

Press Release

11 April 2018

IPSO's comments on the ECB's Annual Report 2017

- ECB trade union regrets lack of diversity in ECB decision-making bodies
 - IPSO calls for an overhaul of the nomination process to Executive Board jobs
 - Social dialogue at the ECB and social dimension in ECB decisions too weak
 - Outsourcing of a large part of its IT services to a US based company disrespects long-serving staff and poses an operational risk
 - Intense use of expensive consultancies masks stability of official staff headcount
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IPSO, the International and European Public Services Organisation, represents the interests of people working for the European Central Bank. On the occasion of the publication of the ECB's Annual Report for the year 2017, we would like to add some information from a trade union perspective. In the field of corporate governance and human resource developments, IPSO welcomes the ECB's intentions and actions to foster diversity. Nevertheless, IPSO advocates for covering all diversity dimensions instead of setting the business priority on gender diversity only. We miss diversity at all levels and desperately on the top level. The leading European political class has unfortunately failed in 2017 to recognise the dimension and seriousness of this problem when preparing the list of candidates for the position of the ECB Vice President, while in contrast, the European Parliament has apparently understood this issue. Consequently, the recently nominated Vice President Luis de Guindos obtained only a very thin majority of votes in his favour in the European Parliament. IPSO supports the calls for an overhaul of the nomination process. An independent central bank needs diversity and merit based appointments in all its ranks.

While in the Annual Report the ECB is praising itself for the efforts for integrity, openness and good administration to gain the trust of stakeholders and the public at large, IPSO also misses diversity in the dialogue partners of the ECB. We note that there are no regular exchanges reported in the Annual Report with trade union representatives. And in fact, the labour and social dimension is severely underrepresented in the discussions and ECB's view of the world, internally and externally. Consequently, while we welcome the efforts towards more diversity, we unfortunately see that the gender targets and guidelines were adopted by the ECB top management without prior dialogue with staff representatives. Such dialogue might have led to a more nuanced and fine-tuned setting of targets reflecting the availability of fit and proper candidates per skill-set rather than adopting one-size fits-all targets.

We note that the report informs the public that "internally, the ECB looks at challenges such as further optimising services, strengthening organisational resilience and harnessing advances in technology, as well as improving collaboration and information-sharing across business functions." We also note, to our regret, that involvement of union representatives in tackling these challenges is often missing. In fact, the ECB has decided in 2017 to outsource a large part of its IT services to a US based company. These IT services have relied to a large degree on temporary agency staff, many of them very long-serving exclusively for the ECB. IPSO had advised the ECB's decision-makers to on-board these colleagues, but the efforts to convince the Board and the Governing Council in this direction were unfortunately not successful. At least, IPSO achieved a first ever collective agreement with the ECB to mitigate the social impact of this outsourcing process. This was certainly worth reporting and although this is welcomed by IPSO, this is only second best.

We remain concerned that further outsourcing of service functions will continue. We do not think that this trend is beneficial for the overall task the ECB has to fulfil for the European citizens. In this

context, we miss in the report information about the volume and direction of spending for external consultancy services.

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IPSO, the International and European Public Services Organisation, represents all those working at and for the European Central Bank (ECB). Not only does IPSO stand up for the rights of directly employed ECB colleagues, but also for those on precarious contracts and in temporary labour assignments.

IPSO on the internet: www.ipso.de