News Ways of Working

Back to square one
President’s promises

- «[w]e're approaching a critical point in the history of our organization [...] we can continue that journey as a true community of EPO professionals, regardless of where exactly or how we are working »

  Mr Campinos, « Shaping our future» Communiqué 14 September 2020

- « Don’t worry. You can move to Düsseldorf or Spain with your family and buy a house there. »

  Mr Campinos in Team Meetings
President’s promises

- October 2020: « Shaping the New Normal survey » results

Please indicate the working pattern that you think would best suit your personal circumstances

- 30% Full telework (away or partly away from PoE)
- 23% Moderate telework (3-4 days)
- 23% Light telework (1-2 days)
- 22% Office based (fully and mainly)
President’s promises

- March 2021: **Draft** « Towards a New Normal »

  - « temporary guidelines in place for all staff since March 2020 [...] are not suitable for providing adequate guidance, clarity and certainty for either individual staff members or the Office in the long term » (p. 10)

  - « staff of the EPO need to have clarity as soon as possible on the potential for more extensive teleworking. » (p. 16 of **CA/38/21**)

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Staff committee
President’s promises vs The results

- June 2021: « Towards a New Normal »(CA/38/21)

![Pie chart showing different percentages of telework options]

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  - 22% Moderate telework (3-4 days)
  - 23% Light telework (1-2 days)
  - 30% Office based (fully and mainly)
President’s promises vs The results

- December 2021: « New Ways of Working » consultation (CA/77/21)
  - Three-year pilot scheme with review in 2025
  - Legal assessments in particular on national income taxation and residence are not provided to the staff representation
  - Abolition of accrual of flexi-hours (flextime) as first step towards a “Review of Leave” in social agenda 2022: parental leave, family leave, sick leave (c.f. Mercer report)

“All aspects of leave will be addressed”

Mr Campinos in the GCC meeting of 9 December 2021
President’s promises vs The results

- December 2021: « New Ways of Working » (CA/77/21) consultation
President’s promises vs The results

- December 2021: « New Ways of Working » stopped by the Council
  - Tabled as « for opinion » and changed to « for information »
  - Major concerns from Member States
    - lack of clear legal basis Article 6 EPC, Article 55a ServRegs, PPI
    - three year pilot too long (reduction to two years or even six months)
    - risk of loss of sense of belonging: capitalizing on existing teams (newcomers?)
    - decentralization aspects vs International Office culture
    - too generous: reduction of compensation, benefits and allowances
    - unequal treatment among staff in application of Rules

Source: CSC publication of 21 January 2022, « New Ways of Working: Stopped by the Council »
What next?

- Emergency Guidelines until end of May 2022. Office premises accessible only for technical or well-being reasons at least until February 2022.

- New Normal remains controversial with potential to drift into a governance crisis and further attacks on staff working conditions

- Today, there is no certainty as to whether issues will be solved in the March or June 2022 Administrative Council meetings, or even later in the future.

- Review of Leave in 2022: *Take your leave before the Office takes it away from you!*

Thank you for your attention!