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To: Head of Delegations
Cc. President of the Office

By email

Fifth Edition of the Technologia Staff Survey: the 2022 results

Dear Heads of Delegation,

SUEPO mandated the company Technologia to run its fifth edition of the EPO Staff Survey in 2022. The survey asks the same questions as the previous survey conducted in 2010, 2013, 2016 and 2020 in order to be able to reliably compare the results. Contrary to the standard practice among other international organisations, the President of the Office did not authorise the dispatch of individual survey access codes to all EPO staff members at their @epo.org email address. SUEPO could therefore only rely on the private emails of its members and those among EPO staff who actively opted in.

Technologia contacted 2.915 EPO staff members among which 1.766 answered representing a 60,6% response rate.

New Career System: Dissatisfaction increases and Quality decreases

The minor fine-tuning made to the 2015 New Career System (“catch-up mechanism” every 5 years and “collaborative bonuses”) did not put an end to the dissatisfaction among staff. Staff’s professional situation is negatively affected by the performance related bonus (for 84%) and the abolition of the automatic step (for 87%)¹.

The project “[Creating a common definition of quality](#)” (SP2023 Goal 3) did not change staff’s perception of the downward trend in quality. Quality is considered to be negatively affected by the performance related bonus (for 89%) and the abolition of the automatic step (for 91%)². Even the MAC [report](#) of 2 June 2022 confirms that the grant compliance rate is historically low at 74.5% compared to 76.6%³ in 2018 and 85.4%⁴ in 2015.

¹ A2, slide 95 and 98; A1, slides 74 and 77

² A2, slide 95 and 98; A1, slides 73 and 76

³ [EPO Quality report 2018](#), page 41/60

⁴ [EPO Quality report 2016](#), page 19/40

It is necessary and important for the future of the EPO to give more time to do quality work (for 87%). Fairness and transparency should be increased in the EPO reward exercise (for 79%)⁵.

Mistrust in EPO management and deterioration in atmosphere

While 57% of staff trust their immediate superior, the figures lower dramatically higher in the hierarchy. Only 24% trust their Director, 5% their Principal Director/COO, 7% their Vice-President, 1% the members of the MAC and 3% the President (even lower than the 4% of President Battistelli in 2013). The Administrative Council remains no exception with trust from only 1%.⁶

DG1 is the Directorate General in which trust in management is the lowest⁷. Respondents in managerial Job-Groups 1 and 2 are ironically the most negative about high management⁸.

89% of staff consider that their manager is bound by the decision of his superior.⁹ The result is consistent among the hierarchy, thereby showing that the EPO operates under a strict pyramidal structure. An exemplary consequence is that reorganizations are perceived as pointless for 86%, not desired by 92% and negative in their career for 87%¹⁰.

Noticeably, 23% of staff consider to be exposed to violence essentially in DG5 and DG0, the area the closest to the President¹¹.

Deterioration in social dialogue

Staff representatives remain trusted by 75%¹² and the action of staff representation is a “plus”¹³ for 88%.

The percentage of staff considering that top management is not showing interest in an honest and constructive dialogue with their representatives has increased from 77% in 2020 to 88% in 2022¹⁴. This should be put in perspective with the fact that since 2018, almost all the proposals tabled in the General Consultative Committee (GCC) either receive a negative opinion or an abstention from the staff representation.

Historical worsening of mental/physical health of staff and engagement

⁵ A2, slide 95

⁶ A1, slides 22-28

⁷ A2, slide 20

⁸ A2, slide 21

⁹ A1, slide 66; A2, slide 64

¹⁰ A1, slides 119-121

¹¹ A2, slides 92 and 93

¹² A1, slide 29

¹³ A1, slide 43

¹⁴ A2, slide 71

Despite the efforts made since 2020 with the “[Strong Together](#)” measures, 67% consider that their current work life affects their health¹⁵. 48% even consider that compared to others of their own age, their health is average or poor.¹⁶ This is the worst result since the organization of the Technologia survey in 2010.

Although Covid-19 variants are currently less risky, 21% of staff still consider that they are not able to cope with challenges/stress facing the pandemic.¹⁷ Only 7% appreciate the support by the Human Resources¹⁸.

31% are working overtime and do not find themselves able to recover¹⁹, and among them 93% are subject to fatigue. This population presents the highest psychosocial risks. 16% of staff are exposed to a high risk of burn-out²⁰, in particular in DG0, the area closest to the President.

On average, 69% of staff feel very tired²¹, 42% feel depressed²² and 37% feel desperate²³.

Teleworking has a negative impact on relationship with colleagues (for 71%), gives a feeling of isolation (for 47%)²⁴ and contributes at 0% to the sense of belonging²⁵. Disengagement of staff in the role and development of the EPO continues to increase from 13% of staff in 2016, and 19% in 2020, disengagement peaked to 41% in 2022²⁶.

We urge the Council delegations to take due account of the Technologia survey results and give the proper mandate to EPO management to repair the situation.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas Czogalla
Acting Chairperson SUEPO Central

Attachments:

A1: 2022 Staff Survey Frequency Tables

A2: Risques psychosociaux – Présentation des résultats

¹⁵ A1, slide 156; A2, slide 43

¹⁶ A1, slide 154; A2, slide 41

¹⁷ A1, slide 138

¹⁸ A1, slide 52; A2, slide 86

¹⁹ A2, slide 46

²⁰ A2, slide 51

²¹ A1, slide 142

²² A1, slide 152

²³ A1, slide 146

²⁴ A1, slide 136

²⁵ A1, slide 135

²⁶ A2, slide 26