



Survey

OPEN SPACE

PMO

Results and Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

A buildings policy at the expense of quality of work/ life of staff is in contradiction with the programme fit@work

Since October 2010 (1), R&D singled out OIB for its irresponsible policy of setting up "Open Space" offices at any cost...

Already at that time, R&D denounced the drift of such a policy adopted by that Office despite the commitments made in 2007 by Mr. Chêne, Director General of DG HR and Mr Kallas, Vice-President, regarding the Manual of Standard Building specifications (MSB) (2).

The only purpose: to make budget savings on the back of colleagues without worrying about their welfare or working conditions!

We thought this intention had left aside, however it re-merged worse than ever with the " hot desk" policy in 2014 (3).

Thus began the proliferation of open space offices. Some Directors-General will say "NO" and stop this momentum, while others let themselves be seduced.

R&D , always present, denounced any plans for these new office arrangements, which endanger the welfare of staff and do not in any way respect part 2 of the Housing Conditions Manual (HCM) (4).

Certainly, if some functions in certain services are more conducive to be made in open space, others, however, due to their specificities and specialties, need to be performed in a single office.

3 vice-presidents in charge of staff matters, Messrs. S. Kallas and Šefčovič and Mrs. K. Georgieva, acknowledged that, while continuing to meet budgetary constraints, the working environment and the well-being of staff should be and must remain a priority for the Commission.

We recognize that provision is made in the 2017 draft budget for a reduction of building space of 79,000 m² by 2024 (from 822.000 m² to 743.000m²), due in particular to the staff cut of 5%, the transfer of resources to the executive agencies, the non-renewal of certain building leases, the necessary renovations of buildings belonging to the institution ...

1 - [Tract R&D 08 october 2010— Open space : colleagues to be crammed into offices!](#)

2 - [Manual of standard building specifications](#)

3- [Tract R&D 03 december 2014 - Draft Commission : everyone in « hot desk » mode?](#)

4- [Manuel des conditions d'hébergement des services de la Commission—Partie 2](#)



However, this rationalisation of space needs to be considered and studied by analysing the situations case by case and providing optimal solutions for each department concerned.

In addition, new working time arrangements (teleworking, flexitime and part-time) cannot be an alibi to automatically and continuously worsen working conditions and reduce the office spaces of colleagues that benefit from them.

Despite scientific studies showing damaging effects of "Open Space" and "Hot Desk", on staff health and efficiency of services, OIB persists and signs.

As the Housing Conditions Manual (HCM) imposes the necessity of obtaining feedback from colleagues involved before implementing any Open Space proposal, services have engaged in botched consultations, claiming later to have received a favourable opinion from those colleagues.

This was the case regarding the PMO with a comic-cut presentation that will be remembered! (5)

Therefore, faithful to its commitment to be always attentive to colleagues, R&D decided to address Brussels PMO staff directly by launching a proper survey, guaranteeing the anonymity of responses and the reliability of results, in order to defend this file with arguments and comments of interested parties themselves.

285 colleagues responded to the survey, representing a total participation of 67% of PMO staff. This shows that this policy is felt deeply by the staff concerned, most of them Contract Agents at our service.

We conducted a detailed analysis of the results based on Commission's reference texts. These results will be released without delay.

We especially thank all PMO colleagues who participated in this survey and we announce already that we will renew this exercise as many times as necessary, in other services that could be heading in the same situation.

Cristiano Sebastiani,
President

5 - [Tract R&D 21 April 2016 : Removal of PMO to CSM2. All in Open Space!](#)

Other communications R&D :

- * [Black Pearl 1: Degradation of working conditions in sight in the New Black Pearl Building](#)
- * [Black Pearl 2: Pearl peril for passengers of the Black Pearl](#)
- * [21 January 2016 : Do you know that the Commission wishes to make from an old building a new « window » for the Institution?](#)
- * [27 January 2016: The Commission always behind the times: The Economist confirms R&D's position on the adverse effects of open-plan office...](#)
- * [15 February 2016: « Open Space » Odyssey—Act II, Scene III DG DIGIT enters the stage without consulting staff!](#)
- * [19 février 2016 : La Grande « Nomade » - La Commission adopte une nouvelle Politique immobilière!](#)
- * [03 March 2016: Black Pearl - Finally DIGIT opens the dialogue](#)
- * [04 may 2016 : Survey on satisfaction Open Space—PMO](#)



METHODOLOGY

Concerned staff

The survey was sent to all Brussels PMO colleagues or 424 people.

285 colleagues participated, representing a rate of **67%**.

Collection method

EU Survey

Duration

From 02 to 25 May 2016

Method used

The method used was based only on staff consultation regarding the implementation of open space and directly related to the executed jobs and tasks.

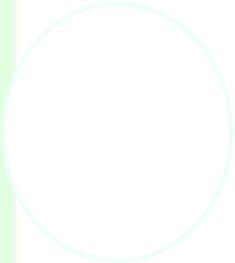
We did not want to segment responses by category of personnel.

We used 8 closed questions corresponding to the specific jobs and 5 open questions to allow colleagues to provide additional information to certain closed questions.

Protection of personal data in this survey

The response to this survey is voluntary and collected anonymously. No link will be established between these answers and any information that could possibly allow the identification of their origin

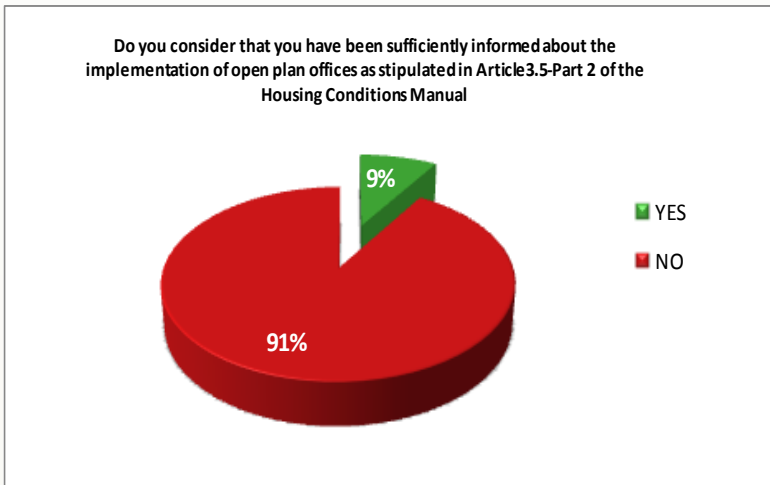




RESULTS

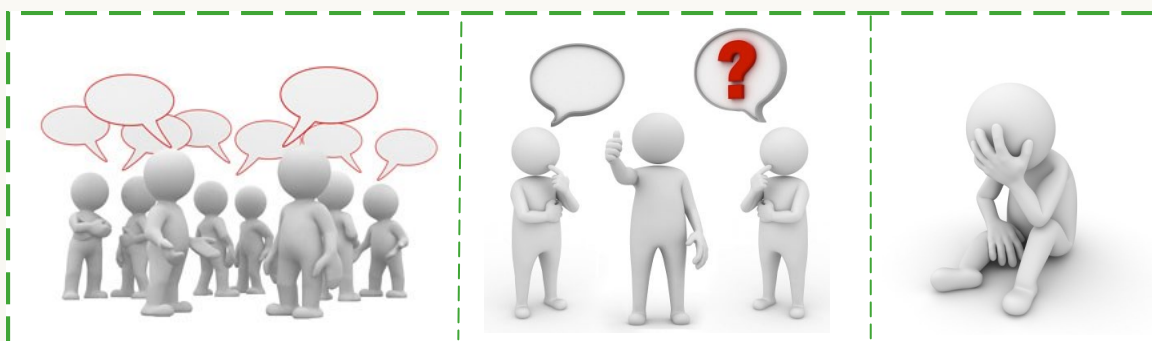
CONCERNING THE STAFF CONSULTATION

1) Do you consider that you have been sufficiently informed about the implementation of open plan offices as stipulated in Article 3.5-Part 2 of the Housing Conditions Manual (“all open plan offices relocation project must be subject to an internal preliminary study for applicant DG in association with the staff concerned in particular to check compatibility of tasks with a landscaped working environment”)?

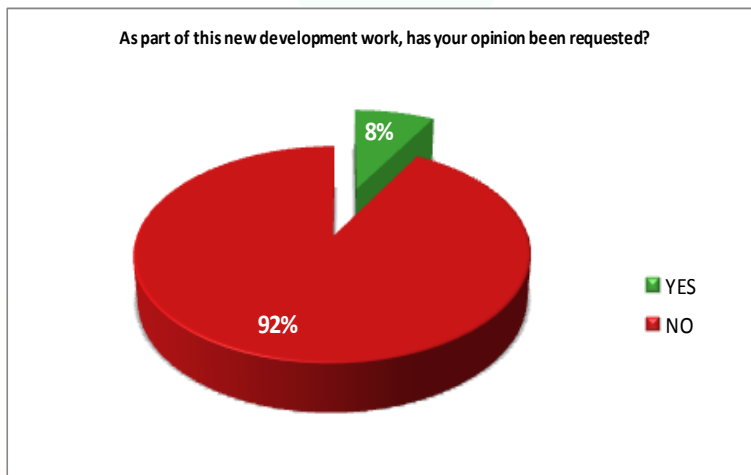


91% of colleagues feel they were not sufficiently informed about the implementation of open plan offices.

According to experts, the lack of consultation of staff in relation to decisions affecting them is a psychosocial risk factor (cf: [Le Renard Déchaîné spécial Harcèlement et autres risques psychosociaux p43](#)).



2) As part of this new development work, has your opinion been requested?



92% of colleagues considered that their opinion was not requested.

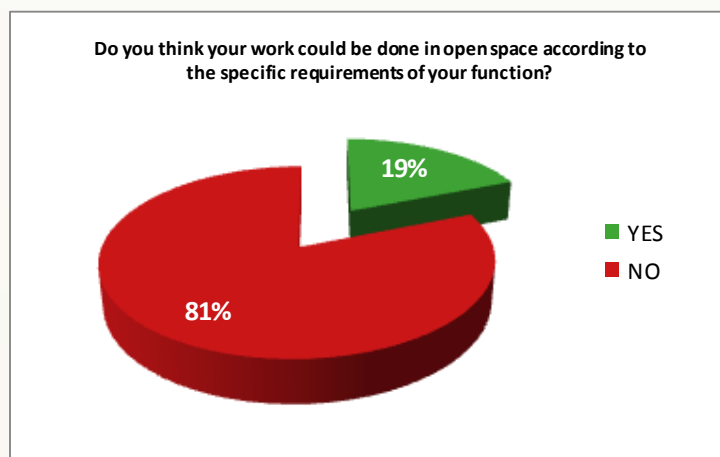
For the remaining 8% of colleagues who feel that their opinion was requested; 5% of them think that their opinion was taken into account 2% partly and 1% not at all.

The Housing Conditions Manual (HCM) of the Commission services, Part 2, states that "before any requirement for space planning, DG applicant must conduct a preliminary

study of functional needs related directly and indirectly to the entity to implement Since the preliminary study, user services must involve staff in the project definition (modification of premises and workstations) in consultation with the Office of the place of employment. This is part of the double objective to promote ownership and personalization of space."

CONCERNING JOB REQUIREMENTS

3) Do you think your work could be done in open space according to the specific requirements of your function?

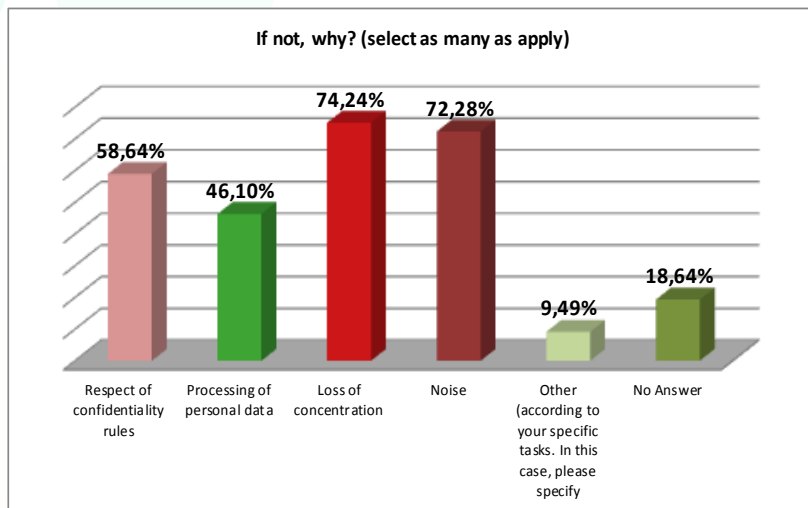


81% of colleagues consider that their work cannot be done in open space. Staff working

at PMO is usually assigned to tasks that require a high degree of confidentiality.



3.1) If not, why?



Loss of concentration was the first concern to be raised by 74.24% of colleagues. This is understandable since the assigned tasks require a particularly high level of attention especially for matters relating to the medical field, the processing of debts and wages ...

Noise pollution is also cited by 72.88% of colleagues, which complements the fear of losing their concentration.

Compliance with confidentiality rules is also a major concern for 58.64% of colleagues.

Then comes the **processing of personal data** for 46.10% of them.

Depending on the specificities of the tasks performed, colleagues provided additional clarification.

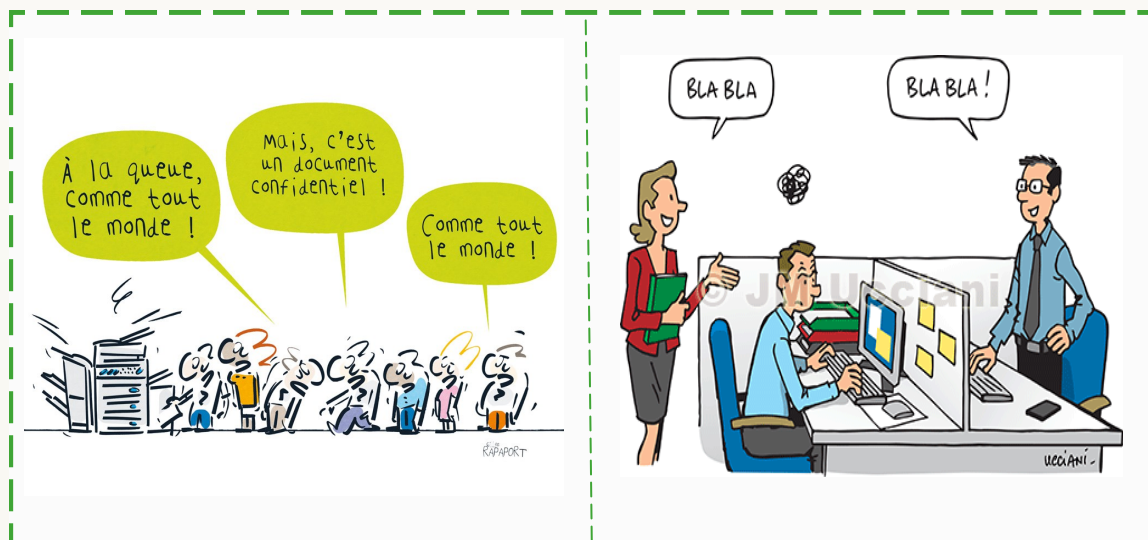
Thus, other powerful reasons for not work in open space are put forward, such as:

- ⇒ the absence of a personal printer for work requiring, at 99%, the management of paper files,
- ⇒ the reception of visitors without confidentiality
- ⇒ the processing of cases by telephone,
- ⇒ the limited working space for the needs of the tasks performed,
- ⇒ the management of special files including specific tasks requiring special concentration and attention to management details,
- ⇒ health problems,
- ⇒ physical disability,
- ⇒ the work environment: air conditioning, bad smells...

There will be too much noise, the paper files we use will be also in the open space so there is no confidentiality, the colleagues ask complex questions and often need to do so in privacy.

Ce ne sont pas les espaces ouverts qui favorisent le travail d'équipe mais bien l'esprit d'équipe qui se construit en collaborant et en communiquant avec ses collègues et sa hiérarchie.

Even if we have quiet rooms, others can still see who's in the room. If you need to meet in confidentiality (evaluation or other HR tasks), you need to go to another floor, or unit???

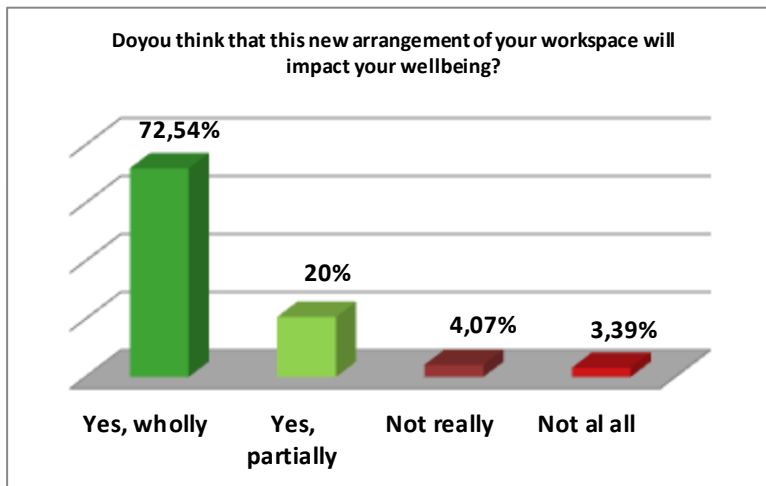


CONCERNING IMPACT



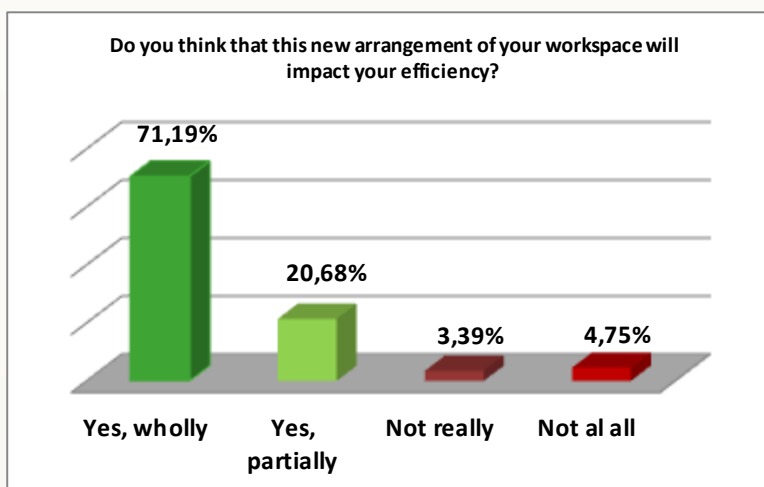
4) Do you think the new arrangement of your working area will have a (negative) impact on...

Your wellbeing ?



92.54% of colleagues, including 72.54% that « strongly agree », believe that this new working arrangement will impact their wellbeing.

Your Efficiency ?



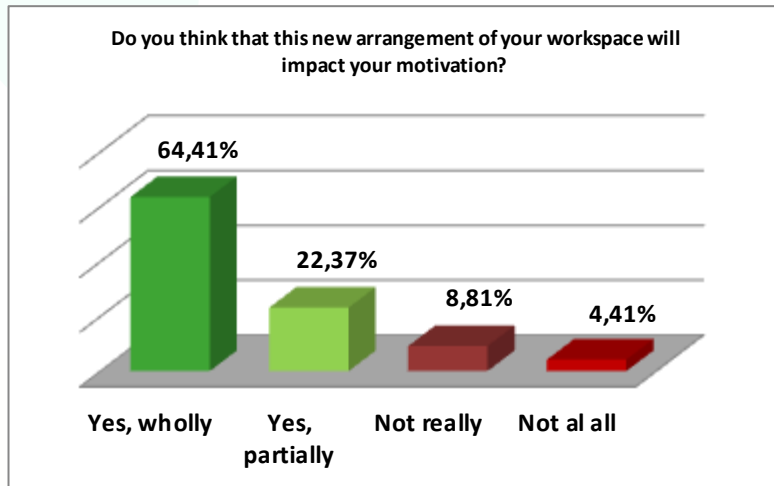
91.87% of colleagues, including 71.19% that « strongly agree», think that this new working arrangement will impact their effectiveness.

Pour se concentrer dans le « Quiet Room », il nous faut une application qui devrait être installée dans ces bureaux, or cette application est liée à une licence externe et difficile à installer vu que chaque licence est liée à un poste de travail.

However, the "customers" are to be received on the ground floor meeting rooms. Even if there will be computers, it will be very difficult to have everything necessary at hand. But the good thing is that it will calm the working premises.

Affiliés, pensionnés, cliniques... Tout le monde sera mis à la même sauce. Plus aucune confidentialité au niveau papier, ni au niveau téléphonie. Car oui, nous traitons avec des avocats, notaires, ayant droits (héritiers) et cliniques...

Your Motivation ?



86.78% of colleagues, including 64.41% that "strongly agree", think this new working arrangement will impact on motivation.

L'Open space impose le « paper less », notre appli n'est pas disponible pour ça.

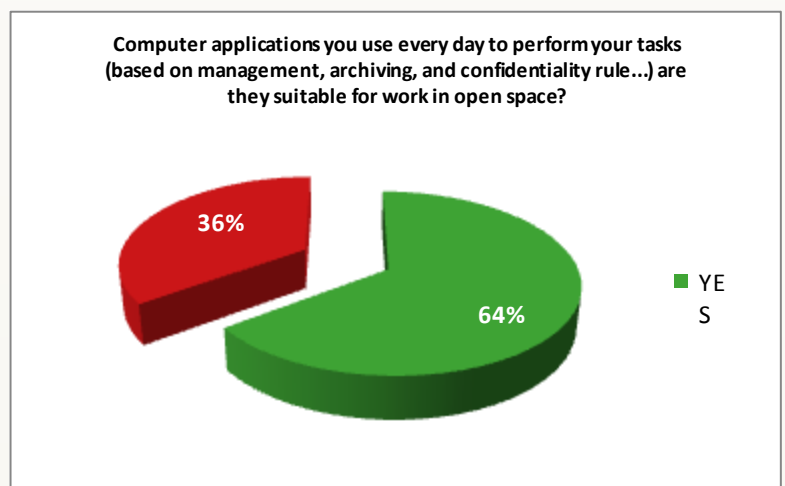
... et donc les dossiers à porter de main sont essentiels.



Un dossier de dette se compose d'abord d'un email et/ou d'un document ARES pour justifier le montant à prélever. Nous n'avons donc pas d'application pour attacher ce dossier à la lettre de dette. Nous devons donc imprimer et archiver physiquement le tout.

CONCERNING WORKING TOOLS

5) Computer applications you use every day to perform your tasks (based on management, archiving, and confidentiality rule...) are they suitable for work in open space?



For 64% of colleagues, computer applications used daily are adapted to work in "open space".

If discussing any confidential matters I close the door. I don't think it will be possible for everybody who has to discuss confidential matters to book a meeting room. The demand will be higher because there will be other colleagues requesting meeting rooms.

5.1) If not, why?

However, colleagues (36%) responding that computer applications are not adapted to the open space, put forward the following reasons:

- ⇒ lack of respect for confidentiality of files handled: medical secrecy, payslips ...
 - ⇒ permanent consultation of personal information
 - ⇒ visibility of personal data on screen available to everyone who share the open space including people not being affected in the same unit as well as visitors
 - ⇒ the need of a personal printer
 - ⇒ the need of two monitors to do the job
 - ⇒ reduced working space
 - ⇒ "Paperless":
 - IT applications not designed to work in paperless and therefore, need to have paper files at their fingertips,
 - inconclusive test phases
- ⇒ Loss of time due to scanning and photocopying documents
 - ⇒ Difficulty to control certain files on screen
 - ⇒ external licenses for some applications available at a single workstation
 - ⇒ need to listen to audio files daily
 - ⇒ need for storage space closeby
 - ⇒ printers noise pollution
 - ⇒ continuous use of Sysper



Nous sommes déjà sous pression de notre hiérarchie qui ne vise que les résultats et non les moyens les plus adaptés pour parvenir aux objectifs et ce, à bureau fermé.

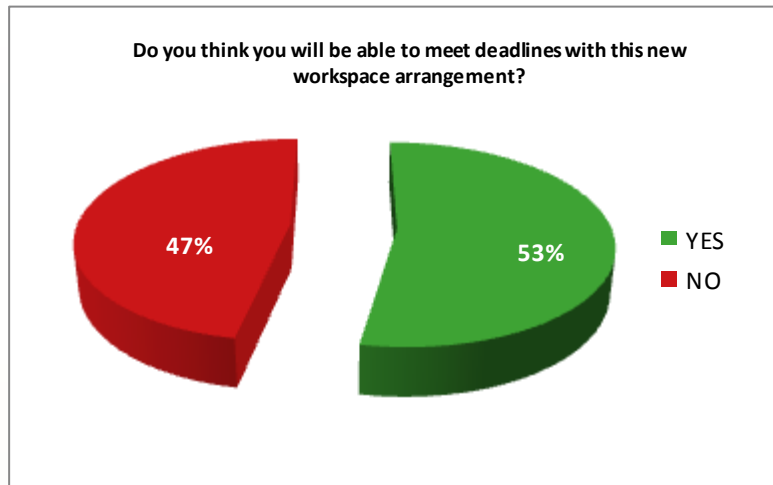
Most colleagues are contractual agents and I feel that this is non-respectful treatment of them, as well as the few officials. Other DGs already refused working in an open space (eg TAXUD) but PMO, with ever increasing work load with sensitive stuff - and the management still keeping up with the 5% deducton of staff - are just to accept the pre-decided

Les distractions et nuisances sonores empêcheront un travail consciencieux et demander plus de temps pour effectuer les analyses et gestion des comptes nécessaires en plus d'un risque d'erreurs plus prononcé...



CONCERNING DEADLINE COMPLIANCE

6) Do you think you will be able to meet deadlines with this new workplace arrangement?



53 % of colleagues think you can meet deadlines with this workplace arrangement?.

6.1) If not, why?

47% of colleagues who responded that they thought being not able to meet deadlines, evoke the following reasons :

- ⇒ **Loss of concentration**
- ⇒ Noise
- ⇒ Waste of time for the whereabouts of the open space to the "Quiet Room"
- ⇒ Change of habits
- ⇒ Stress
- ⇒ Decline of efficiency
- ⇒ Fatigue
- ⇒ Need to work on screen for the treatment of listings (previously on paper), which will cause slow and eyestrain
- ⇒ Increasing workload with fewer staff
- ⇒ Delay in the management of certain confidential files to be processed into "Quiet room", which leads to frustration of the manager



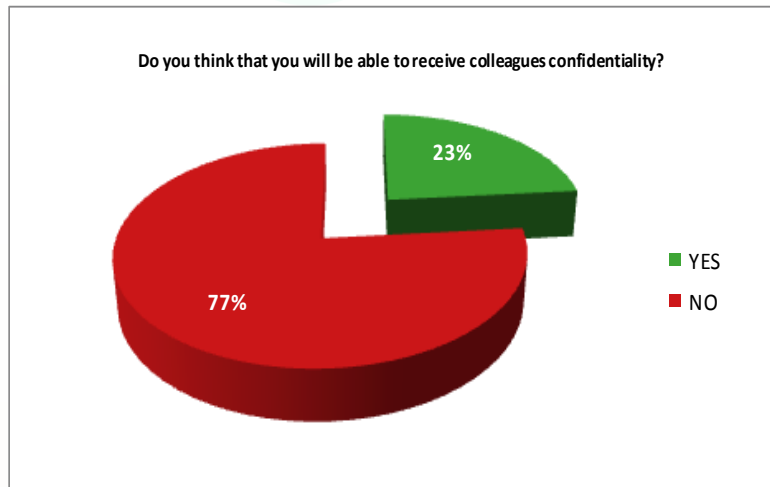
Nous traitons des dossiers urgents. Un simple déménagement entraîne un retard puisque la masse de personnel au PMO diminue également

Nous ne les respectons déjà pas maintenant alors que nous ne sommes que 2 par bureau. Si on rajoute tous les aspects négatifs de l'open space, c'est impossible. Par ex.: nous sommes 8 à avoir besoin de la « Quiet room » car notre interlocuteur veut de la confidentialité: combien de temps d'attente?

Des retards ont été envisagés même par la Direction qui a décidé de reporter certains projets à 6 mois après le déménagement.

CONCERNING CONFIDENTIALITY

7) Do you think that you will be able to receive colleagues in strict confidentiality?



Only 23% of colleagues consider that they will be able to receive colleagues in strict confidentiality.

Confidentiality is a rather sensitive point for colleagues working in PMO.

It's one of the fears -with the loss of concentration-most cited by colleagues.

7.1) If not, why?

Yet, 77% of colleagues think they cannot receive colleagues in strict confidentiality for the following reasons:

- ⇒ Breach of confidentiality rules
- ⇒ The office layout does not allow privacy and discretion
- ⇒ No chairs provided for visitors
- ⇒ Constant need to receive colleagues in strict confidentiality during the day

- ⇒ « Quiet room »
 - * Lack of flexibility to accommodate visitors due upon booking in advance of the "Quiet Room"
 - * Poor soundproofing
 - * Tensions between the colleagues because of the use of the "Quiet Room"
 - * Insufficient number of rooms
- ⇒ Loss of discretion during telephone conversations
- ⇒ Nature of data

8) General Comment

Colleagues also have had the choice to give us additional comments. We have listed those who had not yet been mentioned in the answers to various questions, such as:

- ⇒ Lack of respect of staff by management
- ⇒ Decreased productivity
- ⇒ Non availability of adequate budget to promote teleworking that was proposed in return
- ⇒ Need for individual cupboards for classification
- ⇒ Availability of parking space for all people wishing it
- ⇒ Availability of a canteen
- ⇒ Open kitchen space causing emanation of food odors



Des « Quiet room » seront installées au RDC pour recevoir les agents. Si elles sont de même qualité qu'au CSM1, nous pourrions entendre tout ce qui est dit à l'intérieur et la confidentialité des discussions relatives à des questions privées ne sera pas assurée.

Certains chômeurs sont dans de grandes difficultés financières et seraient gênés de parler devant d'autres personnes. Il y a une vraie détresse parmi les chômeurs et il arrive parfois que des gens pleurent dans mon bureau.

... je dois continuellement ajuster les relations entre collègues, et cela se fait spontanément sans « prise de rendez-vous ». Les collègues se déchargent de façon confidentielle et spontanée de tel ou tel souci, ce qui sera délicat voire impossible en open space. Vous avez déjà vu de la psychologie de groupe, vous?

Pour l'accueil des clients, il faudra aller chercher le dossier aux archives (sous-sol), ensuite se rendre au RDC pour vérifier la disponibilité des salles d'accueil et se logger sur le PC.



EVALUATION OF RESULTS

Global vision

Staff consultation

The results of this survey clearly show that the staff was neither informed (91%) nor consulted (92%) on the move to a shared work-space.

Job requirements

In addition, colleagues consider that their work cannot be done in open space for the following reasons:

- ⇒ Loss of concentration (74.24%)
- ⇒ Noise pollution (72.88%)
- ⇒ Respect the confidentiality rules (58.64%)
- ⇒ Processing of personal data (46.10%)
- ⇒ D'autres raisons sont invoquées (voir point 3.1)

Impact

The new work arrangement will also have a negative impact on well-being (92.54%), efficiency (91.87%) and motivation (86.78%) of the staff.

Working tools

As for computer applications, for the majority of colleagues (64%), they are suitable to work

in open space; however, the persons in quite specific positions invoke special reasons (see section 5.1).

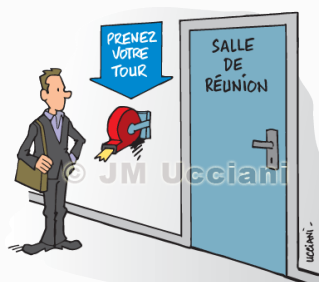
Deadline compliance

Despite the drawbacks identified by colleagues, they think still being able to meet deadlines (53%). For others, the loss of concentration is quite crucial to be able to carry out their daily tasks. Other disadvantages are also raised by colleagues (see 6.1).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality, essential point in the processing of files, will not be respected by colleagues (77%) both in the analysis of files and at the level of the reception of persons concerned. It is envisaged the establishment of a "Quiet room" but several negative aspects emerge from the comments of colleagues such as:

- ⇒ Limited number
- ⇒ Poor soundproofing
- ⇒ Lack of flexibility
- ⇒ Creation of tensions between colleagues





The Housing Conditions Manual (HCM) of the Commission services, Part 2, Article 3.3.1, states that "prior to any application for space arrangement, the applicant DG must conduct a preliminary study of functional requirements directly and indirectly related to the entity to implant"

Since the preliminary study, applicants services must **involve concerned staff in the project definition** (modification of rooms and work stations) in consultation with the relevant Office for the place of employment ... Taking into account these elements and the MIT recommendations, the Office will make a detailed study of implantation (space planning) and check whether the conditions for creation of a landscaped area are fulfilled, particularly in terms of Safety, Health and Welfare at work, and if they are achievable by technical arrangements."

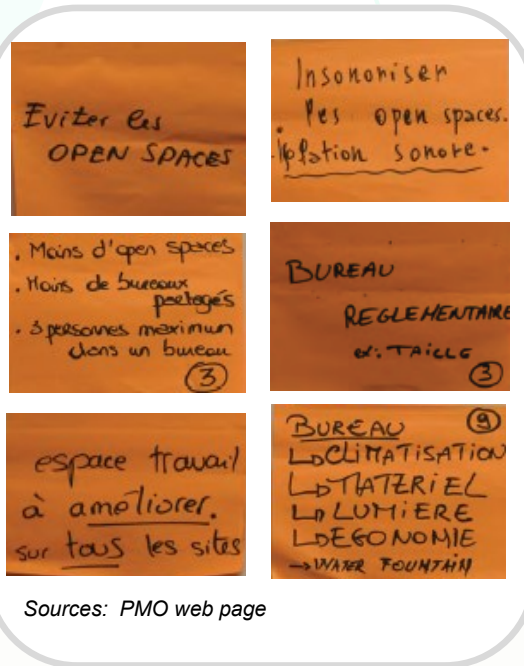
However, we can see from the answers to questions 1 (information on the implementation of the open office) and 2 (required opinion) of the survey launched by R&D, **that the obligation to make a preliminary study of the functional requirements involving concerned staff in the project definition has not been met.**

In addition, the results of the 2014 Staff survey are quite disturbing. Indeed, it is shown that only 42% of the PMO staff feels respected, 44% think it is fairly treated and only 18% have the feeling of working in a wellness atmosphere.

Following these results, the PMO management organized an "away day" based on three themes among which "How would you imagine to improve your work environment every day? ".

Colleagues spoke sincerely, on post-it notes, about their workspace at the seminar. The main requests for the arrangement of their workspace are:

- ⇒ Avoid open space
- ⇒ Fewer shared offices
- ⇒ Recommendation of 3 people maximum per office
- ⇒ Improvement of workspaces in all sites
- ⇒ Soundproofing of open spaces
- ⇒ Respect of the regulatory office size
- ⇒ Respect of the basic rules of the work environment (air conditioning equipment, lighting, ergonomics)



PMO Directorate did not comply with requests made by its staff concerning a building policy favoring open space.

R&D had already pointed out the poor working conditions of our PMO colleagues in the special "Renard Déchaîné" on JSIS published in October 2015, and issued recommendations, in particular the concern that staff should have an adequate work environment especially people working on sensitive matters, such as the ultra-confidential sickness records.

R&D also recalls, as announced in the special "Renard Déchaîné" on harassment and other psychosocial risks, that the non-consultation of staff in relation to decisions that affect them is a psychosocial risk factor.

Regarding job requirements such as respect for confidentiality rules and the level of high concentration

PMO staff's mission is to determine, calculate and make payment of the financial entitlements of the staff of the European Commission and certain other Community institutions and bodies.

These financial rights or "individual pecuniary entitlements" are:

- ⇒ remuneration, allowances and indemnities
- ⇒ reimbursement of the experts and mission costs
- ⇒ insurance coverage for sickness and accidents
- ⇒ pensions
- ⇒ unemployment

Specific attention must be given to these jobs since they require both a high degree of confidentiality - as colleagues treat personal data - and a need for significant concentration.

According to the data protection guide of the European Commission, "...the personal data concerning a member of staff will be treated in accordance with the principles set out in Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and it will process personal data of other persons according to these principles. It is bound by the regulations and is subject to its application. "

Colleagues have a professional conscience and draw attention to the respect of confidentiality rules related to the processing of personal data.

Working in open space would not allow them to meet the requirements of their specific jobs as they claimed.

In addition, these workspaces do not allow them a high concentration and an area without noise, as required by their duties.

The Housing Conditions Manual (HCM) of the Commission services, Part 2, Article 3.3.1, states that "in general, the layout of workstations must meet the functional needs of the type of work performed. **The landscaped office is in particular to be proposed to operational or administrative entities where communication between people is paramount, whose tasks are not confidential or involved in jobs that do not require permanent concentration.** The configuration of workstations should reflect the functional differences and promote effective performance."

In the light of the job requirements of our PMO colleagues, it is clear that the open space can in no case be an option for them to perform their duties safely and respecting their well-being as defended in the program fit@work.

What scientific studies are saying

The workspace has decreased over the years and this especially due to budgetary savings and to facilitate communication and interaction between colleagues and effectiveness of teamwork.

However, several scientific studies have addressed this issue following the reverse effect of these working arrangements.

Certainly, companies have made budget savings relating to property, though there is una-

nimity among scientific researchers with regard to the loss caused by open-space offices, resulting from the:

- ⇒ decline in motivation
- ⇒ decline in job satisfaction
- ⇒ reduced perception of privacy
- ⇒ increase in stress
- ⇒ decline in productivity



A false budgetary saving

According to article "Management issues: Open-space offices are a false economy-(1)" based on recent scientific studies, open-space offices not only do not meet a budgetary saving but also contribute to distraction, as well as increase of stress, and are very noisy. These conditions do not allow working efficiently "*It wouldn't be too wild an assumption that very few of us enjoy working in an open-plan office. For all the propaganda that they improve communication, boost team spirit and increase efficiency, the fact is that as far as most of their occupants are concerned, open-plan offices are noisy, distracting and stressful –just the wrong sort of environment, in fact, in which to work effectively.*"

Moreover, the scientific study "Workplace satisfaction: the communication privacy trade-off in open-plan offices -2013 (2)" set at 40,000 US workers demonstrates that confine the staff in a smaller workspace is very attractive financially but this is false economy because no evidence was found regarding the advanced benefits in improving interaction and communication.

A decline in satisfaction and staff performance

Indeed, many scientific studies have clearly shown a significant decline of the satisfaction on the workspace (Sundstrom, Herbert & Brown, 1982) with an increase in distraction and loss of perception of the private area (Kaarlela- Tuomaala et al., 2009) as well as a performance drop (Brennan, Chugh & kline, 2002) after moving staff from an individual or shared office (2-3) to an open-plan office.

In addition, the majority of survey respondents did not adapt or accustomed to the change of working environment. Several studies have established the link between declining satisfaction of the working environment and the deterioration of job satisfaction and productivity (Sundstrom, Town, Rice, Osborn & Brill, 1994; Veitch, Charles Farley & Newsham, 2007).

A disturbing noise

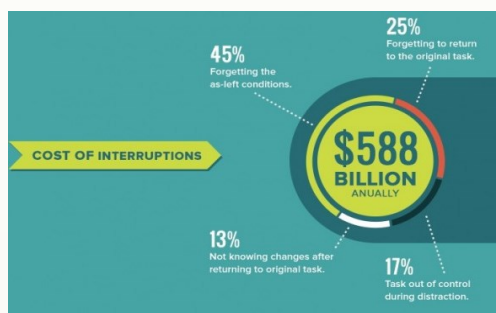
The Noise & Health newspaper published an academic study "Mental arithmetic and non-speech noise office: an exploration of interference by-happy 2013 (3)" which confirms that persons performing tasks involving calculations are less efficient in a working environment with a background sound; it has negative effects on health and performance of colleagues.

A high sick leave rate

According to the study "Sickness absence associated with shared and open-plan offices - a national cross sectional questionnaire survey 2011 (4)", people working in a shared office or in open-plan offices are twice more sick than people occupying individual offices.

A high cost of labor disruptions

According to the article "The detrimental Pitfalls of Open-Plan Offices (infographic) (5)" GETVOIP, a recent American study claims that people working in open-plan offices are interrupted every 3 minutes, corresponding to an annual loss of US\$ 588 billion.



Source Getvoip

A concentration level that differs depending on the work to be carried out

The study "Individual difference in employee reactions to open-plan offices—2005 (6)" highlights that levels of attention differ depending on the tasks performed and this therefore requires different concentration levels to accomplish them.

- 1 - [Open-plan offices are a false economy - August 2013 Management Issues](#)
- 2 - [Workspace satisfaction: The privacy-communication trade-off in open-plan offices—December 2013 Journal of Environmental Psychology Elsevier](#)
- 3- [Mental arithmetic and non-speech office noise: an exploration of interference-by-content—2013 Noise & Health](#)
- 4- [Sickness absence associated with shared and open-plan offices— a national cross sectional questionnaire survey by Pejtersen JH, Feveile H, Christensen KB, Burr H 2011](#)
- 5- [The detrimental Pitfalls of open-plan offices \(infographic\) - GETVOIP Mai 2015](#)
- 6- [Individual differences in employee reactions to open-plan offices—2005 University of New South Wales, Australia](#)



CONCLUSION

R&D does not just publish the results of the OPEN SPACE- PMO survey. It developed a thorough analysis based on responses from colleagues and based on recent scientific and academic studies relevant to the topic.

Indeed, all our positions that fall within very specific areas that require expert advice will always be treated according to the texts and reference works.

Thus with the sole purpose of permitting that the Voice, the Opinion and the Position of staff are reinforced by the work of experts in the field.

The responses of colleagues and specific nature of jobs allowed us to highlight the incompatibility of work in open-plan offices for OIB colleagues. This finding was also supported by the scientific studies we have cited in this report.

We are also aware that in view of the 2015 draft budget, the savings are necessary, but they must follow certain rules by conducting an analysis of all the circumstances in each case to satisfy all concerned actors, and always in accordance with the Housing Conditions Manual (HCM) of the Commission services, Part 2.

Moreover, as stated in a recent study (cf. [The detrimental Pitfalls of open-plan offices \(infographic\) - GETVOIP Mai 2015](#)), many companies are forced to implement open-plan offices for financial reasons and lack of premises. It is therefore recommended to adopt adequate measures to satisfy the relevant staff, by:

- ⇒ promoting teleworking
- ⇒ creating an ecosystem for a sufficient number to meet the needs of "Quiet rooms" as well as private spaces
- ⇒ providing opportunities for staff to choose the flexibility of working time

We also invite all Directorates-General, including the OIB, in particular the office of Mrs. Kristalina Georgieva to read carefully and with interest the studies we have referenced, and beyond, so that effectively the staff work according optimum conditions and according to the fit @ work program requirements.



R&D PROPOSALS

Noting the negative results of the survey launched by R&D near the PMO staff on the rearrangement of their workspace in open-plan offices;

Noting that the PMO Directorate has just invited its staff to attend an information meeting to present their new workspace presenting them with a "fait accompli" when it should have conducted a consultation of its staff in accordance with art. 3.3.1 and 3.5 of the Housing Conditions Manual (HCM) of the Commission services, Part 2.

Noting that the PMO staff had already expressed their negative opinion on open-plan offices during the Away day organized by the Directorate, following the catastrophic results of the "Staff survey 2014",

Noting that PMO jobs are forced to requirements under a high degree of confidentiality as they deal with personal data and that these tasks require a strong need for concentration,

Noting that scientific and academic studies reinforce the view of PMO colleagues,

In order to safeguard the welfare of PMO staff, the quality and quantity of services to colleagues and safeguard the confidentiality of data , R&D specifically requests the intervention of Vice President, Mrs Kristalina Georgieva, to stop the move of PMO services towards open-plan offices and to draft working arrangements taking into account the demands, types of work and the specificities of our PMO colleagues jobs.

Indeed, in any case, PMO staff will not be held liable for the consequences of the bad organization of the work space!

