

The logo for the Union Syndicale Fédérale Luxembourg, featuring the letters 'USF' in white on a red circular background.

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# Hope dies last

Luxembourg,  
01/04/2024

Last year at the same period of the year, we reflected on our future working space ([link](#)). The Institution [Commission] is slowly but surely moving us to what is now called Dynamic Collaborative Space, the '[newspeak](#)' for what is a generalized open space and hotdesking approach ([link](#)). We already mentioned it, our Institution puts the cart before the horse and tries and puts us, similarly to the sizing-down/closure of the catering services (canteens and cafeterias, whether called 'plus' or not ([link](#))), in a situation of a 'fait accompli'. All these files are pushed without any respect of the collective bargaining your working conditions deserve, in fact impose. Thus, we find ourselves in a surreal situation where the Administration's narrative get priority over substance.

Any problem with open spaces? A code of conduct will help you cope with change.

But is there light at the end of the tunnel? Well, it seems the end of the tunnel is under water. So, if we get there, we might as well drown. Nonetheless, there is a Greek saying indicating 'hope dies last', so there is hope even after the end of mankind. But let's be positive and inform you about what else is cooking in the Administration's pot.

Managers' awards: forget about 360 degrees feedback. Indeed, for the last 15 years, it is the intended follow-up after each survey, but never implemented despite countless pilots we don't know the results off. Instead, the Administration is elaborating two types of managers' awards.

First, there is a yearly 'best managers award'. It would seem that Key Performance Indicators are being elaborated in that respect: zeal, micromanagement, tickology (or the science of producing document without any useful content just for the sake of fulfilling managers' to-do list) are on the list.

Second, the Administration intends to run a bi-yearly 'clear-writing award'. Every manager will receive by ARES a list of buzzwords (which by definition do not entail clear or precise concept or action). Then, they will need to produce as much formal correspondence as they could in the next two years incorporating those words. Thanks to artificial intelligence (AI), the Institution won't need any additional resources to hold the scoreboard of that latter award. AI use by managers to produce the correspondence will though be prohibited and they would need to indicate their sources OR they will be allowed to use internal AI text generator to ensure a fair level playing field between managers.

Because of budget constraints, prices for these awards will be limited to the top 3 managers per work site per award. As a Trade Union we have been trying to get a better deal for Luxembourg but Heading 7 [European public administration] hits rock bottom. Prices will entail a non-Fotoshopped picture of winners with the Commissioner in charge of Budget and Administration. That picture will be done at the next visit of that Commissioner, at the only event where he meets (part of the) Staff, meaning when he comes for the medal ceremony. Winners will get an extra bottle of bubbly for free, just for themselves and without needing to declare it as a gift. A specific legal basis derogation is underway accordingly. There is even better news, the frequency of the Commissioner's travels to Luxembourg will increase. Indeed, Elon Musk's Company is working on

a low-cost private jet franchise. So, we might have more awarded managers in the end. We will follow the file and keep you informed.

As to non-management rewards: the Administration thought of that, building on the applicable legal basis (Staff Regulations, code of good conduct). Forget about IDOC and OLAF enquiries or the obligation you all have to formally declare any activities, even if they are not public and/or not generating any income. We fought for your rights and especially your right to freedom of speech. And we were heard! You are now all promoted (in fact designated volunteers) to Chief Communication Officers ([link](#)). That will certainly generate savings in the communication expenditure of the Commission. Legally though, some control service will need to be kept. It would seem that IDOC and the Commission internal mediation service are building a joint proposal in view of a merge and including a coordination with OLAF and the European Mediator ([link](#)). This will bring its own additional share of economies of scale for sure. After all, the budget is limited and we all need to contribute to tackle that issue.

But of course, all these proposals are somehow put on hold because of the upcoming European elections and the related (and quite relative) standstill of affairs at the Commission ([link](#)). But the Administration is smart, it will find a way to implement them (if it isn't the case yet – sorry, I just [winked](#)).

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