



U4U. Union For Unity

Union for YOU

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Whichever way you look at it, YOU are part of everything we do!

VOTE U4U IN THE 2021 STAFF COMMITTEE ELECTIONS!

U4U has a team of four enthusiastic and experienced candidates ready to represent you in the upcoming 2021-2024 mandate of the Staff Committee. Never it has been more important to find an efficient way to make your voice heard. As many of us are working from home, and the possibilities to meet in person are limited, we need to explore new ways of communicating our concerns and influencing the management's decision making process. Working in parallel with our colleagues from Brussels, we will make your voice heard to management. Meanwhile our virtual and real door is always open!

U4U is standing for election with the following candidates (**click on the name below the photo for details**):



[Manuel Simões](#)



[Lucy Carney](#)



[Anna Giese](#)



[Gregor Schneider](#)

We have each worked in the Office for many years and between the four of us, we have covered practically all of the departments of the Office over the years. This places us in the ideal position of having a good global vision of what is going on. We have our eyes on the past, present and the future!

In the upcoming mandate, we will focus on:

- **A work-life balance that ensures a motivated and healthy staff**

This is one of the most important issues for staff at a time when the border between work-life and home-life has become blurred. We believe that a flexible teleworking scheme is in the interests of everyone now, but the cornerstones have to be carefully laid. We all have the right to disconnect. New rules need to be created that protect us from the psychosocial stress that comes along with the new ways of working.

- **Dignity and fairness in the workplace. Humanity and mutual respect - against bullying**

We all deserve to be valued and treated in an ethical manner, to be protected from bullying or any form of harassment and to have our right to privacy respected. The Office should promote equality in workplace policies and processes, and ensure fairness in the application of its administrative rules to staff. We believe that our senior managers should be given clear responsibility and resources for implementing the organization's commitments to ensuring workers' dignity, respect, and fairness. Furthermore, the Office should ensure colleagues have access to efficient mechanisms to report concerns, complaints, or potential violations of their rights.

- **Opportunities for women**

We believe that there is still a lot of work to be done for women in the Office. Career and managerial positions should be made both more attractive and easier to achieve for women. Furthermore, nobody should be asked to choose between family and career – this makes the focus on a proper work-life balance so important. We think that one way of bringing these issues to the forefront would be to establish the figure of an 'Advocate for Women's Issues' - we are convinced that a more female approach will eventually make the Office a better place for all. We commit to investigating and furthering this possibility during our mandate.

- **Objectives which are reasonable, fair and adapted to the individual**

Never has it been more important to ensure that objectives are realistic and adapted to circumstances. We will push for the human touch from management and for you to be viewed as adults that can be trusted, not numbers. We will encourage a change in the management mindset: just because you reach a certain numerical target one year does not mean that the next year you should be doing even more. This leads to burnout, stress and even sickness. It is impossible to remain motivated in the long-term if you feel you like you are just a cog in the machine. Quality should be balanced against quantity. The complexity of the work done should be properly taken into account. Colleagues should have enough time to do their work.

- **A secure and planned career development path for all colleagues**

The opportunity for career advancement and professional growth is a key element for motivation. The Office must offer all colleagues foreseeable and plannable career opportunities. Specific career paths should be drafted and linked to transparent requirements.

- **Avoiding precarious contracts in a European administration which has a huge financial surplus and creating job stability**

According to the Commission itself, the transition towards open-ended forms of employment should be fostered. Taking into account the success of our work, and the income we generate on a stable basis, the Office must avoid employment relationships that lead to precarious working conditions. The excessive use of atypical contracts (such as contract agents or trainees) should be avoided. Any 'probation period' should be of reasonable duration. Once a colleague has proven his or her value, there should be no further need to go through new selection mechanisms in order to obtain permanent employment. Offering job stability should be a primary goal of our agency as we need to offer services of – over time - a coherent and similar quality to the users of our system. Retaining colleagues who have proven their value contributes to the smooth running of the organization.

- **Fear to speak up**

This is one of the worst scoring areas in recent staff surveys. We believe that solving this problem requires a change in the whole culture within the Office and cannot be subject to quick fixes like bringing in motivational speakers to convince us to express ourselves more freely. Words need to be matched by concrete actions which inspire trust on the part of staff. Leaving comments on an in-house forum, for example, should be welcomed by management as an economical way of checking the pulse of staff and employees should not feel penalized for saying what they think or for not couching their ideas in positive terms. Ours is a multicultural environment with a host of different cultures and customs coming together in one place. If we are afraid to speak up and only say what we think management wants to hear, we risk ending up with a monochrome ideology that has nothing to do with the European values we are defending. We will fight to make the Office a place where staff are welcome to give corrective feedback and will be respected and appreciated for their honesty.

Please vote for us on 8 and 9 March 2021 so that we can put our ideas into motion!

Turn the page for more details on our candidates:

Manuel Simoes

I am Portuguese (born in Lorvão, Coimbra); I have one sister and 2 brothers; had my university degree in Germanic philology and linguistics in Lisbon, with post-graduate studies and other specific linguistic and translation studies in Mainz, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Nijenrode, Firenze, Napoli, etc. I worked at the European Parliament in Luxembourg and Strasbourg for 11 years, where I already worked as staff representative. I joined the Office in 1997. In EUIPO, I have been mainly active in the linguistic area, dealing with multilingualism projects and inter-agency relations EUIPO - Translation Centre. More recently, I joined the IBD department, where I integrate de Central Team and deal with horizontal activities and day-to-day management of the department. Maybe due to my early upbringing in less crowded geographies, I developed this sense of proximity with people. I am sensitive to injustice, because I know that it generally strikes those who are easy targets (not the blessed by privilege and automatic protection). And it is at that moment, where I feel that something has to be done. It is at that point where I feel that my work "counts"! And if you apply this vision to the professional life in our Office, that means defending and supporting those colleagues who cannot find protection elsewhere.

Lucinda (Lucy) Carney

I am standing for election for a second mandate on the Staff Committee as part of the U4U team. I have worked in the Office for over 20 years, starting my career as a linguist in the Legal Department in 1998. I have been working as a decision taker in the Operations Department since 2008. I would like to be elected to the Staff Committee to push for the best possible social dialogue and to make your voice heard in an environment where it is not always easy to speak up. Over the last three years, I have enjoyed representing staff and I feel there is still a lot to be done to make working at the Office the most motivating and rewarding experience for everyone.

Anna Giese

I am one of the few temporary agents who got her indefinite contract in 2004. Widespread interests have taken me from HR to Finance, then to Owners & Representatives, two years ago I landed in the BoA as a proofreader. This is something I enjoy because: could there be anything better than spending half of your day reading? My only possible answer is: spending the other half working for staff! The Staff Committee tempted me in 2014 for the first time and ever since, I have wanted to be on board.

Gregor Schneider

Trained as a German lawyer, with earlier professional experiences in private practice and government, I have worked in the Office since 2001, first, in the Legal Department, then in the Operations Department and now in International Cooperation. I decided to represent staff on various occasions when I felt that things needed to change. I served two terms under Wubbo de Boer and have chaired the Staff Committee for the last two mandates. Over the last years we have managed to convince management to engage in social dialogue with both, the Staff Committee and the trade unions. We managed to agree on basic principles of our staff policy. But there are many things that still need to change to make us a solid public organization that is not driven exclusively by client needs or numerical performance fantasies but by a concept of public interest that requires us to balance individual interests with the common good. And there is long way to go to make it an organization that offers motivating job profiles to all colleagues. I want to continue assisting the Staff Committee with my practical experience, legal expertise and strategic vision thus enabling a new generation of Staff Committee members to take the lead in future negotiations.