THE LINK - LE LIEN BULLETIN U4U - JULY 2019 N°72



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Sign the EU staff petition on the climate and ecological emergency !

A group of officials - EU Staff4Climate - independent of any trade union affiliation is calling on European civil servants to act now against climate change.

The petition: already 10,000 signatures: let's double this figure! This is the largest staff mobilization in 10 years. Note also the publication of a special issue of GRASPE, very comprehensive on this subject.

European Parliament : First the Interpreters, now DG TRAD. Who is next?

The plenary meeting of the Staff Committee took place on 12th of June, in Luxembourg.

The Staff Committee invited to the public hearing, Mr. Mavric, Director General of DG TRAD, his top management team, the chairs of the Translators´ and the Translation Assistants' Delegations, as well as a significant number of DG TRAD colleagues. All the participants had the opportunity to engage for almost two hours deep discussions.

DG TRAD has faced many changes in the last year, and considering the changes that are in the pipeline, DG TRAD colleagues can be called "champions of change".

The most experienced colleagues might recollect that the discussions about the high workload the translators and translation assistants have been experiencing is an old issue and one must not consider that it was due to the European elections related work.

Some facts

In 2006, the first discussions concerning high workload started among the linguistic units.

In 2011, the situation became worst and triggered intense discussions with the former Director General, Mrs. Janet Pitt. These discussions addressed issues such as; high workload, the quality of translations and statistical methods to measure productivity in real terms.

The following year in 2012, a second audience with Mrs. Janet Pitt was held as the problems kept ongoing and no solutions were found.

The Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work (CPPT) intervened in 2013. A study was carried out by the Prevention and Protection at Work Service (SPPT) from DG PERS.

Unfortunately, until now, the full range of recommendations have not been put in place.

Ongoing increase of workload

During last year, there has been an increase of 36% in the workload. On top of this, new projects, not directly linked to translation works of legislative texts, as laid down in the treaties, the core business of DG TRAD, were put in place: an Audio Capacity Pilot project (the so called Radio project) and the Subtitling project for Euronews.

Reassignment of staff to 4 new Units

On the 21st of June 2019, at the occasion of DG TRAD Innovation day, Director General, Mr Mavric announced that five new units would soon be created: (1) Clear language and editing, (2) Audio and podcast, (3) Speech-to-text, (4) Subtitling and voice-over and the (5) "My House of European History".

In the plenary meeting, a clarification was made suggesting that it was only four units that would be newly created, as the Editing unit already exists.

To populate these 4 new units, a total of 48 translators and 24 assistants (2 translators and 1 assistant from each language unit) will be sacrificed from their linguistic units to be assigned to these 4 new units.

The large reassignment to these new units, thereby reducing the number of staff tasked with core translation activities, legislative work, is obviously, an issue of great concern to the colleagues, translators and assistants that will remain in the linguistics units.

Interpretation of Statistics and setting SLAs

Another subject of great concern to the DG TRAD colleagues are the statistics. There is often a great misperception when reading and interpreting figures: 11.5 net pages of translations, plus 19 pages of revision/ re-read work, plus 4 pages in a high workload period.

The impartial interpretation of statistics may be passing the wrong information for important decision making to the Secretary-General, the fact is that they might not reflect the real workload faced by the DG TRAD' translators and assistants.

DG TRAD colleagues have strongly called for fair and transparent statistical methods to measure output and workload (KPI and T-Flow), that fully takes into account the revision work of the external translation as a conditio sine qua non to maintain high quality of translation.

► Other areas of concern

The new scheduled changes concerning the outsourcing of documents (accreditation system and CAF control), cannot, by any means, jeopardise the quality of translations.

High quality of translations is a non-negotiable issue that makes our colleagues, translators and assistants, very proud.

The high level of quality in translations is non-negotiable when we are dealing with formal documents published by the European Parliament. Mistakes in translations could potentially expose the EP to issues related to transparency or legal liability.

Another sensitive issue, highlighted in the meeting, was the increasing number of sick leave, in the language units last January and February as a direct result of an overworked and overwhelmed staff. The management was invited to take this issue very seriously and to implement concrete measures to alleviate this burden, as well as monitoring this situation.

This entire situation seems to be a déjà vu of what our interpreter colleagues experienced, back in 2018.

As U4U suggested and stated in the plenary meeting of the Staff Committee, "it is time for change and social dialogue".

All concerns expressed by the colleagues must be fully acknowledged, taken seriously and discussed.

U4U acknowledges and praises the decision by the Director General to set up a trilogue taskforce (with representatives of the Staff Committee, the two delegations and DG TRAD senior management) with a mandate to be defined in a detailed manner, to strive for a new and effective social dialogue that protects the rights and the quality work of our colleagues.

U4U remains supportive to the interpreters' fight for recognition and fair conditions in the work place and will also be supportive to the current situation of staff in DG TRAD.

U4U calls on all staff to remain united and in solidarity with colleagues at DG TRAD.

EUROPOL: U4U begins social dialogue on staff reduction plans

We have been informed by members of our trade union within Europol, that the Commission has proposed significant savings in the context of the budget 2020 negotiations for Europol which will translate in a near future into a significant reduction of CA posts. It seems that following the consultations with the Management Board of Europol, a need to cut more than 70 CA positions was communicated to the staff of the agency.

The information we receive is not in line with the Europol Programming Documents for the years 2019-2021, adopted by the Europol Management Board, which explain the necessity for further staff growth and development over the coming years in light of increased security concerns, inter alia, in the area of terrorism prevention and migration management. Following the request of our members, we have organised a General Assembly and met with the Management of Europol who kindly accepted to meet us. During the General Assembly it became clear that the lack of a clearly defined policy for contract agents, the absence of clear criteria for contract renewal and the uncertainty about their future are producing massive frustration and demotivation in their daily work. During the meeting with Management, we addressed those issues and offered to help in establishing a sustainable staff policy together with the responsible Commission services. If staff cuts concerning Contract Agents would really be necessary, such cuts must be accompanied by measures allowing colleagues to pursue their career within the organisation and allowing the organisation to retain highly qualified colleagues. Such measures could include the conversion of contracts into Temporary Agent contracts or the organisation of an internal competition.

We have sent letters to the Director Generals of DG BUDG, DG HOME and DG HR asking for clarification (see below). We will analyse their responses against the background of feedback received by staff and the operative needs explained by Europol. In September, another General Assembly will be organized at Europol and we will invite Management to discuss potential measures and developments.

AC: finally opening a social dialogue! To improve the situation of our colleagues!

Two years ago already, we had obtained from the Commission a number of positive results for the CAs:

- Promotion rates (reclassification) were to be increased for all CAs
- A special promotion after three years should be considered for all fixed-term CAs, before the extension of their contract for three additional years
- A procedure to move from one grade to the next had to be put in place according to the qualifications and the work done, as had been done in Luxembourg
- The internal competitions were to be scheduled, preferably every two years, to allow colleagues to prepare
- The extension of the lists of the winners of internal competitions opened to the contract agents should allow all the winners to be established
- Mobility opportunities needed to be improved, etc

All the unions recently addressed the Commissioner to remind him of his commitments and to open the social dialogue on this issue. A date has been set in September 2019 for this purpose. Let's bet that this meeting will allow us to move forward.

U4U writes to DG BUDG about work environment change projects

E-mail du 8 mai 2019, à propos des projets de modification de l'environnement de travail :

Monsieur le Directeur Général,

Je vous remercie de votre proposition d'entamer un dialogue social relatif à la transformation de l'environnement de travail des services de votre Direction générale, à laquelle je vous garantis la participation active de notre organisation.

Comme toute transformation de l'environnement de travail, cela nécessite un dialogue intense tant avec le personnel concerné qu'avec les corps intermédiaires que sont les organisations syndicales et le comité du personnel. Aucune évolution de l'environnement de travail ne saurait être bénéfique aux services si elle s'opérait contre l'avis du personnel, voire si elle ne requérait pas son implication, et si elle ne constituait pas de manière évidente une amélioration des conditions de travail.

Notre personnel a eu souvent à pâtir d'évolutions qui lui étaient contraires, souvent imposées. La dernière enquête de satisfaction du personnel de la Commission a démontré que celui-ci se considérait, assez souvent, comme pas assez reconnu, son avis n'étant de surcroît pas, selon les analyses des résultats, suffisamment pris en considération. Cela fournit aujourd'hui une occasion d'inverser cette tendance en démontrant dans la pratique, ensemble, qu'il n'en est rien, en faisant en sorte que les évolutions de l'environnement de travail soient bâties avec le personnel, dans un cadre physique conçu d'emblée à cet effet, à partir de la réalité du travail de chacun et non pas conçues a priori de « l'extérieur ».

Le personnel constitue l'atout principal de l'institution et de ses directions générales. Son apport doit être valorisé et ses conditions de travail préservées, voire améliorées.

En ces temps incertains où la construction européenne marque le pas, voire chancelle, notre priorité est de souder notre corps social pour mieux mettre en œuvre les politiques de l'Union.

Je suis persuadé que tel est également votre opinion. C'est pourquoi notre organisation fonde l'espoir que le dialogue à venir fournira les solutions pertinentes. A chaque étape de ce dialogue, U4U agira en consultant le personnel concerné, gage de son utilité.

Dans l'attente de notre prochaine rencontre, et en renouvelant nos remerciements pour votre offre de dialogue, je vous prie de recevoir l'expression de notre considération.

Georges Vlandas

Président

F4E: a new step forward for regulatory agencies!

After EUIPO (Alicante) and EASA (Cologne), U4U was able to sign, after two years of negotiations, a first framework agreement with the Fusion for Energy agency, establishing formal and structural links between the management of F4E and the trade unions. This agreement was supported several times by staff at three General Assemblies and by the Staff Committee. We should also note the invaluable assistance of Dominique RISTORI, Director General of the Commission's DG Energy, who convinced both parties of the formalization of a useful framework for social dialogue within the Agency. U4U thanks him and the Director of the agency and his staff. The important thing is starting in September to ensure that this dialogue is helpful to staff and the agency.

Following the signature of this framework agreement, U4U is preparing the social dialogue that will begin in September, inviting its members to share their priorities and ideas.

European Parliament : A new service for disabled or retired colleagues

U4U attended on June 11th, 2019, the conference entitled JSIS: Disability Centre of Excellence, organised by EP DG PERS, Prevention and wellbeing Unit and the Brussels Social service (Medical Service).

- On addition to the information that was given, U4U wanted to know how EP retired staff can be helped when they are isolated/disabled/sick.
- Retired EP staff can still contact the social workers of the Institution in times of crisis/difficulty and in PMO it is an open welcome desk every morning as well as the possibility to make appointments.
- Depending on the country to which one retires, the Settlements Office, which will look after your JSIS affairs, can be either Brussels, Luxembourg or Ispra.
- In addition, at least two main organisations of retired staff have branches in most EU Member States, as well as offices in Brussels, help lines, etc.
- Retired staff social assistants list

Of course, U4U continues to inform, help and give support the retired colleagues, as well.

U4U would like to thank DG PERS to organise these information sessions.

U4U is at your disposal for any question.

Adjustment of remuneration and contribution rate of EU staff to the pension scheme for 2019

1. Adjustment of the remuneration of officials and servants of the European Union

At this point, the figures are not known. Significant changes are still possible, which depend in particular on the recognition of increases in the salaries of German civil servants (+ 7% over 3 years). In any case, it can be estimated that the salary increase should be between 1% and 2%, at cruising speed, at first around 1.5% / 1.7%, according to U4U statistical service.

2. Rate of contribution to the pension scheme of officials and servants of the European Union

Given the decrease in the specific wage indicator in 2018, the adjustment of the pension contribution of civil servants and employees to the pension scheme may decrease slightly (more than the 0.25% trigger threshold) in 2019 This is the effect of the 2019 annual evaluation of the five-year actuarial valuation completed in 2018.

The Commission will publish on 15 December 2019 the level of adjustment of the remuneration and of the rate of pension contribution to the scheme in the Official Journal of the EU. It will then be implemented by each institution on the payslip of officials and agents, with a possible recovery back from 1 July 2019.

U4U will continue to inform you on the fly.

Personal Development: Let's get together for tomorrow! A Group coaching...

« Ce n'est pas avec notre manière de penser d'hier que nous résoudrons les problèmes d'aujourd'hui » (Albert Einstein).

L'objectif de cette formation est de vous mettre en position d'acteur pour mener à bien votre mission et obtenir les résultats souhaités.

Votre efficacité se mesure à la fois dans le temps long de la construction européenne et dans votre capacité à réaliser vos objectifs de plus court terme seul et en équipe

Agir implique la motivation de chacun ainsi que de celle de l'équipe.

C'est cette motivation qui rendra votre mission plus intéressante et vous permettra de travailler de façon plus sereine.

Tout ceci se passe dans un contexte très spécifique :

 L'Europe évolue, la Commission Européenne également, et parallèlement, votre mission et votre métier Travailler et communiquer dans un contexte pluriculturel nécessite de mieux identifier votre plus-value spécifique dans la mise en oeuvre d'objectifs communs à un groupe.

Le coaching est conçu pour un petit groupe de participants (min. 6 et max. 12). Le programme comporte 3 modules distincts.

A Bruxelles, de 12h à 14h30 :

- ► Jeudi 12 septembre; module 1
- Jeudi 19 septembre ; module 2
- ▶ Jeudi 26 septembre ; module 3

3 séances de coaching Tarif : 100 euros pour les 3 séances.

Payez le prix des 3 sessions à ce compte par virement: IBAN : BE39 0016 3506 3019 BIC: GEBABEBB 001-6350630-19

Veuillez copier votre preuve de paiement à : training.u4u@gmail.com

Payant, inscription préalable requise Sessions en français

Got your European BAC ? Then join the EE Alumni network

We, the board of Alumni Europae (alumnieuropae.org) invite all the future Bacheliers of the European Schools to join their network, once they leave their respective schools with the Baccalaureat.

Alumni Europae is the structure which hosts all the bacheliers oft he ES who intend to join us. We are keen to be known as well in the ES themselves and of course as well by the furture alumni themselves. We are proud to grow constantly and significantly and are devoted to establish an excellent relationship to the schools and their respective Directors

Exhibition "Los colores del verano"

The Art Circle of the European Commission invites you to discover the works of one of its members, Pilar Santiago, exhibited from 6 June to 11 September 2019 at the Commission Library, 18 rue Van Maerlant, 4th floor. The arrival of Summer is a source of inspiration: light and colors are everywhere! The first challenge is to champion staff interests before the Commission's management and to resist the attacks that will inevitably come from the Council and the Member States.

The drive to build Europe is faltering, and within the European civil service, precariousness and discrimination are now rife. In such a climate, only a united and strong civil service will be able to face the difficulties that lie just around the corner. For this reason, we have to send a clear signal to our leaders that staff care about Europe and the quality of the civil service that Europe needs.

In this context U4U, is the only constructive choice for several reasons:

1. U4U is the only union whose action is motivated directly by a determination to secure the future of the European project. We work towards this aim in a variety of ways: by means of reflection groups, leading to articles that are published in the review Graspe, by organising training courses and seminars on issues of European interest, right through to articulating legitimate staff demands, that are also beneficial for the Institution as a whole, as acting in the interests of staff is in the interests of the Commission. Europe is our raison d'être.

2. U4U is fighting for staff unity, striving to create a bond of solidarity between all staff categories, irrespective of age and whether they pre- or postdate the 2004 reform. U4U is achieving this by making practical proposals to address in-equalities and the difficulties faced by staff whose employment is under threat, specifically by asking for internal reclassification competitions to be held both for Contract Agents as well as for AST and AD. We also ask that AST 9 and AD 12 should have an easier access to end-off-careers grades. Division weakens us -'United we stand - divided we fall'!

3. U4U does not limit its action to solely defending our salaries, promotions or pensions. U4U was the only union to oppose re-opening the staff regulations during the 2014 reform. U4U is currently the only union that is opposing proposal of introducing an additional actual pension fund which, if the idea were to be accepted, would lead to a further reform of the staff regulations.

The lessons learnt from the 2004 and 2014 reforms are that agreeing to changes to one chapter of the staff regulations inevitably leads to a worsening of other aspects of staff working conditions. In the current climate, agreeing to make changes to the staff regulations would be tantamount to opening Pandora's box and a grave mistake.

4. U4U is striving to bring about active and participatory staff careers so as to change the way our professional careers are managed from recruitment to retirement, including by means of training and exchanges with other institutions. Careers must be attractive and remain a source of motivation. The administration must know where talents lie and how to how to best deploy those skills to achieve its objectives. The most fundamental measure of well-being at work is the quality of our work.

5. U4U has, since its inception, worked tirelessly and issued proposals to promote the education provided to our children in the nurseries, after-school care and European schools. For U4U, the entire European educational project is not just about providing a useful service to staff - thus contributing to the attractiveness of the European civil service - but also encouraging us to live together in a manner that is mutually enriching and grounding our young people in their identity as European citizens. To know that your children are being educated under the aegis of a laudable project is a source of serenity and a considerable asset for the society of the future.

6. U4U stands for improved staff representation and constructive dialogue between staff and management in order to increase the transparency of the unions. U4U is in favour of a single, smaller but more professional staff committee, elected at the same time across all parts and locations of the Commission. U4U is of the opinion that more issues should be covered by social dialogue, such as for example, questions of such fundamental importance as the budget. Constructive dialogue between staff and management must be possible throughout the Commission, at all levels, in all DGs and sites, and this dialogue must start at the grass roots and not be limited to discussions with DG HR. Constructive social dialogue is the mark of an organisation whose administration is based on the values of mutual respect and partnership.



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IF YOU SHARE OUR APPROACH, PLEASE JOIN U4U



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