

FLASH
DECEMBER
2020



Union
Syndicale
Fédérale
Consilium

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Public transport



At the request of the FFPE and **Union Syndicale**, negotiations were launched to review the system of partial reimbursement of public transport costs for commuting to and from work.

Our aim was as follows:

- to encourage more colleagues to stop driving to work
- to allow more choice and flexibility in terms of the types of tickets which may be reimbursed
- to simplify the system

We are pleased to announce that these negotiations have made great progress and we are reasonably optimistic that an agreement will be reached.

All the other parties were quick to welcome our proposal that a flat-rate amount (corresponding to 70% of the annual cost of a STIB season ticket) be set aside for all those who give up their parking space. As a result, those of our colleagues who come to work on foot, by bicycle or by electric scooter – undoubtedly the ‘greenest’ transport choices – would also be able to benefit from the system in future.

One key point has yet to be negotiated: how to reimburse colleagues living in areas not served by STIB and therefore facing significantly higher costs. We are fairly confident that a satisfactory solution can be found – negotiations are set to resume on 14 December.

Recruitment



On the initiative of the Administration, negotiations on external recruitment procedures were launched in 2019. They are now at a standstill, with all three trade unions having rejected the Administration's most recent proposal.

The Administration is aiming to facilitate and increase the external recruitment of temporary or contract staff.

While we share the desire to see vacancies filled more quickly – which will also help reduce the burden on our colleagues at work – our main objective is to reverse the current trends. **The number of permanent officials in the European civil service and in the Council in particular is dropping.** In 2020, just one third of external recruitments were permanent officials. All the other colleagues recruited were either temporary or contract staff. We cannot simply stand by and watch as the European civil service self-destructs as a result of the marked reduction in the proportion of stable jobs.

Post-recruitment probationary periods



Negotiations, which had been at a standstill for more than two years, have suddenly been resurrected. They relate to the procedures applicable to the probationary periods which new colleagues have to complete at the beginning of their careers, before becoming established.

Following major concessions by the Administration (in particular as regards probationary periods for those in 'top management' positions), a number of issues remain outstanding. They include changes of assignment during the probationary period and assessment procedures for temporary and contract staff.

Carry-over of leave

Once again, the Administration has [announced](#) that maternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave or family leave cannot justify a carry-over of more than 12 days of annual leave to the next year.

Union Syndicale is convinced that such a restriction is unlawful. For years, we have been calling on the Administration to drop this unfair restriction.

If you have ever been unable to take your annual leave because of maternity leave, parental leave or family leave, we advise you to submit a request for carry-over of annual leave. If that request is refused, **Union Syndicale** is on hand to provide any assistance which may be required in order to find a solution, if necessary by legal means.

Personal data



Many colleagues were astonished to learn that their personal data – including bank data – have been stolen from the Council's servers, and that this has been going on since as long ago as January.

Union Syndicale, keen to know how many colleagues are involved, and why sensitive data have been used on a software development platform (especially on one which is not properly protected), has contacted the data protection controllers directly, but they have explained they were too busy to respond. The Staff Committee is also conducting an investigation with the [services concerned](#), and we are awaiting explicit answers in that regard.

While the protection of personal data at the GSC seems to have become a huge task, securing such data must remain the top priority. Staff numbers must be increased where required.

Adjustment of salaries, allowances and pensions 2020



Union Syndicale has provided clarifications regarding this [annual adjustment](#). For the first time, the *exception clause* provided for by the Staff Regulations applies, as GDP has been falling in this [exceptional year](#). Consequently, the 2.5% real growth in the salaries of our national colleagues will not appear on our payslips until the EU's GDP has returned to its 2019 level, and will not be retroactive.

As the festive season approaches, the 0.7% corresponding to inflation in Belgium and Luxembourg, and which keeps our purchasing power stable, will have to suffice.

By unhappy coincidence, contributions to the pension scheme are rising by 0.4%; as a result, our purchasing power in terms of net salary will decrease very slightly this year.

*We wish all our colleagues a very happy festive season
and, above all, a healthy and less stressful 2021!*



The Union Syndicale Team at your service



If you think our work is worthwhile, [why not join us](#) ? Together we're stronger! !