

Brussels, 6 December 2024

- [Promotions 2024](#)
- [Negotiations on the GSC mobility decision](#)
- [Justus Lipsius Renovation](#)
- [Certification exercise](#)
- [Left by the wayside](#)
- [Update of remunerations and pensions](#)

Promotions 2024



On 25 October, **Union Syndicale** sent a [letter to the Secretary-General](#):

- to raise its concerns about the Administration's failure to publish the lists containing the names of colleagues considered suitable for promotion prepared by the Advisory Committees on Promotion. Such lists should be published within 30 days of the relevant report being established by a promotions board - in line with the [Consolidated Protocol](#) and the Administration's own decision [DE 14/2022](#). For the second year in a row, the Administration has not complied with established procedure. Clearly, this failure compounds the lack of transparency besetting the procedure and further undermines overall confidence in the fairness of the promotions exercise.

- asking for information about the reasons for any discrepancy between the number of promotion possibilities communicated by the Administration in May 2024 and the final number of promotions given.
- asking for a thorough review by the Administration of the entire reporting and promotions exercise. Over a decade ago, **Union Syndicale**, together with the other trade unions, made proposals for [an alternative system that would lead to greater fairness and predictability](#).

The Secretary-General did [answer our letter](#). However, we regret to inform you that she did not accept any of our requests and again rejected the suggestion for an alternative promotion system.

Negotiations on the GSC mobility decision



In May 2024, the Administration invited the unions to negotiate a new version of the SG decision on mobility. The main aim of the review is to simplify the GSC rules and make them work better for staff and services. After several constructive meetings between the Administration and the unions, **Union Syndicale** nevertheless considers two of the proposed amendments to be unjustified and to go against the spirit of better mobility prospects for our colleagues:

1. Publication of vacant posts:

The current rules stipulate that vacant posts should **first** be published internally before the selection procedure can be opened to interinstitutional or external candidates. The new proposal would allow simultaneous publication to internal, interinstitutional and external candidates which significantly reduces the chances of internal candidates being selected. It may also result in less internal mobility overall and increased frustration for colleagues seeking new posts.

2. Rotation exercises:

The two previous compulsory rotation exercises (for ADs) had a negative impact on the staff and services concerned. The exercises were time-consuming and the services lost valuable expertise. However, the new proposal still provides scope for mandatory rotation exercises. This is not justified as, where such exercises are considered necessary, they should be voluntary.

It is clear to us that internal candidates should be given priority on internal vacancies and that rotation exercises should be entirely voluntary.

Justus Lipsius Renovation



You may have noticed that the Justus Lipsius building regularly needs repairs and is starting to show its age. [A renovation is certainly due](#) and also provides an opportunity to build on the positive eco-audits (EMAS) achieved by the GSC in recent years thanks to the work of the Green Office.

As you would expect, such a large project needs to be prepared well so that decisions can be taken with knowledge of all the needs, possibilities and constraints.

So, what about the opinion of the staff who work in the building? In this case, it is the responsibility of the Staff Committee to ensure that the concerns of staff are made known and the Appointing Authority has already committed itself to involving them.

When you elected the members of the Staff Committee, you gave most of the seats to the **Union Syndicale** list. Already at this preliminary reflection stage, the **US** members of the Staff Committee are ensuring that your voice is heard in the Business Implementation Group (BIG) and other groups and committees (the Steering Committee and the Advisory Management Board) where the options are being examined. If there are any issues of concern or suggestions you would like to pass on, please contact any **US** member of the Staff Committee. You can count on **US**.

Certification exercise



Certification is an excellent opportunity for officials in function groups AST 5 and above to advance their career by transitioning to the AD function group. It also opens up the career prospects beyond grade 9, at which the AST function group is capped.

The **new certification exercise** was launched in October and the interviews of the candidates will take place in January 2025. Unfortunately, the number of candidates chosen to participate in the certification programme is limited to 5 participants from the Council, although the demand is much higher.

Certification is an interesting, long and demanding procedure. **Union Syndicale supports its members throughout the process**, helping them prepare for the interview to become a candidate and sharing valuable tips and tricks to excel in the certification exams.

If you are interested in receiving such support, please write to union.syndicale@consilium.europa.eu .

Left by the wayside



Until 2021, the GSC's financial contribution to the cost of annual public transport passes amounted, per calendar year, to

- 70% of the actual cost of annual passes, and
- 100% of the actual cost of public bicycle passes

capped at **€820.00** for staff.

Since January 2022, the GSC has decided, in order to promote sustainable mobility and simplify procedures, to grant a flat-rate annual contribution of **€350** (left unadjusted - despite the steady increase in fares), payable in 2 instalments per 6-month period, to any member of staff who gives up regular access to a parking lot with a motor vehicle. For GFI contract staff, this annual contribution, also payable in 2 instalments, was increased to **€700** in 2022 and **€800** in 2023.

While **Union Syndicale** supports the administration's policy of making a financial contribution to the travel costs of colleagues who come to work on foot or with their own bikes, it maintains the position already expressed during negotiations that **this contribution is neither social nor ecological for colleagues who come to work by train.**

These colleagues, especially those in the lowest AST and AST/SC grades or GFI contract agents, work in posts where teleworking is often not possible, and have to pay for annual passes that cost up to €2,500 - while it is financially difficult for them to live in Brussels.

In Belgium, the employer's contribution to transport costs has risen to **71.8%** of home-to-work annual public transport passes.

The European Commission ([Reimbursement of commuting expenses in Brussels](#)) contributes **50%** of the cost of public transport tickets, and up to a distance of **60 km** from Brussels for SNCB 2nd class annual passes.

On 1 February 2024, the SNCB fare for a standard annual rail pass in 2nd class for 60km was **€2,106** (SNCB fares: [Fares – Edition 01.02.2024](#)), which gives rise to a contribution of **€1,053**.

The European Parliament does even better. It contributes **90%** (up to the first **65** kilometres from Brussels for the cost of SNCB 2nd class annual rail passes, with a maximum contribution of **€1,966.50**). EP staff pay only 10% of the cost of the rail pass, with the Parliament paying the remaining 90% to the public transport operators.

The GSC does not compare favourably.

Despite our concerns, we must unfortunately report that our Administration made it clear to the Staff Committee that it would not consider increasing either the flat-rate contribution or the amount paid to colleagues on lower salaries. The requests were categorically refused.

Update of remunerations and pensions 2024: +8.5 %

This year, our salaries and pensions (and most allowances) are being updated in three stages: we had an interim update in June (+3 %) and we will have an update in December (backdated to July), but due to the moderation clause, the latter will be limited to 4.1 %, the balance of 1.2 % being paid from April 2025, without retroactive effect.

Compared to the financial crisis which, from 2010 to 2014, saw us lose around 5 % compared to national civil servants, the various crises we have faced since 2019 have sometimes have slightly delayed any updates (exception clauses in 2020 and moderation clause this year), but in April 2025 the Method will ensure that our purchasing power develops in parallel with that of national civil servants once more.

The pension contribution will increase from 11.1 % to 12.1 % in December. Since it is levied only on the basic salary and not on the allowances, and since it reduces the tax base, the net effect of that increase is, on average, -0.7 %.

For more information, see our [comprehensive analysis](#).

US wishes you A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Spirit of Christmas



If you think we do a good job, please [join us](#) and even get involved.
We are stronger together.

For more information, please also watch our [video](#), visit our [website](#), or send a
message to union.syndicale@consilium.europa.eu .

Your **Union Syndicale** team

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