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Central Staff Committee
Comité central du personnel
Zentraler Personalausschuss

23 September 2013
SC13128cp

REBUTTAL OF COMMUNIQUE 37

The President does not "agree", nor does he "negotiate", or even "consult" - he merely tells

Dear colleagues,

In his communiqué 37 the President reported on "constructive discussions" with the CSC.

We disagree. There is **NO** progress on **any** of the topics of interest for staff, only further threats on their representatives. In fact, it was so bad, that **the CSC had to walk out**.

Point 1: Management Agenda

Most of the speaking time of management was dedicated to:

a) introduce decisions already made by the President, or partly implemented like the sickness control measures ("wellbeing" batch one)

b) introduce decisions to be implemented soon (documents already sent to the GAC without any prior discussion with the CSC), in particular;
   - an increase of staff's contributions to the healthcare insurance by 0.24%
   - an increase of staff's contribution to the pension scheme by 0.4%,

   resulting in a net 0.64% salary cut from 1 January 2014

c) proclaim the introduction of individual 2013 performance related bonus.

We provided our critical feedback, and protested against:

- further penalisation of staff under the NPS,
- the President's intention to not to reintegrate our post-2008 colleagues in the single DB system enjoyed by older staff,
- the refusal to seriously consider detailed proposals made by the Staff Representation to solve these issues.

Our comments fell on deaf ears.

Point 2: Promotions

From our side, we also addressed the issue of promotions, and complained that management is not willing to see the scope of the problem, in particular for 2014, where about 90% of the promotions to A4 and A4(2) will be blocked if the President does not act now to adapt the 2014 budgetary limits.

The President responded that this is "*the price to pay to build a new career system*", which he claims has reached its limits. (It is worth remembering here that the President did not feel bound by any limit when he rewarded the merit of a close collaborator, by appointing her from A3 to A6 after only two years of presence in the EPO.)

We warned management that not fulfilling the legitimate expectation of hundreds of staff having made substantial efforts during many years would lead to stalling the "production engine" of DG1 in the very near future.

Mr. Battistelli closed this point by threatening that he will force a new career on EPO staff with or without the participation of the Staff Representation.

Point 3: "Social Democracy"

The President and PD4.3 turned then to the topic of "Social Democracy".

We reiterated our position (already set out in our letter of 18 September): we will not discuss any change to the statutory framework of the Staff Committee before

- disciplinary threats on staff and their representatives are removed,
- communication with staff is fully re-established, and
- unlawful limitations on the freedom of association are removed,

as these measures are neither social nor democratic.

Mr Battistelli said that he was not ready to do any of the above. In consequence, we left the room.

While we were leaving the President issued a thinly veiled threat to the staff representatives, reminding them they are not immune and must follow the EPO rules.

Conclusions

The CSC was summoned to a meeting. We set specific preconditions for discussion. Although they were not met, we attended the meeting to hear what the President had to say. Our worst fears materialised.

For as long as Mr Battistelli behaves like an autocrat, it is pointless to discuss, and for the CSC to attend such meetings with the President. We do not want to aid and abet yet another fake consultation, the result of which will be the removal of the last vestiges of statutory consultation in this Office.

During the past 18 months we have witnessed the introduction of

- intrusive Investigation Guidelines,
- contempt for Internal Appeal Committee's recommendations,
- censorship,
- attacks on freedom of association,
- curtailment of strike rights,
- threats to hundreds of staff.

The next move of the President, a drastic reform (should we say neutralisation?) of the Staff Representation may well be the "final touch" he needs to firmly install in the EPO "Social Democracy" à la Battistelli.

The Central Staff Committee