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# Report on a meeting with members of the Working Group Career

## Summary

Shortly after the [recent CSC publication](#) about our endeavours to get the administration to solve the problems of the existing career before starting to design a new one, Ms Bergot sent us an invitation to a 2 hours VICO on 20 February. The timing of her invitation was probably a coincidence. There were three points on the agenda: Benchmark with other International Organisations; Career project: status up-date; Team leader project. We know that staff are interested in their future career, and that there are frightening rumours about the nature of the planned "new career", so, despite not having the required documents, we agreed to attend the meeting to show our willingness to cooperate.

## Benchmark with other International Organisations (IOs)

We sent several reminders that we needed documents to prepare the meeting, notably the two studies that we know to exist (the benchmark study with other IOs and the Deloitte study). We had only received shortly before the meeting one document described as "an analysis of a benchmark study carried out in my department". Requests for the original studies have been pointedly and persistently ignored. Once again we asked at the beginning of the meeting for the documents and studies that have been available to the management representatives in the working group since last October. At the end of the meeting, **the management eventually agreed that a matrix of the answers provided by the International Organisations surveyed would be provided for a future meeting.** However, PD4.3 still insists that **we will see the Deloitte study when a Deloitte's representative will present it to us in a future live meeting**, and not before, although it is available for several months, under the sole motive that we could misuse the information it contains. For now we remain with our question: what is there in it that they don't want us to see?

Will we be able to see not only the full study, but also the mandate and raw information given to Deloitte?

## Team leader project

We also received shortly before the meeting information on a pilot project for team leaders in examining directorates. It had already been published to all staff on the intranet, so we didn't really understand why management made such a show of sending it to us. In any case, most of the information on this project is available from the DG1 intranet page, including an interesting [presentation on the new career in DG1](#) that, of course, we had to retrieve by our own means. The pilot is underway, yet staff representatives were neither informed or consulted or involved in the preparation in any way and will not participate to the selection of candidates. So much for social democracy!

We used the opportunity given to us to meet in this "working group" to stress that such a project has already been tested in the recent past and massively rejected by

DG1 as not adapted to the specificities of DG1. We indicated that there were additional problems to be expected with the current new project, in that the “team leaders” will be asked to contribute to the reports of their colleagues and this will create massive conflicts of interest, within examining divisions, and within teams, since the principle of “charity begins at home” will obviously apply to the reports of the team “leaders” when they recommend their Director on how to report on others (and themselves) in the team. And not to mention the abuse that may/will result from the fact that they will be officially responsible for distributing the files, including their own. Bonjour l’ambiance dans les équipes!

We also pointed out that we hardly could see how this project, if implemented, could be motivating for the rest staff (who will not be chosen as team leader). Indeed, once nominated, these team leaders will be in a very privileged position to compete for an A5 posts, the other staff not having any experience as team leader having virtually no chance at all, contrary to the current system, to be considered for an A5 position. Our fears were backup by the statement of Karin Seegert that team leaders would a priori stay in place until they (hypothetically) decide to resign or the management decides to replace them for whatever reason. But the idea was not to have a regular rotation of the team leaders, so that, once nominated as “jeune cadre dynamique”, the 300 happy few will block any career perspective for the rest of the staff over years, if not decades.

We indicated that we are also extremely worried that “Team leaders” will be provided with confidential data, in violation of the Data Protection Guidelines. Even if they will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement, we believe this is insufficient, especially to protect them should any problem arise in future. We know from what is currently happening to our elected staff representatives that the President will threaten staff members with severe disciplinary measures, if he decides that a

certain action constitutes a breach of the Data Protection Guidelines.

**We were told that the Staff Committee is invited to appoint a coordinator for the pilot project.** We welcomed the idea since it is better late than never and little than nothing. However, we stressed that the President should clarify whether the Staff Committee should appoint an elected person and whether this person could follow the whole project, because this will be contrary to the principles of the “social democracy” under which the very concept of appointees disappears and elected staff representatives will have to do truly everything, even when they do not feel competent. We therefore expect the President to clarify the conditions under which this appointed person will be able to function through the whole pilot project, should the social democracy project be implemented. We raised the same questions for our very group. If the President is really serious about consultation, of which we have little evidence so far, he should accept that the CSC has appointed the best experts for that job. He should therefore let all working groups finish their work under the current composition, unless some changes are proposed by the newly elected people themselves. Obviously, the new elected members will not be expert in all subjects. Furthermore, meaningful involvement on a subject of such a complexity as the career system should imply many meetings and many discussions in 2014 and not a 2 hours VICO every four months to tell us what management has already decided. We therefore expect the CSC to ask for clarifications on the conditions of this group’s functioning and on the role and function of the coordinator to be appointed to the “Team Leaders” pilot project, before appointing somebody, just to find out that after a few months, he/she would not be able to continue exercising this function.

## Career project: status update

Management refused to discuss in this meeting the questions we wanted to discuss under this agenda point, ie,

- 1- status of promotions to A5 (historical data from 2000 per year and per DG) and perspective for 2014 and 2015 (number of posts which will be included in the budget and number of expected retirements per DG);
- 2- status of promotions A3-A4 and A4-A4(2) after the 2013 exercise;
- 3- expected promotions in 2014; possible impact of budgetary limitations on promotions to A3-A4 , A4-A4(2) and in the B1-B5 and C1/C5 careers in 2014;
- 4- budgetary principles for a new career, where we claim the same budgetary impact as in the current career without ceilings;
- 5- transitional measures to ensure that the principle in point 4 above will be implemented and that currently acquired merit and experience will be preserved;
- 6- discussion on general principles that should guide any new career especially in view of the needs of DG1, where 88% of A-grade staff work and will work in future.

We were told that the project will extend beyond the 1 January 2015. This should already be obvious from the fact that the pilot on team leaders will run until 31 March 2015 (if it is a real pilot?). We stressed that if the new career is not ready by the end of 2014, it means that the current demographic problems will only be exacerbated by the decision taken by VP1 to drastically reduce the number of Director Posts in DG1, and not replacing those retiring. We therefore insisted that the questions we have raised as to the promotions expectations for 2014 become even more acute when the provisional decisions taken by the President and VP1 are making the problem worse (a freeze in appointments to director in DG1 means more pressure on the existing A4 and A4(2) quotas). Eventually, **it was agreed during the meeting that a discussion on measures planned for 2014 will take place in a next meeting and that some numbers on expected promotions in 2014 would be provided to the group for this next meeting.**

## Conclusion

We are convinced that staff will agree with us that:

- a working group where only some of the members have documents is a not working group;
- being invited to meetings without preparatory documents or proposals to be considered is not involvement;
- consultation after the fact for projects which have already been launched is not consultation.

It is important to know that significant and far reaching proposals are already far into the pipeline for implementation without any staff representative having been informed, far less consulted and that the social democracy project is already interfering with a proper functioning of the staff representation even before being implemented.

We have strong suspicions that the administration is trying to use spurious studies and so called "benchmarking" with organisations that do not generate their own income and are nothing like ours in size and type to force through measures which have been decided

before any discussions were started. This would be extremely bad faith.

In all management documents/presentations outlining the rough solutions to self-defined problems, we notice a blunt absence of any arguments let alone logical deductions for the proposed solutions.

We have no evidence yet that top Management would have grasped that the necessary elements of seniority and performance are already included in our current career system, which is the result of a delicate balance after long true discussions and an agreement between the Staff Representation and the then President in 2002. Worse, this new career could be implemented along with a management by fear, isolation and punishment, as is apparent from the document called "[challenging people](#)" available on DG1 intranet site. It might also include additional "features" only aiming at reinforcing the absolute power of the President, like the idea of getting rid of the promotion boards, one the best functioning bodies in the EPO and a guarantee of fairness. Abolishing the promotion boards has indeed one big advantage ... for the President. He could promote his "protégés" when he wants disregarding any performance criteria.

However, for the first time, in this meeting we noticed a certain opening towards dialogue and a few promises were made (see bold above), which, if kept, would indicate a change of attitude in management towards the demands of the staff representatives in the working group. However, we do not yet have a time frame for future meetings and still have to wait and see whether the working group can become fully functional. Only when we are given the information and time necessary to work on an equal footing with management in the design of our own career we will be able to start regaining some trust in a President who, so far, has only tried to silence both staff and your representatives (see [communiqué 50](#)).

The members of WG career appointed by the CSC