



DG HR flash survey on the « New Work Environment »: reflection and flexibility!

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USFL welcomes the relatively high participation in this survey, but is concerned about the results and wishes to call:

- the staff to reflection,
- the management towards flexibility.

Telework brings obvious and significant benefits. During this pandemic, it has seduced many colleagues, who until then were not necessarily convinced.

USFL wishes to remind the "new" nature of this situation. All new and appealing, for sure, but with what long-term consequences?

Indeed, we are all "established" in our services, with colleagues we know quite well, because we meet them daily. In general, trainees/colleagues that arrived or left during the crisis did not meet with any of their colleagues except virtually. If telework would become the new norm, how could one possibly achieve the same level of collegiality or expect to hear phrases such as "I feel good in my new service the atmosphere is really nice there"? **What will be human in the way we work?** Do we really want to lose human contact or hear that "robot replaced man"?

What about colleagues who deeply need to effectively meet their fellow colleagues? We question the long-term physical and psychological consequences for any worker who lacks social contact and whose physical activity will be further reduced by an increased rate of telework. Let's also not forget those who have not been able to adapt to telework, and the increasing number of burnouts linked to the indirect increase in workload or even the mental burden of people who must concurrently take care of their children...

Isn't there also a match between the preference for telework and the fear of open spaces or hot desks to come?

Do those who are hoping for a high rate of telework ask themselves the question of what will happen if they are granted it? Depending on the place of origin, the place of residence and the actual place of work, will many colleagues still be able to claim the same salary conditions if they are teleworking over 50% from their place of origin?

Similarly to the Staff Regulations reforms, the changes that arose from previous staff surveys have not always been favourable to staff wellbeing or interests. It all depends on the interpretation of the results made by the various stakeholders/DG HR.

It is therefore legitimate to ask **what the real purpose of this survey is**, since for too long the savings have been mainly made "on the backs" of Staff. One might typically mention:

- the **continuous reductions in staffing** and the **replacement of individual offices with open spaces and/or hot desks**, at the expense of expected quality and working conditions,
- **reductions in heating and buildings renting costs**, thanks to telework, and finally the simple example of **personal garbage cans** that have already deserted individual offices in some DGs/buildings. The next logical step could be to decree that the institutions do not need European officials or other agents, as the work can be done at a lower cost by outsourcing or Member States authorities.

The purpose of this leaflet is to invite:

- colleagues to reflect about **the widening gap between the wishes they make and the results they expect**;
- the management to **trust its staff and provide real flexibility in telework or other measures in specific circumstances (e.g. family reasons, isolated colleagues, ...)**, to be defined on a case-by-case basis. For example, during this pandemic and while it was forbidden to go to the office, the administration should have allowed telework from the place that one chooses.

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