



Bruxelles, 25th January 2019

1) Poem

SYSPER

Not unlike a whisper,
Though not in your ear,
Just bland reassurance,
But a message unclear.

Why be left in limbo
In a deep disconnect?
Who will you turn to
With requests to correct?

SYSPER spells big changes
And wrests control from you,
And unless you speak up
There'll be no review.

2) Sysper and other MIPSs

Work began in several departments more than two years ago and is expected to be finished by spring 2019. Throughout this period, dialogue with the Administration and managers has been heavy going. Information has been shared grudgingly and stingily. The latest news confirms our fears. The Administration seeks to reassure us by claiming that despite the move to Sysper, the GSC will continue to adopt its own implementing provisions for the Staff Regulations in keeping with our consultation and negotiation procedures. As far as possible. It takes care to avoid saying how it plans to ensure that this is done.

In that regard, recent experience with the Mission Guide (and MIPS) is telling: a consultation did take place, but that does not change the fact that the Commission's rules cannot be changed. At most we are being promised that some of these rules will be applied in line with the GSC's usual practice. Really? Which ones? For how long?

Given that the GSC will continue to be responsible for responding to complaints and appeals submitted by its staff in cases transferred to the PMO, but only for a provisional period, we can assume that the same will happen in all other areas. This will eventually include time management and reporting/promotions of which the Administration stresses that no transfer is planned *at the moment*.

Despite the strong opposition and legitimate fears raised by staff in the last few years and at the General Meeting of November 2018, which were reiterated in the open letter to the Secretary General, the Staff Committee's repeated requests to the Administration and the letter to Mr Shapcott, our Administration has stuck to its guns and is seemingly only able to secure purely formal or temporary amendments.

As far as **Union Syndicale** is concerned, quite aside from the ill-judged delaying tactics, the way in which these transfers are being handled confirms what we have been saying for years: the effective functioning of the GSC depends on the goodwill, skills and conscientiousness of all staff. The reduction of staff posts and mobility for managers, now compounded by compulsory mobility for AD generalists, are depriving the departments of indispensable resources, skills and memory. Everyone gives their all in their own field of activity, but no one now has a clear overview or the time to think about the broader or longer-term consequences. We are reinventing the wheel, focusing constantly on the most immediate needs. On top of that, financial constraints and arbitrary deadlines set to meet IT or policy requirements are inevitably giving rise to unsatisfactory outcomes.

When are we going to take the time to take our time? When will we take stock of how much damage has been done? Are further chunks of our Administration also set to disappear without our being informed and with no genuine staff involvement?

3) 360°: something's not quite right

The initial phase of the 360° 'evaluation-which-is-not-an-evaluation' is complete. The managers concerned will now receive their confidential reports, drafted by external consultants. So far so non-transparent, but little matter. **Union Syndicale** is convinced that such crystal-clear responses to such well-considered questionnaires will establish that all managers are good. If not, they will be better after two sessions of individual coaching.

What more could we ask for when it comes to improving management at the GSC?

Nothing!

Apart perhaps from supplementing the managers' professional development policy with a better thought-out managers' mobility policy, inspired by a genuine desire to put the right person in the right place? **Union Syndicale** feels that at least one very recent case would appear to show that our Administration has other priorities.

4) Reform of the reporting/promotion system

Union Syndicale has been calling for a reform to our reporting/promotion system for more than 10 years. The current system was designed for an institution of a few hundred officials in which it was possible for the members of the promotion boards to know all of the candidates for promotion personally. Unlike the situation that has developed since, staff reports only had a limited function.

Today all parties concerned have finally become convinced of the need for reform. The Appointing Authority initiated this reform in January 2018, opting to put off the consultation with the OSPs for as long as possible and consult first with managers and staff about its project. It was not until the summer that the OSPs were finally able to contribute to the discussion. The three trade unions rejected the idea of the Appointing Authority moving towards an evaluation using objectives set at the start of the exercise, in which all colleagues are assigned targets to achieve or exceed, which would therefore be conducted on the basis of a more or less subjective assessment of results achieved. The trade unions considered that such a system would not meet the criteria that the Appointing Authority set itself. In addition, in the view of the trade unions, such a system is neither sound, nor fair, nor even possible for many posts. For example, would a service vehicle driver be given the target of driving faster?

On the initiative of **Union Syndicale**, the three OSPs have therefore submitted their own [proposal](#) to the Appointing Authority with a view to breaking the negotiations deadlock.

The proposed system:

- simplifies reporting (an overall assessment over four levels, instead of the 13 headings with five levels);
- considerably reduces the resources required for the evaluation procedure (no detailed evaluation for the vast majority of colleagues who deliver the 'high standard of work expected of an EU official');
- preserves the individualised nature of the evaluation;
- preserves staff representatives' current levels of influence and monitoring at the different stages of the reporting and promotion procedure;

- is far more transparent;
- and allows for a high degree of predictability in the pace of individual promotions, instead of the annual lottery we currently have.

Union Syndicale has prepared a [PowerPoint presentation](#) for you explaining the main features of the proposal submitted to the Appointing Authority.

5) Contract and temporary staff

The three Council unions had sought an increase in the number of reclassification possibilities available for contract agents (reclassification being equivalent, in a way, to promotion for officials), who often have to wait eight to ten years to be reclassified. We had also requested a review of the initial classification conditions applicable upon recruitment, so as to take better account of new colleagues' professional experience and facilitate interinstitutional mobility.

At another round of negotiations in December, the unions were taken aback by the items submitted by the Appointing Authority: we learned that the latter wished to extend 'the use of contract staff' and institute considerably 'less bureaucratic' methods for recruiting temporary staff so as to be able to respond more quickly to the needs of the services. The Appointing Authority rebuffed the idea of discussing the unions' original requests first and then examining its new suggestions – thereby placing all the items on an equal footing.

Union Syndicale will fight tooth and nail to defend the limits laid down in Articles 3a and 3b of the CEOS as regards the recruitment of contract and temporary staff (namely recruitment to carry out manual or administrative support service tasks (function group I) or to replace a temporarily absent official (other function groups)). We do not wish to follow the example of the Commission, where now around one third of staff members are not officials. We want the European civil service to be stable, lasting and independent – not insecure. **Union Syndicale** will therefore refuse to extend the use of contract and temporary staff and to facilitate their recruitment at the expense of officials. Fighting to secure the position of colleagues in insecure jobs – by organising internal competitions, for example – is a futile exercise if, at the same time, we recruit even more contract and temporary staff to carry out permanent tasks for which officials are needed.

Much to our astonishment, this view, which seems self-evident to us, is not shared by the other two unions.

6) Preventive medicine

In its frenzied pursuit of short-term false economies, our *Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme* decimated the screening programme two years ago. Yes, you can make savings by no longer screening for cardiovascular diseases or cancer, but the Scheme risks being served up a much steeper bill in the long run. Now we are starting to see some tentative backtracking, with staff representatives from all the institutions having negotiated with the Commission to have the screening programme upgraded again (negotiations in which **Union Syndicale Fédérale** played an active role). Over the coming weeks, you will receive information on the new programmes and simplified administrative procedures.

But we are still not satisfied. Preventive medicine will still be limited to a simple *screening programme*, from which, we might add, affiliated children are completely excluded. Encouraging a healthy lifestyle – for example, by covering the cost of sports activities, as many health insurance providers do – remains inconceivable to our employers. More shocking, however, is the fact that the programme still does not cover vaccines – not even those which are mandatory or at least recommended. What can possibly be gained by this? A few cases of polio or tuberculosis to deal with?

Union Syndicale will not give up the fight. We will keep battling to see that a new vision of sickness prevention is adopted during the announced review of the general implementing provisions.

7) Some news from the Court

- The appeals against the non-adjustment of salaries and pensions in 2011 and 2012 have been lost. We are dismayed at the General Court's core argument that the violation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights as regards the duty to consult staff representatives is not an argument which can be relied on by individual officials in their appeals, even if the individual official in question is the chair of a union which should have been consulted.
- However, the appeal against the massive reduction (by the 2014 reform of the Staff Regulations) of additional leave days granted to colleagues serving outside the EU was more successful. Thousands of colleagues in the Commission and the External Action Service will benefit from this.
- The Appointing Authority has got its fingers burnt by sending colleagues on '*leave in the interests of the service*' (formerly '*early retirement*') against their will (applying Article 43c). One of its victims, a member of **Union Syndicale**,

lodged an appeal and won! The person in question is to be reinstated with retroactive effect – spelling a hefty bill for the Council. We're willing to bet that in future, the administration will be wary of applying the article against the will of 'volunteers'.

- Good news for colleagues on a modest salary, in particular FG I contract agents: via a Court of Justice [judgment](#), **Union Syndicale** has secured the possibility for colleagues retiring based on the minimum subsistence figure (Article 6 of Annex VIII to the Staff Regulations), and for whom a previous transfer of pension rights to our system has no impact on their pension, to request that the institution reimburse them the transferred capital. This was recently done for the first time at the Court of Justice itself, with one of our contract staff colleagues obtaining a reimbursement of more than EUR 100 000.

