

Salary Adjustment 2009: Defending our rights, defending the rule of law!

The 'pay dispute': The Commission proposes an adjustment of our pay and pensions by 3.7%.
▪ Several Member States' Delegations, at first at the Staff Regulations Group, then in CoRePer, oppose it on the grounds of the financial crisis and its present social and economic consequences. ▪ The Commission maintains its proposal and the staff of the institutions supports it by giving a strike warning. ▪ In Brussels, the Council's staff goes on strike and huge demonstrations take place in front of the *Justus Lipsius* Building.

Is this a 'pay negotiation'?

Not really! Or at least it was not supposed to be. Our pay system is not based on free bargaining, but on a '**Method**', which ensures parallel evolution of our salaries with those of Member States' civil servants, thus reflecting the social and economic situation in the Member States: when the Member States increase or decrease the salaries of their civil servants, ours increase or decrease the following year.

This 'Method', after being negotiated between social partners, was enacted by the Council and annexed to our **Staff Regulations**. The current Method will expire at the end of 2012. It is legally binding and leaves no room for manoeuvre either to the Commission, which collects statistical data and drafts the proposal, or to the Council, which must adopt it. Since 1972, we EU staff have accepted whatever result the Method produced, favourable or unfavourable. The Council must do the same!

Indeed, the Council, which in 2004 enacted the Method in order to preserve *industrial peace*, is now responsible for causing industrial strife, by blocking the annual adjustment.

Should we surrender in the face of the Press campaign?

No! For more than one reason:

1. Because the 'Method' for adjusting our salaries is part of Community Law, with which all must comply and, most of all, those who have enacted it.
2. If the European Union is facing difficulties, it is an additional reason for ensuring the recruitment and retention of a civil service of the highest level of competence, which in turn can only be ensured through the principle of '**parallelism**'.
3. We have to stand in **solidarity** among ourselves and, above all, with the less well off among us, whether in active employment or in retirement. Giving up our rights can only weaken the EU's credibility, without in any way relieving the situation of the worse off.