

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to inform you that yesterday evening Representatives of the Parliament, the Irish Presidency and the Commission reached a political agreement on the modifications of the Staff Regulations.

Experts will now finalise the texts and a final trilogue to confirm the political agreement will take place next Tuesday, 25 June.

This agreement will now be submitted to the three Institutions for final decision. Before submitting the text to the College, I will also request the views of our staff representatives. The text will only become definitive if agreed formally by the Parliament and the Council, together with the agreement of the Commission.

As in any negotiation, the agreement involves concessions from all parties. However, in my view, this deal preserves the independence, competence and permanence of the European Civil Service.

If confirmed, the deal will bring a new Method that will ensure automatic parallelism of salaries and pensions adjustments with national civil services, while catering for situations of deep economic and financial crisis. It will also offer the possibility of longer contracts and access to internal competitions for contract agents. There will be some sacrifices for senior staff, namely on AD careers, with a decrease of promotion possibilities in higher grades, but there will be an increase in promotion possibilities for AD staff in lower grades recruited after 2004.

The deal maintains the same pension scheme with a retirement age of 65 for current staff (but with transition rules), a small increase to the age of 66 for staff recruited in the future, and a new link to life expectancy, in the same way the Commission is asking Member States to do. We will also show solidarity with the current economic situation, by raising the official working hours from 37,5 to 40 hours each week without any compensation and we will again pay from January 2014 a special levy on salaries, with the same taxable base as that in place until last December. Senior staff in the two highest grades as well as Commissioners will pay a higher rate. The annual adjustments in pay and pensions will be suspended in 2013 and 2014. Staff will face reductions in the annual travel allowance, but not in other allowances. More details will follow once the final texts are in place and the Institutions have agreed on the package.

In the current economic and financial circumstances, I consider this to be a difficult but realistic and honourable deal.

Maroš Šefčovič

(DE and FR versions to follow)