



# Introduction of UCC software at the Commission

In our last [Circular no. 59](#), U4U informed you of the implementation of the UCC software at the Commission in Brussels and promised to keep you informed of developments. On 7 February, DIGIT came to explain to staff representatives the reasons for the introduction of this new software. Extensive reference was made to the question of the use of this software for monitoring purposes. In the opinion of U4U, the DG HR must prepare GIDs to limit and regulate the use of the software for monitoring purposes.

The telephony system used by the Commission is obsolete. The telephones undoubtedly still work, but the back office is outdated, and replacement parts are difficult to find. And the world moves on. Staff want increasingly advanced levels of connective performance, combining sound and images; some jobs require growing access to multiple simultaneous communications on sites that are a long way from each other; teleworking is increasing; requirements are multiple, complex and use a variety of technologies that must be linked together. DIGIT therefore looked at what was available on the market that would make it possible to bring together the different requirements expressed by the services and staff and resulting from changes in how the work is organised.

That is how the UCC software became the solution for the future and the response to the needs identified by the Commission in Brussels. Currently in the testing stage, it has initially been installed at DIGIT itself and at two offices, PMO and OIB. Staff are of course requested to feed back on their experience and make any useful comments that will help DIGIT to improve the system. If the tests are positive, the system will be rolled out to all of the buildings and, ideally, the delegations (in those countries where security can be guaranteed); DIGIT is working on the gateways needed to make this possible.

Without predicting the future of this software and its acceptance by the workforce, it is important for U4U to ensure that this software will not enable the systematic, abusive or systemic monitoring of colleagues. DIGIT has clarified a number of aspects. Any staff monitoring will be carried out within the framework of a formal investigation (OLAF or IDOC) and must be approved by the DG of the DGHR and the Data Protection Officer. Each employee has control over the different functions offered by the software and has the option of not activating his camera if he does not want to be seen when speaking; he may also keep a telephone handset/receiver rather than using headphones (although in the testing stage the handset is removed to test the effects of its possible withdrawal in the future), and choose not to use "chat" on a Skype-type system if he does not want to.

Anyone wanting to spy on staff can do so already with the current tools, albeit on a smaller scale and without observing the safeguards comprised by the data protection laws and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. DIGIT's objective is therefore to move in the direction of the most modern technologies in order to improve working conditions, especially remote working, without allowing or facilitating abuses.

While certain clarifications from DIGIT have been welcomed, U4U believes they are incomplete, especially concerning the requirements that could be imposed on colleagues, which would curtail their supposed freedom to retain control of the use of the functionalities available.

In U4U's opinion, it is essential for HR to draw up GIDs to limit and regulate the use of the software for monitoring purposes, regardless of the nature of the monitoring. U4U requested a social dialogue meeting on this subject at the DG HR on 24 January.

The need for better communication must not result in concern over more monitoring. U4U points out that the Commission staff are of high quality, committed, motivated, and well worth the advances made in HR management and work organisation, but not to the detriment of trust and peace of mind. We need guarantees of transparency.

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