

Staff Survey : What do staff really want to know?

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The results of 2018 staff survey have just been published and as in previous years a vigorous communication campaign has been launched to communicate the results. This is a big marketing campaign similar to those carried out by commercial companies wanting to sell their products in the most effective way. The overall impression is that pretty packaging has been prepared to suggest things are not going badly overall while in fact nobody understands what is going on.

While we do welcome the Commission's initiative, aimed at involving staff in the evaluation of the organisation from working conditions to career development and senior management, we believe that this exercise is far from comprehensive for a number of reasons.

Firstly, staff response to the survey has been requested and even "imposed" on staff by direct management. Deadlines were extended due to the low rate of response which requested the intervention of the hierarchy in order to get people to answer the questionnaire.

But why did colleagues decide not to participate in the survey? Probably, as shown in the survey itself, people felt that no **effective action was taken based on the 2016 Staff Survey**, and only 39% believe that effective action will be taken as a result of this survey, a decrease of 10% since 2016.

Secondly, the results by DG and by Directorate have not been made public, which results in further staff discontent as they are most interested in their own working environment and what their colleagues think about it.

DG HR is providing these results to the Directors General who are under no obligation whatsoever to communicate them to staff. This lack of transparency in the transmission of data is difficult to understand in the Commission context, where each action taken within the organisation needs to be assessed and the weaknesses of previous initiatives need to be addressed. This transparency can also be beneficial for staff and increase its sense of belonging to the institution.

Instead, nicely pre-digested videos and messages are spread around in the DGs focusing on the positive results of the survey (mainly the willingness to give extra effort when required or having good working relationships with colleagues and team members). Undefined measures will be taken in accordance with undefined internal procedures on the basis of undefined information to prepare an action plan to follow up which will just put in a nice package (again) and distributed to staff to show that something has been done according to their requests (!?).

And it doesn't matter that Senior Management is poorly rated by half of the respondents that only 35% think that the relation between their performance at work and their career progression is satisfying, that less than 50% of staff feel involved in the decisions that affect his/her work. Or that the worst scores are registered in PMO and EACEA, staffed primarily by contract agents whose bad working conditions are well known or in OLAF where temporary agents did not have for long time any reclassification possibility.

Then this action plan will be hidden away in a drawer until it is time for the circus of the next staff survey to start again. We do have a question for the administration and for our DGs: Staff survey: where are staffs in all of this?

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