



Union Syndicale

Brussels, 9 January 2025

Note for the attention of the Secretary-General

Subject: reply to our letter dated 28 November 2025

Dear Madame Blanchet,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 November 2024 in reply to our letter dated 25 October 2024.

While we appreciate the retrospective addition of the phrase on the Domus page concerning the [Promotion Exercise 2024](#), we would respectfully reiterate that for many years it has been the Administration's established practice to publish separately the original lists drawn up by the Advisory Committees on Promotion (ACP) - in accordance with the provisions of the [Consolidated Protocol](#) and, most recently, in accordance with Article 7 of Decision 14/22. This practice worked well and added some transparency to the exercise. It is therefore a matter of concern that the Administration does not honour its own decision and agreements with the trade unions and, inevitably, this erodes trust in the Administration.

On our other main point, we wish to remind you of some comments made by the Administration in 2018¹, who considered that the 'staff appraisal system' had 'two main drawbacks'.

- *"it's unclear for staff: appraisal reports include 13 different marks and a general assessment. The way managers apply the marks (from 'unsatisfactory' to 'outstanding') often varies, which means that the evaluation of performance is not always clear to staff. Staff is also not fully aware of what is expected of them and the link between the level of performance and promotion is not always obvious;*

¹ Domus page, screenshot of 16.01.2018, <http://domusportal.consilium.eu.int/news/Pages/20180108admin.aspx>

- *it's labour-intensive for managers: instead of focusing on staff development, managers spend a lot of time on the actual drafting of the appraisal reports, fine-tuning the correct distribution of marks across 13 different competencies, in order to achieve the desired average."*

We fully endorse those findings and would point out that the system has not changed since then. The current system may be 'robust', but we consider it too cumbersome. It was designed to serve the needs of an institution much smaller than the current GSC. Assessment is based on criteria that are, in varying degrees, subjective, unclear, difficult to measure and duplicated. Unfortunately, despite the training and guidance to which you refer, discrepancies remain. Reporting officers adopt differing approaches and interpret the criteria in different ways. Some even deny their staff consultation and feedback. In such cases, colleagues have no opportunity to question and correct.

Each year, the three trade unions advise a large number of colleagues who struggle with the iniquities of the appraisal and promotions systems. That number is significantly higher than the number of Article 90(2) complaints submitted. Colleagues know that the submission of such complaints and requests, even if they are fully justified, never leads to proper review and redress, since the Court only scrutinises the procedural aspects. That is why the many colleagues who come to the trade unions to complain about the results of the evaluation and promotion exercise are most often advised not to initiate a formal procedure.

We agree, too, with your own assertion that *"the budgetary and statutory framework of our system does not allow all deserving colleagues to be promoted or reclassified at their desired pace"*. We therefore consider that a fairer system, such as the one we referred to in our letter of 25 October, would remove the elements of uncertainty and lack of clarity and replace these with a more predictable pace of promotion for the vast majority of colleagues. This would not entail any additional budgetary cost. Union Syndicale would, of course, be very willing to work with the Administration and contribute its further thoughts on this to help:

- deliver a fairer, more streamlined, more predictable and more transparent appraisal and promotions system for the GSC staff as a whole;
- remove the main stress factors in the system for both staff and managers.

In this context, we would also be interested to hear more about your work in the HR-T programme and would ask for staff representatives to be included in the discussions and/or to receive updated reports on progress in the work. We look forward to hearing from you further on this subject of vital interest to staff members and managers alike.

We also respectfully request a return to meetings between you and the trade unions in line with the established practice of your predecessors.

On behalf of Union Syndicale,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Loescher', written in a cursive style.

Bernd Loescher