

COMMENTS

7) General comment

<p>i remain positive hoping there will be enough offices where I could work for example to draft briefings in a quiet environment , otherwise this will be difficult - there would also be a need for nice meeting area with window and water –t here would be the need for a proper canteen, compared to devco, everyone eat now in front of the PC, alone, not really good for team spirit;;;</p>
<p>I love my job and i am proud of the work i am doing, however the open space office challenges the very nature of the work we are doing. I have serious doubts that we will be able to keep delivering "more with less" in those conditions.</p>
<p>Open to ideas to improve well-being, efficiency, save costs, helping create sense of team and DG identity, but this method of simply deciding on such an important personnel issue without prior consultation is almost guaranteed to provoke resistance and resentment. What is management thinking?</p>
<p>We do not know the real reasons to move into open space. It is not efficiency since studies by private companies prove the contrary; it is not well-being since the proxemics science proves that individuals need their private space to feel comfortable; it is not motivation either since staff not consulted democratically. Our DG states that he wants to create a real NEAR identity by having us all under the same roof: DEVCO has 3 buildings and there is no problem of identity. Problems of identity stem from the merger between enlargement and neighbourhood.</p>
<p>In addition, the following issues can be considered: - the decision has been imposed without any prior consultation, despite continuous reassurances by management on the participatory process (the mantra in DG NEAR...) - I would also like to hear what is the security assessment related to LOI-15 building vis a vis the expected increase in the number of people, from approx. 650 to approx. 800 from what we understand. We had simulations of evacuations in the previous years, which highlighted challenges in freeing the building rapidly enough in case of emergency, leaving staff stuck in the stairs</p>
<p>NEAR a un caractère de plus en plus politique en plus d'être une DG opérationnelle. Les échanges entre parties prenantes supposent parfois une certaine discrétion quand il ne s'agit pas de confidentialité. Par ailleurs, notre travail suppose des lectures et rédaction parfois fastidieuses et demandant du calme. L'open space ne répond pas aux nécessités du service.</p>
<p>The open space should be compensated with a variety of other spaces of different sizes and characteristics, for different uses (whether individual or collective).</p>
<p>Should provide wifi in the entire building.</p>
<p>I think it was very disrespectful not to consult staff on such an important decision. I do not understand why the option to move out of the centre was not considered as the best solution. Is the comfort of 10 people (on top) more important than the rest 700 (sorry, I do not know the exact number)? And if the costs are too high in the centre, maybe let's all move out? The Council is finishing a new building in Schuman - it seems that only the EC has to save. Why?</p>
<p>Frankly speaking, the decision to move to open space is so bad, that a lot of good specialist can decide to leave service in European Commission. I am sure - if EPSO indicates in the competition notice that the candidate will have to work in the remote country in an open space the applicants number will decrease at least by 50%. Why to implement American working style to Europe?</p>
<p>It would be good to have a possibility to work standing not sitting the whole day. would be possible to have 1 high-desk with PC for the Secretariat?</p>
<p>I fully disagree with the open space concept and already gave my opinion several times during team building organised months ago but the decision was probably already taken a year ago.</p>
<p>I am mostly concerned about the ability to concentrate, as the many people around will inevitably result in noise and distraction. especially concentrating on writing complex texts will be a huge challenge. I have experience with offices that host several people and I always struggled with the ability to focus, the need to discipline colleagues who chat, walk around etc without any intention to be disrespectful. I have seen no spoken to many colleagues working in open space in other organisations; they struggle on these points.</p>

<p>It is one of the most inappropriate proposals that I ever heard of since I started within the EU Institutions in 1997. It will only lead to a decrease of results and productivity and huge lack of motivation for DG NEAR colleagues. It is the first time I am thinking of changing DG since I joined DG NEAR and look for a job elsewhere.</p>
<p>Few tasks are compatible with open spaces. Security reasons concerning the building asset (small entrance) with a n increase of staff seems not to be taken into account. Reducing the distance between colleagues it is not coherent with the fact people will be obliged to wear headphones. Where the closet for the folder (we are far to be paperless) will be settled? we would have to walk long distance and waste additional time to just go and look for the folders? Lack of privacy is inversely proportional to the increase of stress.</p>
<p>Why do we need to have open space? The European Commission is recruiting less and less, externalising more and more to agencies. But still it seems that they are office issues. Is it not possible to find an alternative to open space? Bad effect on work and health have been proven and you can find many articles in the press: http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/bien-bien/20150616.OBS0908/pourquoi-il-faut-en-finir-avec-l-open-spacehtml I think intimacy at work is a necessity and a right.</p>
<p>> open space is a regress and makes sense only when people are dealt with as "human resources", figures in statistics and subjects of budget cuts and not as persons > the open space layout is particularly in adapted to the work of F&C unit > currently as a general rule all the office doors are open; thus there's no need of any opening in the workspace</p>
<p>I wonder how can you plan to fill the L15 building with more staff without taking in due consideration the drastic decrease of safety stemming from this move. Indeed, L15 is one of the most unsafe buildings when it comes to evacuation as it lacks of sufficient safe exits and proximity to safety gathering areas. Not to mention that the accessibility via the lifts (longer queues and waiting time) and with cars (less parking spaces per occupant) will be also diminished and that the location is in the most polluted (air and noise) area of Brussel.</p>
<p>The decision for open space was taken autonomously by the hierarchy without any consultation with the staff. We were just informed that the decision was taken by the Director General. This kind of authoritarian approach does not comply with the values of the European Commission. If open space is implemented in practice, I will search for another job.</p>
<p>Open space is been proven as most distracting environment for developers. That's why companies that introduced open space 10 years ago are moving back to smaller offices.. It helps with day to day communication but constant noise is something that disturbs.</p>
<p>I'll love the open space!!!!</p>
<p>There is always a possibility to talk with some confidentially - for example in a café across the street</p>
<p>I have worked a lot in open space over the last years and can say that: - It is good for team spirit, more fun and lively than offices - It is bad for concentration and productivity on certain tasks - It increases social control on least productive employees but also strongly demotivates the most productive ones (it is very very frustrating to be the last one working in an open space late in the evening) I think OS is not adapted to NEAR's work, will demotivate the most productive elements and that management really SHOULD NOT be in OS</p>
<p>I feel disappointed to learn that the management of an European institution gives no value to its employees. I am not aware of any PRIOR consultation launched by the management with the personnel on this issue. If our management has such a low esteem for us, how could we expect that the European contributors have a better opinion on the European Institutions?</p>
<p>There will be new financial pressure on the Commission either to cut salaries and pensions or office</p>

<p>space. Well</p>
<p>Apart from saving space, I see no benefit at all. People need to concentrate for providing good results, but this is not possible with 50 people around, working, some speaking on the phone, some eating and other moving around. It is going to be detrimental for both the work and the well-being. The effort to concentrate would waste lots of energy. Staff will be obliged to take teleworking, but this will negatively impact meetings and discussions on important topics. Results will be delayed.</p>
<p>Imposing open space without any consultation of the staff is to say the least, disappointing.</p>
<p>people with long past experience in "traditional" working environment can hardly adapt to such a drastic and quick change !</p>
<p>Very disappointing that staff was not consulted before such an important decision that greatly impacts all of us is being taken by senior management. It would have been more transparent and democratic to have had a chance to discuss the different options on the table altogether and see if there are really no suitable alternatives to open space. This very top-down approach is not at all contributing to the working spirit and motivation in the house.</p>
<p>the implementation of open space policies will increase enormously the requests of teleworking. in my experience teleworking is definitely not an efficiency gain, not only for the person working from home but, more importantly for colleagues in the office. It is NOT possible to discuss the same way with people that are not present, that do not reply swiftly to emails, etc.</p>
<p>In brief, more teleworking would have a very negative impact on the overall quality and efficiency of work delivery.</p>
<p>Working on politically sensitive issues is not conducive to open space. Having previous open space work-experience, I am not a supporter: the noise level is strong, I needed to wear special headphones (for noise elimination) all day at the office, my concentration suffered, I could not easily take phone calls, I lowered my voice on the phone, which lowered the quality of the call and my counterpart could not understand me. I was uncomfortable speaking on the phone and conference calls were simply impossible. I was much more tired in the evening than when I had my own office.</p>
<p>While I agree that open space may be satisfactory for certain types of jobs, I do not think that it is appropriate for the work we are doing, at least in our unit.</p>
<p>We deal with complex documents/files, which require full concentration, full attention. Any errors that affect the transactions we are dealing with ultimately impact detrimentally the level of assurance for our authorizing officers.</p>
<p>DG NEAR is not a DG where the concept of open space could work as it does not correspond at all with the nature of the tasks performed. Policy analysis, speech writing, preparation of confidential documents at the basis of the EU Foreign Policy, be it regarding relations with potential new member states or conflict areas in the EU's neighbourhood such as Libya, Syria or Ukraine, requires the utmost confidentiality, in line with the Commission's own requirements, as well as a lot of focus from the staff to prepare the needed documents.</p>
<p>Open space is unhealthy and stress inducing. How can one concentrate in a room with many colleagues talking on the phone and computer keyboards buzzing at the same time, some coughing, sneezing, blowing the nose, and other humanly-induced noise all around? It resembles a nut-house and that what it is. Open space is de-humanising.</p>
<p>The major problem it won't be coping with deadlines, but rather providing good quality documents/papers and being effective in the daily tasks.</p>
<p>It's difficult to say if our opinion is or not taken into account since the consultation process just started.</p>
<p>I believe fire safety, infrastructure and equipment are key questions in this context.</p>
<p>Any change to an open-space plan should foresee smaller spaces where to have one-to-one or small (3/4 people) meetings - not necessarily large meeting rooms. Consideration should also be given to incoming phone calls, as it will probably cause disruption to colleagues near-by, and allow for several people to have discussions on and off the phone without interrupting the neighbours. Grouping colleagues per sectors and/or per profiles could be an idea to avoid creating unnecessary noise and disruption.</p>

I don't think that open space is necessarily a bad thing, if it is well planned, creates a friendly atmosphere, and is tailored to people's needs, meaning that the working space is designed in a way that people can still make phone calls without disturbing other people, that we have enough work space to be comfortable, and that one does not sit in an 80s style cubicle.

I would avoid it.

I would concentrate to figure out a more human and bright place to stay, with more green. Please improve the meeting rooms, mostly of them have no windows. After 1 hour in there, you want just to go to take a fly to the south of Europe.

I am sure we can spend our money much better.

Due to the location of the building (above a very busy metro station, ARTS-LOI), it is not fit to hold more people in such a space. Creating more open space brings other questions and issues.

On 29 April 2016, following the bomb attacks in Brussels, at a meeting convoked by our HR Unit, the Director of Security in DG HR admitted that DS had concerns about the LOI-15 building precisely due to the location of it above the Arts-Loi metro station.

Stuffing in more people into a small area is not prudent. I believe this exercise is designed to cut posts because staff will find jobs elsewhere.

Management talks about some "phone/ private space booths"... but they will become soon overcrowded - as premium quiet space very much thought after by everybody. We will have to meet diplomats, ministers, technical staff from various non-EU administrations and all these meetings, however small and informal - will be all competing on the same (limited no) of private meeting spaces. We will *maybe* find some space, but not when we need it, with the subsequent impact on work efficiencies, deadlines and lost status in relationship to our partners.

It's a scandal, I worked before in open space in the private sector; it is said that hierarchy will be in open space but it is not true, they forgot to say they will have glass walls for their offices. We have not been consulted beforehand and the deal is already signed. Do not see if NEAR is the first DG to do this why hierarchy could not figure out that there must be some very valid reasons nobody goes for open space unless they are obliged, even in the present and probably perpetual and everlasting budgetary constraints.

I think the impact will be positive. I used to work in an open space and I really enjoyed it. I am totally in favour of working in an open space.

The decision is already taken and they only open a debate with us is on how to implement the open space.

My fears are:

Security :

1. What will happen if we have a terrorist attack, fire ?

2. Lifts already very difficult to take a lift in that building now How will it work when we will be crowded?

Well-being :

3. The toilets are already often busy I hope we will have more toilets.

4. Noise - I can not work in a noisy place I am 60 and cannot concentrate.

5. Smell - It will be a mix of different perfumes

ce sont des concepts d'un temps révolu, des années trentes, où l'on n' avait comme objectif que la productivité au moindre coût, du vieux people managment qui pensent qu'en mettant les gens en batteries on va améliorer la production, des fausses économies, on va épargner quelques mètres carrés et mettre les gens sous pression constante, DeFacto augmentera le taux d'absentéisme, les gens iront avec des jambes lourdes au bureau. Vous choisirez des oeufs de poules élevés en batterie ou de chez le fermier élevé à l'air libre ?

voyer ce lien

<https://youtu.be/HSjWTRnhyPY?t=8m12s>

Loud people (we have a handful of them already on our floor - luckily we still have doors), people moving around, talking, laughing, coughing, sneezing, yawning, eating, making tea etc. is not very conducive to productivity, concentration, creativity. I have first-hand experience of working in an open-

<p>space office and I don't expect anything else even from fancy solutions.</p> <p>Plus, it would be useful to see a cost-benefit analysis before it all starts and it's too late to reverse it.</p> <p>Lastly, it is quite ridiculous that a decision is taken and only then we're consulted on how to implement it</p>
<p>Having worked in open space before, I can do it again. I find that I am more efficient though in an office where I can choose to close my door if I need to concentrate on a task at hand, especially when writing speeches.</p>
<p>Recent work load assessment confirmed NEAR is not overstaffed so we cannot make economies of space by reducing staff. We can only be more efficient by having good working conditions. Ad hoc consultations in an open space environment are good for the persons consulting each other, but not for the ones obliged to overhear. This increases the number of distractions, makes the work less efficient, and increases the chance of errors. I work as a team leader and for me regular teleworking is not a realistic option. Result would rather be reducing the number of working hours altogether.</p>
<p>The building in L15 is, in addition, uniquely unsuited for open space. Situated on 10 floors, at the junction of two busy roads and two metro lines, with inadequate garage space, noise and air pollution and a security hazard waiting to happen either due to fire or potential terrorist activity. It should in fact be evacuated by the Commission.</p>
<p>Really not my preferred option</p>
<p>Open spaces are not suitable for Administrator level/FG IV level functions where a lot of analytical work must be processed, at a high level standard.</p>
<p>As the economy of space initially fixed by the Commission will be equivalent to around 2 or 3 buildings out of around 60 buildings of the Commission, I wish to know if the Commission already identified which services fit more than others to adopt the open space rule.</p>
<p>I believe that the idea of creating an open space for a directorate general performing the functions of DG NEAR will compromise the possibility of performing our key functions and I am curious to know if a study of risk assessment will be conducted before so as to assess what would be the costs if the project results in a failure.</p>
<p>Yes/No answers do not allow nuances to be shown.</p>
<p>Receiving colleagues confidentially will be possible but with lots of pre-arrangements as the meeting rooms might not be enough for all staff that need to have such meetings at a time. Open space might be useful when doing repetitive activities which do not require a lot of thinking and concentration but definitely not suitable with the nature of work in the geo-units.</p>
<p>The need to have the whole DG in one building is artificial. I worked in DEVCO interacting with finance and contract units - all was done electronically and was very efficient. Personal interactions or only needed with closest colleagues who are in the same unit anyhow. And even then, a phone call or e-mail can replace it. I had worked in RTD split over several buildings. There was in my view no efficiency loss and human relations were adjusted (lunches instead of coffee breaks).</p>
<p>Open Space does not fit to the type of our work. We are not a call centre but do sensitive policy work. The OS proposal/decision is offending as it gives the message that our work is not even worth 12 square meters. After staff cuts and excessive workload now even our personalised offices are to be taken away which is a dramatic worsening of working conditions which the Staff committee should oppose to and take up with DG NEAR Management. The OS will also not leave room for any spontaneous meetings and kills the encouraging practice of open-door policy of HoUs.</p>
<p>Open space not conducive towards interaction. It makes people think twice before picking up phone or talking face to face (lack of privacy + background noise interference hampers hearing + understanding). If everyone starts to interact and collaborate as hoped by management it would sound like children's playground full of kids or bustling street market. People will close-up like oyster shells. Last time I set foot in Commission open space I saw anonymous faces sitting in rows (no name/service indicated). It looked like Cape Kennedy Ground Control manned by emotionless androids.</p>
<p>We have been told that our OS will be very open, with no attributed desk; arriving in the morning we will pick a laptop and sit anywhere. I wonder how we will be reachable for other colleagues, mainly the ones working in other buildings/countries</p>
<p>I can imagine that for certain types of work an open space but the least one could expect is a full study before taking such a major decision that might have an impact not only on the efficiency, but also on the well being (health, stress,...) and the motivation of staff.</p>
<p>This is a great idea. Our current way of working is so outdated. This will facilitate contact and information exchange and allow us to all be in one building. Let's embrace this and work like most of the</p>

other people who work in the EU, whether in the public or private sector.
we are just starting the process. I hope to be consulted, but have not yet.
Open space is not conducive to the work we do at the Commission. I have personal experience working in open-space for five years. Noise levels and general distractions of people speaking on the phone, walking by you, make it very difficult to concentrate and as a result of this, productivity decreases.
Have worked in open space for 4 years before joining EC. Had positive and negative aspects (among the positive aspect which leads to a negative aspect - too much socializing. You see someone arriving you start asking how is he/she their kids if they were sick and so on, lost of time)
Negative aspects: Too much noise, lack of concentration , different requirements (someone wants the lights switched on, someone wants the lights switched off, air conditioning which as now for all the same, plus people who are under the air conditioning maybe they do not like it, want to change).
once again in DG Near we face a top down approach without genuinely taking into consideration the opinions of a big part of the staff not even the real interest of the service, as it has already been the case for other important issues
it is not understandable why we cannot go on working in two distinct buildings
The previous set up under DEVCO was already around two buildings and this never affected the overall functioning or good cooperation between services. The needs to move from current sitting arrangements to open space are not well presented.
There is no clear reason why the building at LOI 15 need to be maintained (who benefits of this long term choice?).
On what arguments did DG TAXUD defend the one office per staff option.
How does having people meet each other coincided with the idea that teleworking is good combination with open space. There is the risk that good staff might leave the DG.
I have the feeling, as many of my colleagues, that there was not a real consultation of the staff on the issue of the open space and that there was no real analysis of the fact if this way of working would be the best one for the type of work we are performing. The decision has been taken by senior management and now the staff can comment on it, but it is clear that the decision will not change. Moreover there is the issue of the safety of the building in L15. I think an audit should be done by OIB in order to determine if this building is safe with that many people inside, in case of evacuate
I am unhappy about the fact that staff has not been consulted on any alternatives discussed by the management before taking a decision to go ahead with the open space solution. I do not trust our institution to get it right when they cannot even fix our elevators. The fact that it is a cost-cutting exercise means that money will not be spent on satisfying solutions. I am concerned that how we work and what we do, our tasks, have not been regarded when deciding on an open space. Open space might be OK for a DIGIT call-center-like environment but it is not fit for a political work environment.
Above all, open space will kill communication, as we will have to withdraw into our little universes protect by mental walls and physical headphones. the fact that the disadvantage will be compensated with more tele-work will further erode communication.
A bit preliminary to have a real opinion on this... Part of my work needs confidentiality, but in that case, there will be specific rooms dedicated to phone conversation that should not be heard or meetings ...
I already worked in open-space before joining the EC, and frankly, I don't think it will affect my efficiency... At contrario, It will certainly be benefice for people who never go out of their office, never meet others...
I wonder why the huge amount of studies highlighting the negative effects of open-plan offices are not taken into account. I am not aware of the details of the "brainstorming" of the management (if that took place at all!) which should have examined at least the major pro's and con's. Staff is confronted by management with the impression that there is no alternative to this solution which is wrong - there are plenty of ways to improve collaboration and corporate identity even if located in different buildings!
I believe this is not a wise decision, in a DG which already lacks a sense of unity, is under immense pressure to deliver against impossible deadlines on a regular basis, and is dealing with most of the sensible crisis around the EU.

<p>At least people should be recognised the possibility to perform their duties in a suitable environment, without being obliged to use flexitime to compensate the stress and the teleworking to be able to perform properly our core tasks.</p>
<p>open spaces impede concentration. The continuous noise is a factor of stress. I would have no benefit, only disadvantages from open spaces.</p> <p>Confidentiality when working on HR issues and tenders is indispensable.</p> <p>More collaborative spaces, equipped with the right tools (VTC), such as small meeting rooms, in addition to individual offices would be welcome.</p> <p>A limited recourse to teleworking may be appealing, but we work on paper files (tenders, big dossiers etc) which may not be entirely electronic. Therefore, it cannot be a structural solution.</p>
<p>An open space could be fun from a social point of view. However, we don't come to work for fun but to fulfil our tasks in a professional and efficient manner. The loss on the efficiency in our work will be huge.</p>
<p>The proposal of Open Space for NEAR considers only the need to reunite the DG in one building. No consideration is given to nature of our duties, which is very different from a service DG such as OIB or DIGIT. The proposed accompanying measures (teleworking) are not feasible for everyone, as we have meetings which we need to attend to and can't just work from home most of the time. I am sincerely discouraged by this proposal, especially in the current context of staff reductions and increased responsibilities, I feel demotivated and not enabled to work properly by my hierarchy.</p>
<p>We need to see the studies behind this decision. Plus clarity should be done as regards where to keep our paper files. I have a lot (some are confidential) and cannot bring them along every evening I go back home</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Open space is not compatible/does not correspond to the nature of our task. -open space is not just a way the make savings, it is supposed to serve a benefit (sharing of information within a team) -Location L15 is not suitable to locate still more person while a terrorist attack is very possible in metro station arts-loi -at DG NEAR there is currently a terror regime imposed to staff so that it is difficult to express an opinion when it is not anonymous, therefore we need such tools as this questionnaire to express our strong concerns without to fear to be threatened.
<p>I really detest being listened to and observed by many people all the time. In my line of work phone calls are often the better tool to communicate than emails. I have a loud voice (can't help it) and will not be able to talk to my colleagues as much as I do now, just popping by others' offices. Now, I do not disturb others. In an open space, this will not anymore be possible.</p> <p>Open space offices will very negatively impact on my efficiency and well-being. It crossed my mind that, although I really like my current job, this may influence my decision to depart again to a Delegation.</p>
<p>I find that Open space is the most inconvenient way to ensure productivity at work.</p> <p>It is a nightmare and a source of stress. There is no way that I could concentrate given the disturbances created because of the concentration of staff at one place.</p> <p>In addition, open space is detrimental to our health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>I completely disagree on working in an open space. There are only disadvantages.</p>
<p>La nature des mes fonctions (surtout confidentialité et analyse des dossiers) ne me permet pas de travailler dans un bureau du type "open space". Par ailleurs, il s'avère que le L15 présente des lacunes (par ex., il est difficile de sortir rapidement du bâtiment en cas d'alerte incendie). De plus, ce bâtiment est particulièrement bruyant et son parking est très limité et difficile d'accès. Enfin, des bureaux du type "open space" ne sont pas du tout adaptés en cas d'attaque par des terroristes.</p>
<p>questions 4, 5 et 6: a ce jour, nous n'avons aucune information concrète sur les motivations réelles de l'utilisation de l'open space à court et moyen voire long terme (diminution des surfaces de bureau,</p>

<p>contrôle de présences, diminution du personnel, etc.???) Ni sur l'organisation (chacun conservera-t-il son bureau?), la prise en compte des besoins, des procédures et délais d'adaptation et du confort général des agents. EX: salle de détente, disponibilité à volonté et à proximité d'eau, cafés, thés, frigos, micro-ondes, ergonomie du matériel (bureau, chaises, éclairage).</p>
<p>Gros dégâts collatéraux: de nombreux collègues d'un certain âge et ancienneté ne pourront pas se familiariser avec cet environnement.</p> <p>Il est à craindre que les services ne soient submergés par de nombreux certificats médicaux ou de demandes de mise à la retraite anticipée.</p> <p>La Commission se privera d'une expérience énorme.</p> <p>L'argument de la solidarité accrue des équipes ne tient pas, des formes de travail à domicile étant encouragées, avec l'effet contraire.</p> <p>Il faut (re)mettre en vigueur l'article 42 quater du Statut (congé dans l'intérêt du service)</p>
<p>If this is implemented, in order to comply with the requirements of working on policies, I will likely come to work with noise reducing headphones everyday and will try to work from home at least one day a week in order to compensate the increased stress and distractions of the open space arrangement. I do not need one office by myself alone, but know from experience that working in offices with more than 2 people is very tiring. I suggest to put people who work on tasks that require high concentration, such as drafting, in shared offices for 2.</p>
<p>I have already worked in an open space environment, 2 different configurations and both times we have been moved back to individual/shared offices. Due to the nature of my work, confidential and politically sensitive documents we are dealing with, it will be impossible for our team do deliver quality reports. Even if we are allowed to telework, it will be difficult to schedule regular meetings we have with other colleagues.</p>
<p>Our work is in a very political context, involving frequent meetings with external visitors (Member States, partner countries, implementors, NGOs, UN services), which are partly confidential. The job also requires concentration for key tasks (policy analysis, briefings etc), and quick contacts with relevant colleagues around (very often completely tight deadlines you cannot plan, they are beyond individual control) - all of which is not well-suited to Open Space in combination with telework.</p>
<p>Personally, I am also not in favour of Open Space for concerns of noise and lack of concentration.</p>
<p>If the same rules are applied to all parties of the hierarchy (as promised by the director-general) I do not see why this system would not work. My building is noisy anyway and I overhear what people talk about in the offices next to mine. I believe that small meeting rooms for both confidential and non-confidential discussions would serve the purpose better than it does now. It is important to get all staff on board to work together towards this and to ensure everyone that we are not talking about the old-fashioned open-spaces of the 80's, but something new, modern and functional...</p>
<p>open spaces gives yourself of poor opinion of you own value as a person, it creates depression, lack of self-confidence. You feel like a line worker instead of an employee, and you feel easily replaceable, that you do not count as an individual. Also, when you have a bad day, you have nowhere to hide, and this is a terrible pressure and violence to oneself. We are not robots and deserve some privacy, also when we want to make a personal phone call, or send a personal email. If we get the open space, I will resign, as I feel I deserve better as a human being!</p>
<p>teleworking is and will remain a good option for having time to think and reflect on complicated issues. the Commission is short of space and money, open plan seems the best way to go.</p> <p>I have worked in open plan successfully in the public sector in the UK: it requires consideration and courtesy from colleagues, that is all</p>
<p>I worked in the open space before, for 8 years - and I wouldn't recommend it to anyone. Plus - I do not believe that our management will be really sitting next to us in the open space. I'm sure, that like in many other places, some creative solutions will be found for the management - glass walls around the compartments, etc.</p> <p>The noise pollution even in a room with 3 colleagues is already very disturbing. I'm afraid that people who make decisions about open space have never worked in one themselves.</p>
<p>Cette idée d'open space est complètement fausse! Mon secteur est les finances et on a besoin de calme et de concentration! Nous serons toujours distrait par les autres....</p>

<p>Having already an extensive experience of working in open space, I can confirm that it is very bad for concentration and for communication. In an open space a person works much slower and makes ore mistakes, many deadlines are missed and the quality of documents drafted in open space is much lower than in a normal office. Communication with colleagues must be limited in an open space, because you don't want to disturb your neighbours. There is no confidentiality in an open space. An open space is a no-go for the work on foreign and European affairs. The level of noise is infernal.</p>
<p>Dans un open space, le bruit combiné des conversations, des téléphones qui sonnent et des imprimantes en marche est une menace sérieuse pour les personnes y travaillant et demande un sérieux effort de concentration. La qualité du travail, va se faire ressentir... certainement, beaucoup de certificats médicaux...</p>
<p>In general, I am against open space work.</p> <p>I have been working in an open space for a few years in the private sector.</p> <p>No concentration possible, non-stop interruption (needing time to concentrate again), people tend to create their own private space and close themselves to others. Some people don't dare talking to each other, afraid of making noise, whereas others have no idea of the noise they do when they speak on the phone, with other colleagues or even eat in a noisy way.</p> <p>This results in nervousness, lack of privacy, lack of communication, lack of freedom. Lack of efficiency.</p> <p>I am assuming there will be meeting rooms available to have confidential meetings.</p> <p>A general comment on your question one: I have been "informed" but I am not aware that a "study" specific for our building has been prepared and if it has, I have not seen it.</p> <p>As for my opinion, (question 2) it is impossible to know at this stage (as no decision has been taken) if my opinion will be heard or not.</p> <p>For me my main concern is lose of concentration. If quiet "library style" areas are provided with computers to work on, I'll be ok with open space.</p>
<p>I do not agree at all the concept behind the open-space work environment.</p>
<p>Improving collaboration requires open minds, not open spaces.</p>
<p>in his emial of 14/10, the DG said "In parallel with this open space project DG NEAR will also promote more flexible working arrangements", however no information has been offered on what it actually means. Will those who are already doing structural telework be allowed more teleworking days per week? will HoUs be obliged to accept structural telework? what are the guarantees given to staff that more flexible working arrangements will be implemented, and not subject to a sole decision of a HoU?</p>
<p>I am strongly opposed to open space because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - doesn't fit my type of work (will only make efficiency decrease) - if teleworking would be offered to work on these tasks, the objective of reducing the distance between colleagues won't be meet, on the contrary - security reason: how can fitting more people in the least secure building of the Commission improve safety? <p>Finally, management used the wrong assumption that the problem of 1 NEAR identity comes from the geographical split: this is not the issue and will only worsen the problem resulting from the "aggressive Enlarge take over".</p>
<p>All scientific studies prove that the open space have a negative influence on productivity and on the well being of workers.</p>
<p>It is still premature to ask the questions above as the consultation has only recently started and we have not yet engaged on the details of the open space plans. There will need to be an adaptation period that will impact on our working conditions for a while but as I have worked in open space before, I am not so afraid as others in the organisation.</p>
<p>Je ne pense pas que ceci va améliorer le travail d'équipe.</p> <p>Je pense que les certificats médicaux risquent d'augmenter considérablement.</p>

<p>Et aussi que puisque le télétravail sera vivement encouragé, cela n'améliorera en rien le travail d'équipe.</p> <p>Je suis vraiment surprise que toutes ces mesures ayant pourtant de lourdes conséquences sur tout le personnel de la NEAR aient été prises sans la moindre consultation préalable.</p>
<p>La littérature scientifique démontre à suffisance que l'open space a un impact très négatif sur la santé et sur le collectif de travail. La problématique du bruit est importante, les salariés ont beaucoup de mal à se concentrer, ils sont régulièrement interrompus dans leurs activités ce qui occasionnent une charge cognitive importante. Le collectif est aussi amoindri, chacun cherchant des espaces physiques et/ou temporels pour arriver à faire son travail, il en arrive le résultat inverse, c'est-à-dire que les personnes s'isolent les uns des autres.</p>
<p>Please, take in consideration that I'm secretary to the HoU and Unit team. I think that, as far as work duties are concerned, me and my colleagues secretaries are less affected by open space than other colleagues. But for sure our personal comfort and our precision will be affected by the fact of working in a noisy space without any privacy which requires considerable additional effort to maintain the necessary concentration.</p>
<p>Apart from all negative considerations about the working environment and health issues an openspace can bring, the not so well hidden impression we have had is that squeezing more people in this building is THE reason for the choice. The building is far from ideal in terms of space and mainly position, being in the most trafficated and polluted area. Proximity with other EC building, seems to be the main reason for keeping Loi 15, but do we really need to be here and walk in such surroundings? Berlaymont is 10-15 minutes' walk from here or just 8 minutes metro from Beaulieu area, for example.</p>
<p>I find it outrageous that we are not consulted on how open space should be implemented but not on whether we actually want to move to open space and what we think about it. would also have expected a proper consultation in the form of an anonymous survey to make sure people can speak their mind without potentially putting their career at risk, rather than a consultation on the intranet. All in all I have the impression that the decision to move to open space is already taken and consultation of staff just serves to justify this purpose.</p>
<p>My personal situation is very specific because of a serious disease. Suffering from a brain tumour I work only 60% medical part-time and my disease impacts already now on concentration. I am worried about the consequences of open space. Most likely because of my medical situation I will get a separate space but this will just create isolation in my case.</p>
<p>Overall I believe open space would impact negatively on my work since I often have meetings in my own office without disturbing other colleagues, while in a quiet environment I can better concentrate on my work and deliver results</p>
<p>Very disappointed at DG's handling - mixed messages about what staff are consulted on, whether possible to influence decision or not, whether they will stop if staff object or OIB doesn't provide what staff identify as minimum requirements for NEAR's specialised work (not comparable to DIGIT, OIB or PMO) plus lack of information on what is on "offer". High distrust of management intentions / ability to deliver on promises. Very concerned about how open space will impact negatively on my ability to do my particular work. NEAR won't attract good staff to replace those who will leave.</p>
<p>I am happy to accept the concept of an open space office. However, the question raises the following concerns for me:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increased level of noise- As mentioned I need to work in absolute silence to produce sound pieces of work and I am worried that the increased level of noise will result in lack of concentration and subsequent lack of efficiency. 2) lack of privacy- if need be to make private phone calls and even eat in privacy for those times when I do not have sufficient time and need to eat my lunch at my desk. <p>If these issues could be addressed, perhaps the concept could work.</p>
<p>I worked for 10 years in an open space at the television channel and for about a year at DG BUDG fichier tiers so I know what it is and I have to admit that I work more concentrated and more effective in a separate room, sometimes with closed doors.</p>
<p>So far, no concrete survey has been conducted on the type of tasks we are performing, need for confidentiality on sensitive matters and very important need of coordination with colleagues in other DGs and in Delegations. Time spent on the phone by me and other members of the team is very substantial and we donnot understand how we will deal with that collectively, without raising major tensions between us.</p>

<p>I agree on the open space, we have to move to a more modern DG, we can not expect life to be like in the 90s in the offices when people used to have their own huge office with lots of paper files. I would suggest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having laptops instead of PCs -having social corners with couches, coffee machines where people could also stay and work if they want -having a children corner for holidays -having a designer plan it with plants, lamps and colours -each person should have soundproof headphones (like in EPSO) <p>Having no office might lead to less paper storing</p>
<p>At DG near the IT department has already moved to open space at the 1st floor. So I have a question: Will the open space at the first floor be also relooked ?</p>
<p>Neither earplugs nor teleworking would help enhancing the communication.</p>
<p>J'ai vécu l'expérience open space dans le privé pendant un an. La société (un bureau d'avocats international) dans laquelle je travaillais à l'époque est d'ailleurs assez vite revenue en arrière à l'ancienne configuration.</p> <p>Les certificats médicaux risquent de pleuvoir.</p> <p>Il n'y aura pas plus d'esprit d'équipe que maintenant puisque le homeworking sera vivement encouragé et pris par les gens qui éviteront un maximum cette configuration nouvelle.</p>
<p>This is crap. So disrespectful for our work! We may do administrative work, but we are no factory workers. All the similar organisations that have switched to open space in the 90s, now are reversing it</p>
<p>Preserve special chairs/sitting arrangements. Have enough meetings rooms/private rooms. Have useful phone facilities for which people do not have to move all the time. Create/keep unit cooperation. Enough storage for papers etc. Modern work facilities. Flex working.</p>
<p>Certain tasks needs constant consultations with colleagues and peers where other tasks need 100% concentration which for me, after 26 years working in the Commission, would be very difficult to do in open space. The reply might be that certain tasks could be done by teleworking but this option is not always a solution, depending on the home situation. While it might be easier for some people to adapt to an open space culture, I am convinced it will be more difficult for others. We should at least have the option to choose for it and not be dumped into a new adventure without a choice.</p>
<p>Hard to believe that the needs for reducing the costs and therefore creating an open space will allow the proper investment in establishing open space where working conditions will be improved. There is definitely a lack of confidentiality, increasing pressure over the staff to deliver urgently in minimal conditions. Those who need to concentrate, making researches, and going through numerous files will not have the space to concentrate properly. Risks of noise, distractions resulting from movements, phone calls, exchanges between colleagues, all legitimate but still disturbing for others.</p>
<p>Open-plan seating won't be beneficial for everyone. Many people function better with some privacy, free of distractions and without being forced to constantly engage with the people around them. The open-plan movement began in the business centres of the US and the UK, but was not always successful as a one-size-fits-all model - because people are different. At the same time, people in more senior positions require privacy due to the highly political nature of their work. A hybrid arrangement (part open-plan; part offices) would be ideal, and is now favoured in the private sector.</p>
<p>1) Open Space Offices are a CLEAR DETERIORATION of our working conditions and the sole reason is financial one. If the Commission really needs to save money, there are other ways and I can propose some that appear clear to most of the officials.</p>
<p>2) Open Space Offices are, by definition, in CONTRADICTION with functions performed by a DIPLOMATIC SERVICE. Diplomatic activities, some very sensitive, require a degree of discretion. Can somebody imagine Open Space Offices in the EEAS?</p>
<p>Whilst the introduction of "open space" in the workplace may be appropriate for certain functions, its blanket application without discussing the proposal in detail (e.g., ergonomic, safety, performance, etc. issues) to the whole of the Service and without considering its implications may be detrimental to the</p>

<p>Service's integrity. This comes at a time when the Service has been called to do "more with less" and has suffered significant cuts in resources and services, which means that every action affecting a critically balanced organisation may result in the organisation's undoing.</p>
<p>I spend a lot of time working together with colleagues on projects political issues. This requires ad hoc discussions, visits, and phone calls, 5 min, 15 min; it would be inefficient to book a room for 10 x 5 minutes per day.</p> <p>I talk a lot on the phone. Most of my team colleagues work in an EU Delegation abroad, with not excellent phone connections. I cannot book a VC room for a 10 min discussion on a simple work issue.</p> <p>For analytical work and drafting, I need silence.</p> <p>I have a psychological issue with noise, but I will not admit this and not end up as the freak in the glass office.</p>
<p>The DG of DG NEAR said in his first e-mail to all staff that the discussion has already been taken that there will be open space offices. He later backtracked, seeing the reactions but this whole exercise thus went off to a very bad start. He now says no decision has been taken but how can you still trust this statement?</p> <p>Also, the justification (important to bring all DG staff together) only holds water if all alternatives have been thoroughly looked at, including changing the building or the excessive meeting culture at DG NEAR.</p>
<p>It is been proved by many studies that an open space environment affect negatively the efficiency and quality of work, not to mention the quality of life of workers. Real reason behind this proposal is purely economic, all other arguments provided by hierarchy are easily counter-argued: the barriers/difference among Directorates in the DG are by no means "physical", as argued by DG but organisational, other examples of DGs scattered in different buildings shows that this is not a barrier to create a good working environment. Nobody from J-54 has requested to move. No need to change!!!!</p>
<p>In the secretariat we are often in contact with members of the unit and private information, we need to be able to protect their privacy by talking in a restricted room/space</p>
<p>I worked in open space already 20 years ago. It made for a good working atmosphere.</p>
<p>Not against in principle, but I would like to see exactly how the workspaces will be configured and what facilities will be available before making up my mind. Could be better than current arrangements, could also be worse.</p>
<p>I am not against the idea of open space. But if you want to do proper ones not affecting your efficiency, it cost a lot of money, and as the financial aspect seems to be the primary motivation to move to open space, it will be hard to have enough garanties. The nature of the task does determine the nature of your working environment; it is not a discrimination to say that some people could still have offices and other open plan if the one working in open space have enough guarantees too. But in the policy making area, open space seems really hard to believe or conceive.</p>
<p>This is not one of the existential problems facing the Commission or the EU at the moment. It's not even one of the big issues for doing my job successfully.</p>
<p>A formal relocation proposal has not yet been made so it is premature to discuss whether there has been sufficient consultation.</p>
<p>I am worried also by the fact that HR managment will be very challenging. With offices, if I need to speak confidentially with the HoU, I can go to his office in total privacy. In an open space, how the privacy and personal issues will be addressed and guaranteed? All the personnel will see that I have requested a private meeting with the HoU and might listen.</p>
<p>The answers of the above are also conditioned to the organisation and the design that will prevail but it will at least induce a very different way of working and weaken our functioning. It could also result in increasing teleworking and further isolate colleagues and destabilise the teams.</p>
<p>Re question 5: the question is not about meeting deadlines but about the quality of the work</p>
<p>we are far away from a paperless office. Space for files on the desk and sufficient storage capacity is required. That has to be considered.</p>
<p>I am very glad that open space initiative has been taken up by the EC. This will create stronger boundaries with colleagues and less hierarchy. However, the aim should be to upgrade our work space and not find a less costly solution. This implies probably more space for the same amount of people. I would encourage you to follow the best practices when creating the open space. Please take a look at</p>

<p>GOOGLE offices. If the idea is to have a 90's inspired open spaces, then it is not an improvement and I will not be in favour.</p>
<p>Open space common areas to go beyond meeting rooms, quite room and kitchen. To be creative and to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reading areas with daily news, relevant newspapers/reviews, brochures, interesting reports, books (geographic, literature, culture, fashion) on the geographic region covered by NEAR . 2. Foresee a room with simple group games 3. Important inspiring, relaxing walls decoration
<p>The open space plan has been announced to staff not as a proposal but as a decision - open space it will be. Concerns associated by colleagues to working in OS would need to be addressed and answered in detail, particularly as they doubt that the of bringing the whole staff together is what is required to bridge the divide within DG NEAR.</p>
<p>I think the open space will improve collaboration, exchange of expertise and relationship between colleagues.</p> <p>People will be able to speak rather ending e-mails which will ensure better communication and faster procedures.</p> <p>It is also good that the DG is one single place instead of 3 different buildings. For the colleagues which are not in the LOi-15 tis is a positive element.</p> <p>Team spirit will be improved and colleagues could help each other.</p>
<p>Overall privacy of the working environment will diminish, together with motivation and availability to spend overtime at work. Provision of meeting rooms or phone booths will not compensate this. Overall, the exercise seems overly expensive (new furniture, transition logistics, etc) and with very tenuous benefits at the end of the process. Procedure-wise, the management decision lacked any consultation of the staff before being taken. Ex-post-facto "consultation" exercises will not suffice to restore the trust of the employees. A bad decision remains a bad decision.</p>
<p>Not unless there is a sufficient number of offices where confidential meetings can be held.</p>
<p>The fact our work conditions are worsening might demotivate the staff that works already under very high pressure, in particular with sensitive regions (i.e Neighbourhood South) on sensitive topics (such as migration) with interlocutors that are not always easy to work with.</p>
<p>These questions are oriented!</p>
<p>I think it is a very bad idea to introduce open space, then I would say that management do not care about their staff. At the same time one talks about efficiency and open space and efficiency cannot be said in the same sentence. It is too noisy with telephones ringing, people talking on the phone and with each other. Impossible to keep concentration and be focused.</p>
<p>This survey is premature as the consultation process is only just now beginning. Until the potential concept is defined none of these questions can be answered.</p>
<p>"Open Space" can look so different. What is Important is that there will be enough place for working files in relation to the working place, low cubicle walls, adjustable desks and enough number of small rooms that can be used when needed for meetings, phone calls etc,</p>
<p>As seen in other services, open space tends to lead to less communication as people put headphones to cut themselves from the noise and the environment. And you talk less to colleagues as you disturb the ones around. Going to a separate room each time you have to discuss a specific file over the phone with other DGs will not be the most efficient working method either and it would imply that we are all equipped with cell-phones /wireless phones.</p>
<p>The only real problem of Open Spaces is the impossibility to customize light and climatisation according to personal needs.</p>
<p>This kind of issues should be better studied in order to find a solution</p>
<p>The open-plan office is the way most organisations work now and should work well here. But careful consideration is needed to meet people's needs and to accommodate the nature of their work. It is critical to provide sufficient informal meeting space (for quick meetings and conversations away from desks), quiet rooms (for private meetings and quiet working) and formal meeting rooms.</p>
<p>Other factors need to be taken into consideration:</p>

<p>SECURITY (L15 building could be terrorist target): evacuation time is already very slow, you cannot increase the number of staff in upper floors;</p> <p>ELEVATORS: they malfunction all the time. Another reason not to increase number of staff in upper floors</p>
<p>Work on the biggest EU financial assistance programme in a politically very sensitive context requires efficiency, accuracy and rapidity of reactions and ability give constantly reshaped info to various interested parties: Council, EP, Court of Auditors. It requires analytical work, substantial drafting, and contributions to a flow of briefings. I ticked that yes could keep deadlines in new environment but this due to my motivation will stretch to do the necessary in any environment as this is the way I work. The high political priority area of our work would merit enhanced work environment-not downgrading!</p>
<p>I worked in open space environment for more than ten years and it partially affected my ability to concentrate. In addition bad acoustical design can increase stress and reduce productivity. However, certain types of tasks are more suited to open spaces than others and such working environment can even become more social and collaborative environment than the current one.</p>
<p>With the numerous staff cut we've been facing over the last years, the workload has tremendously increased for every one of us. This is already impacting negatively our capacity to deliver our work up to the qualitative and professional standards that are expected from EC officials.</p> <p>If, on the top of staff cuts, working conditions also deteriorate further to the adoption of the open space policy (noisy working environment, loss of concentration and of confidentiality), I don't see how this institution can still guarantee that it will continue delivering up to high standards.</p>
<p>Open space can work if it is implemented in a way to be able to keep ones privacy. I have worked in open space before in which each colleague had a "cubicle" of +/-5 sqm, formed in U shape with one side being open to the corridor and cloth partition panels (to reduce acoustic noise) on three sides with a height of +/-160 cm. This I must say was a pleasant working environment.</p> <p>A big closed kitchen with several appliances should be provided with an eating space to avoid food smell in the open space area.</p>
<p>It will take a period of adaptation. One cannot judge now how things will be later and how efficient one will be after being 6 months in open space and having fully adapted to the new environment. Human beings are adaptable creatures and this is a change people can easily survive. We should be flexible and try to adapt to the new situation. I prefer to work in my office alone, and I would not mind to try for a time how it would be to work in an open area environment. But if I take that choice I will not be able to come back to my single person office if I do not like it. So, I am better now.</p>
<p>Question 4 is impossible. Do you mean positively influence or negatively? If not clear how will you analyse the result under this? Is it too difficult to imagine that some of us prefer open space to 7 sqm box offices with a pillar in the middle? I worked in open space offices before join the EC - it worked very well - and exchange of information and speed of decisions were both supported.</p>
<p>Bad idea, poorly executed. Trust in senior management has been lost with many colleagues.</p> <p>Worked in open space before. It won't work, you'll see (has the DG read any of the more recent studies coming out of Canada?).</p>