

Staff of EPO goes on strike on 15th December

After two and a half years of presidency of Mr. Campinos, the situation is again tense at the European Patent Office.

Many of the issues inherited from the previous administration have not yet been solved, or only partially solved.

In particular staff at the EPO is still denied a fair career progression and a fair and transparent reporting system.

Respect for staff and staff representation, people-oriented management, decrease of work pressure and genuine social dialogue are still empty promises that have failed to materialize so far.

The cases of some of the SUEPO officials/Staff representatives abusively sanctioned by the Battistelli administration have not been settled and partial impediment of the activities of the staff representation and its capacity to contact all the staff by limiting the number of email addressees to 50, has not been officially lifted yet. The current unique strict regulations on the right to strike are a clear limitation of that same right and an unacceptable interference of the administration in union matters.

On top of all that the unilateral implementation of a new Salary Adjustment Procedure based on a flawed financial study will have a disastrous effects from next year on to the salaries and the pensions of the staff, due to its arbitrary capping mechanism. For the first time in EPO history, and most probably in the history of international organizations, Purchasing Power Parity between sites and parallelism with the evolution of salaries in the central governments of the member states will not be respected. This precedent is worrying not only for the staff of the EPO but also for all staff of international organisations. The new Salary Adjustment Procedure is an adjustment procedure only by name and should be more properly called a Salary Erosion Procedure.

The EPO top management is now pushing unpopular, divisive and far-reaching reforms, like a reform on education allowance, despite the pandemic while ignoring most input from the staff and the staff representation.

Staff at the EPO has been very patient so far. However in light of all of the above and the lack of substantial progress in most of the issues at stake staff has decided that “enough is enough” !

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