



Report on the meeting of the General Consultative Committee (GCC) of 18 December 2018

A surprising meeting

Five documents were on the agenda of this GCC meeting for consultation: one to the revised Guide to cover under the healthcare insurance scheme (Circular No. 368), one to professional incompetence (implementation rules to Article 52 ServRegs), two were relating to the career system (revised Circulars Nos. 366 and 364), and one to the resources granted to the Staff Committee (revised Circular No. 356)¹.

Revised Guide to cover under the healthcare insurance scheme

C368 was tabled for the second time. After a first GCC discussion an additional round of discussion in a Working Group produced an improved and consensual version of the document. The Circular was quickly and unanimously approved by all GCC members in this meeting.

Professional incompetence; New Career System (C364, C366)

The proposed circular on professional incompetence was clearly the most sensitive topic. The document as tabled by the Office did not provide sufficient clarity and predictability for the affected staff members, nor did it come close to the established and proven equivalent regulation of the EU, so it transpired very quickly that the CSC would not support it as it stood. Both the Office and the CSC made genuine efforts during the meeting – with both sides taking times out - to come to a version of the circular that could be supported by a large majority (if not all). Nevertheless, the latest version put to the vote after lengthy discussions was not supported by the CSC, because it was still not clear and lacked sufficient safeguards for staff. We announced that we intended to unanimously abstain, whereupon the President decided to withdraw the circular on the implementation of Article 52 from the agenda, as well as the revised Circulars 364 and 366² as these are linked.

¹ C368 is publicly available [here](#). However none of the other GCC documents has been published to staff.

² The revised versions of C366 (Guidelines on performance development) and C364 (Implementation of the Career system) on the agenda of the GCC meeting of 18 December were in essence very similar to the already existing versions of those circulars that implement the new career system introduced in the Office as from 1 January 2015. It was clear that no support could be expected from the CSC on these two documents for essentially the same reasons that led the CSC to vote against them on 19 November 2014 (GCC/DOC 9/2014), on 9 March 2017 (latest revised revision of C364, cf. GCC/DOC 7/2017) and on 5 December 2017 (latest revision of C366, cf. GCC/DOC 36/2017).

We expect discussions on those topics to take place in Q1 2019. The CSC's approach to a New Career System and the necessary fundamental changes are summarised in the [letter sent to the President](#) on 14 November 2018. It follows that until further notice the current Circulars 364 and 366 apply.

Resources granted to the Staff Committee (revised C356)

Quite a few members of both the central and local staff committees are struggling with the workload entailed in staff representation and the “day-job” and experience conflicts of interest and independence. We had therefore claimed an increased time release combined with flexibility in allocating it, i.e. for more time to be given to staff representatives working on heavy and virulent dossiers and for involving experts without electoral mandate. The document as tabled by the administration foresaw only to increase the time exemption of the 10 full-members of the CSC from 50% to 75% as from 1 January 2019³.

The President considered withdrawing this document from the agenda along with the other three, but finally asked the GCC to vote on the revised C356, probably to stick to his [Christmas announcement to staff](#) that the time proportion which staff representatives can spend on staff representation work has been increased. The proposal tabled by the President was a lot more conservative than the “quick fix” proposal⁴ sent to him by the Staff Representation on 24 September 2018 that would allow the Staff Committees to better fulfil their mission at both local and central level in 2019, pending an in depth reform of the “social democracy” system. The proposed document was approved by 16 votes in favour (10 GCC members from management + 6 CSC members) and four abstentions from 4 CSC members⁵.

Conclusion

The CSC genuinely appreciates that result-oriented discussion and negotiation is possible again and that there is a shared desire to have regulations in place that are consensual or at least supported by the majority of GCC members on both sides of the table. This session showed that good preparation outside the GCC can produce consensual proposals if there is good will. Insufficient and rushed consultation in working groups or during GCC meetings under time pressure does not lead to mature documents everyone could live with.

Your Central Staff Committee

³ Following a revision of C356 early 2017, the time exemption for the 10 CSC full-members and the chairmen of the Local committees was unilaterally decreased by the previous administration from 100% to 50% as from 1 July 2017 whilst the missions and workload of the SCs had not changed/decreased.

⁴ Cf. GCC/DOC yy/2018 = letter sc18124cl (cf. page 9 and following of sc18138cl available [here](#))

⁵ At the time we write these lines the new C356 has not been published. Until and unless new C356 is published the time resources for the Staff Committees will remain unchanged.