

# European Patent Office

Your voice, our future: The EPO Staff Engagement Survey

Results Presentation

April 2019



# Agenda

- 1 Key facts and key results**
- 2 Overall results and trends**
- 3 Internal overviews**
- 4 Key messages**
- 5 Comments analysis**
- 6 Next steps**



# Key facts and key results

# Survey background



## OBJECTIVES

- **Establish a baseline** to measure progress as the new EPO strategy is rolled out from summer 2019 onwards.
- Give EPO staff a chance to **have their say** at an important time for the Office.
- **Compare results** with relevant external benchmarks: WTW's Europe Norm\* and Professional Services Norm\*\*



## QUESTIONNAIRE

- 62 questions and 13 categories.
- 7 questions were added for BoA, plus 2 additional comments questions.
- **Segmentation** by DG, job family, part-time status, length of service and other variables to create a rich internal data source.



## ADMINISTRATION PERIOD

- The staff survey was administered to **all employees** from the **31<sup>st</sup> January to 28<sup>th</sup> February**.
- **6645 employees** were invited to participate in the survey.
- **Online** administration in **3 languages** (English, French and German)



## RESPONSE RATES

- **85% of employees (5675)** took the opportunity to express their opinion.
- This is a **strong response rate** providing reliable and representative data.

\* WTW Europe Norm - Comprises 360 companies and 2.028.911 employees.

\*\* WTW Professional Services Norm – Comprises 23 companies and 187,296 employees.

# Key results

## High Participation

- 85% response rate shows that staff were keen to take the opportunity to express their views.

## Views on Remuneration and Well-being are positive compared to external benchmarks:

- Staff recognise that their pay and benefits are competitive. Views are also positive about issues impacting staff well-being (e.g. work schedule flexibility, workload/staffing, manager care for staff well-being).

## Results are below external benchmarks on all other categories:

- Views are furthest below benchmarks on aspects of management effectiveness, with low confidence in senior management decisions, lack of clarity about direction, and insufficient contact between senior management and staff.
- Concerns are high about the Office's commitment to quality, and about its reputation and service focus.
- The majority of staff have autonomy to do their work, but far fewer think it is safe to speak up, or feel encouraged to contribute new ideas. There is little evidence of a 'continuous improvement culture' in the Office.

## The EPO faces significant engagement challenges:

- Only two thirds say that they are proud to work at the Office, and four in ten say they face substantial obstacles to doing their job well.
- Opportunity for Personal Development is the strongest driver of Engagement in the EPO.

## There are variations by DG:

- Results in DG1 are lower than in other DGs.
- DG1 represents 77% of the total Office data and so has a major impact on the overall results. However results in all DGs are generally below external benchmark levels, which indicates that there is clear room for improvement across the Office.




# Overall Results and Trends


## EPO overall results compared to external norms

Results trail the external norms by 11 to 40 percentage points for all categories except Remuneration and Well-Being, which are significantly more positive. Scores are furthest below norms for questions about Management.

	Total Favourable Score	Europe Norm (147,345)	Professional Services Norm (138,415)
Agile Culture	52	-20*	-13*
Communication	35	-28*	-29*
Empowerment	50	-24*	-19*
External Reputation	50	-30*	n/a
Inclusion and Diversity	51	-26*	-37*
Line Management	64	-12*	-11*
Management	23	-37*	-40*
Remuneration	57	10*	18*
Service Focus	44	-27*	-28*
Sustainable Engagement	63	-15*	-16*
Training & Talent Development	55	-15*	-20*
Well-Being	70	7*	6*
Working Effectiveness	42	-30*	n/a

WTW Europe Norm - Comprises 360 companies and 2,028,911 employees.  
WTW Professional Services Norm – Comprises 23 companies and 187,296 employees

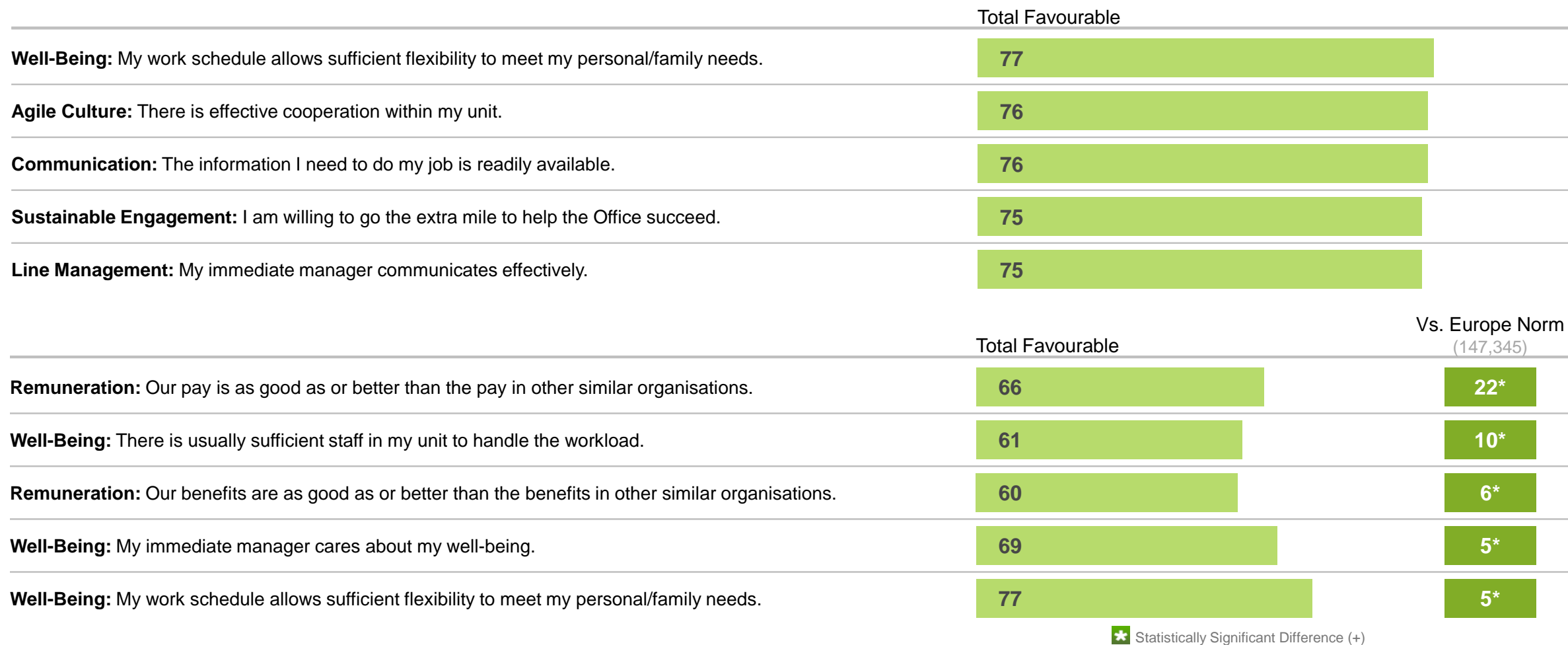
 Statistically Significant Difference (+)

 Statistically Significant Difference (-)

## The positives: Five top scoring questions and five strongest vs. norm

Ability to balance work and personal/family needs is most appreciated feature of working at the EPO.

Compared to other organisations in Europe, EPO staff are more positive on pay, benefits and aspects of well-being.





## Overall trends since 2011

Results have declined in the majority of categories since 2011. The largest declines relate to External Reputation and Management. An upward trend can be seen for Sustainable Engagement and Well-Being.

Chart shows category score trends 2011-2019, based on scores for questions used in both surveys

	Total Favourable Score	EPO Overall 2011 (4,907)
Agile Culture	52	-7*
Communication	35	-5*
Empowerment	50	n/a
External Reputation	50	-21*
Inclusion and Diversity	51	n/a
Line Management	64	-3*
Management	23	-14*
Remuneration	57	-6*
Service Focus	44	n/a
Sustainable Engagement	63	6*
Training & Talent Development	55	-7*
Well-Being	70	5*
Working Effectiveness	42	n/a

\* Statistically Significant Difference (+)

\* Statistically Significant Difference (-)

## Most/least improved results since 2011

Much clearer sense of identity with the mission of the Office, and efforts to encourage managers to pay closer attention to staff well-being have been successful. Major declines around quality, reputation, service focus, management/staff contact, and respect at work.

	Total Favourable	EPO Overall 2011 (4,907)
<b>Sustainable Engagement:</b> I believe strongly in the mission of the Office.	68	42*
<b>Well-Being:</b> My immediate manager cares about my well-being.	69	31*
<b>Agile Culture:</b> There is effective cooperation within my unit.	76	9*
<b>Line Management:</b> My immediate manager communicates effectively.	75	4*
<b>Sustainable Engagement:</b> I am willing to go the extra mile to help the Office succeed.	75	4*
<b>Working Effectiveness:</b> The Office's commitment to quality is apparent in what we do on a day-to-day basis.	30	-35*
<b>External Reputation:</b> The Office has established a good reputation for the quality of its services.	61	-26*
<b>Service Focus:</b> Our internal processes are geared towards providing the best possible service for our users (this includes applicants, parties, internal clients).	42	-25*
<b>Management:</b> There is sufficient contact between senior management (PD and above) of my DG /BoA Unit and staff.	19	-24*
<b>Inclusion and Diversity:</b> All staff are treated with respect here.	39	-23*

## Sustainable Engagement summary

Sustainable Engagement levels are below norms on all three components (Engaged, Enabled and Energised).

Fewer than two-thirds say they are proud to work at the Office, and four in ten say they face substantial obstacles to doing their job well.

		Sustainable Engagement	63%	% Fav	?	% Unfav	Europe norm	Prof Serv norm
* Engaged	I believe strongly in the mission of the Office.	68	18	14	-10*	-7*		
	I am proud to work at the Office.	65	16	20	-18*	-16*		
	I am willing to go the extra mile to help the Office succeed.	75	13	12	-13*	-13*		
⚙ Enabled	My unit is able to meet our work challenges effectively.	64	15	21	-16*	-19*		
	There are no substantial obstacles at work to doing my job well.	43	16	41	-19*	-22*		
💡 Energised	I am able to sustain the level of energy I need throughout the work day.	59	12	29	-19*	-17*		
	My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment.	64	12	24	-12*	-16*		



# Internal overviews

## Overview by DG: results compared to EPO overall

Scores are lower in DG1 and generally higher in other DGs and in BoA (except for External Reputation).

DG1 represents 77% of the total Office data and so has a major impact on the overall results.

Engagement levels are highest in DG4, and Empowerment levels are much higher in all of the smaller DGs than in DG1.

	EPO Overall 2019 (5,670)	DG0 2019 (88)	DG1 2019 (4370)	Boards of Appeal 2019 (179)	DG4 2019 (812)	DG5 2019 (216)
Agile Culture	61 <sup>1</sup>	8	-3*	17*	8*	10*
Communication	35	6	-1	2	5*	1
Empowerment	50	11*	-4*	13*	14*	11*
External Reputation	50	3	-1	-12*	5*	9*
Inclusion and Diversity	51	1	-2*	9*	9*	1
Line Management	64	-7	-2*	8*	10*	8*
Management	20 <sup>1</sup>	11*	-2*	7*	6*	3
Remuneration	57	-2	-3*	2	11*	10*
Service Focus	44	14*	-4*	4	14*	27*
Sustainable Engagement	63	10	-3*	3	10*	9*
Training & Talent Development	55	4	-2*	11*	9*	6
Well-Being	70	-5	0	-1	2	-3
Working Effectiveness	42	6	-1	3	4*	7*

<sup>1</sup> Category score recalculated to include only scores of questions that are common across all sub groups

## DG overall trends since 2011

The last staff survey took place 8 years ago which means historical comparisons have to be treated with caution. However opinions on external reputation have clearly declined across all DG's since 2011.

Trends on Agile Culture, Line Management, Management, and Training & Talent Development are mixed, whereas Sustainable Engagement is up.

	EPO Overall 2019 vs. 2011 5,670 vs. 4,907	DG0 2019 vs. 2011 88 vs. 129	DG1 2019 vs. 2011 4,430 vs. 3,083	Boards of Appeal 2019 vs. 2011 179 vs. 144	DG4 2019 vs. 2011 752 vs. 384	DG5 2019 vs. 2011 216 vs. 204
Agile Culture	-7*	8	-19*	6	0	2
Communication	-5*	0	-6*	-4	-5	-3
Empowerment	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
External Reputation	-21*	-20*	-24*	-32*	-13*	-11*
Inclusion and Diversity	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Line Management	-3*	-13	-7*	24*	7*	2
Management	-14*	0	-18*	16*	-9*	-13*
Remuneration	-6*	-9	-8*	-3	0	-6
Service Focus	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sustainable Engagement	6*	9	6*	2	9*	9*
Training & Talent Development	-7*	5	-7*	10	-4	1
Well-Being	5*	-1	5*	4	4	7
Working Effectiveness	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

## Job Family: results compared to EPO overall (1 of 2)

As in most organisations, more senior levels of the EPO are more positive. Team Manager perceptions of Management are notably more positive than in the EPO as a whole.

	EPO Overall 2019 (5,670)	Principal director (24)	Director (151)	Head of section (32)	Head of Department (90)	Lawyer (61)	FO Team manager (64)	Team manager (281)	Senior expert (73)
Agile Culture	68 <sup>1</sup>	17	5	13	16*	19*	28*	15*	0
Communication	35	35*	11*	9	3	-1	1	11*	-6
Empowerment	50	27*	6	22*	17*	5	14*	12*	-8
External Reputation	50	41*	25*	19*	6	2	14*	23*	-1
Inclusion and Diversity	51	24*	12*	9	6	-3	15*	22*	-9
Line Management	64	18	2	5	10	18*	15*	14*	-6
Management	20 <sup>1</sup>	59*	25*	14	5	9	24*	23*	0
Remuneration	57	17	20*	9	15*	6	10	15*	-4
Service Focus	44	34*	27*	31*	20*	27*	21*	21*	4
Sustainable Engagement	63	23*	15*	11	7	6	16*	19*	-1
Training & Talent Development	55	24*	8*	12	5	8	18*	24*	-1
Well-Being	70	1	1	-3	-5	0	10	10*	-6
Working Effectiveness	42	33*	17*	6	7	5	18*	19*	2

<sup>1</sup> Category score has been recalculated to include only scores of questions that are common across all sub groups

## Job Family: results compared to EPO overall (2 of 2)

As expected, the results pattern for Examiners is similar to that of DG1, and their views are significantly less positive than those of other job families.

	EPO Overall 2019 (5,670)	Expert (135)	Formalities officer (406)	Examiner (3291)	Administrator (396)	Administrative Board of appeal employee (528)	Board of appeal chairman (26)	Board of appeal member (112)
Agile Culture	68 <sup>1</sup>	6	10*	-7*	-2	9*	11	18*
Communication	35	5	2	-3*	0	7*	-7	0
Empowerment	50	16*	12*	-9*	6*	19*	18	7
External Reputation	50	6	3	-5*	6*	3	-15	-16*
Inclusion and Diversity	51	8	9*	-6*	3	9*	10	6
Line Management	64	15*	5*	-6*	1	13*	-16	10*
Management	20 <sup>1</sup>	1	4*	-7*	1	9*	14	-1
Remuneration	57	4	1	-6*	9*	8*	-5	1
Service Focus	44	16*	15*	-12*	8*	22*	5	-3
Sustainable Engagement	63	10*	7*	-7*	9*	12*	1	0
Training & Talent Development	55	14*	11*	-8*	5*	10*	12	6
Well-Being	70	4	1	-1	0	2	-16	2
Working Effectiveness	42	6	7*	-6*	-1	10*	-4	0

<sup>1</sup> Category score has been recalculated to include only scores of questions that are common across all sub groups



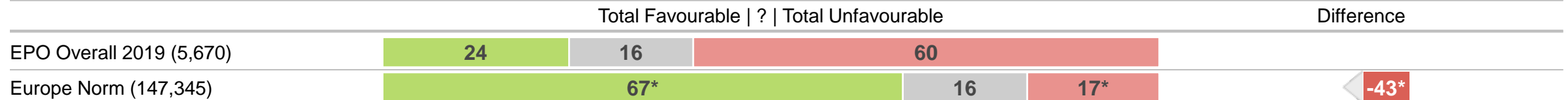


# Key Messages

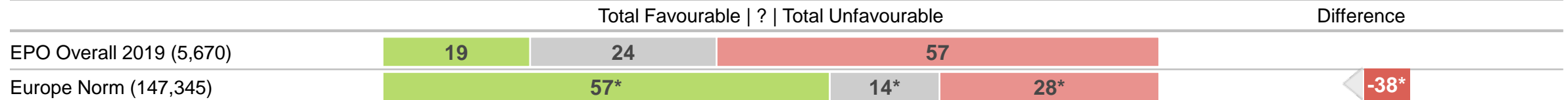
# Senior Management

There is a call for clear direction from senior management, and a need for closer contact between senior management and staff.

**14** Senior management (PD and above) provides a clear sense of direction.



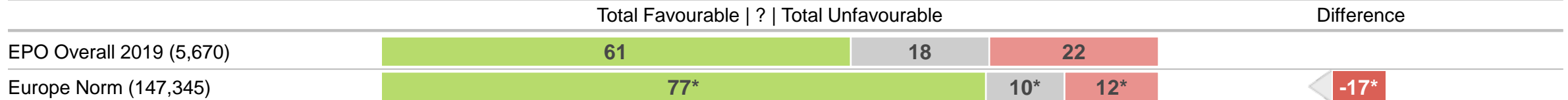
**57** There is sufficient contact between senior management (PD and above) of my DG /BoA Unit and staff.



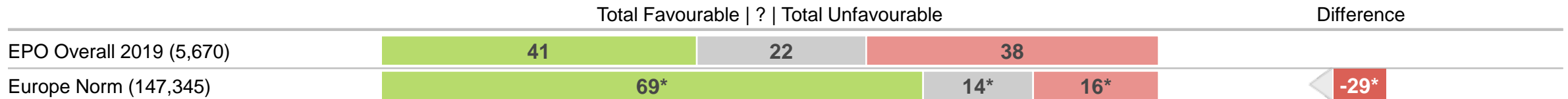
# Confidence in decisions

Building confidence in management decisions at all levels is crucial, but at senior management level most of all.

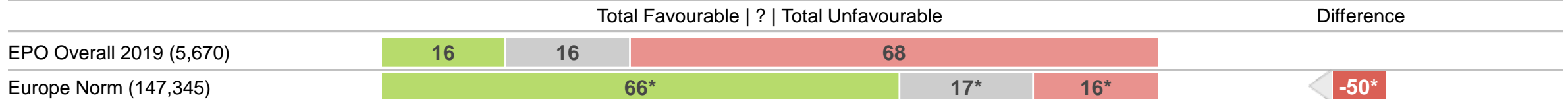
**49** I have confidence in the decisions made by my immediate manager.



**25** I have confidence in the decisions made by my director.

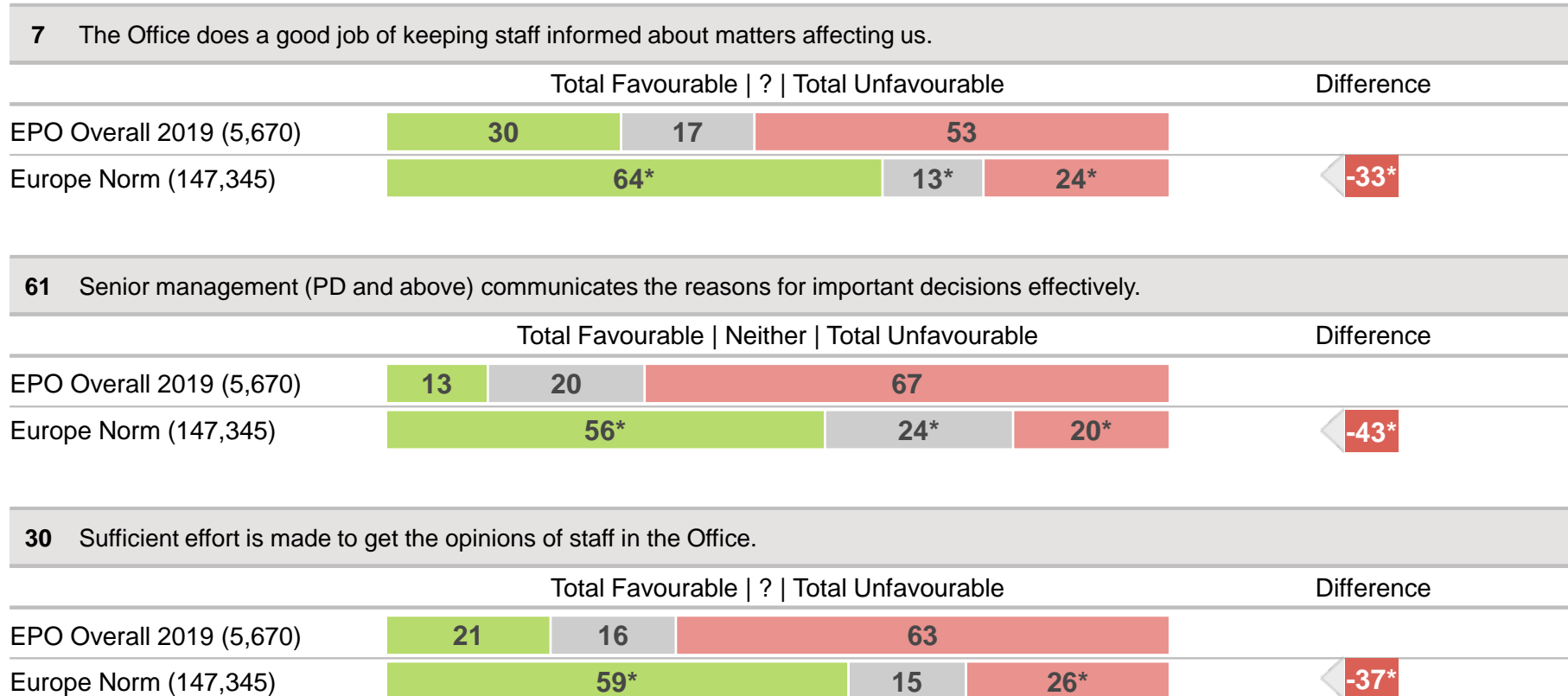


**40** I have confidence in the decisions made by senior management (PD and above).



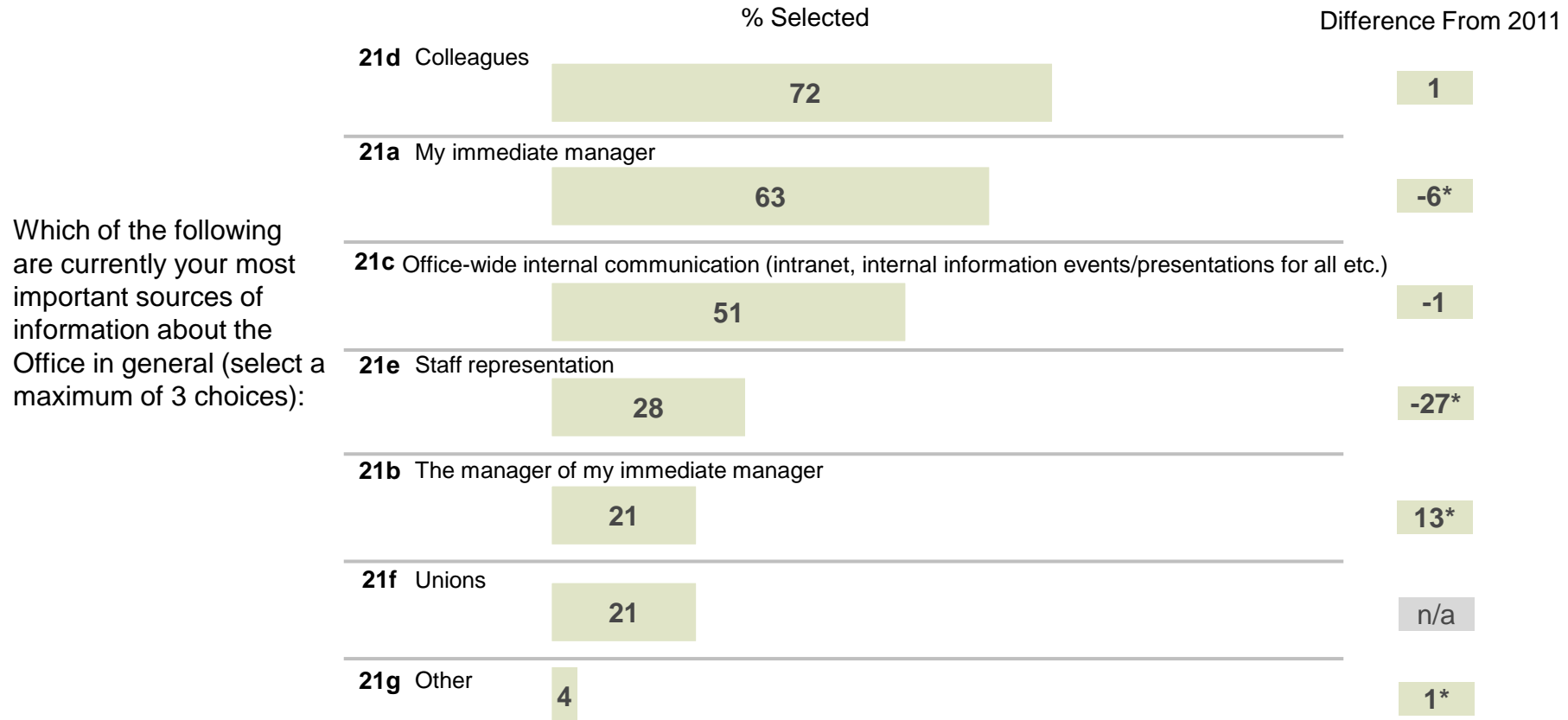
## Focus on Communication

Staff do not feel well informed about issues that affect them or about the reasons for important decisions, and upward feedback is not seen to be the 'norm'.



## Focus on Communication (2)

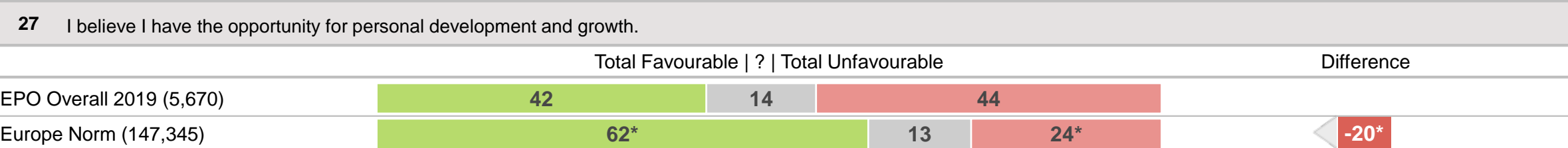
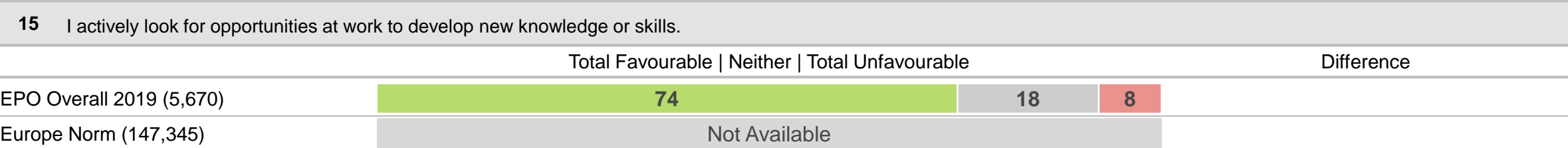
Colleagues, immediate managers and office-wide internal communication are the most important sources of communication. Staff Representation was selected much less often than in 2011, whereas managers of immediate managers play a more important role.



# Does this Office have a development culture?

Staff look for opportunities to develop, but many feel that these opportunities are not available.

*Having opportunities for personal development is the #1 key driver of Sustainable Engagement in the EPO and should therefore be a top priority for follow-up.*

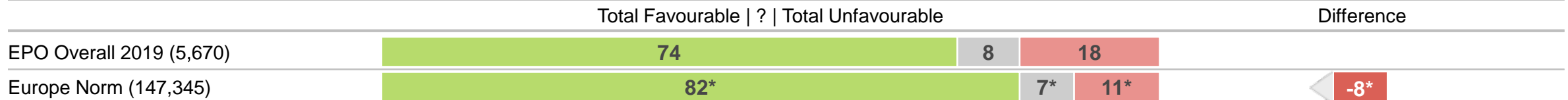


## Empowerment and Openness

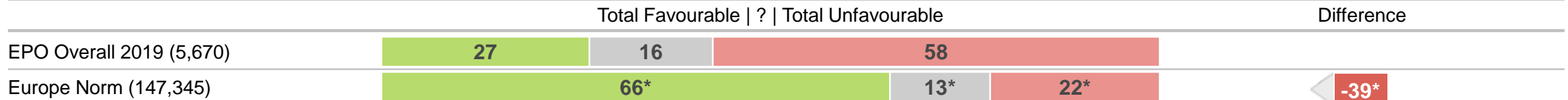
The majority have the autonomy to do their work, but far fewer feel it is safe to speak up or are encouraged to contribute ideas. There is little evidence of a 'continuous improvement culture' in the Office.

*Empowerment is also a key driver of Sustainable Engagement in the EPO and should also be a follow-up priority.*

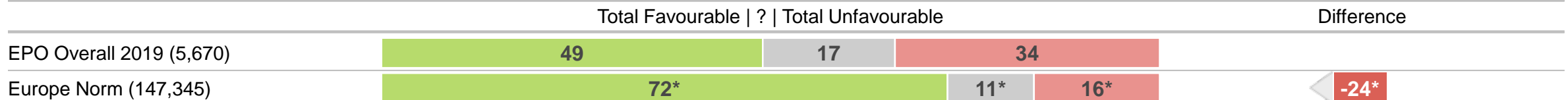
**51** I have sufficient autonomy to do my job well.



**56** It is safe to speak up at work.



**3** People in my unit are encouraged to come up with innovative solutions to work-related problems.

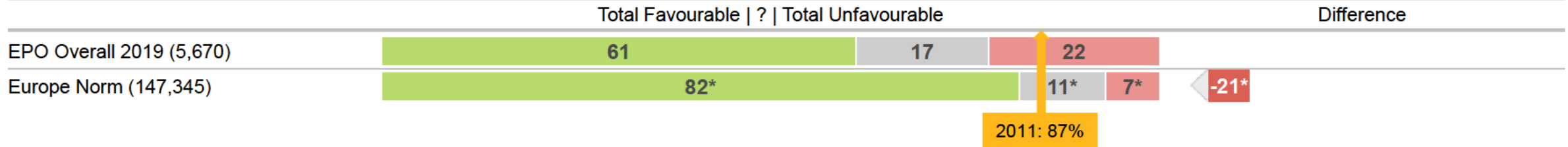


## Quality, Service and External Reputation

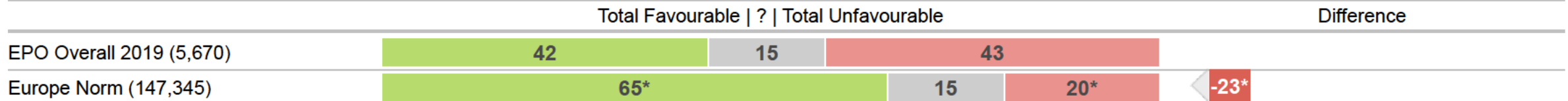
Only 6 in 10 believe the Office has a good reputation for the quality of its services (it was nearly 9 in 10 in 2011).

*The strength of the EPO's external reputation is another key driver of Sustainable Engagement in the Office and should be a follow-up priority.*

16 The Office has established a good reputation for the quality of its services.



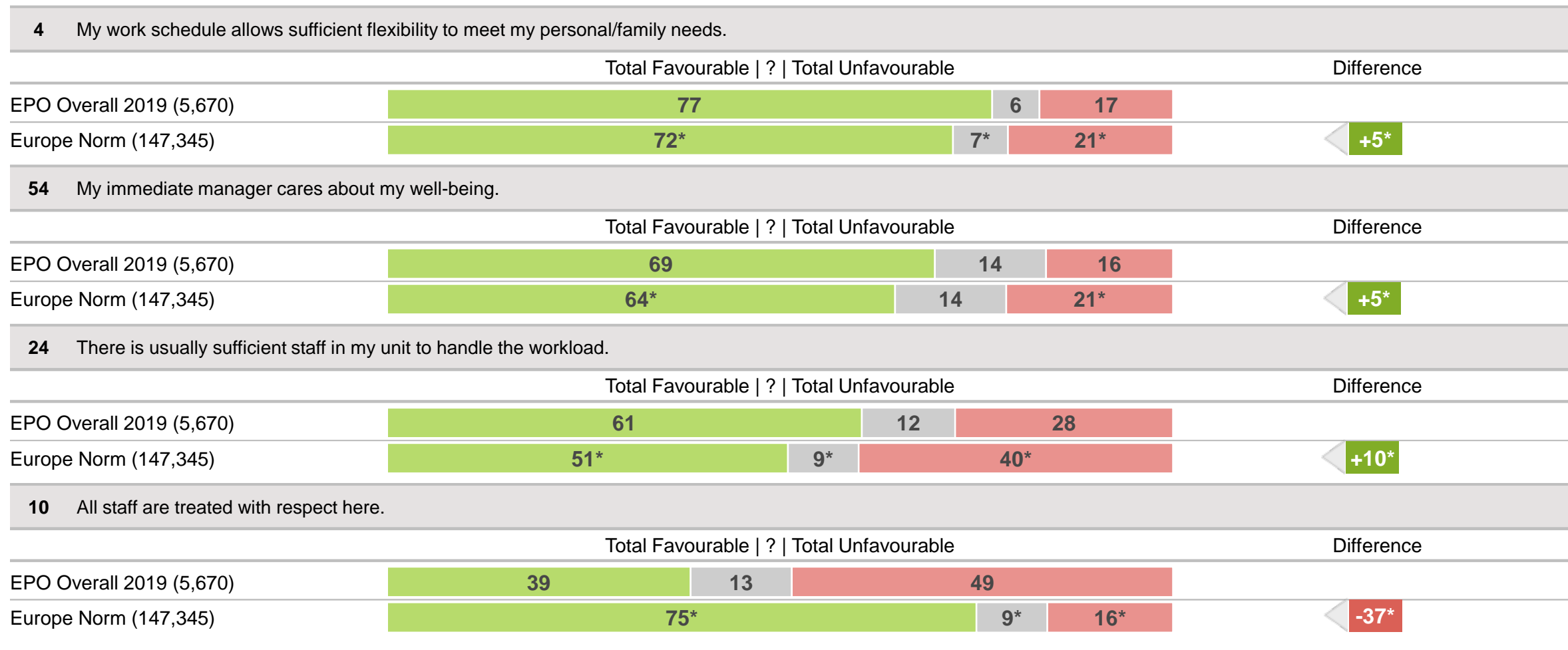
5 Our internal processes are geared towards providing the best possible service for our users (this includes applicants, parties, internal clients).





## Well-Being and Respect

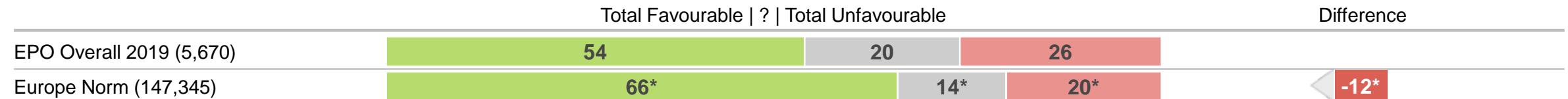
Aspects of the EPO culture support well-being, but nearly 50% do not think that all staff are treated with respect.



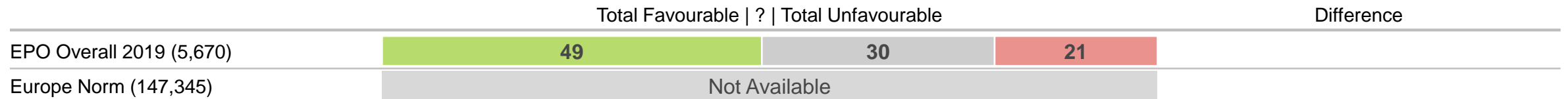
## Is the Office preparing for the future?

More than half believe that technology is helping to make processes more efficient, but there is a high level of uncertainty about how well the Office is positioned for the future.

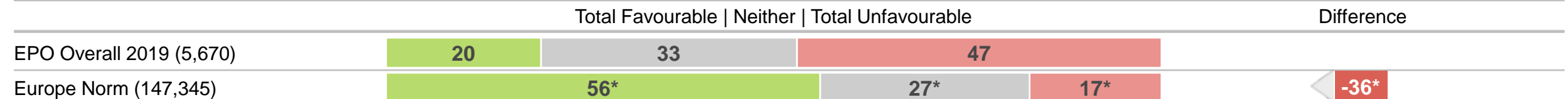
**39** In my unit, we are making good use of technology to make our processes more efficient.



**44** My immediate manager aligns my development plan to the future needs of the Office.



**60** The Office is effective in identifying the changes that are necessary for our long-term success.



## Summary of Key Messages

- There is a call for clear direction from senior management, and a need for closer contact between senior management and staff. Building confidence in management decisions at all levels is crucial, but at senior management level most of all.
- Staff do not feel well informed about issues that affect them or about the reasons for important decisions, and upward feedback is not seen to be the 'norm'.
- Staff look for opportunities to develop, but many feel that these opportunities are not available.  
*Having opportunities for personal development is the #1 key driver of Sustainable Engagement in the EPO and should therefore be a top priority for follow-up.*
- The majority have the autonomy to do their work, but far fewer feel it is safe to speak up or are encouraged to contribute ideas. There is little evidence of a 'continuous improvement culture' in the Office.  
*Empowerment is also a key driver of Sustainable Engagement in the EPO and should also be a follow-up priority.*
- Only 6 in 10 believe the Office has a good reputation for the quality of its services (it was nearly 9 in 10 in 2011).  
*The strength of the EPO's external reputation is another key driver of Sustainable Engagement in the Office and should be a follow-up priority.*
- Aspects of the EPO culture support well-being, but nearly 50% do not think that all staff are treated with respect. Further investigation is advisable on what lies behind this result, as it is also the most frequently mentioned topic in the comments about what would make the biggest difference to the Office as a place to work.
- More than half believe that technology is helping to make processes more efficient, but there is a high level of uncertainty about how well the Office is positioned for the future.



# Comments Analysis

## Comments Themes

**What one change would make the biggest difference to this Office as a place to work?**



## Comments Themes

*What one change would have the greatest positive impact on the long-term success of the Office?*





# Summary and next steps

## Recommended focus areas in summary

- Build greater confidence in senior management by creating closer connections with staff, communicating clear direction, and addressing concerns about reputation and service (externally), and respect (internally). The roll-out of a new strategy provides the ideal opportunity to build confidence in the future of the EPO.
- Create regular channels/forums for upward feedback so it is clear whether progress is being made 'on the ground' (in particular among the Examiner population).
- Addressing Engagement challenges means focusing on the key drivers: Personal Development, Empowerment and External Reputation.
- Create a culture of continuous improvement by creating opportunities for staff to speak up and to contribute to innovation.



# Moving from results to actions

In the months ahead, the EPO’s leadership teams will discuss the results at every level, and identify priorities that will transform what you’ve said into real changes and new initiatives.

