

Munich, 02-03-2026
sc26019cp

Report on the GCC meeting of 30 January 2026

Dear Colleagues,

The General Consultative Committee (GCC) met by videoconference on 30 January 2026. The following items were on the agenda of the meeting and the CSC members of the GCC raised their concerns and tried to get further clarifications:

- General guidelines on rewards 2026 - for consultation [GCC/DOC 01/2026](#)
- Circ. 390 - New transfer coefficients (Art.12 of the Pension Scheme Regulations and new Pension Scheme Regulations) - for consultation [GCC/DOC 02/2026](#)
- Office-wide organisational adjustments - stream 2 - for information [GCC/DOC 03/2026](#)

The CSC members in the GCC declared themselves on strike and participated in the meeting.

In any other business, the CSC members in the GCC alerted the administration on the controversial and ill-designed proposal on the salary adjustment procedure planned to be tabled in the next meeting of 19 February.

Read more in the [GCC minutes](#).

The detailed opinions by the CSC members of the GCC are annexed to this paper.

Sincerely yours,

The Central Staff Committee

Opinion of the CSC members of the GCC on [GCC/DOC 1/2026](#): President's Instructions on Rewards for 2026

The CSC members of the GCC give the following opinion on the President's Instructions on Rewards proposed in [GCC/DOC 1/2026](#).

The document defines the annual budget envelope and reward types, the eligibility and criteria for rewards and the process and timeline.

On the consultation

1. For the first 6 reward exercises following the implementation of the New Career System in 2014, the President's Instructions on Rewards were submitted each year **for information** only to the General Consultative Committee (GCC). In essence, the document could not be subject to a vote. The CSC members of the GCC argued each year that such instructions on rewards should be submitted **for consultation** in compliance with Article 38(2) ServRegs stating that the GCC shall be consulted on *"any proposal which concerns the conditions of employment of the whole or part of the staff to whom these regulations apply"*.
2. In 2021, the President's Instructions on Rewards were submitted for the first time **for consultation** and Mr Campinos invited the GCC members to send their opinion in writing. This change of practice followed an opinion of the Appeals Committee (ApC) recommending that such a document should be submitted for consultation from now on. It is regrettable that only legal action convinced Mr Campinos to make the Office comply with its own Service Regulations and acknowledge that rewards concern conditions of employment.
3. This year, the instructions are again submitted for consultation.
4. On 15 January 2026, Mr Campinos tabled the present document in the GCC for the meeting of 30 January 2026.
5. Compared to the President's Instructions on Reward Exercise for 2025¹, the amendments consist in:
 - a **change of the date of eligibility of staff in service and organisational structure** from 1 November to 1 October 2026,
 - an **increase of the percentage of eligible staff** who may receive step(s) and/or promotions from 60% to 65%,
 - a **decrease of the minimum (individual) bonus** from EUR 2.000 to the value of 1.000 EUR,

¹ [GCC/DOC 1/2025](#)

- a change of terminology from maternity and adoption leave to parenthood leave,
6. The administration did not invite the staff representation to any technical meeting to discuss the amendments. The document does not contain an explanatory statement explaining the reasons for the changes.
 7. On 30 January 2026, the GCC meeting took place from 10.00h to 11.00h.

On the merits

On step(s) and promotions

On the 65% ceiling

8. The steps and promotions shall be allocated as follows (section II. 1):

Up to 65% of staff under II 1. 2) may receive one or two steps or a promotion

A careful look at the past, shows that Mr Battistelli's reward exercise in 2015² defined that up to 70% of staff may receive step(s) or a promotion. The subsequent exercises in 2016³ and 2017⁴ were slightly below at 65%.

9. Mr Campinos maintained the threshold at the minimum level of 60% applied in 2018⁵, 2019⁶, 2020⁷, 2022⁸, 2023⁹, 2024¹⁰ and 2025¹¹. The only exceptions are the year 2021¹² for which the ceiling was set at 70% and now the year 2026 with a ceiling set at 65%.

² [GCC/DOC 12/2015](#)

³ [GCC/DOC 11/2016](#)

⁴ [GCC/DOC 16/2017](#)

⁵ [GCC/DOC 5/2018](#)

⁶ [GCC/DOC 4/2019](#)

⁷ [GCC/DOC 11/2020](#)

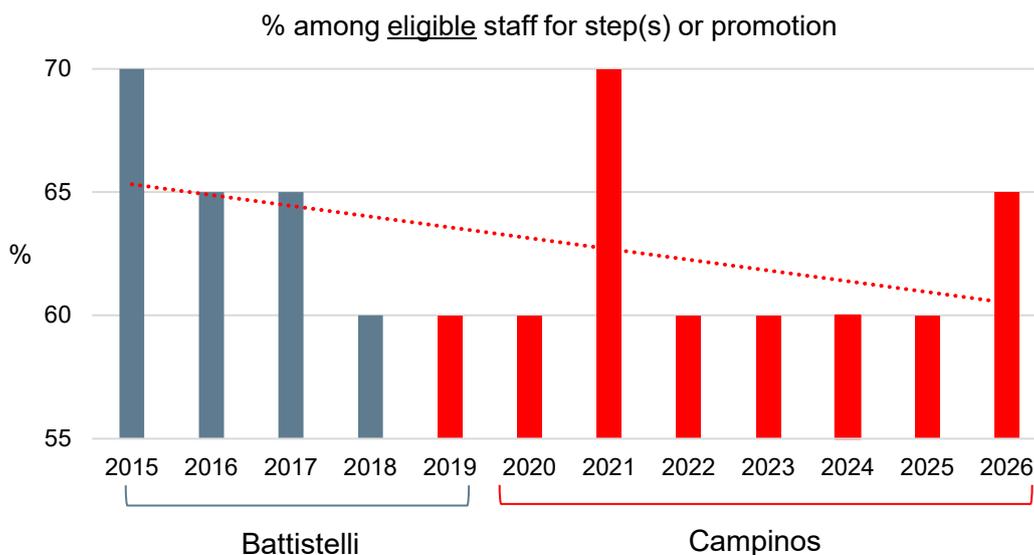
⁸ [GCC/DOC 4/2022](#)

⁹ [GCC/DOC 3/2023](#)

¹⁰ [GCC/DOC 1/2024](#)

¹¹ [GCC/DOC 1/2025](#)

¹² [GCC/DOC 1/2021](#)



10. Back in 2014, in the Working Group on the New Career System, the Chair was PD4.3 put in charge of the reform by Mr Battistelli. She had explained that those who do not produce (and are hence appraised as “far below” or “incompetent”) would not have a career. She had even suggested that to this end, the ceiling would be 80%. It was a misrepresentation of the facts. In his first Guidelines on Rewards, Mr Battistelli set the ceiling at 70% and decreased it down to 60% as a punishment of staff.

On the catch-up mechanism

11. The low ceiling should be furthermore put in perspective with the fact that (section II. 1)

Staff falling in the category of the catch-up mechanism as described in Annex II are included in the 65% (emphasis added)

whereas the catch-up mechanism 2020 was under a separate budget¹³ and amounted to an additional EUR 861.000.

12. Furthermore, an additional separate budget is still available, as the President’s budget for step(s) and promotion does not exhaust the budget voted in the Council (see section “On the budget” below).

13. The document in ANNEX II mentions that

Eligible staff, who did not receive a step advancement or promotion during the last four consecutive years (2022-2025), will advance one step in grade. Such advancement is possible until the last step of the grade. Promotions to a next grade are excluded from the catch-up mechanism.

¹³ “[One-off measure](#)”, President Communiqué of 13-01-2020, “this one-off measure has been decoupled from the next reward envelope. The sum will be taken out of the 2019 budget and will not come from, or affect, the funds available for the next rewards exercise.” “This one-off measure will take effect as of January 2020 and represents a total investment of around EUR 861 000.”

14. We do not understand why this specification is only part of an annex and not mentioned directly higher in section II. 1) together with the mention that it is on a separate budget envelope.
15. We consider that 1 step every 5 years (promotions excluded) is clearly insufficient to solve the [unfairness of the career system](#)¹⁴. For instance, the [EU staff regulations](#) consider that 1 step every 3 years is the minimum¹⁵.

On the financial justification

16. From 2021 until 2023, the Guidelines justified in ANNEX the ceiling as follows:

*With regards to career progression, **the baseline scenario of the Financial Study 2019 corresponds to granting a step to 60% of eligible staff. Every 5% increase in quota increases the coverage gap with around EUR 160 million.***
(emphasis added)

17. This statement remains absent in the present document.
18. In 2024, the administration explained the removal of the reference to the Financial Study 2019 by the [2023 update](#)¹⁶. At the time, the CSC representatives asked why the administration did not increase the ceiling to above 60% as there is no justification anymore to keep it. The administration was not in the position to answer.
19. The Financial Study 2019 has confirmed to be undeniably and fundamentally wrong as it [predicted deflation](#)¹⁷ instead of inflation. It was not tenable anymore for the administration to justify career policies on the basis of this document.
20. This year, the ceiling is increased from 60% to 65%. This is still far too little and late to better reward EPO staff.

On the demotivation aspects

21. After 11 reward exercises, the demotivating aspects of the New Career System have also become obvious.
22. The number of staff members who have reached the last step (G9(5) for JG6, G10(5) for JG5 and G13(5) for JG4) has increased and they are now deprived of step(s) and promotion. This could create some possibility of granting more step(s) and promotion to younger colleagues if the envelope as approved by the Council were used (see section "On the budget" below).

¹⁴ "Nobody should be left behind: An imperative to fix the current rewarding system", CSC paper of 01-07-2024 ([sc24038cp](#))

¹⁵ [EU staff regulations](#), Article 87, "A member of the contract staff referred to in Article 3a who has been at one step in his grade for two years shall automatically advance to the next step in that grade."

¹⁶ [CA/68/23](#)

¹⁷ [CA/83/19 page 20](#)

23. However, the rigid quota combined with the arbitrary "real" (net of inflation) decrease of the envelope prevents this. The effect is that, in absolute numbers, fewer and fewer colleagues are receiving step(s) or promotion, and thus fewer and fewer colleagues are progressing in their career. The reward exercise is more of a budget-based and quota-based exercise than a merit-based one.



24. A purely competition-based career system excluding still 35% of eligible staff is not fit for purpose. It is dogmatic to consider that 35% of eligible staff, regardless of their performance, should be excluded from any career progression. If the negative effects cannot be seen on production, they take place on decreasing substantial quality.
25. The staff representation would be ready to discuss within a Working Group a performance-based system defining a minimum career, an average career and a fast career.
26. The CSC repeatedly asked Mr Campinos to put a Review of the New Career System on the Social Agenda (e.g. for [2020](#), [2022](#), [2024](#), [2025](#), [2026](#)) but Mr Campinos systematically refused.

On the budget

For step(s) and promotions

Since 1 January 2024 onwards, step advancements and promotions take effect on 1 April (instead of 1 July previously). The period of payment increased from 6 to 9 months. This derives from Circular 364¹⁸. The subsequent changes to the presentation of the budget of the Administrative Council and the evolution of the budget envelope in the Guidelines on

¹⁸ [GCC/DOC 35/2023](#), section E. (6)

Rewards were analysed in the CSC [publication](#)¹⁹ of 18 December 2023 and the CSC [open letter](#)²⁰ of 18 January 2024.

27. Until 2024 budget documents CA/50/xx and CA/D 1/xx, as well as the Guidelines on Rewards GCC/DOC x/xx, mentioned the envelope in terms of 12 months equivalent while payments for the budget year were made only over the 6 months period of July to December.
28. Since 2024, these documents mention the envelope in terms of pro-rata with different basis and shall be considered in 12 months equivalents:

Approved by the Council	Proposed in the Guidelines
2025	
CA/D 1/24 (p. 78/106)	GCC/DOC 1/2025 (p. 6/19)
EUR 11,325 mil pro-rata temporis (9 months)	
EUR 15,100 mil (12 months equivalent)	EUR 12,500 mil (12 months equivalent)

2026	
CA/D 1/25 (p. 75/102)	GCC/DOC 1/2026 (p. 6/16)
EUR 11,863 mil pro-rata temporis (9 months)	
EUR 15,100 mil ²¹ (12 months equivalent)	EUR 13,000 mil (12 months equivalent)

29. The present Guidelines on Rewards set a lower budget than the one approved by the Council, namely **EUR -2,100 mil**. Mr Campinos has decided again to reward less staff than possible.

For bonuses

30. The comparison shall be made by comparing the individual bonus(es) for the 2025 performance with the previous budget envelope:

Approved by the Council	Proposed in the Guidelines
2025	
CA/D 1/24 (p. 79/106)	GCC/DOC 1/2025 (p. 7/25)
EUR 11,200 mil ²²	EUR 11,900 mil

¹⁹ "Reward Exercise 2024 – The addendum", CSC paper ([sc23144cp](#)), 18-12-2023

²⁰ "Reward Exercise 2024 – Budget Envelope in the Guidelines", CSC letter ([sc24002cl](#)), 18-01-2024

²¹ Corresponds to 1,74% x Basic salaries (Item 3.000 p. 29/102) = 1,74% x 870.274k = 15.142k rounded at 15,1 mil

²² 1,26% x Basic salaries (Item 3.000 p. 30/106) = 1,26% x 882.331k = 11.117k rounded at 11,200 mil

2026	
CAD 1/25 (p. 76/102)	GCC/DOC 1/2026 (p. 6/16)
EUR 11,000 mil²³	EUR 12,000 mil

31. The budget envelope in the Guidelines on Rewards for (individual) bonuses for 2025 remains higher than the one approved by the Council, but the excess remains far below the underspent on the step(s) and promotion and is of course of a very different nature i.e. not a career progression.

On the bonuses

32. The staff representation maintains that a bonus culture has no place in a public service organisation in charge of legal acts for delivering or refusing patent applications.

Two rounds of bonuses

33. Two individual bonuses (first round in July 2026 and second round in January 2027) are possible for eligible employees. These bonuses relate to the 2026 performance.
34. There is still no indication in the document as to which months of performance each round applies. Does the second round also cover the period of the first round?
35. Last year, management told us that the second round of bonus shall cover the whole performance of the previous year. We are however aware that the second round is used by some Team Managers to reward purely the June to November performance rather than the whole year.
36. Overall, the current policy is to perform these two rounds of bonuses for the performance year in addition to a round of step(s) and promotions for the same performance in April of the following year.
37. Therefore, the same performance can be rewarded three times. This is wrong in terms of performance management policy.

Ceilings and amount

38. A combination of two individual bonuses (first round in July 2026 and second round in January 2027) is possible for eligible employees and they relate to the 2026 performance.
39. However, the combination of bonuses shall not exceed the annual ceiling of EUR 9.000 per employee. This overall ceiling remains unchanged. However, the basic amounts and ceilings have been amended as follows:

²³ 1,26% x Basic salaries (Item 3.000 p. 29/102) = 1,26% x 870.274k = 11.965k rounded at 11,000 mil

40. Since 2024²⁴, there is no **ceiling on the number of eligible staff** (formerly up to 30%) who may receive individual bonuses. At the same time in 2024, the minimum individual bonus amount was increased from EUR 2.000 to EUR 3.000. In 2025, the minimum individual bonus amount was decreased back from EUR 3.000 to EUR 2.000.
41. This year, the minimum individual bonus amount is decreased further from EUR 2.000 to EUR 1.000.
42. The exact lump sums are now:
- EUR 1.000
 - EUR 2.000
 - EUR 3.000
 - EUR 4.000
 - EUR 5.000
 - EUR 6.000
 - EUR 7.000
 - EUR 8.000
 - EUR 9.000
43. The administration considers that an explicit list of exact lump-sums increases transparency. A mere list of lump-sums still does not reveal what goes to whom and with which criteria.
44. In the GCC meeting, the administration explained that reducing the minimum individual bonus amount is a mean to reward more staff with bonuses.

Additional burden and frustration

45. Feedback from line managers is that the two rounds of bonuses on top of a round of step(s) and promotion has multiplied by three the administrative work of line managers and lengthy discussions. It has also multiplied by three the level of frustration inside teams. Indeed, line managers have to say three more times in the year that they could not reward individuals.
46. The envelope of bonuses is often eaten up by higher grades. A EUR 2.000 bonus for an employee in a high grade is deemed insufficient to motivate the employee. Therefore, line managers give an amount of EUR 9.000. This policy amounts to giving more to those who already get more.
47. The [announcement](#)²⁵ of 19 January 2026 mentions that the EUR 200.000 left over from the 2025 bonus budget have been awarded to the examiner teams that met their internal plan. In practice, the EUR 200.000€ envelope was shared among 1.080 examiners who got an amount of EUR 185. However, not all examiners in the team which met the internal plan could be rewarded. As the minimum bonus in a year is EUR 2.000, those who did not have any bonus yet were not given this bonus either. Again, this amounts to giving more to

²⁴ [GCC/DOC 1/2024](#)

²⁵ "Outcome of second 2025 bonus round", Communiqué of 19-01-2026 [ANNEX A]

those who already get more. This issue will not even be solved with the decrease of the minimum bonus down to EUR 1.000.

Lack of transparency

48. In the GCC meeting, the administration explained that reducing the minimum individual bonus amount is a mean to reward more staff with bonuses.
49. In the [announcement](#)²⁶ of 19 January 2026, the administration published a [report](#)²⁷ on insights and trends from the 2025 bonus cycle.
50. By email²⁸ of 21 January 2026, the staff representation requested to be provided with the statistics for the most recent bonus rounds, both when the minimum bonus was EUR 2.000 in 2025 and when the minimum was EUR 3.000 in 2024.
51. Staff representatives expressed concerns that the change in minimum bonus amount may have a detrimental effect on the amounts rewarded to certain groups of staff, in particular to the lower job groups and some categories of staff, which is not possible to determine by scrutinising the percentage of eligible staff rewarded only. For full clarity, the request is to add an “Average” column, as is provided for each DG, also to the second (Job Groups) and third table (specific populations) of the [report](#) on the bonuses.
52. By email²⁹ of 27 January 2026, the administration provided an incomplete answer. The average bonus per Job Group is included. But the average bonus per specific population of staff is missing: men, women, part-timers, full mobility, partial mobility, staff reps in 2025, maternity leave, newcomers and young professionals year 2-3, newcomer in 2021-2024 (excl. YP).
53. Data protection rules cannot be an excuse for not providing this information. Staff representation should be able to determine potential differences of treatment.

Young professionals

54. Young Professionals are among the categories of staff who may be considered for the allocation of bonuses (see section I) and for which specific attention is to be paid (see section III. 1. 3)).
55. The administration considers that this gives more opportunities to Young Professionals. There is however nothing binding ensuring that this will actually be the case.
56. In our view, Young Professionals should be provided with a decent work package.

²⁶ “Outcome of second 2025 bonus round”, Communiqué of 19-01-2026 **[ANNEX A]**

²⁷ “Insights and trends report from the 2025 bonus rewards cycle” **[ANNEX B]**

²⁸ “Request for data related to GCC/DOC 1/2026”, Email from the CSC to GCC members, 21-01-2026 **[ANNEX C]**

²⁹ Reply email from Social Dialogue to the CSC, 27-01-2026 **[ANNEX D]**

On functional allowances

57. For the first 6 reward exercises following the implementation of the New Career System in 2014, the budget for **functional allowances** was mentioned in the President's Instructions on rewards.
58. In 2021, the budget for functional allowances was not even submitted to the General Consultative Committee (GCC) and the budget envelope was simply disclosed in an [announcement](#) published on the Intranet on 15 October 2021. The details concerning the distribution and entitlement remain undisclosed. The Office also carried out a harmonisation reform without discussing it with the staff representation and without providing any details or basis for it.
59. The CSC addressed this lack of transparency and consultation in a [letter](#)³⁰ to the Administrative Council on 26 November 2021. To this day, the letter remains unanswered.
60. In 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 no consultation took place and no figure was communicated. We expect the same to happen in 2026.
61. Initially, functional allowances were meant to compensate employees in Job Groups 4-6 when temporarily taking on tasks above and beyond what is in their job description. This is for instance the case for Team Managers. Obviously, this did not apply in the beginning to managers in Job Groups 1-3, since the New Career System awarded them an increase in salary for higher responsibilities.
62. In 2017, management [amended](#)³¹ Article 12(2) ServRegs to open up the possibility of getting a functional allowance also to... Management. Concomitantly, the functional allowance was increased from a maximum of "*an amount equivalent to two steps in the current grade*" to "*two monthly basic salaries per year*".
63. The Office stated that this was justified for "*the sake of efficiency and flexibility*". Annex I to Circular 364 indicates that duties and constraints deserving a functional allowance are for "*functions of high responsibility (...) organizational and technical change management etc.*" One can easily assess the degree of self-service and how the trend will continue if the budget for functional allowances remains undisclosed and not submitted to consultation. After having opened the cookie jar to help themselves, management is now hiding the cookie jar.
64. The [budget document](#)³² mentions the percentages of the basic salaries allocated per site for functional allowance. No information is given as to whom and for which tasks the envelope is spent.

³⁰ "Functional allowances at the EPO", CSC letter ([sc21140cl](#)), 26-11-2021

³¹ [GCC/DOC 7/2017](#)

³² [CAD 1/25, page 76/102](#)

On performance criteria

For step(s) and promotion

65. Since 2024, the criteria for granting a reward are to be found in the new Circular 364³³ which merely contains a broad non-exhaustive list interpreted differently among directorates and teams.

66. It is worth mentioning again that for steps, one of the criteria is the

achievement of the expected objectives and competencies corresponding to grade, seniority and job profile” (C364, section B. 1) a))

67. and for promotions, the criteria have become stricter (amendments in bold)

*proven performance and expected objectives corresponding to the grade continuously achieved **over several years***
(C364, section D. b. 1) b))

demonstrated competencies and abilities to perform at a higher grade
(C364, section D. b. 1) c));

68. Such levels of expectations are not defined and the so-called corridors of “production/productivity” or “grade expectations” applied (e.g. in DG1) continue to be purposefully hidden from staff. And staff is essentially asked to perform already like in the higher grade to get promoted. The rat race competition is pushed even further.

“Specific attention”: Parental leave? Sickness?

69. Allegedly to “ensure a fair distribution of rewards to all categories of staff” (section III. 1.), the Guidelines on Rewards state that “it is wished that specific attention is paid in the reward exercise” for:

- *Staff on maternity and adoption leave (periods of maternity and adoption leave are to be neutralised by considering continuity between performance prior to and after the leave)*
- *Newcomers (performance with demonstrated learning curve may be rewarded, including during probationary period)*
- *Part-timers*
- *Staff who changed jobs or were on partial mobility during the relevant period (in such cases it is important that managers in charge liaise to discuss potential rewards proposals)*
- *Staff who did not benefit from pensionable rewards over several years*
- *Staff in statutory functions (e.g. Staff Representatives, Confidential Counsellors)*
- *Young professionals*

³³ [GCC/DOC 35/2023](#)

70. If the Office were serious about fairness, it would not define it as a “wish”, but as a requirement and the “specific attention” would be defined as a positive attention.
71. The period of “over several years” before making an employee benefit from step(s) or a promotion is undefined and open to managerial arbitrariness.
72. **Sick staff and staff on parental leave are not mentioned in the list.**
73. In the last Technical Meetings of 2024 on performance management, the staff representation requested that these shall be included in the list, but the administration pretended they “*did not want to overburden the text and keep it concise*”. Representatives from the Employment Law Department stated that the Office is able to prove in litigation that these have been taken into account.
74. We are not convinced by the argument. We hear of several cases of Directors explaining to staff on parental leave that they have “*made a choice of family life incompatible with a career*”. We also remember that management explained in the GCC meetings shortly after the entry of the (New) Career System that “*the Office shall support sick staff but not promote them*”.
75. The age pyramid of EPO staff shows a clearly ageing population and hence more prone to sickness. It is high time for the EPO to revise its policies.
76. Overall, the Reward Exercise sends the signal of how much the EPO values its employees and pays attention to them. For this reason, rewards, performance management and skills management need to be in the hands of the best managers ready to treat staff with the utmost care.

(Lack of) justification

77. Colleagues are hardly ever given reasons as to why they got or did not get a reward, and how they should perform to get one in the future. Only those who file a management review start to have the beginning of answer which raises even further questions on the arbitrariness of the exercise.
78. We hear that colleagues were successful in their appeals against a lack of reward. Their case was then submitted to a Reassessment Panel. However, this panel remains defined nowhere, its creation was never submitted to GCC consultation and the staff representation obviously never involved in its composition.

On the communication of rewards allocation

79. Line managers remain forbidden to transparently share the information whether they had proposed a staff member for a reward or not. They are only allowed to announce the President’s decision after the completion of the rewards process. This goes against the alleged principle of “empowering managers” which was put forward by management when disbanding the promotion board in 2014.

80. 35% of staff will be excluded from a pensionable reward. We are concerned that the text allows line managers to communicate the outcome of the reward exercise collectively. If a lack of individual reward is announced in front of the other team members, this could be experienced as humiliating for the employee concerned.

On the calibration by PDs, VPs and the President

81. Staff engagement can only be fostered by performing an **objective** appraisal exercise and linking it to the reward exercise. At the EPO, the appraisal exercise is not objective, and the reward exercise remains arbitrary. The administration is wrong in continuing along this path which has not been followed by another International Organization.
82. We observe an increasing number of colleagues in DG1 who produced at least 81% of their challenging target and are considered to be “far below” and their requests for being considered “partially not met” are summarily dismissed. We even see Team Managers ranking their Team Members along the criterion of “usefulness” for deciding whether or not to grant a reward. Such a policy can only trigger frustration, demotivation and lack of engagement. If the negative effects cannot be seen on production, they take place on decreasing substantive quality.
83. The document mentions (section IV),

*There is **no automatic link between appraisal reports and the reward exercise**. While performance is a pre-condition, it may not be sufficient to warrant a reward in view of other elements taken into account for its attribution such a **comparison with peers**, collaborative behaviour, development, priority of the Office and contribution to the Office’s achievement. (emphasis added)*

84. The broad statement allows management to exclude anyone at PD or VP level from the reward exercise during the so-called calibration process in an arbitrary manner.
85. The term “peers” is not substantiated by any document: are the peers from the same team? from the same grade? from the same directorate? from the same technical field? Over the years, we have asked the administration for clarification and a clear definition. None was provided.
86. The document mentions (section I par. 5)

*The pensionable and non-pensionable envelopes are initially distributed to the DGs on the basis of the demographic structure (number and grading of staff). **Each VP may then calibrate them within the DG considering unit performance and collaborative achievements**. However, no transfer of the different amounts between the different envelopes is allowed.*

87. Production is paramount for management. The above statement formalises the practice of arbitrarily reducing the percentage for the teams considered less productive (50% for some, 70% for others) without duly considering the specificities of their work.

88. A COO, a PD or a VP may further reduce the percentage to show that he or she is acting more “sustainably” than other managers.

On collaboration

89. The document mentions several times the word collaborative and collaboration.
90. The word “collaboration” appears to be a communication exercise designed to hide the fact that the administration maintains a competition-based system that goes actually against the values of cooperation.
91. It is a fig leaf on the actual exclusion of 35% of eligible staff from career progression.

On transparency and the Harmonisation Committee

92. On 26 July 2024, the CSC [addressed](#)³⁴ Mr Campinos on the lack of transparency in the reward exercise with three requests:

1. That the detailed statistics continue to be published on the intranet, including for the new bonus reward rounds, past and future
2. That the average value of the bonus is included for the disaggregated data
3. That more granularity at Directorate and Team level is provided

93. An “answer” came on 2 October 2024 from PD 4.2 in a [letter](#) “packing” replies on two other letters as well on different topics. Previously, management used to reply to our letters one by one. This form of respect has now disappeared, and the priority seems to get rid of the backlog of CSC letters with a batch of minimal answers.

94. The reply referred to

detailed information, including on the distribution of rewards, such as strategic bonuses, across various staff categories, was provided to the Harmonisation Committee on 30 June, 5 December 2023, and 4 July 2024; it is noted that the CSC declined the Office’s invitation to send an observer to these meetings.

95. The flaws of the Harmonisation Committee are detailed in the [opinion](#)³⁵ on [GCC/DOC 2/2023](#) and the [opinion](#)³⁶ on [GCC/DOC 35/2023](#).

96. We maintain that the Harmonisation Committee remains a rubber-stamping exercise which lacks transparency. Staff representation is only offered to nominate a single observer with strict confidentiality requirements. Our nominee is not even allowed to comment thereafter on the events of the meeting in front of other staff representatives. The conditions are not met for the CSC to nominate an observer in the Harmonisation Committee.

³⁴ “No ‘transparency’ in the rewards exercise anymore”, CSC letter to the President of 26-07-2024 ([sc24049cl](#))

³⁵ “Report on the GCC meeting of 28 February 2023”, CSC paper ([sc23030cp](#)), 09-03-2023

³⁶ “Report on the GCC meeting of 5 December 2023”, CSC paper ([sc23148cp](#)), 21-12-2023

97. In 2025, three rounds of reward exercise took place and for each the Harmonisation Committee met. Two rounds related to individual bonuses only. We wonder whether the EPO is making best use of its resources by keeping busy managers and staff for the purpose of the distribution of bonuses which have very little impact on staff engagement.

Conclusion

98. The many pitfalls identified by staff and their representation over the last 11 years of application of the (New) Career System still remain unsolved. The reward exercise is still a lottery which is unique among International Organisations. The paradigm can be summarised as follows:

“If you work well, you get a salary. If you work very well, you MIGHT get a step”.

99. However, the EPO has not only the worst career system among International Organisations, it also has the worst salary adjustment procedure. One should say:

“If you work well, you get an ERODING salary”

The CSC members of the GCC

Annexes:

A	“Outcome of second 2025 bonus round”, Communiqué of 19-01-2026
B	“Insights and trends report from the 2025 bonus rewards cycle”, 19-01-2026
C	“Request for data related to GCC/DOC 1/2026”, Email from the CSC to GCC members, 21-01-2026
D	Reply email from Social Dialogue to the CSC, 27-01-2026

ANNEX A

Outcome of second 2025 bonus round

Insights on rewards statistics, with more colleagues than ever receiving bonuses

Show target groups ⓘ

19.1.2026 in Office

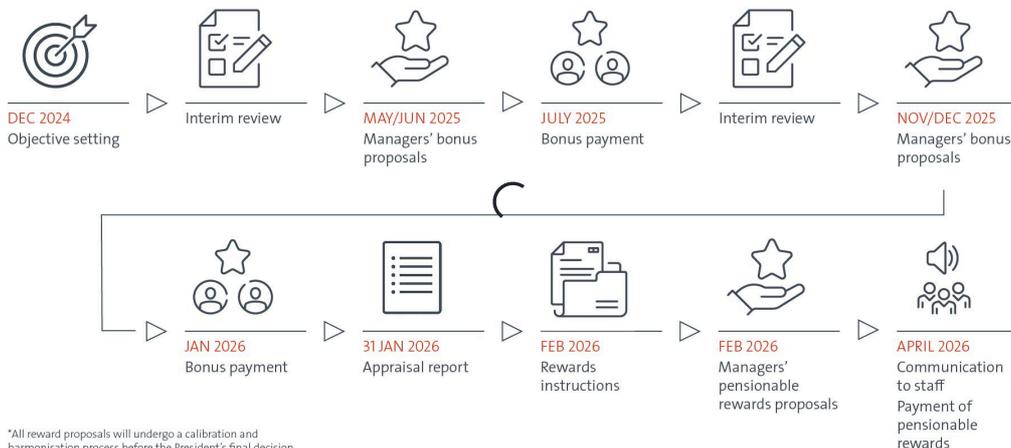
18



As we enter the new year, the Office is pleased to share the results of the second and final bonus round of 2025.

This marks the third year of the three-round rewards system, which is comprised of two bonus rounds and a separate round for pensionable rewards. The system facilitates more timely and frequent rewards and is based on well-defined criteria to enhance transparency.

2025 | Performance & Rewards



*All reward proposals will undergo a calibration and harmonisation process before the President's final decision.

Highlights from the second 2025 bonus round

In 2025 the strategic bonus allocation was redirected to individual bonuses and the minimum bonus amount was lowered to 2 000, enabling more colleagues to be recognised. The second bonus round saw a total of €6.2 million in individual bonuses awarded to 2 434 colleagues. In particular, there was high recognition for end-of-scale staff, colleagues who moved to a new role and newcomers.

A total budget of €11.9 million was allocated for 2025 bonuses. Across both rounds, 58.9% of staff – a total of 3 563 staff members - were rewarded, with 20% of recipients receiving a bonus in both rounds. In 2024 41.4% of staff received an individual bonus, and in 2023 30.5% did. This increase compared to previous years is, in part, a result of the strategic bonus allocation being redirected.

Notably, gender equity also improved, with 57.3% of women and 56.2% of men receiving bonuses across the two 2025 rounds, demonstrating near parity. A small gap remains in DG1, with 54.2% of female colleagues received bonuses compared to 55.4% of male colleagues.

To see more insights and trends from the 2025 bonus rewards cycle, please see the [report](#).

Rewarding examiner teams who met their annual objectives

As announced in the President's end-of-year message, the more than €200 000 left over from the 2025 bonus budget has been awarded to the examiner teams that met their internal plan. This additional top-up forms part of the Office's recognition of these teams' hard work and appreciation of their commitment over the past year.

Looking ahead

Every colleague's contributions are responsible for the collective success of the Office, and we would like to thank you for your hard work throughout the year. Recognition for the 2025 performance cycle will conclude with the April 2026 pensionable rewards round, which will focus on sustained excellence and includes steps and promotions.

 Like 18

Related topics

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Human resources

Performance management

Remuneration and benefits

ANNEX B

Individual bonuses by DG awarded for performance in 2025 in July and/or January

DG	Eligible*	#Bonus**	%	Average
DG0	236	154	65.3%	€2.773
DG1	4666	2568	55.0%	€3.610
BoA***	64	40	62.5%	€3.225
DG4	841	504	59.9%	€3.054
DG5	242	154	63.6%	€2.942
EPO 2025	6049	3420	56.4%	€3.456
EPO 2024	6092	2522	41.5%	€3.674

* Staff in active service 01.11.2025 are eligible for an individual bonus in the second bonus round (payable in January 2026)

** Only staff in active service 01.05.2025 were eligible for an individual bonus in the first bonus round (paid July 2025)

*** BoA: non-members of the boards only

Individual bonuses by JG awarded for performance in 2025 in July and/or January

JG	Eligible*	#Bonus**	%
JG2	30	19	63.3%
JG3	159	102	64.2%
JG4	4617	2575	55.8%
JG5	175	118	67.4%
JG6	843	510	60.5%
YP***	225	96	42.7%
EPO 2025	6049	3420	56.5%
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* Staff in active service 01.11.2025 are eligible for an individual bonus in the second bonus round

** Only staff in active service 01.05.2025 were eligible for an individual bonus in the first bonus round (paid July 2025)

*** This statistic reports on all young professionals, including 97 in year 1 who entered the EPO on 15.09.2025

Individual bonuses by specific populations awarded for performance in 2025 in July and/or January

Category	Eligible*	#Bonus**	%
All staff	6049	3420	56.5%
Men	3878	2177	56.1%
Women	2171	1243	57.3%
Part-time	781	369	47.2%
Full mobility	195	120	61.5%
Partial mobility	11	9	81.8%
Staff reps in 2025	45	10	22.2%
Maternity leave	36	19	52.8%
Young professionals year 2+3	128	93	72.7%
Newcomer in 2021-2024 (excl. YP)***	393	246	62.6%

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** Only staff in active service 01.05.2025 were eligible for an individual bonus in the first bonus round (paid July 2025)

*** Newcomers of 2025 are excluded for this statistic because they have not been in the Office for the full performance year of 2025

ANNEX C

Thomas Franchitti

From: Derek Kelly
Sent: 21 January 2026 16:55
To: Social Dialogue; Christoph Ernst; Konstantinos Kortsaris; Steve Rowan; Richard Flammer; Nellie Simon; Mariya Koleva; Laurent Germond; Gema Requena Sempere; Elodie Bergot; Diego Eguidazu Alonso; Beatrice Marliani; Michael Sampels; Eva Loschnig; Rhiannon Mitchell-Thomas; Thomas Franchitti; Evelyn Mülthaler; Teresa Juárez; Florence Olsder; Fausto Ciotta; Ion Brumme
Cc: Maria Arranz Gomez; VP4 OFFICE; VP4 OFFICE
Subject: GCC meeting 30 January- request for data related to GCC/DOC 1/2026

Dear GCC chair, dear Christoph,
Dear GCC members,

In the [GCC/DOC 01/2026](#), we have noted a proposal to reduce the minimum bonus amount to €1,000. This is after a reduction in the minimum bonus amount from €3,000 to €2,000 only one year ago, as cited in the recent [announcement](#).

In order to properly analyse the impact of the change of the minimum bonus amount, we would like to request that we are provided with the statistics for the most recent bonus rounds, both when the minimum was €2,000 in 2025 and when the minimum was €3,000 in 2024. We are concerned that the change in minimum bonus amount may have a detrimental effect on the amounts rewarded to certain groups of staff, in particular to the lower job groups and some categories of staff, which is not possible to determine by scrutinising the percentage of eligible staff rewarded only.

For full clarity, the request is to add an “Average” column, as is provided for each DG, also to the second and third table of the published statistics on the bonus rounds (e.g. [the 2025 bonus rewards cycle](#), see below).

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Sincerely,
 Derek Kelly
 Chair of the [Central Staff Committee](#),
 On behalf of the CSC members in the GCC

From: Social Dialogue <socialdialogue@epo.org>

Sent: 15 January 2026 13:31

To: Christoph Ernst <christoph.ernst@epo.org>; Konstantinos Kortsaris <kkortsaris@epo.org>; Steve Rowan <srowan@epo.org>; Richard Flammer <rflammer@epo.org>; Nellie Simon <nsimon@epo.org>; Mariya Koleva <mkoleva@epo.org>; Laurent Germond <lgermond@epo.org>; Gema Requena Sempere <grequenasempere@epo.org>; Elodie Bergot <ebergot@epo.org>; Diego Eguidazu Alonso <deguidazualonso@epo.org>; Beatrice Marliani <bmarliani@epo.org>; Derek Kelly <dkelly@epo.org>; Michael Sampels <msampels@epo.org>; Eva Loschnig <eloschnig@epo.org>; Rhiannon Mitchell-Thomas <rmitchellthomas@epo.org>; Thomas Franchitti <tfranchitti@epo.org>; Evelyn Mülthaler <emuelthaler@epo.org>; Teresa Juárez <mjuarezcolera@epo.org>; Florence Olsder <folsder@epo.org>; Fausto Ciotta <fciotta@epo.org>; Ion Brumme <ibrumme@epo.org>

Cc: Maria Arranz Gomez <marranzgomez@epo.org>; VP4 OFFICE <vp4office@epo.org>; VP4 OFFICE <vp4office@epo.org>; Social Dialogue <socialdialogue@epo.org>

Subject: GCC meeting 30 January- agenda and documents for consultation

Dear Members of the GCC,

The agenda for the upcoming GCC meeting on 30 January is now available on [OpenText](#) with links to the documents for consultation and the minutes from the December 2025 GCC meeting.

Best regards,

Social Dialogue Office

ANNEX D

Thomas Franchitti

From: Social Dialogue
Sent: 27 January 2026 13:09
To: Derek Kelly; Christoph Ernst; Konstantinos Kortsaris; Steve Rowan; Richard Flammer; Nellie Simon; Mariya Koleva; Laurent Germond; Gema Requena Sempere; Elodie Bergot; Diego Eguidazu Alonso; Beatrice Marliani; Michael Sampels; Eva Loschnig; Rhiannon Mitchell-Thomas; Thomas Franchitti; Evelyn Mülthaler; Teresa Juárez; Florence Olsder; Fausto Ciotta; Ion Brumme; Roberta Romano-Götsch
Cc: Maria Arranz Gomez; VP4 OFFICE; Social Dialogue
Subject: RE: GCC meeting 30 January- request for data related to GCC/DOC 1/2026

Dear Derek,
Dear GCC members,

As requested, the Office is providing you with the statistics for years 2025 and 2024.

Please note that for year 2024 a strategic bonus was still in place, accounting for 20% of the total bonus budget. The remaining 80% was allocated to individual bonuses across two rounds (July and January), with top-up bonuses of €1 000 already permitted in the second round; by contrast, in 2025 the full bonus budget (100%) was allocated to individual bonuses, again distributed across two rounds (July and January).

JG	Average 25	Average 24
JG2	€3,211	€4,304
JG3	€3,847	€4,207
JG4	€3,584	€3,731
JG5	€2,881	€3,554
JG6	€2,986	€3,315
YP	€2,844	€3,171
EPO related to performance in 2025	€3,456	€3,674

JG	#Bonus**2025	%	#Bonus**2024	%
JG2	19	63.3%	23	71.9%
JG3	102	64.2%	87	50.9%
JG4	2575	55.8%	1904	41.3%
JG5	118	67.4%	83	48.0%
JG6	510	60.5%	384	42.6%
YP	96	42.7%	41	20.3%
EPO related to performance in 2025	3420	56.5%	2522	41.4%

Best regards,

Social Dialogue Office

From: Derek Kelly <dkelly@epo.org>
Sent: 21 January 2026 16:55

To: Social Dialogue <socialdialogue@epo.org>; Christoph Ernst <christoph.ernst@epo.org>; Konstantinos Kortsaris <kkortsaris@epo.org>; Steve Rowan <srowan@epo.org>; Richard Flammer <rflammer@epo.org>; Nellie Simon <nsimon@epo.org>; Mariya Koleva <mkoleva@epo.org>; Laurent Germond <lgermond@epo.org>; Gema Requena Sempere <grequenasempere@epo.org>; Elodie Bergot <ebergot@epo.org>; Diego Eguidazu Alonso <deguidazualonso@epo.org>; Beatrice Marliani <bmarliani@epo.org>; Michael Sampels <msampels@epo.org>; Eva Loschnig <eloschnig@epo.org>; Rhiannon Mitchell-Thomas <rmitchellthomas@epo.org>; Thomas Franchitti <tfranchitti@epo.org>; Evelyn Mülthaler <emuelthaler@epo.org>; Teresa Juárez <mjuarezcolera@epo.org>; Florence Olsder <folsder@epo.org>; Fausto Ciotta <fciotta@epo.org>; Ion Brumme <ibrumme@epo.org>
Cc: Maria Arranz Gomez <marranzgomez@epo.org>; VP4 OFFICE <vp4office@epo.org>; VP4 OFFICE <vp4office@epo.org>
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Subject: GCC meeting 30 January- agenda and documents for consultation

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The agenda for the upcoming GCC meeting on 30 January is now available on [OpenText](#) with links to the documents for consultation and the minutes from the December 2025 GCC meeting.

Best regards,

Social Dialogue Office

**Opinion on [GCC/DOC 02/2026](#)
Circ. 390 - New transfer coefficients
(Art.12 of the Pension Scheme Regulations and new Pension Scheme Regulations)**

The Staff Representation highlights the serious concerns arising from the recent policy shift towards a lower risk tolerance in the management of the pension reserve fund, which has led to a significant reduction in the assumed discount rate from 3.25% to 2.2%.

We note that the immediate effect has been a substantial increase in pension contributions, including those borne by staff. This impact has been unevenly distributed, placing a disproportionate burden on younger colleagues while benefiting a limited number of senior managers. The consequences of this policy have already been felt in practice, including cases where staff employed in Germany experienced a decrease in net salary in January 2026 compared to December 2025.

We are further concerned that the same revised discount rate has now been applied to the actuarial coefficients governing pension transfer-ins. This decision has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of reckonable years of service credited for identical transferred capital amounts. Depending on age and pension scheme (OPS or NPS), the revised coefficients represent reductions ranging from approximately 10% to as much as 73% compared with the previously applicable values.

By way of illustration, a 34-year-old staff member who previously would have received six years of reckonable service from a given transferred capital now receives only around four years under the new coefficients. This constitutes a material devaluation of transferred pension rights.

The Staff Representation considers that this measure will primarily and unfairly disadvantage newer colleagues, younger staff, and prospective employees currently in the process of transferring pension rights to the EPO. It therefore risks undermining both the attractiveness of the Organisation as an employer and the principle of intergenerational fairness within the pension system.

In addition, since colleagues have no control over the actual date of transfer of the funds, a staff member cannot know whether their transferred funds will arrive at the EPO before or after the date of entry into force of the new coefficients, proposed to be 1 January 2027. Furthermore, the transfer cannot be reversed, leaving colleagues in a position where they are unable to make an informed decision.

Another consideration is that as of 1 January 2027, a new salary adjustment procedure will be in place. The proposals made by the administration so far include a lowered long-term actuarial assumption for the growth/reduction in salaries. Should the assumption indeed change, this would have an impact on the calculated actuarially neutral coefficients, meaning the ones calculated would already be out-dated.

We recall that in the past, the administration has chosen, for policy reasons, not to implement certain actuarially neutral coefficients proposed by the actuarial advisory group, specifically in relation to early retirement provisions.

In light of the many issues raised here, including the cumulative and unequal impact of recent changes on younger staff members, the Staff Representation calls on the administration to adopt a similar policy-based approach in this instance and to refrain from implementing the revised transfer-

in coefficients. We recommend that the currently applicable coefficients remain in force until a broader and more balanced review of the pension system has been conducted in consultation with staff representatives.

Opinion of the members of the General Consultative Committee nominated by the Central Staff Committee

Comments regarding

GCC/DOC 03/2026 “Office-wide organisational adjustments 2026 - stream 2”

Continuous changes in organisational structures can negatively impact staff by creating confusion, stress, fatigue and resistance, leading to decreased productivity and lower morale. Disruption is also a technique and often used as a management strategy. The CSC members of the GCC often expressed concern about the negative impact on staff and plead, as already mentioned several times, for consolidation.

Referring to the administration’s introduction about the consultation of the staff affected, the CSC members of the GCC received feedback from concerned staff that they are rather informed than consulted.

On DG0

Management practice across the Office appears to favour breadth in some areas and depth in others. In DG1 operational teams continue to grow, with team managers overseeing approximately 30 staff and directors managing 200-300 staff. While elsewhere, like now in DG0 small teams are consolidated and rewarded with an additional director level layer. Lean management for some, more career opportunities for others. This questions about overall organisational coherence.

On DG4

The proposal to place the Chief Sustainability Officer directly under the hierarchy of VP4 reflects a view of sustainability as primarily operational. The one who “controls” sustainability projects now is positioned within the same DG? This represents a departure from an independent CSO role. The CSC members of the GCC would rather position the CSO alongside the President.

The CSC members of the GCC question the rationale for this shift, and how it would support the organisation-wide nature of sustainability.

Finally, on DG5

Comparing the reorganisation approach from three years ago with this round. the CSC members of the GCC observe an inconsistent approach. The earlier concept replaced European and International Co-operation directorates with a regional-desk model, while this year reintroduces a functional directorate-based structure. The CSC members of the GCC question what challenges or shortcomings in the last reorganisation have led to the decision to change direction so substantially again.

On a positive note: director posts in Finance (DG4) and Employment law (DG0) are open to all staff of JGs 3-6, resulting in proper career opportunities for staff which was not the case for FO job alternatives.

The CSC members of the GCC