



# New HR Strategy: Enhancing the Commission's dwindling attractiveness

Luxembourg, 03/03/2021

Well before COVID-19 broke out, there has been a growing concern within the Commission that the European Public Administration (EPA), and the Commission in particular, is no longer appealing to bright professionals from some Member States.

COVID-19 brought with it a different perspective on our ways of working, notably on teleworking, and this is of course heavily influencing the ongoing reflection on the modernization of the Commission HR strategy. However, the reflection on the new normal should not make us lose sight of the structural roots of the attractiveness problem but rather focus on addressing them.

It is a fact that European Public Administration offers today less attractive salaries and career prospects, less long-term work diversity, poor prospects of adequate work/life balance, lack of adequate integration support mechanisms and worse working conditions overall than those that the targeted elite workforce can find elsewhere.

The 2004 and 2014 reforms are at the origin of some of these problems. However, many of them have been exacerbated by the Administration's wrong policies.

One of such problems is the current imbalance between permanent and non-permanent staff. **Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg** believes the Commission should gradually appoint non-permanent staff as permanent officials through systematic, regular internal competitions and external specialist competitions at higher grades (AD8 or higher) and facilitate access of contract staff to temporary agent positions.

Greater attractiveness requires more diverse and dynamic career paths and promotion based on performance and merit. **Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg** has also repeatedly asked for a proper, fair career development for contract and temporary agents with indefinite contracts.

The notion of "doing more with less" has been bad for staff and detrimental to the external image of the Commission as a prospective employer. The present Multiannual Financial Framework is likely to make matters worse, particularly as the Next Generation EU is not endowed with significant administrative appropriations for its implementation. **Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg** asks for a systematic, rational evaluation of staff needs to deal with areas of growing activity rather than across-the-board arbitrary staff (re)allocations or, even worse, staff reductions.

The physical working environment is essential to attractiveness, but there is a clear risk that the Commission is moving in the wrong direction in this respect, led by purely economic concerns. **Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg** considers essential that the Commission's building and workplace policy emerging from the new HR strategy, including provisions for teleworking addressing costs and ergonomics, be designed with people's needs and interests (including those of people with disabilities) as its central concern. Savings resulting from a more rational building policy, if any, should be used to remedy well-known issues.

**Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg** believes that, to enhance its attractiveness, the Commission should become a model organization in preventing and tackling harassment at work, and promoting equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion. The new HR strategy should also result in a complete overhaul of the present, obsolete approach to non-pecuniary benefits, reinforce existing services and bring about additional modern support services for newcomers and established staff, with particular attention to staff with children.

In the long run, ensuring that the European Public Administration and the Commission in particular remain attractive to EU citizens, notably younger ones, is key to ensuring that the EU continues to deliver on its highest political objectives for future generations.

**Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg** welcomes you feedback

**Need help? Contact us:**

[REP-PERS-OSP-USF-LUXEMBOURG@ec.europa.eu](mailto:REP-PERS-OSP-USF-LUXEMBOURG@ec.europa.eu)

**Your representatives:**

BECH et T2: N. MAVRAGANIS, C-A POPESCU	Gasperich: S. KARDARAS N. FETTAH-ZAIT	OP: I. WOLFF, M. COLLIGNON
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**UNION SYNDICALE FEDERALE LUXEMBOURG**

Contact: [REP-PERS-OSP-USF-LUXEMBOURG@ec.europa.eu](mailto:REP-PERS-OSP-USF-LUXEMBOURG@ec.europa.eu)

[www.usf-luxembourg.eu](http://www.usf-luxembourg.eu)

