



Le Renard Déchaîné

Nr 1 / 2 (1st part)

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To be continued in
LE RENARD
DECHAINED N°2/2

R&D and the CDR

From criticism...

Ever since the initial draft of the new evaluation (CDR) and staff promotion procedures were first presented, and throughout the negotiations, **R&D** has resolutely held the view that these proposals were wrong and, in particular, were unsuitable for our Institution, and that they should therefore be altered in several ways.

... to assisting staff...

However, the reservations we expressed did not blind us to the fact that **in addition to any political move aimed at**

‘reforming the CDR’, we had to provide staff with any assistance they needed to protect their rights in the context of these procedures.

It follows that since the exercise got under way, **meetings with the various Directorates-General** have been organised with a view to obtaining comprehensive and **s p e c i f i c** information that had patently not been provided in the course of the onerous training courses organised by the consultant selected by DG ADMIN.

What is more,

R&D provided representatives appointed to Joint Evaluation Committees and Promotion Committees with training and offered them **o n g o i n g assistance**; we also involved ourselves in **following up on hundreds of individual cases** by offering colleagues legal expertise and model forms.

Although these efforts enabled staff to steer clear of even more **s e r i o u s consequences**, **R&D** has always been aware that its representatives’ commitment and



Renouveau & Démocratie

Political secretariat:
Cristiano Sebastiani

Address :
L-102 7/16 – B-1049
Brussels

Email : Osp-
Rd@cec.eu.int

Tel : +32-2-
299.92.39/295.56.56

Fax : +32-2-295.30.14

Website :
www.renouveau.org

the follow-up on individual cases, however thorough-going they may be, were not enough. **Quite simply, the CDR has to be reformed!**

... to a detailed analysis of the shortcomings observed...

Ever faithful to its promise to listen constantly to what colleagues have to say before proposing necessary corrective measures, **R&D** launched a very wide-ranging consultation exercise of staff (see our leaflet of 7 October 2003), and of members of Joint Evaluation and Promotion Committees, with a view to identifying shortcomings in implementing CDR/PROMO procedures and determining appropriate remedies.

R&D's avenues of reflection for CDR reform centre on the following four objectives:

ensuring that the system, for the Institution as a whole, operates consistently and homogeneously;

basing assessment on colleagues' true merits, and

not on a statistical and mechanical distribution of merit points (follow-up to the Tatti decision);

installing effective and transparent mechanisms with a view to avoiding such matters as favouritism, the abuse of power, and the settling of old scores;

implementing new measures aimed at ensuring that account is taken of merit over the whole period of service, and eradicating prejudice associated with change.

... to proposed reforms of the CDR...

Given the crowded timetable, we need to work in stages: first, we must bring in amendments for the exercise in 2004, and secondly, focus on the corrections to be determined and applied when the CDR is first introduced in the context of the new structure heralded by the new Staff Regulations.

In practice, we need to introduce the most urgent amendments before the 2004 exercise gets under

way: in particular, we need to restore consistency to the system as a whole, and avoid any new form of discrimination between colleagues depending on where they work.

To make sure that the exercise is **consistent**, and to halt the **35 assessment and promotion procedures** that we currently have, there is a need in particular:

to lay down clear, transparent rules, and a single corpus of assessment norms for the entire Commission;

to strengthen DG ADMIN's regulatory role, which must revert to being that of a genuine guardian of the Staff Regs;

to establish a single internal set of rules for all Joint Evaluation Committees;

to group several DGs within a single Joint Evaluation Committee;

► to submit proposals for the allocation of priority points to Promotion Committees.

Results of our analysis of the most important matters to be changed immediately in the CDR/PROMOTIONS system

Problems identified during the 2002 exercise

- ▶ A large number of grievances that have been triggered by the CDR, and which are having a disastrous effect on staff motivation, the working environment within services and team spirit.
- ▶ In addition to causing disputes, the procedure has shown that it is quite unable to deal with grievances effectively, to provide effective mediation between the parties, and to find shared solutions.
- ▶ Far too frequently, validators' submissions have turned out to be completely pointless.
- ▶ Joint Evaluation Committees have been able to resolve very few disputes...

Proposal for the 2003 exercise

The CDR must be a real instrument of dialogue, and cease being an additional source of disputes. The CDR must be a real instrument of dialogue, and cease being an additional source of disputes.

To achieve these aims, the procedures need to be adapted and, particularly, implemented in order to deal with any source of disputes as quickly as possible, and to do so with a view to serving the mutual interests of those mainly concerned.

To prevent grievances, there needs to be genuine dialogue:

In order to facilitate discussion in the course of dialogue with an official being assessed, and to ensure that the discussion focuses on the real issues underlying the exercise, **the assessor must announce his/her proposed number of points** on the basis of objectives fixed at the beginning of each exercise.

It is important to value **team spirit**, one of the jewels in the Institution's crown, and the fixing of objectives must be consensual, and consistent with the work programme of the Unit/Directorate/DG.

Every official must feel that he/she is an integral part of general project that can only be achieved through everyone making a contribution.

A key role must be given to **self-assessment**; this needs to be a genuine starting-point for the exercise, and any comments by the assessor that contradicts the self-assessment must be based on factual matters observed by the parties.

New functions need to be introduced with a view

The role of the validator:

Disputes between the official being assessed and the assessor must, if possible, be resolved in a three-cornered discussion involving the validator.

The role of the Joint Evaluation Committee:

If no solution can be found, and if the dispute is the subject of an appeal to the Joint Evaluation Committee, the Committee must, depending on the nature of the problems, either propose solutions or ask the appeal assessor to mediate between the main parties concerned.

- ...and the appeal assessor has too often ignored the Joint Evaluation Committee's opinion, and simply issued stereotyped decisions lacking substance.

The role of the appeal assessor:

It is important to ensure that, where the appeal assessor does not go along with the unanimous opinion of the Joint Evaluation Committee, s/he must present the reasons for his/her decision to the Committee.

When the Joint Evaluation Committee's opinion is not unanimous, the appeal assessor must independently take all the factors of the case into consideration, and hear each of the parties (separately and together) with a view to finding a solution that satisfies all the parties.

- An equitable assessment of merits has often been impeded by the automatic and pre-fixed distribution of merit points, by target averages, and by the perverse system whereby 'to give one person a point, you have to take it off someone else'. This system operates even worse in small groups.
- Assessors have systematically referred to the need to abide by averages, statistics, ranges and all sorts of other erudite methods of calculation to justify proposed marks.

Assessment must be genuinely based on genuine merits.

Coordination measures must be implemented to ensure that assessments may be compared.

However, assessors must always be free to make up their own minds when evaluating performance, and **mark officials being assessed in the light of their merits, and not on the basis of a pre-established**

- ***'Forced ranking': a monster that needs to be annihilated!***

There are good grounds for abolishing any reference that might be construed as seeking to ensure a force and *ex ante* distribution (the 'forced ranking' of staff into classes of merit e.g. 15% in a fast-track career, 75% in a normal career, and 10% in a slow career).

And it should never be forgotten that 'forced ranking' is a statement of the failure to improve management style. It takes real courage to try and see how someone achieves what s/he has been asked to do: it is far too easy to hide behind statistics.

- Small groups: You don't have to be an expert statistician to know that it does not make sense to apply averages to small groups. An average has even been applied in a 'group' of two people!

Small groups

As Promotions Committees have already proposed, specific measures need to be adopted immediately to deal with small groups – for example, by reverting to the 'small units' system.

- ***35 different assessment and promotion procedures!***

The standards applied to the assessment of merits need to be consistent.

- Unacceptable forms of discrimination have crept into the Institution as a result of the absence of any consistency or standardisation in the merit assessment criteria applied by each DG, and the impotence of DG ADMIN when confronted with the sometimes nonsensical decisions reached by DGs.

In order to ensure that merit is assessed consistently, a standard grid applicable to all Commission services needs to be written into the guidelines used in preparing for the CDR. And that needs to happen at the beginning of each exercise.

An assessment of merits over the previous period must be conducted on the basis of this initial grid: the rules of the game must be clear, and well known to all the actors from the moment the exercise gets under way.

If there can be differences of interpretation regarding output in respect of different kinds of job (e.g. as a result of the typology of objectives), these differences

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DECHÂINE N°2/2