

UNION SYNDICALE



Brussels, 14 July 2015

Enough is enough!

Sunday's Euro Summit was only the latest in a long series of summits and other exceptional events to have taken place since the beginning of this year. For General Secretariat staff, little distinguishes each new crisis from the one that preceded it: the economic and financial crisis, Libya, sovereign debt, Ukraine, the euro crisis, terrorism, the prospect of a Grexit... And there is no end to the "unusual working hours" required to keep pace with the negotiations: permanent stand-by, night work, weekend work, the translation units working up to 24 hours in a row last weekend – without even getting into the hellish conditions that logistics and security services have to endure at these summits.

Of course, the Council and the European Council are political institutions and, of course, the GSC must be at their service and ensure they have the support necessary to hold their meetings.

But there are limits, and this time they were exceeded!

Making staff work 24 hours in a row is clearly illegal from the point of view of European legislation. It may also constitute a criminal offence which jeopardises staff health. To offer no compensation in return for these sorts of working conditions is immoral, and indicative of an archaic and miserly approach to management. The fact that the colleagues who worked until Monday morning were generously allowed to take the rest of Monday off cannot be considered compensation; to maintain otherwise is sheer hypocrisy.

Sunday's summit was a success because there was a desire to solve a problem to which no solution seemed possible. The issue of staff working conditions has seemed equally intractable, since a former Secretary-General obliged the Trade Union or Professional Organisations (OSPs) and staff to accept a reduction in compensation to almost zero in exchange for a promise to continue to curb unusual working hours. The various crises meant that this was not to be.

If the current Secretary-General also wants to solve this problem, nothing is preventing him from putting in place exceptional measures to deal with an exceptional situation.

Union Syndicale demands that the Secretary-General and the Appointing Authority ensure:

- **that fair compensation is granted to all the colleagues who had to work in unacceptable conditions;**
- **that consultation on compensation for unusual working hours, which was suspended in September 2014, resumes in September 2015.**

The Executive Committee/Council