



For a European, citizen-focused,
participative and unitary trade
unionism

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EDITORIAL – Making a commitment to Europe

U4U is a new organisation, set up at the time of the last elections to the Staff Committee at the European Commission in Brussels.

When taking action, we believe that there is a need to position our work in the broader context of European integration and the European civil service. The way in which the latter is being dismantled represents a real threat to Europe and staff working in the Community institutions: the situation means that each and every one of us is called upon to display the kind of vision and **commitment** in our place of work **that is as rooted in our sense of citizenship as in our trade union values**.

We hope to conduct our work **in a spirit of staff and organisational unity** guided by courses of action set out with staff (staff participation and involvement must systematically be sought out and facilitated).

In order to find a way out of the staff representation crisis, we want to take

action with all those who wish to join us to work towards a **revival of trade unionism** in the Community institutions to promote a **democratic trade union approach, anchored in the workplace** and resolutely unitary in nature, which also encompasses the conditions underpinning the work of a European civil servant. In addition to the safeguarding of the promotion, we must also defend the 'raison d'être' of this post.

Our organisation has joined forces with USHU, another new organisation representing colleagues working outside of the European Union. Together, our two organisations, with our complementary visions and shared view of an in-touch style of trade unionism, represent 12% of the staff from the whole of the Commission, making our group the third trade union force.

We **invite you to join us** because we all have a part to play in our own destiny and are all stakeholders in the future of Europe.

A unified trade union platform for 2009-2012

U4U is a member of a unified trade union platform for the duration of the LSC's term of office, or in other words, for the period 2009-2012.

U4U has signed this unified platform with 5 other trade unions, thus making up a 2/3 majority, open to other trade union forces. The reasons as to why we signed up can be found in the text itself (Cf: <http://u4unity.eu/ccp.htm>) which takes up a large number of our ideas, ideas which are shared by the other signatories:

- the need for a united front, based on a shared way of working which meets 'the needs of the staff in terms of prior debate, unity in action, an in-touch approach and participation'
- and shared goals: maintaining and building on staff cohesion, radical overhaul of the assessment/promotion system, getting involved in service restructuring, enhancing the status of the over 50s, fighting against precarious working conditions, defending European schools and their development, etc.

This text is not an end in itself but rather a tool to push on with and put into practice ideas which can help staff, defend our institution, and work towards European integration. It was on this basis that it was possible to find a **stable and reforming majority** for both the local and central staff committee. It led to the election of Hans Torrekens to the presidency of the Brussels Local Staff Committee and the appointment of the members of his Bureau, including our friend Agim Islamaj from U4U.

U4U will be constructive but will also never take its eye off the ball in order to reach, with all the force of goodwill, the objectives which reflect the expectations of the staff.

U4U is calling on all colleagues **to join the working groups which it is setting up in order to contribute to this collective endeavour based on reflection and action.**

U4U and USHU are joining forces to stand up for staff rights together

Our trade union has joined forces with another new trade union established in Commission delegations outside of the European Union. This is an organisation which obtained 52% of the votes in the elections to the Staff Committee outside the European Union and with which we share the vision of democratic, participative and in-touch trade unionism and complementary activities.

Together, U4U/USHU represents 12% of Commission staff as a whole, or almost 4000 colleagues, placing the new group third in the list of trade unions at the Commission.

**Unity in
action!**

Can the Lisbon Treaty survive the crisis?

Sixteen months after voting 'no' in their first referendum, the Irish have voted massively in favour (by 67.1% of the 59% of participants) of ratifying the Lisbon Treaty, leading to its ratification by Poland.

On 4 and 5 October, the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) and the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) held a seminar on 'European Development and Integration Perspectives'. One of the participants put forward 'three scenarios for the EU in 2020', drawn up in the light of the economic and banking crisis which has greatly transformed the Western world...

1. Black scenario: the disintegration of the European Union. Faced with this crisis and all that is at stake in order to 'get out of the crisis', the nationalist reactions of the Member States have progressively called into question the two pillars of the European Union (the single market and single currency).

The 21st century will thus not be European, but rather Sino-American: it had been Soviet-American during the second half of the 20th century...

2. Grey scenario: the residual European Union. Aware that a break-up of the European Union would wipe them off the map, the Member States realise that the single market - in spite of its shortcomings - generates wealth and that getting rid of the euro would bear a far greater price than maintaining it. The Member States revert to type: giving the impression of making choices and finding apparent compromises.

Attempts to bring about an intergovernmental drift within the European Union prompts the gradual erosion of the Commission, which ends up as a secretariat to serve the Member States. Once the only remaining goal is to maintain, as well as we can, the status quo, once 'Community solidarity' has been reduced to shared assets and the pursuit of 'the common interest' is no longer the principle of European integration, what role and what *raison d'être* can possibly be given to the European civil service? Do its existence and independence, justified by the promotion and defence of the common interest, still carry meaning in these conditions?

The very status of the civil service would be called into question in several of its dimensions, in proportion to the gradual disappearance of the political 'raison d'être' of this civil service. Here, we can measure the inseparable nature of trade union and citizen-based endeavours in the effort to defend and promote the European civil service.

3. Blue scenario: towards a federal Union? In order to prevent the Union disintegrating in the wake of the 2008-2009 crisis, the Member States react by agreeing on two new founding pacts:

- deepening of the single market with fiscal coordination
- a renegotiated Stability Pact.

The Member States continue along the path of integration in all

To give you food for thought and debate, we offer you this digested read, inspired by the IFRI summary. You can find the complete text of this article on our website on the *Debates* page

fields. Buoyed up by this spirit, the CFSP gains a more powerful role by harnessing a growing number of supporters. Soon the European Union will have just one phone number and the 21st century will be 'also European'....

But who, in this day and age, can or wants to give European citizens a 'European dream'? As we all know, forecasting is a perilous exercise. No doubt the reality will be somewhere between these three possible versions of the future, according to the choices the European Union and its Member States wish to take, having considered each of the challenges outlined below.

The Lisbon treaty. The Treaty should lend a sense of coherence leading from the intergovernmental towards the Community rather than from Community solidarity towards the vagaries of the intergovernmental. However, the rise in conservatism runs the risk of dragging the institutions set up to this end towards intergovernmentalism.

It is to be hoped that the European External Action Service, which will serve as a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development, will not continue this trend or put external action under the control of military and security forces.

In these conditions, can we be sure that the Treaty 'will bring the Union into the 21st century' (albeit ten years late) as we are so fond of saying?

The economic crisis. Even if the European Union was able to mobilise the world with G20, each of its Member States adopted national strategies, to such an extent that the Commission believes that the viability of public finances is a prerequisite for a sustainable relaunch, a challenge for the future. Furthermore, it is advising in particular a concerted approach so that, as far as the Stability and Growth Pact are concerned, the viability of this debt can play an explicit, key role in monitoring procedures.

An exchange market where the euro increasingly serves the purpose of a 'balancing variable'. Paradoxically, European divergences of interest tend more to 'strengthen' the euro as they demonstrate the powerlessness of European political leaders to find a captive audience for a coherent and strong discourse on the international monetary stage. However, it is not clear whether the Lisbon Treaty, with its intergovernmental logic, can end this kind of situation.

Against this kind of backdrop, the United States (and China) can 'manipulate' their exchange rates as much as they please and do all within their power to weaken the dollar (and the yuan) and stimulate their exports.

In the monetary arena, as in other fields, does the Lisbon Treaty give the right answers when we consider the emergence of a G2 and the affirmation of new powers, sure of their strategic priorities and their fundamental interests ? We are right to ask the question.

Exceptional taxation of Greek colleagues

The unacceptable calling into question of the independence of the European civil service vis-à-vis the Member States

There is a need to clarify the situation for all colleagues of Greek nationality regarding the exceptional taxation of Greek residents whose net annual income amounts to at least 60,000 EUR.

Indeed, such taxation goes against article 13§2 of the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Communities, which foresees, for European Community civil servants and agents, an exemption from national tax as regards salaries, wages and emoluments transferred by the Community.

The Humblet case (6/60), ruled on by the Court, confirms the fact that the taxation of wages or emoluments transferred by the Community runs counter to the PPI. The taking into account of this income when calculating the level of taxation applicable to the other income received by a Community civil servant thus appears also to be contrary to the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities, in line with the Court's case law.

As a consequence, the taking into account of this remuneration to calculate net income of at least 60,000 EUR annually for this exceptional taxation runs counter to article 13§2 of the PPI.

U4U thus calls on the Commission:

- to offer legal aid to the civil servants and former civil servants affected by this matter;
- to send a formal notice of complaint to the Greek authorities, in line with article 226 TEC, in order to receive their observations as soon as possible;
- to launch an infraction procedure against the Greek authorities regarding Community legislation in this matter.

U4U will help colleagues in the procedures relating to this affair in order to protect the independence of Community civil servants and agents who could be threatened by national taxation. Let us not forget that this independence is guaranteed in particular by Community taxation, which is considerable, and the revenue of which is paid back into the overall Community budget.

U4U will stand alongside all colleagues, of all nationalities, whose working conditions and/or guarantees of independence could come under such attacks.

As we went to press: the Commission has just asked Greece to bring itself in line with Community regulations before possible launching an infraction procedure. We thank the Commission for taking this very positive initiative.

In partnership with GRASPE

GRASPE is holding a seminar with ENA on the European civil service on 10/11 December.

For more information: <http://graspe.eu>

Pupils resitting the year in the European Schools

For years now, too many pupils have had to repeat the year in the European Schools. This year, the level has reached incomprehensible heights, in particular in secondary schools.

Very often, parents receive little in the way of explanations. And yet having to repeat the year is a serious matter, a rare situation in the Member States. Having to stay down a year will affect the remainder of a pupil's time in formal education. Often, being a year late reduces his chances of getting into a good university.

The European Schools follow the curricula of their national counterparts. There is no pedagogical explanation for such a gap between the numbers of pupils repeating the year in the European Schools and national schools.

We would like the European Schools to provide us with the exact number of pupils repeating the year for 2008/2009, by section and class, in secondary and primary schools, with a detailed analysis of the reasons behind this. Statistics do exist, but they are too general for us to get to grips with the phenomenon.

Of course, we will take into account the link between the need for teachers and part-time teachers to undertake further training, so that the professional workforce can have the pedagogical means to guarantee an optimum level of teaching. Issues related to the maximum number of children per class and the real amount of time a child spends in school must also not be overlooked when considering this problem.

We would like to highlight the scale of the problem and make it mandatory for the European Schools to change their practices, working closely with parents, the unions and staff committees, including the Commission's staff committee, which set up a working group to look into the problem.

This information will also be analysed with the European School Parents' Associations to be in a position to cross-check the analyses and compare it with the number of pupils repeating the year nationally, for each section and level.

In this field and others, U4U's action will be carried out in an inter-union, unified framework.

Contact us if you have encountered this problem or if you wish to support our actions. We need your support to be in a position to provide concrete examples and to get the schools to rethink their policy.

U4U calendar of meetings

- 6 November, 2009 (loi 80, large Central Staff Committee room), meeting at 12:45 with **RELEX** colleagues on the new external service
- 13 November (SDME 7th floor, room E), meeting at 12:45 with **DG research** colleagues on the CDR, U4U presentation, etc.
- 17 November, (details of room to follow), **U4U plenary meeting**, taking stock after returning to work after the summer recess and looking to the future
- 20 November, room to be decided; meeting at 12:45 with **Trade** colleagues

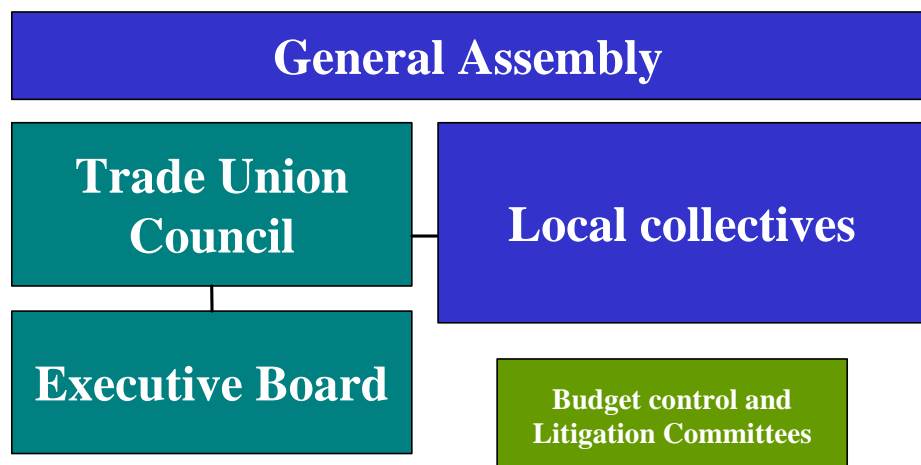


Statutes – helping us to stand up for your rights

The U4U [statutes](#) list the principles and values of U4U: a pro-European trade unionism, based on citizenship, democracy, participation and staying close to its members, unity, a rejection of corporate values and an attachment to the working conditions and the way we do our work. They reaffirm U4U's political objective to be the main force which pushes, along with all who support this goal, the revival of Community trade unionism.

The statutes contain key innovative provisions, providing food for thought for the latest campaign. U4U is based on groups from different DGs, which is the embodiment of our vision of a trade unionism based at the heart of the staff and in touch with their concerns. The representatives of these collectives in the Trade Union Council, elected in each DG, can be relieved of their functions at any time by the union members of these DGs.

The statutes foresee regular consultations between members and staff, guaranteeing freedom of expression internally and externally, including after a vote. The minority keeps the right to voice its positions publicly, including on the website and in this bulletin, because freedom of thought is always that of he who thinks differently. This amounts to a considerable breaking away from the current practices of 'democratic centralism', which are damaging to pluralism and the bringing together of trade union forces, which are nevertheless urgently needed to defend staff rights.



In order to put all of this into practice and defend staff effectively, we need you to join us.

Becoming a member is the best way to participate in our clean-up initiative and get your voices heard. It is vital to participate in local collectives and working groups in order to outline our positions and prompt all trade union forces to follow us in standing up for our careers in an effective way.

To [join](#), please transfer 5€ (members) or 50€ (donor member) into the account 377-008 5561-44 (J.-P. Soyer, treasurer), clearly indicating your name.

U4U: a structure at your service

Coordination, Representation, President: **Georges Vlandas**

General Secretariat: **Rafael Marquez Garcia**

Organisational secretary: **Alain Hubrecht**

Communications secretary: **Ruben Mohedano-Brethes**

Treasury: **Jean-Paul Soyer**

Vice-Presidents : **Tomás García Azcarate** (external relations), **Paul Clairet** (intellectual debate), **Jacques Prade** (setting up of the EEAS and the file on people with precarious working conditions), **Agim Islamaj** (statutory affairs), **Fabrice Andreone** (training), **Oren Wolff** (monitoring of U4U DG groups), **Jacques Babot** (50+), **Dorian Prince** (assessments).

Trade union council: **Agnès Lahaye, Sylvie Vlandas, Georges Spyrou, Yves Dumont, Beatrice Thomas, Catherine Vieilledent, Jacques Babot, Hélène Chraye, Philippe Keraudren, Elie Faraoult, Grazyna Wojciezko, Dyonissia Lagiou, Marita Kayamanidou, Lisa Kyriakidis, Stephane André, Kim Slama, Alekos Tsolakis, Ugur Muldur, Vlassys Sfyroeras, Monique Jacques, Ute Bolduan, Thomas Henokl, Nikolaos Christoforides.**

Manifesto: 'The Commission we want': **Paul Clairet**

50+ file: **Jacques Babot**

Statutory member and monitoring of the staff committees (LSC and Central Staff Committee): **Agim Islamaj**

Evaluation, Promotion: **Dorian Prince, Catherine Vieilledent, Tomas Garcia Azcarate, Georges Spyrou**

Working conditions: **Jacques Prade, Tomas Garcia Azcarate, Charles Henri Metzger**

European schools, creches, after-school centres, liaison with GUDEE (the Unified Group for Development in the European Schools): **Agnès Lahaye, Jean-Paul Soyer, Michael Stenger**

Liaison with Graspe (future of the European Civil Service) : **Philippe Keraudren, Catherine Vieilledent, Tomas Garcia Azcarate, Laurent Bontoux, Elie Faroult, Stephane André, Dyonissia Lagiou, Jean-Paul Soyer.**

Communication: **Ruben Mohedano-Brethes, Sylvie Vlandas, Fabrice Andreone, Jean-Paul Soyer.**

Members elected to the staff committee: **Fabrice Andreone, Ute Bolduan, Agim Islamaj et Georges Vlandas**

Agim Islamaj: Vice-President of the Local Staff Committee

Georges Vlandas : Vice-President of the Central Staff Committee

Get in touch with us, come and take part in our working groups, join us!

Get yourselves heard so we can do an even better job in standing up for your rights!