



Alicante, 20 May 2014

To the Presidents and Members of the Administrative Board and Budget Committee

U4U is a Brussels based trade union which defends the independence and strength of the European public service. A branch section of U4U was created earlier this year in Alicante.

On the occasion of his recent visit to OHIM, U4U communicated to President Barroso its concerns about the staff cuts programmed by the Commission. In particular, we insisted that the assignment of new tasks and the growth of core business cannot be accompanied by staff cuts. In reply we received the attached letter from the Head of Cabinet of Vice President Šefčovič.

We believe that the answers are alarming. While it is true that a financial crisis needs signs of solidarity (which we have given by accepted pay cuts), the economic situation of our host country cannot be a reason to deny our staff needs and have recourse to dubious contractual constructions.

In this context, the following issues need urgent attention:

- **The high number of consultants:** of a total of around 1.800 persons working at OHIM, only about half are directly employed by OHIM. This situation seriously endangers the independence of a body of the European administration and limits internal career and mobility possibilities for our staff.

- **The high number of national experts:** by assuming the total costs of our national experts, OHIM has created a new type of employment which is not foreseen in the Staff Regulations. The Staff Regulations stipulate that every post within the European administration must be open to the public and filled by a transparent procedure. The use of SNEs entirely paid by OHIM seems to contradict this principle and again limits internal career and mobility possibilities for our staff.

- **The temporary limitation of employment to a maximum of 10 years:** while a certain flexibility of employment is necessary, it should not be the rule, even more when the same staff is regularly re-employed but on a lower level than the level which was obtained at the end of the previous contract. This model of revolving contracts unnecessarily creates a level of insecurity and strain for our staff which can affect negatively its motivation and thereby the quality of work.

We ask you to discuss these issues and to take measures to solve the negative implications for our staff and for the independence of OHIM as a part of the European administration.

Yours faithfully,

Gregor Schneider
Vice President for Regulatory Agencies