Brussels, 12 August 2026

NOTE TO THE ATTENTION OF PIETRO BARABASCHI

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ITER ORGANISATION

AND

JAN PANEK, HEAD OF THE EUROPEAN DELEGATION TO THE ITER COUNCIL AND

DIRECTOR FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY, SAFETY AND ITER, DG ENER

Subject: Staff reductions decided at the ITER Organization (IO) in July 2026: very serious concerns regarding the process, implications for programme delivery, and urgent requests for clarification

Purpose

As staff representatives, we wish to express our deep concern regarding the significant number of redundancies announced at the IO, as well as our serious reservations about the decision-making process followed.

At the outset, we wish to reject the recurrent objection raised by IO that, as representatives of Commission and F4E' staff, we have no standing to raise these matters.

First, it is clear that the measures adopted by the IO could impact our colleagues at Fusion for Energy (F4E) too. For this reason, it is necessary to open a dialogue with the relevant authorities.

Moreover, Euratom is a Member of the IO, its largest financial contributor, and is represented on the ITER Council.

Thus, we are entirely legitimate not only to raise these matters with the Director-General of the IO, but we are also fully entitled to request clarification as to the position taken on behalf of Euratom and the extent to which that position was coordinated with the relevant Directorate-General and the competent Commissioners.

Indeed, the European Commission therefore has a direct interest not only in the successful delivery of Baseline 2024, but also in ensuring that an international organisation established under an agreement to which the European Union is a party, observes at any time and in any decision and procedure the principles of transparency, respect, fairness, sound administration and meaningful social dialogue.

That is why, these matters cannot be regarded as concerning the internal management of the IO alone.

They also engage the responsibility of the Commission, which must at all times uphold—and be seen to uphold—the abovementioned principles.

This is precisely the purpose of **the strengthened governance** requested by the staff representation and put in place by the Commission and most recently reaffirmed by Commissioner Serafin in the context of the Large-Scale Review exercise.

This governance framework is not optional: it must be fully respected and consistently applied in practice.

Questions regarding Commission oversight, accountability and internal coordination

Against this background, in the face of a procedure that appears manifestly incompatible with the fundamental principles of employment and social law which the Commission itself firmly requires the Member States to uphold, it is particularly significant that a representative of the Commission participated in the relevant Iter Council meetings.

The issue is not to keep repeating that the Commission cannot decide on its own or that it has no veto over decisions that are ultimately adopted.

The issue is that where a decision is manifestly unacceptable, as is the case with the dismissals decided by the ITER Organization, both all internal and external stakeholders, are entitled to know what position was taken by the Commission representative and, where applicable, whether any disagreement or objection expressed on behalf of the Commission — irrespective of whether it was sufficient to prevent the decision from being adopted — was duly and formally recorded.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the decision adopted by the ITER Council in June 2026 to reduce the notification period for affected contracts from nine months to three months. This amendment reportedly followed a proposal by ITER management and was approved by all ITER members, including the European Commission, represented by DG ENER.

Such a drastic reduction is deeply troubling. A three-month notification period gives employees and their families very little time to reorganise their professional and personal lives, particularly in an international workplace where many staff members have relocated across borders. The decision appears incompatible with the European Union's stated commitment to social dialogue, collective protections, fair working conditions, and respect for workers.

It is especially important to clarify why the Commission accepted a deterioration in employment protection within an organisation in which the EU plays a central role. European labour principles should not cease to matter merely because ITER has a particular international legal status. The EU cannot credibly promote strong social standards within Europe while accepting significantly weaker protections in an international organisation operating with substantial European participation and on European territory.

In particular, it should be clarified **whether the Commission representative expressed any reservation, objection or legal concern** regarding the measures proposed and, if so, whether that position was **explicitly stated, formally recorded and traceable in the official minutes or other records of the meeting**.

In the absence of such a record, serious questions arise as to whether the Commission exercised the level of scrutiny and oversight that could reasonably be expected in relation to decisions carrying potentially significant legal, financial and reputational consequences.

It should also be established whether the position taken on behalf of the Commission had been **properly coordinated in advance with DG ENER and with the Commissioners concerned.**

Given the significance of the decisions concerned, such coordination cannot be regarded as a mere procedural formality, but as an essential element of sound governance and institutional accountability.

Equally important is the question whether a **formal legal assessment was sought before the measures were endorsed or implemented**.

In view of the apparent issues relating to legal certainty, legitimate expectations, non-retroactivity, transitional protection, procedural fairness and good administration, it would be difficult to understand how measures of this nature could have been supported, or allowed to proceed without formal objection, **without prior verification of their legal robustness**.

If no such legal assessment was requested, no reservation was formally expressed and no prior coordination took place at the appropriate level within the Commission, this would raise a broader and more fundamental question as to **whether the governance and oversight mechanisms put in place to safeguard the Commission's institutional and financial interests were effectively exercised in practice**.

Providing such assurances and ensuring full transparency are all the more critical at this juncture, when the Commission is negotiating a substantial **additional financial contribution to the ITER project in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).**

In these circumstances, clear accountability as to the positions taken on behalf of the Commission is not merely desirable; it is essential to the credibility of any request for further EU funding and to our ability to justify such a significant financial commitment.

Consistency of treatment: leading by example is not an empty slogan!

At the same Council meeting at which the compulsory staff reductions were approved, the Council was informed that annual performance-based bonuses formed part of the arrangements used to reward staff members and that, at least, **in one senior-level case, such a bonus could amount to approximately three months' salary.**

During the same performance cycle, staff members whose mid-year assessments confirmed that they were meeting their objectives were notified that their posts were being abolished under provisions reducing their separation entitlements by up to one third.

No conclusion is drawn here as to the merits of any individual awards. The issue is one of consistency of treatment.

Leading by example cannot be reduced to an empty slogan. If the financial position was considered sufficiently serious to justify compulsory staff reductions and a substantial reduction in separation entitlements, we are entitled to request clarification from both the Director-General of the IO and the Commission's representative as to what corresponding cost-saving, restraint or burden-sharing measures were considered or implemented at senior-management level before those decisions were approved.

Last Message to Staff from the IO Director-General

We have taken note of the message addressed to IO staff by the Director-General on 31 July 2026, setting out the rationale for the staff reductions, the procedure followed, and the measures adopted, in accordance with the duty of care, to mitigate their consequences for the colleagues concerned.

We wish to state at the outset that we strongly deplore the repeated references in this message to the possible initiation of disciplinary proceedings.

Such references convey an intimidatory message and are wholly unacceptable, particularly given that the communication is also addressed to colleagues who are already experiencing considerable distress following notification of their dismissal—an announcement that places both their professional future and the well-being of their families at serious risk.

The repeated assertion that employees are prohibited from disclosing the circumstances surrounding these dismissals goes well beyond any legitimate duty of discretion or restraint that may reasonably be expected of an employee. It appears instead to be aimed at discouraging colleagues from speaking openly about the decisions taken and, in doing so, at limiting public scrutiny and accountability in relation to those decisions.

Context

Against that background, and in a constructive spirit, we consider it important it is important to set out, in sufficient detail a clear reconstruction of the sequence of events in order to assess not only the substance of the measures adopted, but also the manner in which they were prepared, approved and subsequently applied.

In particular, it is crucial to address the following elements:

- **The context and detailed chronology of the decision-making process**, including the respective dates on which the relevant amendments, implementing guidelines and individual decisions were prepared, approved, signed and notified;
- **The manner in which the staff concerned were informed, consulted and heard**, including whether they were given a genuine opportunity to understand and respond to the measures affecting them before the relevant decisions became final;
- **The relationship with the performance cycle**, and in particular whether, and to what extent, the termination decisions were linked to individual performance assessments, notwithstanding the existence of an established performance-management framework;
- **The financial premise underlying the measures and their implications for programme delivery**, including the extent to which the expected financial savings were properly substantiated and weighed against the loss of expertise, continuity and operational capacity resulting from the dismissals; and

Taken together, these elements are necessary to establish a complete and verifiable factual record and to assess whether the decisions were adopted and implemented in accordance with the applicable legal, procedural and governance requirements.

Detailed Chronology

In order to fully appreciate the extent to which the process raises serious concerns, it is essential to reconstruct in detail the chronology of the relevant events and decisions.

The sequence and timing of those events are not merely factual background: they are central to assessing the fairness, transparency and legal robustness of the process as a whole.

Date	Event
19 June 2025	The ITER Council approves the Twenty-Fourth Edition of the Staff Regulations, effective 1 July 2025.

Date	Event
July–November 2025	Contracts of employment are concluded or renewed under that Edition, in several cases for terms running to 2030.
19–20 November 2025	IC-37. All Members note that the Project is ahead of the Baseline 2024 schedule, with Schedule and Cost Performance Indices above unity. The United States notes that planned work has been executed within cost and without using contingency. Euratom raises the issue of unused contingencies and requests official disclosure of unspent or accumulating funds and of the creation of financial buffers.
25–26 June 2026	IC-38. The Council approves the Twenty-Fifth Edition of the Staff Regulations effective 1 July 2026.
26 June 2026	At the same meeting, the Council instructs the Director-General to take decisive cost-reduction measures, including abolition of posts and an overall reduction of staff, expressly in accordance with Article 6.3(a)(ii) of the newly approved Staff Regulations, and directs that the measures be implemented without delay.
30 June 2026	At an all-staff meeting, the Director-General informs staff of the Council's instruction and indicates that decisions will be taken by the end of July 2026.
30 June 2026, 17:29	The Human Resources Division informs all staff that the Twenty-Fifth Edition (IDM 2EFKUE), "following consultation with the Staff Committee" and as approved by the Council on 25–26 June, is available in IDM and applicable from 1 July 2026. The amended topics are listed, including the notice period and the introduction of reduction of staff as a ground for termination (Article 6.3), payments where notice is shortened (Article 6.5), and the conditions and maximum amount of the indemnity for loss of job (Annex I). No indication is given of the direction or magnitude of the changes. The same message records that the Council deferred its decision on the salary scale, leaving the rates in force since 1 January 2025 unchanged.
30 June 2026, 17:31	The Staff Committee writes to all staff, acknowledges a difficult and uncertain period across the Organization, draws attention to psychological support and confidential counselling services, and announces a general assembly.
1 July 2026, 07:09	The Director-General writes to all staff. The Council has agreed that the Organization should plan for a forecast shortfall of approximately €170 million per year, or about 20 per cent of annual income. The preliminary assessment is that staff positions will need to be reduced by approximately 6–8 per cent. The stated objective is to preserve the Organization's ability to continue delivering the Project *"while maintaining the capability to resume deferred activities rapidly once funding is restored".* The exercise is to comply fully with the Staff Regulations, and all staff are to be invited to express interest in a voluntary separation arrangement before any compulsory redundancies are implemented.

Date	Event
1 July 2026, 18:08	The Construction Project Department communicates the schedule optimisation agreed by the Council: targeted deferrals across approximately twenty systems and units, intended to reduce cash payments in 2027 and 2028 by about €200 million in non-labour expenditure between the third quarter of 2026 and the fourth quarter of 2028. The message states that the deferred scope is intended to be recovered when cash flow improves, potentially before 2029; that deferrals fall primarily on activities not on the critical path for Start of Research Operation or where schedule float exists; and that ongoing commitments are maintained. It expressly states that it concerns schedule and non-labour expenditure only and does not address labour-cost savings.
1 July 2026	The Twenty-Fifth Edition enters into force. The voluntary separation scheme is announced under the financial conditions of the new Edition.
10 July 2026	The application period for the voluntary separation scheme closes, twelve days before the compulsory notifications are issued.
Mid-July 2026	Mid-year performance review meetings are held with line managers and project leaders. Objectives are confirmed for the remainder of the year. No indication is given that any post is under consideration for abolition.
20–21 July 2026	The implementing guideline governing the calculation of the indemnity for loss of job is created on 20 July and approved on 21 July.
22 July 2026	Letters are signed notifying staff members of the intention to abolish their posts and terminate their contracts under Article 6.3(a)(ii) of the Twenty-Fifth Edition, expressly relying on guideline. The letters do not identify the post said to be abolished.
29 July 2026	Deadline for the staff members concerned to submit their views: five working days after notification, during the principal summer leave period in the host State.
End of July 2026	The mid-year appraisal forms resulting from the reviews held earlier in the month are completed and signed by line managers, after the notifications of intention have been issued.
30 July 2026	At a meeting with staff, representatives of the Staff Committee are reported to state that the Committee had consistently opposed the amendments adopted in the Twenty-Fifth Edition.
31 July 2026	The termination decisions are signed and notified. They identify the post abolished for the first time, restate that the Staff Committee was consulted under Article 32.4, and state that no available position corresponds to the profiles concerned; no record of the assessment itself is produced. The contracts end on 30 November 2026.

Amendment of the Staff Regulations and application to existing contracts

The amendments relevant to termination for abolition of post are summarised below

Provision	Twenty-Fourth Edition	Twenty-Fifth Edition	Effect
Notice — Article 6.3(a)	Six months (suppression of the budgeted post)	Four months; reduction of staff as directed by the Council added as a separate ground	Notice reduced by two months
Indemnity ceiling — Annex I, §3	Twelve monthly emoluments	Eight monthly emoluments	Ceiling reduced by four monthly emoluments
Compensation for reduced notice — Article 6.5	Calculated to the end of a six-month period regardless of the notice actually given	Calculated only to the end of the applicable notice period	A shorter notice period is no longer neutral in value
Cessation of cover — Article 6.5	No equivalent provision	Life and invalidity cover ends, and pension contributions cease, at the end of the contract	Coverage ends before the indemnity has been fully paid
Basis of the indemnity — Annex I, §3	"their monthly family and social allowances"	"any applicable family and social allowances"	An entitlement is replaced by conditional wording
Start of payment — Annex I, §4	Six months from notification	End of the applicable notice period	Payment timing aligned with the shorter notice period

Combining notice and indemnity, and expressing both in monthly emoluments:

Full years of service	24th Edition (months)	25th Edition (months)	Reduction (months)	Reduction (%)
5	11	9	2	18%
8	14	12	2	14%
10	16	12	4	25%
12	18	12	6	33%
15 or more	18	12	6	33%

The reduction is regressive in effect: it falls most heavily on the longest-serving staff, reaching one third of the total separation value at twelve years of service and above.

A further effect is not immediately apparent from the text. Years of service are counted to the actual contract end date. Shortening the notice period therefore also truncates the accrual period for the indemnity; a staff member whose service anniversary falls within the two-month interval may lose an additional full year of service for calculation purposes.

A related decision taken at the same Council meeting affects the amounts payable.

The Council deferred its decision on the salary-scale update, leaving the rates in force since 1 January 2025 unchanged. The monthly emoluments used to calculate both final salary payments and the indemnity for loss of job therefore remain based on a scale that has not been adjusted for inflation since the beginning of 2025.

Legal and procedural concerns

In the light of the foregoing, it is clear that the process was conducted with exceptional speed, against the backdrop of an evolving and uncertain legal framework and without the degree of transparency and genuine social dialogue that measures of this nature would ordinarily require.

Particular concern arises from **the amendment of the Staff Regulations immediately prior to their application to staff members** whose contracts had been concluded under the previous regulatory framework. The amended provisions resulted in materially less favourable separation terms, **without the introduction of any transitional arrangements** for staff whose contractual situation had been established under the previous rules.

This sequence of events raises serious questions in relation to the principles of **legal certainty, foreseeability of administrative action, protection of legitimate expectations and non-retroactivity**.

These concerns are further reinforced by the chronology surrounding the implementation of the amended framework.

The implementing guideline governing the calculation of the relevant indemnity was approved **only ONE day before the notification letters relying on that guideline were signed**.

Such an exceptionally compressed timeline raises additional questions as to whether the applicable methodology had been formally established, made sufficiently transparent and effectively available before the individual decisions were prepared and adopted.

It also calls for clarification as to whether the persons concerned benefited from the procedural safeguards inherent in the principles of **good administration, procedural fairness and due process**, including adequate transparency regarding the legal and methodological basis on which the amounts concerned were determined.

Taken together, these elements warrant careful examination of both the **substantive legality of the applicable framework and the procedural regularity of the individual decisions adopted on its basis**, including whether appropriate consideration was given to pre-existing legal situations, legitimate expectations and the need for proportionate transitional measures.

The manner in which staff were neither properly informed nor genuinely heard

Time allowed to submit views

Staff members were allowed just <u>five working days</u> to submit their views on the proposed abolition of their posts, during the principal summer leave period in the host State and without

access to the documents on which the measure was based.

The notification letters themselves provided, in a footnote, for an extended deadline of 6 August in defined circumstances. This demonstrates that an extension was administratively feasible and compatible with the exercise timetable. Requests for such an extension were nevertheless not granted.

Identification of the post only after the deadline

The letters of 22 July did not provide a post title, post code, organisational unit or budget line, and no copy of the act abolishing the post—or information on its date and adopting body—was produced on request. **The post was identified for the first time in the decisions of 31 July!**

Staff members invited to comment on the abolition of their posts were therefore not told which post was said to be abolished until after the decision had been taken.

Absence of the underlying material

The letters did not describe the search for an alternative position, identify the posts considered, or set out the criteria applied in selecting the posts affected.

Closure of the voluntary separation scheme

The voluntary separation scheme announced on 1 July closed on 10 July, twelve days before the notifications were issued. During that window, staff had received a communication from the Construction Project Department describing the deferred activities, but that communication presented the deferrals as targeted reductions in cash payments, primarily affecting activities outside the critical path or benefiting from schedule float. It stated that the deferred scope was intended to be recovered when cash flow improved, that ongoing commitments would be maintained, and that the communication concerned schedule and non-labour expenditure only. Nothing connected the deferral of an activity with abolition of the post attached to it. That connection was made only on 22 July, after the voluntary scheme had closed.

Confidentiality clause

The letters stated that they were strictly confidential and could not be discussed with third parties not copied, while preserving access to the Staff Committee and external counsel. In practice, this limited the ability of the staff members concerned to determine whether comparable situations were being treated consistently.

In breach of the fundamental principles of employment and social law, this clause also appears designed to deprive trade unions of the ability to defend their members effectively.

Relationship with the performance cycle

The notifications of 22 July were issued only days after mid-year performance review meetings with line managers and project leaders, during which objectives were confirmed for the remainder of the year and satisfaction with the work was expressed.

The corresponding appraisal forms were completed and signed by the end of July, after the notifications had been issued. In the same performance cycle, the staff members concerned had received assessments at or above the requirements of their posts. Whatever view is taken of the staff-reduction decision itself, the fact that positive mid-year assessments were recorded in the days following notification indicates that the appraisal process and the abolition-of-post process were conducted without reference to one another.

Search for alternative employment

IO has confirmed to explore whether other positions existed in which the staff members could continue to be employed, having regard to their experience and qualifications, and concluded that none was available in the context of an overall staff reduction and the absence of vacancies. The decisions of 31 July restate that conclusion and add that the profiles concerned did not match the positions then published.

However, to our knowledge IO has stated its conclusion without disclosing the material needed to understand how it was reached: who conducted the assessment, on what date, against which criteria, and whether expected or forthcoming positions were considered in addition to positions published at that time.

The conclusion is now recorded in signed administrative decisions. The supporting assessment should therefore either exist and be capable of production, or its absence should be acknowledged.

The staff members concerned include long-serving professional-grade officers holding technical and contractual responsibility for procurement instruments of the Organization. A conclusion that no position anywhere in the Organization corresponds to such profiles is not self-evident and would ordinarily require a reasoned comparison.

Lack of information and consultation of the Line managers and project leaders

It appears that Line managers and project leaders have NOT been consulted.

The mid-year reviews held shortly before the notifications confirmed objectives for the remainder of the year, and the corresponding appraisal forms were signed after the notifications.

If the managers who direct the work of the staff concerned were not consulted, it is difficult to identify the assessment of current duties on which the search for alternative employment was based. An obligation to consider redeployment cannot be distinguished in practice from an obligation left unfulfilled where the conclusion is stated without the assessment that produced it and appears to have been reached without consulting the managers of the staff concerned.

Criteria applied in selecting the posts

IO senior management is reported to have stated that the purpose of the exercise was exclusively to terminate posts attached to activities that the ITER Council had decided should be deferred. However, it is also reported that the grade and cost of the incumbents had been examined and that posts occupied at higher levels of remuneration might have been targeted.

The distinction is crucial. If posts were selected because the activities attached to them had been deferred, the exercise is an abolition of posts required by the necessities of service as officially stated.

If the cost of the individual incumbent entered into the selection, in whole or in part, the exercise is different from the one described.

It raises questions concerning the relationship between remuneration, seniority and age within the Organization’s grade structure, none of which is addressed in the decisions.

Financial premise and implications for programme delivery

The measure is based on a forecast cash-flow shortfall arising from reduced expected in-cash contributions from several Members over the period 2026–2028. On 1 July 2026, the Director-General informed staff that the Council had agreed that the Organization should plan for a shortfall of approximately €170 million per year, or about 20 per cent of annual income.

Several aspects merit attention.

The measure does not appear to preserve the capability it was intended to protect

In the same communication, the Director-General stated that the objective was not simply to reduce expenditure but to preserve the Organization’s ability to continue delivering the Project while maintaining the capability to resume deferred activities rapidly once funding was restored. The difficulty is that the exercise has removed in-house knowledge together with the posts abolished, without a successor being designated and without a handover taking place. Whatever saving has been achieved, the capability to resume rapidly does not appear to have been preserved in the areas concerned.

The Construction Project Department’s communication of 1 July describes the deferrals as reversible and the deferred scope as intended for recovery when cash flow improves, potentially before 2029.

The scope is therefore treated as recoverable, while the capability needed to execute it has been removed without any stated mechanism or timetable for reconstitution.

A temporary premise has produced a measure that may be irreversible in practice

The Director-General is also reported to have indicated that the decision whether to resume the deferred activities would fall to his successor, whose appointment was expected at the end of 2027.

Accordingly, a permanent, or at the very least practically irreversible, loss of in-house technical capability is being accepted in response to a shortfall expressly described as temporary, without any defined mechanism for restoring that capability and in circumstances where no competent decision-maker is expected to address its restoration before late 2027.

At IC-37, succession planning was presented as a means of facilitating smooth leadership transitions and preserving institutional knowledge, and was described by the Director-General as a fundamental principle for the Organization’s long-term health.

That principle is difficult to reconcile with the removal, in a single exercise and at four months’ notice, of staff whose knowledge has been accumulated over many years and may not be recorded elsewhere.

Position reported to the Council seven months earlier

The draft minutes of IC-37 (November 2025), tabled for approval at IC-38 as document IC-38/04.1, record that all Members acknowledged the Project’s positive progress and continued adherence to the Baseline 2024, and noted that the Project was ahead of schedule, with Schedule and Cost Performance Indices both above unity.

Euratom raised the issue of unused contingencies, observing that the Project was executing more efficiently than the resources allocated in the annual budget, and the IO was invited to propose a way forward also requesting clearer and more transparent reporting, including official disclosure capable of clarifying unspent or accumulating funds and the creation of financial buffers, and emphasized collective decision-making regarding their use.

Just seven months later, a forecast shortfall was relied upon to justify compulsory reductions in staff adopted three weeks after the amended separation provisions entered into force!

We are therefore entitled to request that the Commission clarify whether the disclosure requested at IC-37 was made, what unspent funds or financial reserves were available as at June 2026, and whether those resources were duly considered before the compulsory staff reductions were approved.

In conclusion, it appears that:

- **The Staff Regulations were amended on 26 June 2026, entered into force on 1 July and were applied to individual staff members on 22 July. The implementing guidelines governing the calculation of indemnities was approved on 21 July, ONE DAY before the notification letters relying on it were signed.**
- **The amendments reduce the total value of separation for abolition of post by up to one third,** with the greatest loss borne by the longest-serving staff. They were applied to contracts concluded under the previous Edition and still running, in some cases with more than four years remaining, **without any transitional arrangement.**
- The Organization relies on consultation of the Staff Committee in response to substantive objections, but has not disclosed the date of consultation, the material submitted, the proposals or opinion expressed, or whether the Council was informed of that opinion. **Staff Committee representatives are reported to have stated that the Committee consistently opposed the amendments.**
- The exercise has removed in-house technical capability in areas where no successor was designated and no handover took place, notwithstanding the Director-General's stated objective of maintaining the capability to resume deferred activities rapidly.
- The deferrals underpinning the measure are described by the IO **as reversible**, with the deferred scope intended for recovery when the cash-flow situation improves, potentially before 2029. By contrast, **the removal of the capability** needed to execute that scope **is not reversible on any stated timescale.**
- At IC-37, seven months before the measure, Euratom requested official disclosure of unspent or accumulating funds and financial buffers, while the Project was reported as executing within cost and ahead of schedule. The Commission is well placed to establish whether that disclosure was made and whether such resources were considered before compulsory staff reductions were adopted.

Our questions and demands

In the light of the foregoing, the following questions are addressed both to the Director-General of the IO and to the European Commission representative on the ITER Council:

a) The communication to staff of 30 June 2026 listed the provisions amended on the eve of the new Edition's entry into force but did not state the direction or magnitude of the changes. Were the staff affected informed at any time before 22 July 2026 that the amendments would reduce the notice period, the indemnity ceiling and the compensation for reduced notice, and by how much? Why was no transitional arrangement adopted for contracts concluded under the previous Edition and still running?

b) On what basis was a period of five working days, during the principal summer leave period and without the underlying documents, considered sufficient for the effective exercise of the right to be heard and the post said to be abolished was not identified until after the decision had been taken?

c) What documentary record exists of the assessment of the affected profiles against available and forthcoming positions? Who carried it out, on what date and against which criteria? Were the line managers and project leaders of the staff concerned consulted before the intention to terminate was formed?

d) Did the incumbent's grade or level of remuneration enter into the selection of posts to be abolished? If so, how is that reconciled with the ground stated in the notification letters? What criteria were applied, and what is the list of posts abolished, including their grades?

e) What assessment was made, and by whom, of the exposure created by abolishing posts attached to commitments currently in execution, and of the cost of reconstituting the knowledge lost if the deferred activities are resumed, compared with the salary cost saved?

f) What disclosure was made following Euratom's request at IC-37 concerning unspent or accumulating funds and financial buffers? Were those resources considered before compulsory staff reductions were adopted? If the outstanding contributions are received, what mechanism exists to restore the capability removed, who is competent to decide, and on what timescale?

Demands

1. We are calling for a redundancy plan that safeguards jobs and provides longer transitional arrangements ;
2. We are calling for social dialogue to take place in order to answer the questions raised and draw up a support plan.
3. In view of the significant budgetary impact now being seen, as well as the consequences already being experienced, we believe it is essential to take concrete action against ITER Members that are no longer meeting their financial obligations. This is necessary in order to restore fair contributions and safeguard the resources needed to fulfil our missions. Should indeed be clarified the measures envisaged in response to the failure of certain ITER members to make their expected contributions, insofar as this contributed to the present situation.

Conclusion

We trust that this request, and the questions raised above, will receive the serious attention they warrant.

It is in the interest of all parties to establish a clear, complete and verifiable account of the process by which the posts of the colleagues concerned were abolished and their contracts terminated.

This thorough review cannot, however, be a purely academic exercise.

Should it confirm the substantive, legal or procedural concerns identified above, it must also lead to the withdrawal of the decisions already adopted and, where appropriate, to the adoption of all necessary corrective measures.

An organisation facing genuine financial constraints may, once all other reasonable alternatives have been properly explored and exhausted, ultimately be required to take difficult decisions affecting employment.

However, where such decisions have far-reaching consequences for the individuals concerned and place them in a situation of serious uncertainty and distress, they must be taken and implemented through **transparent, fair and legally robust procedures**, with effective respect for the **right to be heard, procedural fairness and genuine social dialogue**.

These safeguards are all the more important where the staff affected have devoted many years of professional service to the Fusion programme and possess expertise, institutional knowledge and technical know-how that are material to the successful future delivery of the ITER Project.

The European Commission and its representatives must be expected to uphold these standards not only within the Commission's own services, but also in the organisations in whose governance the European

Union participates. **This responsibility is particularly compelling where the Union provides — and is being asked to continue providing — a substantial financial contribution.**

In such circumstances, effective oversight, transparency and accountability are not optional considerations: they are essential conditions for safeguarding the Commission's institutional and financial interests and for maintaining confidence in the governance of the Project.

Cristiano Sebastiani	Nicolas Mavraganis	Georges Vlandas
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Staff