



Staff association of the European Commission

ROTATION EXERCISE 2024:
FINALLY, SOME LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS... OR NOT?



Brussels, 23 April 2024

As it is known, for a number of years **TAO-The Independents** has been advocating for a more human approach to the rotation exercise. Unfortunately it has become an unnecessary and very stressful exercise for most colleagues and existentially devastating for some.

In 2022, on the basis of several alarming testimonies received, we published an article¹ denouncing the practices of our administration regarding this exercise; sadly characterised by opacity, arbitrariness and lack of flexibility. Then we already proposed some urgent measures to mitigate those unnecessary hectic months for our colleagues and their families.

Before addressing the Institution further on this outrageous situation, we decided to take a responsible evidence-based approach through a staff survey on the 2023 mobility exercise, which undoubtedly confirmed our worst assumptions² Over 50% of colleagues are dissatisfied with the mobility exercise, 80% of colleagues consider they suffered 'significant stress' during the mobility exercise, after two rounds, 47% of colleagues were not assigned any of their five postings of preference!

In view of the gravity of the situation, **TAO** publicly presented a comprehensive but realistic and feasible roadmap to put an end to such unnecessary, counterproductive and very inconsiderate exercise summarised in the following table:

More transparency and accountability: to end with the pervasive sensation of being treated unfairly. There should be greater efforts in genuinely aligning job-descriptions with actual expectations from the EU-Delegation and that these correspond to the interview competencies assessed. Also panel members should declare any potential conflict of interest just like we do for the evaluation committees in procurement procedures and the presence as observer of a local staff committee representative should be compulsory.

¹ <https://tao-afi.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2022-a-contract-agents-mobility-exercise-odyssey.pdf>

² <https://tao-afi.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023-TAO-sheds-light-on-the-CA-mobility-exercise.pdf>

The use of references for the evaluation should be structured by guidelines and documented in the evaluation report. Evaluators are regularly approached by colleagues recommending candidates and/or they may ask for the opinion of former colleagues.

The evaluation report should be shared with candidates who deserve and will benefit from feedback that can help them grow. The panel may still keep certain aspects confidential, but those confidential aspects should be shared with a staff representative who should sign a commitment to keep this confidential (but under scrutiny).

The **principle of alternating postings in terms of the level of difficulty of living conditions** may be difficult to implement since the mobility exercise is a complex puzzle to solve. Either other forms of compensation are granted for those who against their will end up in hardship countries again or it is maintained it should be implemented. This may require organising interviews in two rounds: first with those in hardship countries only. And only once those in hardship countries have been assigned a new position, should the rest be interviewed.

Conditions in hardship countries: The living difficulty indemnity (ICV) ranging from 0 to 40% is not a sufficient incentive for those colleagues who end up risking their lives for work and compromising the health of their families. If the ICV ranged from 0 to 80% it would be more appealing for certain colleagues to apply to hardship posts. Currently, many end up in a second, third or even a fourth hardship country coerced by fear of losing their job.

In the **allocation of posts**, the matching should be undertaken solely considering the candidate's expressed preferences and the EU Delegations ranking of interviewed candidates. Third party influences should be totally censored such as, *inter alia*, Cabinet members lobbying for their friends.

Allowing Contract Agents to voluntarily take **more than the current limit of one year of sabbatical off work** (so-called *congé de convenance personnel-CCP*), would grant more flexibility in the mobility exercise. Officials can take up to 12 years.

Increasing the number of posts in Brussels for CAs from EU Delegations keeping their indefinite contract and in turn facilitating the transfer of CAs from HQ to shift to EU Delegations would help in filling up vacancies and avoid sending CAs to countries where they do not wish to live.

Ultimately, **if CAs were to become Officials**, as they should since they undertake Officials core tasks at all levels and not temporary ones, **most of the above problems would be solved** because there would be significantly less fragmentation in terms of staff categories, hence multiplying the opportunities for mobility. It will seem shocking to hear for CAs that the relevance of competencies of Official candidates to EU Delegations is generally lower than of CAs and this will be more and more the case as CAs continue to gain more experience in Delegations relative to Officials.

Finally, we have received some positive echoes regarding the 2024 rotation and also some others quite shocking to say the least. Time has come now to have a comprehensive picture allowing a factual assessment and put forward targeted measures. To do so, we would like to know what your experience has been in this regard and would be grateful if you could answer the question hereafter and share with us any relevant information.

Did you receive any offers among the 5 positions you expressed an interest in?

[Yes](#)

[No](#)

Finally, should you have any suggestion to improve the Mobility System or you should want to share with us your experience and thoughts please write to us at **osp-tao-afi@ec.europa.eu** (for which we thank you!).

TAO-The Independents remains fully committed to follow closely this matter of general interest and remains at your full disposal.

Your TAO-The Independents team



Join TAO-The Independents to reinforce the staff's action and to be informed on your rights!

TAO-The Independents

European Commission

Rue Joseph II, 70 – 1049 Bruxelles

+32 2 296 25 89 // osp-tao-afi@ec.europa.eu

 tao-afi.eu

You receive this email because you are an official or agent of the European Commission and therefore listed in its formal directory.

TAO-The Independents is an official EC staff association. [Here](#) to unsubscribe. [Here](#) to view our Policy statement.

Your **TAO-The Independents** team:

Join TAO-The Independents to reinforce the staff's action and to be informed on your rights!

TAO-The Independents

European Commission

Rue Joseph II, 70 – 1049 Bruxelles

+32 2 296 25 89 // osp-tao-afi@ec.europa.eu



You receive this email because you are an official or agent of the European Commission and therefore listed in its formal directory.

TAO-The Independents is an official EC staff association. [Here](#) to unsubscribe. [Here](#) to view our Policy statement.