



Staff association of the European Commission

Ms Ursula Von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Brussels, 14 October 2024

Dear President,

TAO the Independents has analysed with great interest and deep concern the Mission letter addressed to Mr Piotr Serafin, Commissioner-designate for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration. **We share your vision for a modern and effective public administration : agile, reactive, and capable of allocating resources where they are most needed.**

In the light of previous experiences, **we are strongly convinced that staff representatives should this time be involved** from the onset in the launching of this large-scale review of the Commission's organization and operations that you now announce, playing an active role in the High-level reflection group on the future of the Commission's civil service.

TAO, as a reliable actor of our social dialogue is persuaded that the Commission should remain an attractive employer, selecting the best candidates and retaining talent. **We are at a crossroads and must evolve, rearrange, or improve to make our workplace more attractive, inclusive, and fit for purpose.**

The European Commission should take stock of the **teleworking experience** which has become a standard work pattern following the pandemic, defining the direction of travel any modern public administration must aspire to. Collaborative working structures and methods should be empathic, efficient, and safe e.g. Videoconferencing should complement not substitute face-to-face interaction and it should sound and feel natural.

We should tread lightly and circumscribe the use of generative AI at the workplace. Machines can be more precise, but the limitations of self-learning systems together with corpus-based text generation should not be downplayed. More importantly, Artificial Intelligence lacks a moral compass and cannot replace human beings. As of yet it can only enhance their performance.

Temporary agent selection procedures should be revamped, with full guarantees assuring merit-based selections, communicating vessels between temporary agent posts and internal competitions acknowledged, as well as with contract agents, and a balance between external and internal competitions should be reassessed so that the level playing field is reinstated.

The simplification, harmonisation and speeding up of HR policies and processes flies in the face of the institutional crisis faced by EPSO. The transition to fully virtual testing for competitions with no alternative testing sites has resulted in waves of litigation because the technical hiccups were commonplace. The externalization of test invigilation together with online candidate support services have proven unsatisfactory.

Furthermore, the **new linguistic policy for selection procedures** with L1 and L2 any of the 24 official languages although watertight in terms of protection against litigation, makes testing specifically for competence in EN an impossibility. For highly technical profiles this seems unreasonable.

Before the challenges we confront collectively, to best serve the citizens, we stand ready to deliver in accordance with the responsibilities we have been entrusted with.

With kind regards,

Raúl Trujillo
TAO the Independents
President



Cc: Commission staff members

TAO - The Association of Independents

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