



Catering: drunken boat?

Luxembourg, 23/09/2022

Teleworking The new way of working (partial presence at the office) led the Central Staff Committee (representing all Commission sites) to have a meeting with OIL, OIB and DG HR in May 2022. The basic question concerned the catering model to be applied in the future to the Commission. This is still under study...

With the COVID crisis, Brussels had partially replicated the Luxembourg model of internalised catering functioning. The number of canteens (much lower than in Luxembourg) shows higher prices with a higher quality and quantity.

In Luxembourg a formula for revising the prices of canteens and cafeterias exists. It was duly negotiated between your staff representatives and OIL a few years ago. It is linked to the increase in the costs of raw materials and other management costs, including the salaries of our colleagues working in catering. This method also foresees that an increase of price is capped/limited by the increase of our salaries. However, this method approval was accompanied by an explicit request to improve quality and quantity of the dishes, which didn't happened so far. The method calculation was presented to the Local Staff Committee in December 2021. The pending quality and quantity issues were then repeated by the Local Staff Committee members.

Inflation, which suddenly resumed has put pressure on the current catering operating system. This important parameter further weights for an application of the formula, and thus to the increase in prices (of course limited by the increase in our wages (the method)). In passing, there was a rise in 'hidden' coffee prices due to the failure to repair some machines !

For **Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg**, it is neither logical nor acceptable to increase prices, only for budgetary reasons, without having a vision of a catering model covering all sites. This seems similar to the imposition of payment by credit card in our cafeterias: incorrectly sequenced, without considering the availability of money or the revenues of distributors. We would also like to add that, from a legal point of view, national laws state that cash is a means of legal payment and cannot be refused by a trader or collector.

For the **Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg**, the Luxembourg model of internalised catering has all the advantages for success. Indeed, an outsourced system does not allow flexibility and would have higher costs and prices. For the Luxembourg model to work, sufficient financial investments are actually needed though.

USFL remains in favour of maintaining the internalised management, which proved successful, particularly during the crisis and, especially with the introduction of the Ecoboxes, allowing all staff obliged to come to the office to benefit from meals in the canteen. **Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg** remains convinced that OIL and the colleagues responsible for catering have the human resources, expertise and management skills if they are given the resources.

Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg remains available to discuss this historically sensitive dossier with the relevant departments (OIL, DG HR, DG BUDG) in the context of the attractiveness of the Luxembourg site and the Commission departments, in particular because catering is part of the social policy that the institution needs to develop

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