

CONFERENCE OF STAFF ASSOCIATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
CONFERENCE DES ASSOCIATIONS DU PERSONNEL DES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
15th CONFERENCE

*16-17th OCTOBER 2014
ESRIN, FRASCATI*

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-Programme-

Thursday 16 October 2014

09:00 – 09:30 Registration

09:30 – 12:00 Follow-up previous conference (*informal session*)
Update from last year's participants & discussion

13:30 – 14:00 Registration

14:00 – 14:20 Conference introduction

14:20 – 18:00 Session A / Moderator: Tillman FROMMHOLD (ECB)
Salary adjustment method

- [Pierre-Philippe BACRI \(European Commission\)](#)
- [Céline GROBON \(CERN\)](#)
- [Marc BAECHEL \(Council of Europe\)](#)
- [Matthew MONTAVON \(FICSA\)](#)

16:00 Coffee break

16:30 Discussion

18:00 End of Session A

Dinner in a restaurant in Frascati city centre

Friday 17 October 2014

09:00 – 12:15 Session B / Moderator: Nadine MICHALAK (Council of Europe)
Performance evaluation

- [Christel OSTERROTH \(OECD\)](#)
- [Tillmann FROMMHOLD \(ECB\)](#)
- [Ivan BABOVIC and Evelyn KORTUM \(WHO\)](#)
- [Bayo CALLENDER \(ICTY\)](#)

10:30 Coffee break

10:45 Discussion

12:15 End of Session B

12:15 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 14:15 Preparation of next Conference

14:15 – 16:45 Session C / Moderator: François PICOULEAU (ECA)
Renewal and training of new representatives

- [Marina PARSONS \(EBRD\)](#)
- [Joel LAHAYE \(CERN\)](#)
- [Klaus NOETZEL \(EUMETSAT\)](#)

15:30 Discussion

16:45 End of Session C

16:45 – 17:00 Conference wrap-up

❖ Introduction

Jean Dumoulin, Human Resource Business Advisor and local head chair at the ESRIN presented the three main topics addressed in this conference:

1. Salary adjustment methods
2. Performance evaluation
3. Renewal and training of new representatives

Anya Demarle, Executive Secretary at the OECD's Staff Association invited Tillman Frommhold to moderate who started by congratulating Anya, Joel and Pauline for all their work in preparing this conference.

Salary adjustment method was stated as being a “phoney” issue in that there is not a negotiation approach used as opposed to what happens on a national level. It was also considered as a key issue in that people have to move and Organisations therefore have to pay good salaries in order to attract staff members.

Session A

Salary Adjustment Method

❖ Presentations

Presentation by Pierre-Philippe BACRI, European Commission

The salary adjustment method follows two principles: parallelism and automaticity and the method is based on three main parameters:

- The evolution of cost of living in Belgium and Luxemburg
- A correction coefficient
- The evolution of purchasing power of national civil servants amongst eleven Member States.

The method has a counterpart which is the “Solidarity Levy” of 6% but that is not applicable to pensions or any other allowances.

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

The Solidarity Levy arose many interrogations within the Conference.

- What exactly is the Solidarity Levy? This levy shows solidarity with others and allows money-saving. The levy cannot be changed and only appeals or strikes can show discontent.
- What is the cost of living based on? It is based on composite indexes provided by Belgium and Luxemburg authorities.
- The criterion that was used to determine the referent Member States was based on the idea that those represented had to correspond to at least 75% of the European Union’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Presentation by Céline GROBON, CERN

In the five-year review, the salary adjustment is made of two principles : career paths from C to G are recruited internationally (Noblemaire principle) whereas career paths from A to B are locally recruited (Flemming principle). In both cases, the objective is to rank these employers following the family situation as “single”, tax treatment as well as the cost of living. Purchasing power parities are also taken into account. The results are only used as guidance but discrepancies have to be justified.

The annual review takes into account different criteria:

1. The cost of living in Geneva on a one-year basis (August from the previous year to August from the current year).
2. The real net movement of salaries from Swiss Federations civil servants.
3. The real movement of salaries of officials from Member States who contribute to at least 2% of the CERN’s budget and who publish statistics.

4. “Negative memory” from previous years must be taken into account when calculating the Cost-Variation Index (CVI).

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

- What Member States are taken into account for the adjustment of salaries? They are the Member States that contribute to at least 2% of the CERN’s budget (France, Italy, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands).
- The five-year review is used when payments are too low.
- Are these adjustments applicable to pensions? The system used for pensions is totally different and the five-year review is typical to the adjustments made to salaries.
- As regards to the “negative memory”, can it be forgotten and what happens if the result is negative every year? Negative memory must be taken into account and can go on for several years.
- Does the survey concerning local employers only take into account sectors in Geneva? Data is not only collected from Geneva but also from Savoie, Haute-Savoie, the Ain and the Vaux.

Presentation by Marc BAECHTEL, Council of Europe

The method is based on three pillars:

- Parallelism with 8 national civil services with a reference index of 100.
- Inflation.
- Purchasing Power Parities: Brussels is used as a city base. This parity is not strictly applied and a “corridor” of +2% or -2% is used.

Affordability clauses can reduce the annual adjustment. For example, at the Council of Europe, the Council of Ministers has the sovereign right to take any specific measures but there are conditions to apply the affordability clause. In States where there is few staff members (grades B and C), Councils can also take appropriate measures. In case of high inflation (+7%), an intermediate adjustment can be made.

Finally, the current method does not involve studies of salary levels which was the case in the previous method which showed any loss in competitiveness.

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

- How is the consumption basket constructed regarding housing costs? Housing costs represent around 30% of the consumption basket.

- The survey is conducted frequently but the results are not shared with staff representatives although the method affects the colleagues.
- Is an actuary paid to validate the results? It was answered that an actuary is only employed by the staff representatives to check the percentage of contribution to pensions.

Matthew MONTAVON, FICSA

Professional salaries are set and adjusted with reference to a comparator, the US civil service base salary, and a post-adjustment is then made to take into account the cost of living to ensure parity of compensation worldwide. Every five years there is a comprehensive review of salaries and the post adjustment, but interim monitoring also take place to ensure salary comparability.

General service (support staff) salaries are set based on comparability to the best local employers. The latest survey indicated that the UN salaries were 9% too high compared to the local market conditions. Salaries of existing staff were not reduced but any new person coming into the Organisation would be paid at the lower level. Salaries of existing staff would be frozen and not increased again until local market conditions indicated a need for adjustment.

Salaries in the UN are governed by the International Civil Service Commission, set up to be independent of politics. The idea is that people are separate from political manoeuvring and that the decisions are taken on a technical ground rather than a political ground.

The UN General Assembly called two years ago for a comprehensive review of salaries and allowances. This review is motivated in part by the increasing budgetary pressure felt by member nations.

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

- Is the post-adjustment salary taken into account in contributions for pensions? The post-adjustment amount does not influence the amount of pension the individual will receive. But pensionable remuneration amounts are set sufficiently high to take account of living costs in retirement.
- What is the salary of reference from the US civil service? The salary that is taken into account is the one of individuals working in Washington where a large number of US civil servants are located. A large number of positions similar to those in the UN are identified for the comparison.
- Discussions have evolved around the amount of leave and politicians have underlined the fact that UN Staff get too many leave. But in reality, American civil servants who serve overseas will get extra days (US and local holidays, extra days for home leave). In the end, UN staff receive a comparable amount of less than the US civil servants serving overseas receive.
- What are the working hours used? A 7.5 to 8 hour-day is standard but may vary due to local work customs.

❖ **General discussion**

There was a general concern regarding the difficulty in recruiting people from some countries and notably from European States that can be explained by the difference in salaries.

The automaticity of the system is also put into question by the Member States who would like to keep some flexibility in salary adjustments. For example, at the CERN, the adjustment result is used as guidance and Member States can decide to not follow the new figure. This flexibility also results in a high level of staff rotation whereby young staff are recruited and who are paid less.

Many of these Organisations are now entering a period of “modernisation”, that is to say that different tools can be used to cut costs. Recently, a new principle was introduced as the “zero nominal growth”. This principle brings to the table the fact that the salary method will stay what it is. Therefore, in the event of an increase of salaries, there will have to be a cut in posts. Salaries could previously be frozen but negative salary developments can now happen.

Session B

Performance Evaluation

❖ Presentations

Nadine Michalak, moderator, quoted Motowidlo who defined performance as “the total expected value to the organisation of discrete behaviors that an individual carries out over a standard period of time”.

Presentation by Christel Osterroth, OECD

At the OECD, performance evaluation is annual and a maximum of five objectives are set between the staff member and the manager. The rating is done by the immediate supervisor and in case the staff contests the result, he/she can go to a re-evaluation Commission. Five different ratings can be given from “outstanding contribution” to “unsatisfactory performance”. A Performance Improvement Plan can also be implemented in case of underperformance.

The Staff Association has tried to renew the system and notably: review the ratings, prolong the PIP to six months, offer exceptional leave days, introduce a tick-box in the evaluation form to assess the meetings took place and change the re-evaluation Commission to an external body.

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

- At the OECD, the evaluation is annual and is independent from the length of service in the Organisation.
- What happens for agents who are at the top of the steps? In this case, there is a possibility to grant them extra days of leave.
- Are there staff representatives within the re-evaluation Commission? The answer was negative and the Commission is *ad hoc*.
- How do these extra steps impact on the salary? An extra step corresponds to a salary increase of 2 or 3% of the salary.
- Do the establishment of objectives as well as the evaluation take place in February? It is possible to do the two together or to establish the objectives in February and then evaluate at the end of March.
- How many officials are considered as unsatisfactory? Between 1% and 2% of officials are rated as unsatisfactory.
- How many steps does the OECD have in total? There are between eleven and fifteen steps for each grade.
- At the end, there is a possibility of an *in-situ* promotion granting higher-grade functions, or a horizontal transfer.

- What happens if an official receives a continuous “improvement needed” rating? A PIP is implemented.
- Are skill assessments taken into account in the evaluation? The performance evaluation is only based on achieving the objectives.
- Are the extra days of leave pensionable? The answer was negative.
- How can the results be compared between the different directions? Standardisation happens at the direction’s level.
- Are there training efforts made for both managers and officials? There is indeed a pedagogical effort that is made with notably explanations on firing lines.

Presentation by Tillman Frommhold, ECB

T. Frommhold stated key elements regarding the system: “formal process”, “assess”, “individual contribution”, “with regard to a certain deliverable” and “wider framework”.

The “annual appraisal” has a first part that concerns the previous performance cycle and a second part that contains values and competencies. In case of two consecutive appraisals revealing underperformance, a particular procedure can be implemented.

In addition, every two years there is also a 270 degree online assessment whereby managers are assessed by staff members and counterparts (not by their own managers in this context).

However, the annual appraisal has no direct link with the Annual Salary and Bonus Review (ASBR) that provides for individual salary increase and which is considered as a comparative exercise among staff in the same business area. However, the missing link is perceived by many staff members as lacking fairness and there is no transparency regarding the comparative character of the process at business area level, only general statistics are provided.

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

- Is the underperformance notified in writing to the staff member? Officials have to be warned in writing.
- Emotional intelligence is complex as it can be interpreted differently.
- The 270 degree is an exercise that managers have to do but it has no direct link to the appraisal and only shows how the manager is perceived by himself and others.
- The external company that is involved in the 270 degree assessment is paid by the ECB but does not intervene in the appraisal system.

- What are the positive or negative consequences of the appraisal? The ASBR can go from 0 to 14 steps and promotions can be granted in case of outperformance. A second “red zero” in the annual appraisal will result in the initiation of the underperformance procedure, starting with the set-up of a performance improvement plan and in worst case ending with a dismissal.

Presentation by Ivan Babovic and Evelyn Kortum, WHO

The “performance management and development system” (ePMDS) has four ratings: “exceeds expectation”, “meets all expectations”, “meets most expectations” and “falls below expectations”. At the WHO, there is a will to introduce a culture of dialog between staff and management and also to encourage staff participation.

The evaluation is based on an accountability framework that sets work objectives, competencies and a personal development plan.

In case of underperformance, both an informal and a formal process can be implemented, of which the latter is the implementation of a Performance Improvement Plan proposed by the manager.

However, the system is criticised in that some managers are often reluctant to complete the ePMDS and that the system is seen as only used as a punishment. The organizational culture needs to experience a drastic change which makes this tool efficient in terms of a culture of continuous communication and feedback of staff and managers during the performance period. This is not currently the case.

Presentation by Bayo Callender, UNICTY

The electronic “performance appraisal system” (e-Pas) has three components: an individual work plan, a mid-point review and an end-of-cycle appraisal. Core competencies and core values are also taken into account. The evaluation is done by a first reporting officer and then a second reporting officer who ensures that the first assessment is accurate.

There are four ratings: “exceeds performance expectations”, “successfully meets performance expectations”, “partially meets performance expectations” and “does not meet performance expectations”. The staff member can also complain about the rating either in front of the UNICTY’s Staff Union or through Human Resources. A 360 degree feedback system also allows the staff to assess their experience with the Management.

There is a comparative review process whereby an individual score is given to each staff member. The formula looks at performance, integrity and length of service and one point is given to every month of service.

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

- How much does the downsize represent? The downsizing represents 30% of staff members.
- Is there a sanction following an appeal? There is no punishment but there can be a change from a “fixed-term” to a “temporary” contract.
- How does the UNICTY handle frustration resulting from downsizing? It is not about job satisfaction but the importance of having a job.
- Is a staff member allowed to contest if his evaluation is rated “successfully meets performance expectations” when he thinks he deserves a higher rate? It was answered that contestations are only limited to the negative rating.
- When did the comparative review process begin and has there been a spike in complaint cases? The process was introduced in 2013 and claims were brought up in front the Administrative Tribunal but remained unsuccessful.
- How are the two reporting officers appointed? These are the people to whom the staff member is assigned to upon his entry. The Organisation is based on teams and the first reporting officer is the team leader. The second reporting officer is the higher officer in the chamber. However, there are no outsiders that deal with the evaluation.

❖ **General discussion**

This idea would be to have a unified system but each Organisation has its own way of evaluating. Furthermore, the evaluation is often done by people from different backgrounds or nationalities thus explaining different interpretations.

There was a question as to whether the whole system was done for the wrong reasons. Indeed, there are only a few underperformers and these are often well known by their colleagues. Overperformance, on the other hand, is not often rewarded. It was also added that appraisals cause tensions between the staff as well as ineffective competition.

Bottom-up evaluation was perceived as very positive and management trainings have been implemented in some Organisations. However, the lack of sanction towards bad management remains an issue.

Session C
Renewal and Training of New
Representatives

A. Demarle introduced François Picouleau from the ECA as moderator who underlined the importance of ensuring the takeover by younger generations.

❖ Presentations

Presentation by Marina Parsons, EBRD

The European Bank Reconstruction and Development has a Staff Council composed of fourteen representatives. They work on a voluntary basis, do not receive monetary reward and have no time release. The Election Committee is the main player and is composed of one lawyer as well as two staff members. The Staff Council has the power on the election process and on campaign rules.

To attain full representation, there is planning and flexibility. The Staff Councils reviews the constituencies on a regular basis. The election rules provide a possibility to relocate constituencies who do not have enough representatives.

Training is mandatory and allows the staff to gain deeper knowledge in a particular subject as well as covering broader subjects such as the functioning of the Staff Council, salary strategies or internal justice mechanisms. Human Resources issues are also tackled through training.

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

- Are the representatives renewed every year? M. Parsons replied that only half of them were renewed every year.
- Why does the EBRD not have a staff association and how are finances dealt with? Historically, it was set up as a Staff Council and the bank grants them a budget but remains insufficient.
- Does the Council formally exist with the Status and are dues mandatory in order to have a Staff Association? The bank's rules say that the bank should allow staff a freedom to associate and an association is where members have to pay an amount.
- How many people stay at the EBRD? The number of short term contracts is increasing, notably with fixed-term contracts and short-term contracts. However, the majority remain under open-ended contracts (70% of staff).
- At the EFTA, there is a limited duration life expectancy in the Organisation. Consequently, it is not viable to get members to pay as the time spent in the Organisation is too short and the interest for staff representation is very low.
- Would converting to a Staff Association give more rights than a Staff Council? A Staff Association only ensures that rules are respected.

- Dues that are given to the Staff Association are essential as it allows it to have its own budget and remain independent from the Administration. Furthermore, its professionalization is also a great asset.
- Is a Staff Association different from a Staff Council and are members of staff automatically members of the Staff Association? The name given to such a body is not important. An Association defends all staff members and dues are given by members.

Presentation by Joel Lahaye, CERN

At the CERN, there is a Staff Association as well as a Staff Council. Staff pay dues but the Association defends all the staff's rights. The Staff Council is composed of staff representatives who are elected by members of the Staff Association.

Training and development programs have been introduced but are not yet officially recognised by the Organisation. This allows the representatives to gain knowledge about a particular subject and therefore be aware of evolving subjects. Training officers can be internal or external and roles, functions and missions are defined with the representative. However, the problem remains in the small amount of time they spend to their mission (approximately 10%).

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

Training is essential as badly-informed representatives end up leaving the councils. However, there was a concern that representatives would be reluctant to attend these trainings. In the end, these were successful.

Another concern was raised regarding the protection of the representatives' jobs. At the CERN, the chairman can go back to his previous job or be appointed to another one after discussion with the Administration.

The reconciliation between career development and the Staff Association's development was also mentioned. In some of the Organisations, staff representatives often sacrifice their career development notably at the CERN and at the ECB. However, the OECD offers the possibility to the chairman to reach a certain level of knowledge after his mandate and he also benefits from step increases.

It is also important to motivate staff representatives in order to keep them within the Staff Association. To this extent, representatives are often called to intervene and this is a way to involve them in projects.

Presentation by Klaus Noetzel, EUMETSAT

The Staff Association Committee (SAC) is composed of six people who are allowed to dedicate 20% of their time to the Committee. The SAC represents all staff and has day-to-day activities. The SAC is also takes care of social activities (twenty social clubs) to integrate new comers, and the Organisation provides a budget to run these clubs.

There are two days of training given by an external mediator. The role and areas that have to be worked on are then defined and senior Management is also presented to the representative.

Questions and additional comments regarding this presentation.

- What was the purpose of the survey? The survey was triggered by management and a 360 review was proposed but finally rejected by Management.
- Are the decisions taken at a correct level? In the Organisation, there is a lot of micro management and there can be issues with confidentiality. A possibility to fill out a paper form was mentioned but this proposal was seen as too expensive by the Management.
- A question regarding the training was asked. The SAC searched for a trainer and the latter set up soft skill training. However, this means that the training is coloured with mediation. On the other hand, every member should be aware of mediation and how conflicts should be solved.
- A final question was asked regarding the social clubs. There are approximately twenty social clubs that are financed by EUMETSAT. A club fee is directly paid to the chair of the club. The SAC only provides a financial background but another committee deals with the clubs (2 staff member and 2 consultants).

❖ General discussion

Recruiting staff representatives is not an easy task and motivating candidates is essential.

The question was asked on how to deal with new staff representatives who might pose a problem. However, this is not an issue as the elections are a means to control who these new representatives are.

Motivating candidates is also essential and recognising their work is part of it. To this extent, producing good quality documents is a way to show that their work is solid. Furthermore, motivation goes through the insurance that their job will be protected during their mandate.

Finally, communication and information are key factors to attract new candidates for staff representation.

❖ **Proposals for future topics**

The main topics that were mentioned are as follows:

- Harassment
- Geographical mobility
- Employment contracts
- Staff motivation
- Invite experts to reveal the best practices
- Organise the cooperation on a more regular basis
- Hierarchy of rules between the different contracts
- Long-term care
- Sum-up the rulings from the different Administrative Tribunals