

UNION SYNDICALE - SERVICE PUBLIC EUROPEEN - BRUXELLES

AVENUE DES GAULOIS, 36 - 1040 BRUXELLES - TEL. 02/733.98.00 - FAX. 02/733.05.33

us@unionsyndicale.eu

POLICY OUTLINE FOR THE 2010-2013 TERM OF OFFICE adopted by the statutory General Meeting on 27 May 2010

I. INTRODUCTION

Following the onset of the world financial crisis and with the prospect of unprecedentedly large public deficits in many EU Member States, Union Syndicale-Brussels (USB) reaffirms its total commitment to ensuring the promotion and development of the European Public Service.

USB would like to point out that the European Public Service has played a fundamental role over the last 60 years in the successive advances in the process of European integration, which have been accomplished in peace and prosperity, uniting 500 million citizens in 27 Member States that were separated by deep divisions at the end of World War II.

USB is convinced, more than ever, that only a body of officials encompassing all grades and functions, playing their part in the Community method, who are competent, independent and permanent, has enabled this immense progress to be made; and that only such a body of officials will make it possible, in the years ahead, to cope both with the current internal upheavals and challenges and with the disruptive consequences of globalisation, which threatens to reverse our previous social and economic gains.

Against this disquieting and uncertain background, USB once again unreservedly condemns the bad practices of the institutions, especially the Commission, which for decades has engaged in social dumping, creating more and more insecure and underpaid jobs in order to perform the increasing number of tasks entrusted to it by the Member States, instead of demanding permanent posts.

II. CHALLENGES

Renewal of the salary and pensions adjustment method

In reality, this is now a package with three elements (salary adjustment method, pension contribution calculation method, special levy) which will expire at the end of 2012. If we want to

renew one element among these three – namely, the salary adjustment method – the Commission and, above all, the Member States are very likely to put the two others on the table.

Salary adjustment method

During the 1960s, EU officials had to go on strike every year to secure an adjustment of their salaries. Despite this, over a period of about ten years, they lost 30 % of their purchasing power compared with the results which they would have obtained if their purchasing power had moved in parallel with that of officials in the Member States. At that point, Union Syndicale designed, called for and finally, in 1972, secured a first salary adjustment method based on the principle of parallel development. Since then, a method of this kind has been applied continuously: the parallel development principle has been implemented for 38 years now. The Council has never liked the method, and had to be forced to accept a new method in 1976, 1981, 1991 and 2001/2003 – in other words, whenever it terminated the existing method or the method expired. Union Syndicale is and remains convinced that the only alternative to a method – i.e. annual conflicts – would yield a result similar to that obtained in the 1960s when a method did not yet exist and EU officials were losing a considerable percentage of their purchasing power.

USB will demand a package which is equivalent overall. **The method itself will have to be almost identical**, apart from a few minor technical details which could be negotiated. However, any technical changes made must not undermine its mandatory character. A new method absolutely must guarantee parallel movement in purchasing power. If purchasing power increases by 2 % for national officials, it must also increase by 2 % for us. Any attempt by Member States to change the method into a mechanism for bringing about convergence (e.g. by establishing parallelism in absolute amounts) must be fought.

As regards the technical aspects, there is only one on which we insist: increases in national officials' social security contributions reduce our net pay, but we have our own increases in social security contributions, especially in the pension contribution which has risen considerably, further reducing our net pay. We are currently paying twice over for changes in social security contributions. We are therefore calling for changes in the social security contributions paid by Member States' officials to be excluded from the calculation so that this element is not double-counted.

The salary adjustment method must continue to be applied, mandatorily, to pensions as well.

Once again, we are calling for it to be enshrined permanently in the Staff Regulations.

Union Syndicale is sensitive to the issue of the method's application, especially as regards the lowest salaries of officials and contract staff.

Union Syndicale will set up a wide-ranging process of internal reflection in order to define its position and, if appropriate, its proposals, which will be put to a General Meeting before the start of negotiations on the next method.

Method for the calculation of pension contributions

The current method is acceptable in principle. We are calling for a longer reference period as regards the interest rates used to calculate pension contributions (most pension schemes take 35 rather than 12 years as a basis) since this would avoid the considerable fluctuations in contribution rates which we are experiencing at present.

Allowances

USB considers that since the allowances system was reformed and rationalised in 2004 no further change is justified. Any attempt to reduce benefits must be fought.

Pensions

USB considers that no change to the pension scheme is justified. As part of the reform of the Staff Regulations in 2004, the Member States imposed a raft of restrictions and adverse changes. Further concessions cannot be accepted.

Combating insecurity

Like all real trade unions, Union Syndicale defends, first and foremost, the weakest, whose position is the least secure, together with the principle of equal pay for equal work.

USB denounces the violation of the letter and the spirit of the Staff Regulations and the negative trend in human resources management which consists in employing contract staff, in the worst case, or, in the best case, temporary staff, to carry out tasks which are structurally a permanent requirement.

USB is alarmed by the new adverse trend of creating Agencies of all kinds which are progressively hollowing out the Public Service and jeopardising the Community method. USB is calling for a stop to be put to the practice of changing permanent posts into budgetary resources, enabling more and more contract staff, lacking job security, to be employed. USB demands the re-establishment, across the board, of the virtuous circle created by the good practice of only employing contract staff

to replace absent officials, in accordance with the current rules of the Staff Regulations.

To combat insecurity, USB:

- ◆ Will oppose any extension of the possibilities in the Staff Regulations for employing contract staff and will demand that the letter and the spirit of the CEOS be adhered to.
- ◆ Reaffirms the principle that permanent tasks = permanent posts
 - Contract staff in function group I should be given contracts for an indefinite period (with a probationary period) from the outset.
 - This applies to contract staff in all function groups outside the institutions.
- ◆ Wishes to give existing contract staff the possibility of becoming established, in particular by enabling them to participate in internal competitions.
- ◆ Wishes to create a real career for contract staff by adding at least two additional grades at the top of each function group.
- ◆ Is fighting for a pay increase for contract staff.
- ◆ Is combating the practice of systematically ranking contract staff too low.
- ◆ Is demanding a mobility system for contract staff similar to that which exists for officials. The appropriate way to do so is to draw up an establishment plan for all contract staff posts which are for an indefinite period.
- ◆ Will reinforce its strategy of obtaining decisions from the Court of Justice recognising that Community directives and regulations on worker protection apply in their entirety to the Institutions as employers.

Recruitment and careers for officials and temporary staff

USB considers that the unduly low level at which staff have been recruited since 2004 does not provide for equivalence between career development before and after the reform. USB is calling for the level at which staff are recruited to be raised across the board, to AST2 / AST3 and AD6 / AD7.

USB will tackle the issue of new colleagues – often with remarkable professional experience – recruited at grades which are too low, using all the means available within the Staff Regulations, namely internal competitions, derogations with respect to seniority in the grade, and higher promotion rates in the grades concerned.

USB will defend the guarantees of promotion laid down in Annex I B to the Staff Regulations, which are the real cornerstone of our careers, and will fight for promotion systems which are fairer and more motivating for the majority of officials.

EEAS

The Lisbon Treaty provides for the creation of a new European External Action Service (EEAS), to be headed by one person holding the posts of High Representative, Vice-President of the Commission and President of the Foreign Affairs Council.

It seems inevitable that a whole batch of staff will transfer to the EEAS when it is created (subject to derogations in the Staff Regulations). The Union Syndicale, however, finds it unacceptable to permanently grant the EEAS, Council and Commission the power to transfer colleagues from one institution to another. The Union Syndicale will fight for EEAS colleagues' right to apply for internal vacancies at the Commission and at the Council without any distinction being made according to origin.

With regard to the Staff Committee to be set up for the EEAS, the Union Syndicale regrets the fact that Vice-President Šefčovič has given in to rival unions' calls for the EEAS staff to be deprived of a staff committee of their own, subjugating them to the Commission's staff committee. The Commission has thus traded away the staff's right to their own representation, in order to obtain a majority in the Commission's Staff Committee for its proposals for amendments to the Staff Regulations. The Union Syndicale will continue to demand that the EEAS be given its own staff committee.

The Union Syndicale will continue to fight for alternative welfare cover to be extended to the local agents of **all** Commission and EEAS delegations – a victory which was won in principle as far back as 1991. It agrees that the Commission should take advantage of the opportunity to acquire a legal basis for the system, which was created further to an initiative by the Union Syndicale.

Equal opportunities for all

The Union Syndicale will continue to lend support to an equal opportunities policy for men and women, new and old staff, and those with disabilities.

The 2004 Staff Regulations created unprecedented rights to enable staff to achieve a better work-life balance.

The Union Syndicale will continue to fight to make sure that these statutory rights are applied in everybody's interest. In keeping with our values, which are rooted in solidarity, the Union Syndicale will defend all staff, whatever their position under the Staff Regulations, and will strive

to improve conditions of employment and work.

The Union Syndicale will remain alert in its defence of the staff's well-being in the new climate of authoritarianism, which is becoming increasingly apparent in an obsession with assessments, forced and often arbitrary mobility and the use of management techniques based on pressure, techniques which have now been left far behind by recent advances in human resources management. The culture of control in our institutions has a negative impact on morale and output. Only too often, conceptual thought and a sense of initiative, which are the very foundation upon which the European Civil Service builds all its endeavours, are devalued in favour of "image" and bureaucratic management, a state of affairs which the Union Syndicale will continue to fight.

The Union Syndicale will demand an effective policy to prevent stress and all forms of harassment at work.

Our members' General Meeting in September 2008 gave us a mandate to step up a gear in our demands for equality between men and women. The incoming Executive Committee will continue to work on this mandate. For the recruitment of new colleagues, we will demand parity between men and women on selection boards and committees. For the selection of managers, the goal will be an equal number of men and women in middle and top management posts.

Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme (JSIS)

The Union Syndicale is committed to preserving solidarity between all its members, whatever their position under the Staff Regulations, and, in pursuit of financial balance, will oppose any reduction in benefits.

III. ORGANISATION OF THE TRADE UNION

Internal budget

Following USB's internal conflicts, the incoming Executive Committee had inherited a budget which was heavily in deficit, placing the trade union at risk. During the term in office which is currently coming to an end, the Executive Committee has implemented occasionally painful measures to limit that deficit to 20 %. The General Meeting asks the Executive Committee to take steps to eliminate the shortfall in the current budget, and to ensure that the next budget will show a surplus. This is essential if we are to be prepared to call staff out on strike in the event that Member States refuse to accept a new method or try to impose drastic cuts in our rights.

New sections :

EEAS

USB will endeavour to establish a specific and unique Union Syndicale for the EEAS. If that proves impossible, we will propose to our members the creation of a specific section within USB.

Retired officials

Special efforts need to be made to support members who are due to retire or who have already retired, in particular through the organisation of social gatherings. A policy of raising awareness among members with a certain level of seniority, members who have taken early retirement and retired members will be organised in order to guide the Executive Committee's discussions. The latter will re-examine the possibility of creating a section for retired members within USB.

Contact with our members

Better use will be made of the House of Union Syndicale, which already provides members with a trade union contact centre for training and legal issues. The Executive Committee will continue to organise parties there to increase contacts with and between all USB members.

Our remit

Union Syndicale will continue to play an active role on the **staff committees** of the various institutions, even where it does not form part of the majority; it will regularly insist on the correct application of the Staff Regulations and protect staff interests.

In order to be able to achieve all our objectives, it will be important to obtain a sufficient number of seats at the statutory elections to constitute a majority capable of implementing most of USB's programme.

Union Syndicale Fédérale, of which we are the main member organisation, represents men and women throughout the European civil service, wherever they are employed. Through our affiliation to the European Trade Union Confederation, we will continue to be fully integrated into the European trade union movement. The new Executive Committee will endeavour to improve cooperation within USF even further in the interests of all members.

Adopted unanimously by the statutory General Meeting of Union Syndicale on 27 May 2010.