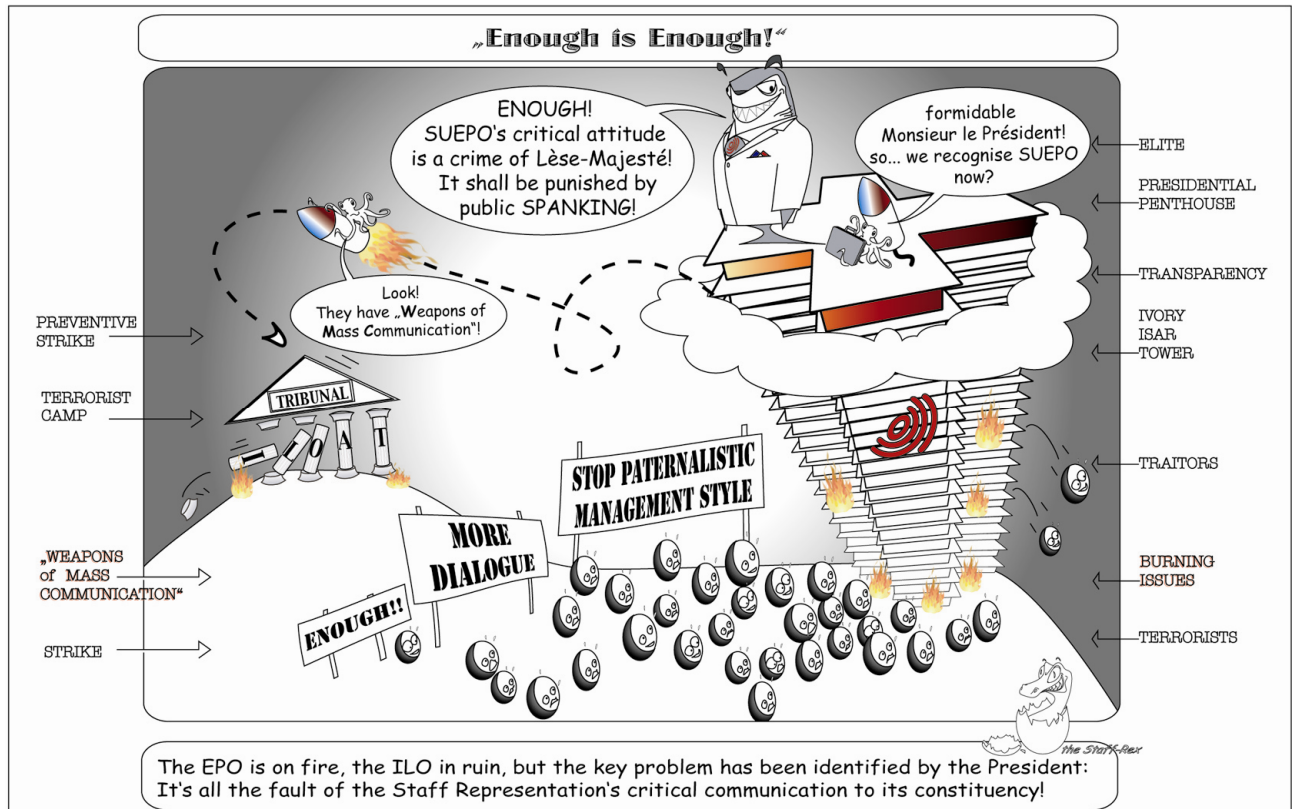




Communiqué No 26 - Translation into plain English



Original

It is unfortunately necessary to address you today on the subject of mass communication in the Office. With the sole exception of breaking the news about the adoption of the Unitary patent last December, I have consciously refrained from using mass mailing to address staff, because such direct contacts are intrusive and do not respect each one's freedom. Instead, communiqués (not more than 8 from the beginning of 2013) have been placed on the intranet for staff who are interested to read.

Staff representatives have chosen a different approach. No fewer than 79 texts of various descriptions, of which 56 from SUEPO, 15 from the CSC and 8 from Local Staff Committees, have been actively pushed to staff from beginning of 2013; in 4 months alone that means one text every 1.6 days.

"Plain English"

I have not sent many mails this year because I do not see the point in drawing your attention to what I am getting up to.

On the contrary, staff committees and SUEPO have been very active in keeping staff informed of important issues.

<u>Original</u>	<u>"Plain English"</u>
<p>This would, perhaps, be of minor importance were it not for the content of an increasing number of these texts. In many cases they are polemical and factually incorrect, which is regrettable. But with an increasing tendency, texts are published which contain vindictive personal attacks, which is unacceptable.</p>	<p><i>I would not mind too much if they were not making you aware of things I would rather keep secret.</i></p>
<p>It is not realistic, nor would it be helpful, for me to react publicly to every distortion or untruth. But to take just one example of the kind of disinformation now circulating, here are some hard facts about the respect of our legal procedures and nationalities of management appointments since July 2010: Some 37 managerial appointments to Director and Principal Director have been made. Six of the appointees have French nationality, the remaining 31 being divided between 11 German, 5 Dutch, 5 British, 3 Belgian, 2 Swedish, 1 Danish, 1 Finnish, 1 Italian, 1 Rumanian and 1 Spanish nationals. In each case I have followed the recommendation given by the selection boards and nominated the suitable person ranked first.</p>	<p><i>It is not my fault that the wife of my closest French collaborator is neither German, nor Dutch, nor British, nor Belgian, nor Swedish, nor Danish, nor Finnish, nor Italian, nor Romanian. What has this to do with nepotism?</i></p>
<p>Misuse of mass communication by staff representatives has a long history at the EPO. Founding father and first President of the Office Bob van Benthem found it necessary in his departing address, given in March 1985, to criticise the "negative publishing of the trade union".</p>	<p><i>If it wasn't for staff representatives telling staff what is really going on, management's life would be a lot easier at the EPO.</i></p>
<p>In the meantime, our Office has grown and matured. Indeed, it has seldom been in such a good position as it is today; its finances are strong, its performance solid, its reputation and standing reinforced, its economic and social package has never been so high. With our strategies and roadmaps solidly supported by the Council and entrusted with the Unitary patent, we can look to the future with confidence.</p>	<p><i>The Office is doing brilliantly. Obviously this is all due to your current President and his careful, wise and inspired guidance of the Office.</i></p>
<p>After 40 years it is high time to apply modern European principles to internal discourse as it is practised at the EPO. That is why I will shortly be setting out rules on mass communication which will provide means to staff representatives as well as helping to ensure minimum standards of respect and decency. Sometimes enough really is enough.</p>	<p><i>It is time we dump these outdated ideas of free speech and staff dignity.</i></p>
<p>Naturally, I and the senior management team remain open for constructive dialogue with staff representatives. I look forward to my next meeting with the Central Staff Committee, which will take place on 16 May and for which I have proposed an agenda including our current social issues.</p>	<p><i>We (= me; yes I intentionally use the royal "we") are happy to sit down and have the staff representatives agree with us (=me) on everything and not criticise.</i></p> <p><i>Affectionately yours,</i></p> <p><i>Your President so committed to staff well-being, transparency and social dialogue.</i></p> <p><i>PS: keep reading the Gazette, you will find plenty of pictures of my royal self</i></p>
