

FLASH
September
2023



Brussels, 25 September 2023

*General Meeting of 11 September 2023 on
New Rules for Working Time, Telework and Leave*



Thank you to all those who took part in the General Meeting of staff convened by the two representative trade unions, R&D and **Union Syndicale**, on 11 September 2023. In addition to the large number of those colleagues present in the room, there were also 1029 staff members who followed the event online and 57 who watched the event via video-on-demand.

The purpose of the meeting was to present to staff the outcome of the negotiations between the trade unions and the administration on the new rules on working time, teleworking and leave. We explained the various changes that are planned, both positive and negative, and answered questions. Although there are still a certain number of negative points in the new rules, we firmly believe that we have reached a good compromise with the GSC management.

After the presentation, the Chair of the Staff Committee also gave her opinion on the negotiations and the outcome thereof. At the end of the meeting, the trade unions' proposal was approved by staff, with no votes against and eight abstentions. Thank you for your support!

Lost promotion possibilities



As explained in our last [Flash report](#), staff are facing another loss of promotion possibilities in 2023. Due to an incorrect application of the calculation method, fewer colleagues have been promoted to AST8, AD13 and AD14 than is provided for by the Staff Regulations. This incorrect method has a negative impact on the remaining members of staff eligible for promotion in these grades, and on promotion possibilities in the grade directly above. It slows down career progression for a significant number of colleagues and reduces their pensions thereafter.

In 2022, three members of staff lodged a complaint under Article 90 of the Staff Regulations; they subsequently lodged an appeal against the incorrect calculation method used by our administration. **Union Syndicale** has been supporting these colleagues throughout the process and we are looking forward to the Court's judgment.

Furthermore, in view of the increasing number of temporary and contract staff at the GSC, **Union Syndicale** is suggesting to the administration that the members of staff concerned be placed in the next highest grade after 3 or 4 years.

Violation of the Codified Protocol



The [Codified Protocol](#) of May 26, 1988, signed by the **Union Syndicale** and the Secretary-General, is a fundamental text regulating the participation of staff representation in numerous administrative areas.

During this year's promotion exercise, the Appointing Authority did not comply with the Codified Protocol by failing to publish the lists of colleagues proposed for promotion as established by the Advisory Promotion Commissions. This non-publication greatly reduces transparency in terms of promotions. A comparison between the number of possible promotions and the number of promotions granted also reveals that for grade AST 4 the staff lost one promotion. This is all the more surprising since the decision of the SG in force, DE 14/22, recalls decision 194/83 which also requires the publication of the lists of the Advisory Promotion Commissions as they are. The Staff Committee's request to the Appointing Authority to comply with the Codified Protocol and publish the lists proposed by the Promotion Commissions as quickly as possible received a negative response, followed by an unconvincing oral explanation.

Union Syndicale insists that social agreements signed by a Secretary-General be respected and will take legal action to ensure that the rules are complied with.

Increase in pension contributions



According to Eurostat calculations, we need to pay more for our pensions. The contribution rate is increasing from 10.1 % to 11.1 %. The new rate is applicable from 1 July, but will not be paid until the December salary payment (when the 2023 salary adjustment is made).

The main reason for the increase is the change in interest rates. The value of the contributions we are making now to finance our pensions over the coming decades is calculated by using an average of the yield on bonds over the last 30 years. The rates for 1992 are therefore replaced by those for 2022. The 1992 rates were in fact much higher, and so the average falls significantly. This means that higher contributions are needed to generate sufficient capital to fund pensions in the future.

Senior administrators



Increasing numbers of staff are stuck at AD 12, with no prospect of promotion. There are hundreds of colleagues currently in this situation brought about by the 2014 reform of the Staff Regulations.

To continue to progress, and thus remain motivated at work, these members of staff need to be awarded senior administrator status. In the past, 10 individuals were chosen each year by the Appointing Authority – already far too few, given the number of staff affected.

In 2020, during the pandemic, one of the exercises to make staff ‘senior administrators’ did not take place and was not rescheduled.

Since 2022, the Appointing Authority has decided to carry out such exercises only once every two years, as this saves a certain amount of administrative work. Yet we were very surprised to learn that this would not mean that 20 members of staff would become ‘senior administrators’, but still only 10. The result of this in practice is that the number of staff awarded ‘senior administrator’ status has been halved – and the number was already far from sufficient.

Union Syndicale requests that the Appointing Authority ensure that at least 25 colleagues are awarded senior administrator status as of this year’s exercise.

Recruitment policy



2023 has been another worrying year. During the first half of the year, only one of the four new members of staff recruited externally by the GSC joined the institution as an official. The three others became temporary or contract staff. The latter strengthen our organisation and yet do not benefit from job security. This short-term approach to recruitment seriously undermines the European civil service, which is essential to the stability of European integration.

Holding regular internal competitions would offset this trend. With this in mind, we are looking forward to the publication of the AST internal competition. Even so, this alone will not solve the problem. The trend needs to be reversed at source: permanent tasks require permanent posts.

Health insurance – some progress at last



The current rules of our *Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme* date from 2008. Many provisions no longer reflect medical reality and, above all, the ceilings applicable to various benefits are no longer adequate.

After years of difficult discussions, the Sickness Insurance Management Committee (on which the management of all the institutions and all the staff committees are represented) has submitted a proposal for revision. One of **Union Syndicale**'s earlier proposals, a mechanism for automatically updating the ceilings, has been included. This should avoid a return to this situation where the insured parties bear an increasing proportion of their costs.

It is up to the Commission to take the necessary steps to make these proposals a reality.

Any questions? Please send us a message:

union.syndicale@consilium.europa.eu

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

The Executive Committee

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bernd  | Frances  | Michael  | William  | Mohamed  |
| Kerstin  | Agnes  | Felix  | Magali  | Isabelle  |