

FLASH
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**Union
Syndicale
Fédérale
Consilium**

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DGA3 –

OUTSOURCING AGAINST THE ODDS

A very interesting document has just been made available in DGA3: the [Mid-term review on the Implementation of the Pilot Project on Outsourcing](#). If you don't have the time or inclination to read it, there is an article on [Atrium](#) which gives a fairly good summary of the main findings. The experiences of four units (DE, HR, PL, SV) involved in outsourcing translation work over the first six months of the year show that relatively few GSC documents are suitable for outsourcing. It is also very difficult and costly to get translations back within the required deadlines – not to mention that the quality is not up to scratch.

This confirms what we already knew: given the specific nature of translation at the Council and the problems inherent in outsourcing (level of quality required, value for money and compliance with deadlines), outsourcing translation work is not a good choice for the GSC. We might also mention that the figures in the T2020 report by DGA3 management on the number of pages that could be outsourced were clearly wishful thinking.

So is this option off the table? Not at all. Though we are turning our backs – perhaps a little hastily – on the Translation Centre, the private sector is not getting the same treatment. Nor is the possibility of having accredited translators in the Member States, which is currently being explored (with the utmost transparency, needless to say).

Of course, it might be more useful to harness the skills and energy of the colleagues tasked with carrying out these pilot projects to look into ways of improving internal management, organisation and the coordination of work in order to ensure the quality of the service provided in all languages, not just to our colleagues at the GSC but also to the citizens and delegations of all the Member States. Nevertheless, we must welcome the continuation of the pilot project because the longer it lasts, the clearer the drawbacks of outsourcing become, and the more justification we will have in defending our reliable and high-quality in-house translation service.

US-info

JOB FOR THE BOYS

and other 'creative' solutions

Everyone knows that it's a futile exercise trying to keep hold of temporary or contract staff whose contracts come to an end. But don't despair: the intervention of a high-ranking benefactor can work administrative miracles, whether the Legal Service likes it or not.

Article 29(2)¹, which allows for recruitment without a competition, may also prove very useful in resolving the issue of colleagues who are indispensable but whose status is not secure. Of course, the whole thing is dressed up with a lovely vacancy notice open to all GSC officials and temporary staff to show that the post is not reserved for one person in particular. But an internal competition is not held because that would require 'a sufficient pool of candidates'. After extensive discussions within the Joint Committee on both the legality and the legitimacy of the procedure, the administration is asked to review its text... and ends up deciding not to change anything and to publicise the post without delay.

But don't even think about organising internal competitions for ASTs or AST/SCs, whose skills are just as invaluable to the institution: it's too complex and too costly.

And what about those high-ranking officials who return to the GSC after leave on personal grounds? The Council is required to offer them a post commensurate with their grade and duties. It's only fair, or they wouldn't be able to support themselves. Too bad if the post in question is suddenly not open to all those who might want it. They will just have to take part in the compulsory mobility exercise or hope they will soon become senior administrators...

Let us also remember that one of the reasons given for making the rotation exercise compulsory is that some people seem to cling desperately to fabulous posts that are coveted by their colleagues. We could welcome the fact that these posts (which have still not been identified) will finally be vacated. But then again, the vacancies will obviously not be published and the proud new holder of the post won't be chosen by a selection board but by a computer drawing on 63 possible combinations of choices.

¹

'A procedure other than the competition procedure may be adopted by the Appointing Authority for the recruitment of senior officials (Directors-General or their equivalent in grade AD 16 or AD 15 and Directors or their equivalent in grade AD 15 or AD 14) and, in exceptional cases, also for recruitment to posts which require special qualifications.'

FLEXITIME

The clocking-in machines have gone, prompting some people to break out the bunting on Domus.

Union Syndicale accepted the result of the consultation because we reached an agreement that is not detrimental to staff and is in line with the Secretary-General's clearly stated intention to remove the clocking-in machines while opening the door, on the basis of his declaration, to a long-requested negotiation which we consider to be far more important. But we are still not convinced that the removal of the clocking-in machines represents social progress, fearing instead a return to a situation which allows more room for arbitrary practices.

But let us give it some time and see what is negotiated this autumn. As we indicated in [October 2015](#) and reiterated, along with the other unions, in [January 2016](#), Union Syndicale will insist on three points:

- Night and weekend work must be treated in a different way from work carried out during normal working hours.
- The length of the day must be limited to 12 hours and the daily break of 12 hours must be uninterrupted. If you cannot take it immediately because your manager requires you to come back earlier, you must be able to defer it.
- Overtime is limited by the Staff Regulations to 150 hours in a six-month period. This limit is currently monitored and respected only for staff entitled to compensation or remuneration for overtime, when it should apply to everyone.

A fourth point has since been added: the right to 'switch off'. It is not normal for colleagues to be reachable 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as is now possible with the new communication tools. In addition to the general rules to discourage managers from disturbing their staff, we believe there must be strict rules to prevent any abuse of the system.

We will of course keep you informed of developments in the negotiations.

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