



17 June 2019
su19030cp

To Strike or Not To Strike – That is the Question

Dear SUEPO members, dear colleagues,

Things have been moving fast these last weeks.

Triggered by the rather disappointing meeting with the President on 16 May, SUEPO Central submitted a [call for strike](#). Due to the EPO's rather special strike regulations (Circular No. 347) such swift action was necessary for planning a strike to coincide with the June-meeting of the Administrative Council.

This call for strike – and no doubt also the [letter from FICSA](#) and the [resolution](#) unanimously adopted at the recent USF Congress – seems to have focused senior management's minds. Earlier foot-dragging turned into several meetings being organised at short notice, culminating in a meeting with both CSC and SUEPO Central on Monday 3 June.

During this meeting the President showed understanding for several points. This resulted in some concrete commitments and limited progress, which we briefly discuss below. He furthermore committed to ensuring that sufficient time and meetings would be organized with Staff Representation on all issues covered by the call for strike.

As SUEPO Central prefers to negotiate, to sit around the table and to arrive at strong, negotiated solutions, those, admittedly small, steps gave rise to the SUEPO delegation agreeing to propose to General Assemblies at the different sites not to strike (for now). The SUEPO members agreed to that proposal during all of the four local GA's. Following these votes, SUEPO Central withdrew its call for strike on Wednesday 5 June.

As a result, the ballot was called off by the President.

Brief overview of the commitments/statements made by Mr Campinos, for each of the points mentioned in the call for strike, irrespective of how we actually assess them (e.g. positive, insufficient, negative):

1. Fair settlement for all SUEPO Officials/staff representatives abusively sanctioned by the Battistelli administration
 - The President intends to start a new approach (apparently involving an external mediator), addressing the open cases first. No commitment was made with respect to the consideration of the *status quo ante* or the necessity to find an urgent solution.

2. Fair reporting, instead of artificially underrating hundreds of colleagues "far below expectations"
 - [Communiqué was published](#) to reassure staff that an incompetence procedure is not automatically triggered by a "far below" assessment, but is and remains a highly exceptional procedure. Additionally, commitment to continuing meetings and negotiations with CSC and SUEPO to arrive at an unambiguous regulation on the implementation of Article 52 ServRegs.
3. Respect for staff instead of threat of incompetence procedures
 - See above + A dedicated meeting will be organised with VP1, geared specifically at production pressure and CQI.
4. Fair career progression for everyone, no managerial arbitrariness
 - Our proposal to align the 2019 budget envelope for *pensionable* rewards in the [Rewards Guidelines](#) (EUR 10.8m) to the one of about EUR 12.8m contained in [CA/D 1/18](#)¹ will not be followed. For next year the reward envelope will be re-evaluated.
 - The President stated that – from next year onwards – the presence of staff representatives in the Harmonisation Committee should no longer be taboo.
 - Putting into place transitional measures for the past from old to new career system: Staff representation was asked to table a proposal in writing.
5. People-oriented management, instead of management by fear
 - Confirmation by President that – unlike what has happened in the IT area (now "BIT") – there will be no change of management in HR ²
 - For the CSC Technologia Staff Survey ([4th edition](#) – planned for autumn 2019) there will be support to run it on office channels, the technicalities are to be discussed directly with the CIO.
 - Additional statistical data on the implementation of the career system will be provided
 - President will consider whether staff matters should feature more prominently in his Strategic Plan
6. Fair assessment of the financial situation, no pension reform based on a heavily biased study
 - The President [published his commitment](#) not to trick staff with a sudden launch of a pension reform, should one be needed. This will be done i.a. by changing the notice period for requesting retirement from 6 months to 3 months during the relevant period in 2020, and foreseeing appropriate transitional measures. Note that the President aims at an AC decision in June 2020 with effect from 1 January 2021. From our point of view the actual financial status of the EPO³ does not warrant fundamental and detrimental reforms.

¹ Cf. page 165.

² Such double standard is mind-boggling. We draw your attention to our earlier publication [sc19014cp](#) titled: "HR & IM departments: double standards when dealing with managerial achievement".

³ We share the position of the CSC published in their various papers titled "The Financial Study: Yet Another Hoax", see [sc19070cp](#), [sc19071cp](#), [sc17076cp](#), [sc17081cp](#).

7. Fair salary and pension adjustment procedure for the coming years, no erosion of purchasing power
 - President stated that any future salary method should protect staff and pensioners from inflation.

We have seen deviations from what we understood to be commitments in the past. Some steps have been taken and some principle commitments made, but the devil is in the implementation-detail. We will all have to remain vigilant during the forthcoming period of meetings and negotiations. SUEPO will keep its members and staff alike informed of any progress made – or the lack thereof.

SUEPO Central