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Seventeen measures for staff and for the EPO

Summary:

The President is about to communicate 17 measures emanating from the ([in our opinion heavily distorted](#)) [financial study](#). After 8 years of Battistelli's presidency and 14 months of Campinos' presidency, both with the same administration, we feel it is now time to implement a basket of the following seventeen measures to restore staff's trust and engagement and ensure long-term financial health.

We welcome all your comments.

Production pressure and quality

1. Set production objectives at a healthy and sustainable level to [ensure that the quality of granted patents returns to the level which made the reputation of the EPO](#).

Permanent employment / temporary contracts

2. Amend immediately the policy of recruiting new colleagues on 5-year contracts. The EPO is rapidly becoming unattractive, especially for examiner positions.
3. Amend further recruitment conditions by [fair recognition of PhD](#) and of professional experience in general.

New Career System

4. Introduce measures for a viable transition from the old career system to the new one ([sc19095cl](#), page 4: "Input by the CSC on transitional measures") by including a budget earmarked for transition measures in the 2020 draft budget.
5. Redesign the current system professionally and calibrate it to provide a motivating average career ([sc19095cl](#), pages 6-27: "Input by the CSC on transitional measures"), ensuring staff engagement over their whole career. An appropriate annual budget for pensionable rewards must be made available reliably from now on.

Sickness and Invalidation Scheme

6. Amend the sickness and incapacity scheme to reintroduce invalidity pensions and invalidity insurance.

7. Put an end to the pernicious house arrests and restore freedom of movement for sick and incapacitated staff.

Pension system(s)

8. [Amend the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities \(PPI\)](#) to align it with the Protocol of all EU institutions and agencies to introduce an internal tax on pension, also with a view to addressing the current huge benefits for the host countries (DE, NL), which apparently is tolerated by the other member states. Gather all staff in a unified Defined Benefit (DB) scheme again, as in the EU or in the UN agencies.
9. Provide appropriate transitional/implementation measures for any proposed change within the timeframe to which the President already committed (i.e. no application before 1 January 2021) after consulting both SUEPO and the CSC.

Salary adjustment procedure

10. Maintain from 1 July 2020 the recognised principles of parity of purchasing power and parallelism of evolution for staff and pensioners alike (letter of the CSC: "[Review of the salary adjustment procedure](#)").
11. [Solve past litigation](#) (estimated one-off cost of 12–13 million Euros, subject to minor variation if the moderation clause cuts in this year).

Adjustment of procedural fees

12. Maintain the regular inflation-based fee adjustment in the form of the biennial increase, the importance of which was acknowledged by the Administrative Council ([CA 25/19](#), page 3, par. 1).

Functioning of the Staff Committees

13. [Urgently provide sufficient resources](#) to the Staff Committees and solve the disciplinary cases of former nominees in the Appeal Committee who were unfairly downgraded.
14. Provide Staff Committees with appropriate means and competences to remove the hindrances introduced by the Social Democracy reform. Re-establish their meaningful involvement in all statutory bodies.

Social dialogue

15. Re-establish social dialogue by properly organising consultations with capable interlocutors having the Organisation's success at heart, a mandate to make progress in discussions and the background and knowledge of the situation in well-functioning international organisations.

Relation with Staff Unions

16. [Acknowledge the political nature](#) of the disciplinary cases of union officials and settle them amicably once and for all.
17. Work jointly on a meaningful framework agreement with the unions recognising them as a negotiation partner, recognise the European Social Charter and [amend strike regulations](#), discontinue censorship on emails to all staff, etc.

Conclusion:

Budget and numbers are relevant but cannot be the only drivers of this Office. Staff members aren't numbers. They do not only present unit cost, but benefit as a motivated, competent entity. The focus must be on creating a climate in which staff can concentrate on doing good work that is appreciated by the public and the Office alike. Solid work requires appropriate recognition. If the focus changes, the EPO will once again become an attractive employer and the guarantor of valid patents serving the interest of society.

SUEPO Central