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HR & IM departments: double standards when dealing with managerial "achievement"

Dear SUEPO member, dear colleague,

IT department: swift and radical action

The role of the Office's IT department is to provide tools and services that help staff to work efficiently. Now it is undergoing a profound reorganisation. There is no doubt that the managerial performance of the IT department has not impressed Mr Campinos, particularly with respect to the implementation of the so-called "IT Roadmap" launched by Mr Battistelli. It was supposed to revolutionise our IT system ¹ and boost EPO productivity ². Nothing of the kind happened, in spite of 250m€ having been spent over a period of six years.

Already before taking office on 1 July 2018, Mr Campinos was convinced that many changes would be necessary in IM. Shortly after his arrival he commissioned an audit of the IT department by a consultant, which delivered a critical [report](#). Since then, a quick and radical reorganisation is taking place: the former CIO has been relieved from his managerial responsibilities and has become adviser to the new VP4. Ms Simon ³ herself was acting as CIO until 27 March, when a new CIO and CTO ⁴ were appointed. Both of them, like VP4, are former colleagues of Mr Campinos at the EUIPO. A brand new structure is being set up: 25 director posts are suppressed, and 6 new director posts are created. Things are moving very fast and drastic changes are being implemented with little regard for "casualties at managerial level".

HR department: no change

HR is supposed to ensure that the right amount of properly skilled and motivated people can work in conditions in which they can perform at their best. Most of us are in no doubt that this is not the case. Yet no audit of the HR department has been launched or is even planned ⁵. Nothing is happening in the highest echelons of HR. This is quite surprising, considering the record of performance of this department in the recent years. Let us look at a few "achievements" of HR in the past five years:

¹ The most recent event is the [official closure of the e-dossier](#) by the Campinos administration.

² Everyone working in DG1 knows that the huge productivity gains over the past years have been made at the expense of time spent on files and quality, and are not due in to any improvement of the tools.

³ There is little doubt that the new VP4 has been hired to take care mostly – if not exclusively – of the IT department (now renamed Business Information Technology or "BIT"). Indeed Mr Campinos has made it clear on several occasions that **he** is in charge of the social dialogue and of HR, and that VP4 should be left to concentrate on IT.

⁴ Chief Information Officer and Chief Technology Officer, cf. [VP4 announcement](#).

⁵ In fact it is rather surprising that the Staff Survey was launched without having audited beforehand the HR department.

- Social monologue institutionalised in a new framework called "social democracy" where perfunctory consultation is used as a fig leaf for social dialogue, and inability to listen to genuine staff concerns demonstrated on every possible occasion ⁶;
- A new career system that has proven to be a litigation generator ⁷ and a motivation killer, in particular for its arbitrariness and discrimination, like for (pregnant) women and part-timers, and is directly responsible for the continuous drop in quality of EPO's work;
- An unacceptable way of treating sick colleagues, e.g. dismissing them while on sick leave or alleging unauthorised absence during an authorised cure, which has been castigated by the ATILO ⁸;
- The witch-hunt against elected staff representatives and union officials which culminated in the dismissal of three staff representatives and union officials and the severe downgrading of another one in 2016, decisions which the Tribunal invalidated (for three of them, the fourth case of Laurent Prunier still pending before the ATILO);
- A sharp increase in stress related diseases in recent years, e.g. burn outs; a staff morale approaching rock bottom; a Titanic feeling in the Office that has already translated into the decrease of the average retirement age over the past 4 years (from 63.4 in 2015 to 60 today);
- Significant reputation damage for our organisation in the public.

Mr Campinos knows all of this. Already before his arrival at the EPO, he must have informed himself and read public blogs and papers written by relevant stakeholders. In any event, after 9 months spent in the Office and after having met personally a thousand staff members, who often complained to him about HR, Mr Campinos is fully aware of the responsibility of HR (top) managers for the present disarray.

Double standards

Our President seems unperturbed by the contradiction, and remains unruffled by HR top management's "achievements". In fact, over the past 9 months our new President has *systematically* lent his support and protection to the highest echelons in HR, including its head, Ms Bergot, stating on several occasions that "*it is the policy which matters, not the people*".

It is difficult not to notice the obvious contradiction between such a statement concerning HR and the merciless managerial changes that the President is currently imposing on IM (now "BIT"). Double standards are applied: in BIT full speed reorganisation with change of (top) managers; in HR no change at all.

A disturbing question inevitably comes to mind: **WHY no change at all in HR?**

It appears that Mr Campinos has *compelling* reasons for not doing in HR what he is doing in IM, and for accepting to be seen by EPO staff and users as *de facto* endorsing all earlier devastating policies of his predecessor.

Or does Mr Campinos really believe he should not change a "winning team"? After all, this would be consistent with Mr Campinos' repeated praise of HR for having introduced at the EPO the career system he was dreaming of ⁹ when he was at the head of the EUIPO in Alicante.

⁶ Cf. also the recent [CSC open letter](#) concerning the Working Group performance management and its composition.

⁷ The number of colleagues having filed a "Request for Review" (RfR) to complain about decisions relating to career or rewards (in the framework of the New Career System) has gone from 200 in 2016 to 700 in 2017. Figures for 2018 have not been published, but we have reasons to believe that the number of requesters having filed a RfR on these topics has further increased in 2018.

⁸ See for instance judgements [3972](#), [4115](#) and [4117](#).

⁹ Mr Campinos made such statement several times in front of the CSC and during GCC meetings.

We doubt that his sympathy for Ms Bergot's policies or methods is sufficient to explain Mr Campinos' unfaltering support of PD43, considering the consequences this open support has on his image and the strong impression it gives – namely that Mr Battistelli is still running the Office through the trustees he placed in the house. Like our readers, we can only make assumptions about Mr Campinos' true reasons for changing nothing in HR. In any event the continued presidential support to HR top management does not bode well for social dialogue and the EPO's future.

Your SUEPO Committees of The Hague and Munich