

Workload



Steered by Union Syndicale, the unions and the Staff Committee have been stepping up pressure on the administration to end the unsustainable excessive workload. Back in 2021, the limits of the Flexitime counters for night and weekend work and hours worked above the 80-hour ceiling were exceeded. But then in 2022 the excessive workload increased massively again, with countless overtime hours, unlawful standby requirements and bans on recuperation or taking of leave ... **Enough is enough: there's no juice left to squeeze from the lemon!**

The administration did take a small step by promising to allow colleagues to recuperate hours worked over the 80-hour ceiling, which would normally have been lost, during the summer months. Union Syndicale thanks the administration for this, but stresses that it will not be sufficient to solve the problem. **The Council needs several hundred more officials!**

Steps must be taken to:

- Respect the limit of 150 hours' overtime per six months in a row;
- Respect the European standards on protection of workers' health, namely:
 - a working week must never exceed 48 hours, including overtime;
 - a working day must never exceed 12 hours;
 - daily (12 hour) and weekly (36 hour) breaks must never be interrupted or refused;
 - where standby duties impose major restrictions on colleagues they must be counted as working time;

- Ensure that all additional hours are paid or recuperated. Whenever a colleague's counter is approaching the 80-hour ceiling, their line manager must work out with them when the hours can be recuperated.

The General Meeting of Council staff recently adopted a [resolution](#) which **Union Syndicale** fully endorses.

Now the ball is in the court of the administration and the Council as the budgetary authority.

Union Syndicale stands ready to help any colleagues who need assistance with asserting their rights.

Internal competitions



Union Syndicale is pleased that following the internal competition for security staff, the Appointing Authority has now launched a competition for financial assistants and announced some other internal competitions for generalist and linguistic administrators in the course of 2022. The Council's trade unions have been calling for years for an ambitious programme of internal competitions to provide opportunities for the many colleagues on insecure contracts, to enable career development commensurate with individual competencies and to meet the needs of services. **Union Syndicale** proposes that the competitions be tailored to the needs.

However internal competitions cannot solve a structural problem: When 80 % of new colleagues recruited externally are not officials but contract or temporary staff (as was the case in 2020 and 2021), internal competitions are merely mitigating a basic imbalance. Safeguarding our European public service, which is the backbone of European integration, requires that recruitment be focused mainly on officials.

+ 2,4 %



For the first time ever, there will be an intermediate adjustment in 2022 due to high inflation, based on the method for adjusting our salaries and pensions (the 'method' that was obtained and defended through long strikes and negotiations, in 1981, 1991, 2003 and 2013). All remuneration and pensions will increase by 2.4 %, with retroactive effect from January 2022.

The increase may seem low compared to the current inflation rates we are facing. So why isn't it higher?

- Firstly, the adjustment is based on only six months of inflation, not 12 (though inflation is generally recorded in terms of annual variations).
- Plus, the reference period for the adjustment is the 2nd half of 2021 – when the current inflation rate had not yet been reached.
- Lastly, as usual the adjustment also takes into account developments in the purchasing power of our colleagues in national administrations, which fell by 1.1% in the reference period (specifically due to inflation)

Union Syndicale will shortly be publishing a full technical analysis (including the historical background) of this adjustment.

Apart from this, the three Council unions have made a joint [request](#) for negotiations with the administration on finding ways to reduce the impact of inflation on the lowest salaries.

We would also draw your attention to the Commission's recent submission to the Council and the Parliament of its report on the [functioning of the method](#) since 2014. The Commission explains that it intends to continue to apply the current method, without any modifications, beyond 2024. This significantly reduces the danger of the legislator trying again to attack our Staff Regulations.

Telework 'from abroad'



During the pandemic Council staff showed they were capable of maintaining a very high productivity level whilst teleworking. Today, many of our colleagues would like the opportunity to perform hybrid work, by combining and alternating between presence in the Council offices and telework, without obsolete bureaucratic obstacles.

It is high time to move away from the heavily regulated and restricted concept of 'telework from abroad'. It is absurd to restrict the possibility of working from Paris whilst there are no restrictions for places like Arlon. The fact that there is a national border between the place of work and the Council premises does not hamper staff members' productivity. The only thing that could theoretically be problematic is the time needed to reach Schuman in an emergency. So, let's please stop talking about 'telework from abroad'.

Union Syndicale proposes a more modern, less bureaucratic concept that is more in line with both the needs of the service and the wishes of staff members.

Specifically, we propose that all colleagues be given the possibility to telework for three weeks a year, in addition to the standard or occasional teleworking schemes, with no obligation to come to the Council premises and no restrictions on the place of work. Unused weeks may be carried over to subsequent years in order to build up a stock that could be used, where a need arose, for an extended period of telework from a remote location. These provisions would replace the 'basket' of 160 days over one's working life brought in by the administration, which is subject to unnecessary bureaucracy and is very unfair as it does not take account of the length of an individual career.

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It's a crucial time! In accordance with the '[Framework Agreement](#)', the representativeness of the Council's trade unions will be checked and measured in the near future. The strength of each union and the resources it has for defending the staff's interests depend solely on the number of members.

If you think what we do is useful, if you like our actions and standpoints, if you want to express your feelings of solidarity and want a greater say over your working conditions, [join Union Syndicale](#) now!

The Executive Committee



If you think that we do a useful job, [join us](#), we are stronger together !