

FLASH
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Union
Syndicale
Fédérale
Consilium

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Reimbursement of public transport costs



You will have seen in the administration's and unions' communications and on Domus that the negotiations on the reform of our system for the reimbursement of public transport costs have failed.

The only objective that has been achieved is less red tape, which **Union Syndicale** had proposed at the very outset. From now on, giving up your right of access to the car park will be enough for you to receive a lump sum. You will therefore no longer need to wait until the following year and search for supporting documents in your pockets and desk drawers.

Two issues are a cause for concern:

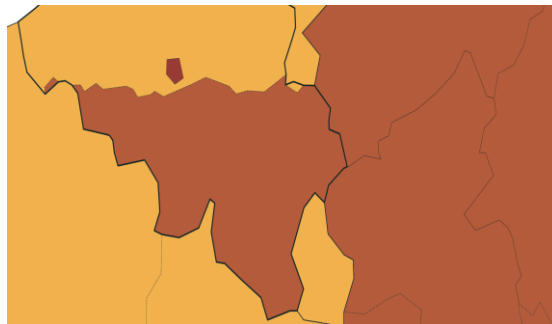
- The GSC has set itself the laudable objective of drastically cutting its CO₂ emissions, a significant part of which comes from journeys between home and the office. The new system proposed (or, should we say, imposed) by the Secretary-General does not, however, help meet that objective and is very likely to have the opposite effect. For those of us living in Brussels, the incentive not to use the car remains broadly the same and there will therefore not be any more colleagues choosing to leave their car at home. However, the incentive not to use the car decreases, on average, by 35 % (in extreme cases, by 60 %) for those colleagues living in Flanders or Wallonia. There is therefore a risk that colleagues who have been using the SNCB until now will start

using the car parks, and their long car journeys will cause the most emissions. Any claim to the contrary would be misleading.

- The Secretary-General stated that he was imposing his new system, although he had not secured the agreement of the trade unions (it should be remembered that it was the **FFPE** and **Union Syndicale** which had called for a review of the existing system so as to reduce pollution, simplify the system and protect those colleagues who are less well-off). This imposition is not in keeping with the idea of constructive social dialogue.

With this in mind and given the large amount of negative feedback on Domus, we are asking the Secretary-General for the last time not to go ahead with his system, and instead to return to the negotiating table.

The GSC Coronavirus measures - how do they measure up?



Union Syndicale welcomes the partial return to offices with the chance to see our colleagues again and benefit from the social contact that we all miss. At the same time, we see a need to question the consistency and direction of some of the GSC's administrative decisions.

As regards the general approach and the office returns policy, the GSC has disregarded the "[strong recommendation](#)" by the Brussels regional government to use telework, where possible, in the Brussels region, and is currently ignoring the recent specific request to companies and administrations in the Brussels region to keep telework as "[the norm](#)" (as from 1 October). Our administration has decided, instead, to make presence in the office the default position as of 20 September. In contrast, the Belgian public service organisations based in Brussels have [followed the regional government's advice](#).

While we greatly appreciate the exemplary work on vaccinating staff and making the GSC buildings as safe as possible, we consider the administration's current approach to be ill-advised and would respectfully ask it to fully respect the updated official guidelines by:

- **inverting** the current policy and restoring work from home as "**the norm**";
- issuing clear recommendations to line managers and staff that on-site presence should be the **exception**, allowed only for work-related tasks that cannot be carried out from home;
- establishing a reasonable **upper limit** for on-site presence for the above-mentioned tasks that cannot be performed from home.

Office-sharing and lifts in the Council buildings



We endorse the administration's wise decision to continue to restrict the sharing of offices in Council buildings for social distancing reasons. However, the maximum number of people using **lifts** has been tripled. This decision seems neither advisable nor consistent with adequate social distancing.

We would ask the administration to continue to consult the **CSST** on all building-related matters in the context of COVID-19 - and comply with its findings. This will help ensure that administrative decisions can be properly balanced by the need for continued vigilance regarding staff members' health and safety.

The unexpected renaming of COPEC



According to the long-standing practice at the Council, the two parties (employers and the OSPs) jointly agree, in line with the consultation procedure agreed on in the [2006 Framework Agreement](#), to define the names, mandates and membership of the joint bodies. This is logical as these bodies enable ongoing social dialogue. A dialogue involves two participants. If there is only one participant, the result is a monologue.

This summer, Staff Note [CP 41](#) caught us completely by surprise. The Secretary-General believes that he may change, through a unilateral decision, the name and mandate of the [Joint Committee on Equal Opportunities](#). For the Council, this is unprecedented ...

The Staff Committee wrote to the Director of HR: "We therefore asked our representatives not to take part in any meetings that do not respect the current agreement between the Appointing Authority and the Trade Unions."

If the Secretary-General considers that amendments should be made to COPEC's name or mandate, **Union Syndicale** would ask him to open a consultation procedure with the three trade unions, in line with the terms of the 2006 Framework Agreement.

In the meantime, we would ask the Chair of COPEC to convene meetings under the name COPEC, and respect the unchanged mandate of this body.

The Executive Committee



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