, agencies and other organisms should systematically make use of EPSO rather than organise their own procedures.

It is possible to go even further in the search for innovative and less costly solutions for the whole of the EU and the Member States.

As an example, the creation of European Schools in European cities and large world capitals (outside the EU) would allow the pooling of means at the Community level, would enable the MS which maintain their own schools to make significant savings, whilst at the same time improving the delivery of services to European nationals. Moreover, this would improve the image of the EU by a concrete manifestation of the principle of "Unity within diversity".

3. Better management of the European public policies

3.1 A truly European budget

The Staff Unions support the demand that the European budget should reach at least 1.25% of the GDP of the Union and that it should be financed principally from its own resources, levied on the basis of a tax on financial transactions and on VAT.

This amount is necessary to accomplish the tasks resulting from the enlargement of the Union and in order to face the crisis. By way of reminder, during the Fontainebleau summit of 1984 the ceiling had already been set at 1.25%, to be financed from own resources, though the politicians in charge since have never achieved this level of commitment.

The increase of resources needs to be accompanied by an even greater effort to ensure that they are used optimally and by always accounting to the European citizenry.

Following the example of Commissioner Piebalgs, who states that he can economise €4.5 billion a year, without affecting the staff, each Commissioner should undertake a screening of his programmes and of his financial procedures.

Particular efforts are necessary notably in the management of the various aid programmes. The distribution of Community aid should be better controlled by the Commission itself. Finally, the Commission should be given more means with which to manage the various European aid programmes. The use of consultants should be audited and limited.

It would be advisable to move towards a recentralisation of administrative and financial functions and responsibilities. There are often more controllers than persons to be controlled with the duplication of controls at successive levels. It is necessary to find a balance between responsibility, exactitude and transparency on the one hand and operational efficacy in the interest of the tax payers on the other.

3.2 Administrative simplification

The Staff Unions of the Joint inter-institutional Front suggest that the Commission undertake a critical examination of the realisation of the principle of subsidiarity with a view to identifying duplications between the Member States on the one hand and between Member States and

European Institutions on the other hand. (For instance, drug agencies, sanitary health, air security, etc.).

The paths suggested above are explained in greater, though not full, detail in the annexes hereafter.

Individual elements outlined above could be fleshed out in greater detail with concrete suggestions as to how to implement them in reality.

4. Annex I: Measures with direct financial impact, but outside of the Staff Regulations

4.1 Measures in the framework of Chapter 5 of the Financial Perspectives

4.1.1 Measures relative to the structure of the European Civil Service (ECS) and the operations of the services

- Dynamic management of staff at all grades
- Screening of the operations of all 48 agencies and rationalisation
- Regrouping of control agencies in a single site in one Member State
- Regrouping of executing agencies
- Re-internalisation of security and catering services and a reduction in the use of expertise through private framework contracts
- EPSO: consider a reduction in the operational expenses
- Obligation to fully exploit reserve lists before organising new competitions; competitions would consequently be organised only every two years
- Make economies of scale through the recruitment of TA and CA of Agencies
- Evaluate and limit the call on external firms
- Estimate of 25-30% savings
- Central registration service at the Commission/validation of Legal Entities and banking details (an operational example DG BUDG). Creation of common administrative services between DGs (Example DG HOME + JUST)
- Recentralisation of administrative and financial management functions and responsibilities: Court of Auditors, IAS, IAC, ex-post audits, external audits, etc.
- Strengthen the independence and the functions of control organs such as OLAF and IDOC (Commission)

4.1.2 Measures not related to the structure of the ECS and the functions of the services

- Align Regulation n° 422/67 relative to the emoluments of members of the Commission and the judges of the European Court of Justice with the evolution of the Staff Regulations

4.2 Measures outside of Chapter 5 of the Financial Perspectives

- Better management of community policies (along the lines of Commissioner Piebalgs), without affecting staff
- Improved management of the Commission budget with regard to the various aid programmes
- Distribution of community aid better controlled by the Commission itself
- Granting the Commission more management means for the various aid programmes
- Analyse the use of external expertise with a view to reducing its use
- Create European Schools in the big capitals of the world

5. Annex II: Measures with an indirect financial impact, outside of the Staff Regulations

- Best use of human and financial resources by administrative simplification, the rationalisation of objectives and of mandates devolved to the DGs
- Abandonment of the objective to reduce staff by 5%
- Identification and/or finalisation of the analysis concerning “Core” and “non-Core” tasks such that permanent tasks can be undertaken by civil servants
- Better equal opportunities policy for all, most particularly for female staff, the young and the over-55 years. A compensation system should make it possible for the effective and rapid replacement of colleagues working part time
- Increase of the means for SCOP or any other equivalent service provider and the creation of specific career paths (non-management, advisers, experts)
- Active and continuous policy support in career management
- 5-year Action plan for the reform of career management
- Establishment of a more rational relationship between the number of management positions and the rest of staff, notably at SEAE

5.1 Organisation of work

- Internal screening of Commission DGs and the Directorates of other Institutions and Agencies (offices, etc)
- De-compartmentalisation of units in order to compensate for lack of staff
- Systematic creation of spare capacity teams (floaters) within DGs
- Rationalisation and harmonisation of data bases
- Replacement of Microsoft software with “open source” software

5.2 Rationalisations

- Move towards a more integrated building policy
- Integration of language teachers within the European School of Administration
- Integration of Security agents and firemen