



Survey

# OPEN SPACE

# DG NEAR

## Results and Analysis

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# Methodology

## Concerned staff

This survey was distributed to the concerned DG NEAR colleagues, or 614 people.

380 colleagues participated, representing a rate of **62%**.

## Collection method

EU Survey in secure mode. Only those who have received an official link were able to respond.

## Duration

From 20 October to 18 November 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 4 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





# Introduction

In October 2010, and subsequently, **R&D** denounced the adoption of a buildings policy by OIB favouring the proliferation of open-plan offices within our institution (cf [R&D Communications](#)).

## *Scientific studies strengthen R&D's position (cf [p16](#))*

In all our actions, we have relied on scientific studies to reinforce our position on the negative effects of work in open space for the vast majority of services.

Indeed, most of our colleagues need a great deal of concentration to do their work, involving a space devoid of noise. In addition, our colleagues are often confronted with the handling of sensitive or confidential data.

## *R&D launches OPEN SPACE survey in PMO and DG NEAR*

In order to be even closer to our colleagues and allow them to express themselves in the greatest and strictest confidentiality, we have launched "OPEN SPACE" surveys to PMO and DG NEAR staff.

Whether our colleagues are from the PMO or DG NEAR, their answers are categorical and without appeal: their work cannot be done in open space, given the requirements of their jobs.

## *Director General of DG TAXUD listened to his staff and stopped moving to open-plan offices (cf [Stephen Quest's blog](#))*

Moreover, DG TAXUD's Director-General has understood the fears of his staff. He therefore made consulted within his DG to be sure that this workspace met his expectations and those of his staff by bringing together the 3 C: "Content, Collaboration, Communication" promoting a real "Win-win-win".

**He listened to his staff and took the wise decision to stop any move to open space.**

## *A workspace formula not in line with most of the Commission's tasks*

It is therefore obvious that this work space formula cannot correspond to all services but must be studied on a case-by-case basis and according to the specificities of the jobs, as stipulated in the Commission's Housing Conditions Manual - Part 2



### **OIB Director joins R&D position on Open Space**

Finally, the OIB's Director joins our position in recognising that open space is toxic (cf [see video from 4'40''](#)), calling this solution old and well below OIB projects which are to set up "Collaborative spaces". These "dynamic" spaces will have as objective to choose the workspace according to the flexibility and the type of work carried out.

### **Open space ... Collaborative spaces ... Two different terms but always the same constraints...**

We were the first to support the new working methods allowing flexibility for everyone to reconcile work and private life, especially after the introduction of the 40 hour week. However we never wished or envisaged that this progress could open the Pandora's box ... and again to the detriment of all staff!

To this end, we recall that "The Economist" confirms the position of **R&D** on open space and collaborative space (cf [article](#)) : *"we cannot force colleagues to share large noisy spaces ... interrupt their concentration ... workers suffer In silence ... distraction ... the problem is serious ... frequent interruptions ... increased time to finish a job ... multitasking reduces the quality of work ... lower efficiency by going from one task to another because the brain continues to think in the old task ... "*

### **R&D gave the floor to the staff of DG NEAR**

#### **Recall of facts**

Last October, the Directorate of Resources of DG NEAR informed the staff of the **decision** of senior management to move to building L-15, specifying that workspace would be arranged in **open space** since this option would be the most appropriate to meet the objectives of bringing together the staff in a single building and thus improve the work, communication and mutual understanding within the DG.

The Director-General made clear that [this decision was conditional](#) and would apply only if certain elements were met, such as the needs of the DG and the welfare of the staff.

Subsequently, at the "NEAR breakfast" on 24 October, staff raised doubts and concerns about the layout of this new workspace.

Four themes were highlighted:

- ⇒ safety / health;
- ⇒ noise / concentration;
- ⇒ well-being / health
- ⇒ confidentiality.

On 3 November the Directors were invited to designate representatives to carry out an internal consultation with staff on the setting up of open space, with reference to the Housing Conditions Manual.

At the outset of his communication, the Director-General made clear that this process would not happen overnight and that discussions would take place with staff and staff representatives

### **R&D listens to DG NEAR's staff**

Last October, at staff request, **R&D** have participated in a meeting organized by DG NEAR's colleagues

Having noted that there was a lack of proper consultation formally organised by DG NEAR, **R&D** decided to consult all colleagues and **to launch a survey through EUSurvey on the setting up of OPEN SPACE in DG NEAR.**

This survey was distributed to 614 colleagues via EU Survey and in secure mode. Only those who have received an official link were able to respond. 380 colleagues (62%) took the time to answer the questions and have submitted their comments reflecting their fears about this new work arrangement.

**We thank all our colleagues for their participation and the trust they have placed in us.**

The results of this survey demonstrate that DG NEAR's staff does not wish to move to open space for strictly professional reasons.

**R&D carried out an in-depth analysis of this survey and presents the results below.**

Cristiano Sebastiani,  
President

### **R&D communications**

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

#### **DIGIT**

[Black Pearl 1: Degradation of working conditions in sight in the New Black Pearl Building](#)

[Black Pearl 2: Peal peril for passengers of the Black Pearl](#)

[15 February 2016: « Open Space » Odyssey—Act II, Scene III DG DIGIT enters the stage without consulting staff](#)

[03 March 2016: Black Pearl – Finally DIGIT opens the dialogue](#)

#### **PMO**

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

[04 May 2016 : Survey on satisfaction Open Space—PMO](#)

[Survey OPEN SPACE PMO—Results and analysis](#)

[14 October 2016: Note to Mrs Veronica Gaffey, Director of PMO: “Open Space” in your services](#)

#### **TAXUD**

[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...](#)

#### **JRC**

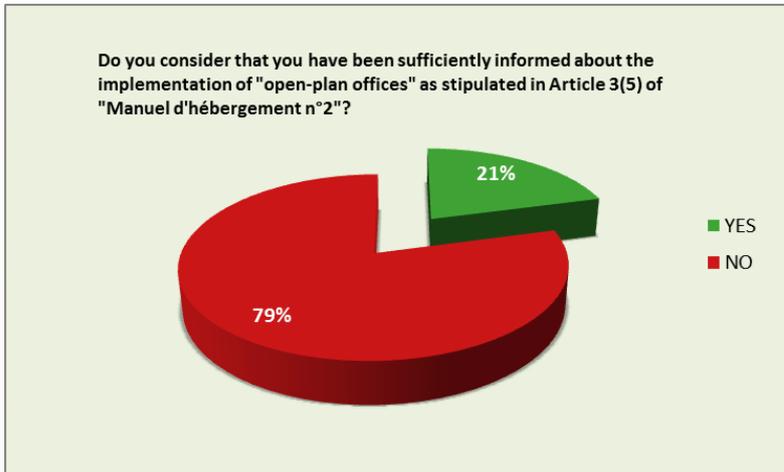
[Saga Réalité OPEN SPACE au JRC](#)



# 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) of "Manuel d'hébergement n°2" (all open-plan offices relocation proposal must be the subject of an internal preliminary study by the relevant DG in association with the staff concerned, in particular to check the compatibility of tasks with a landscaped working environment )?

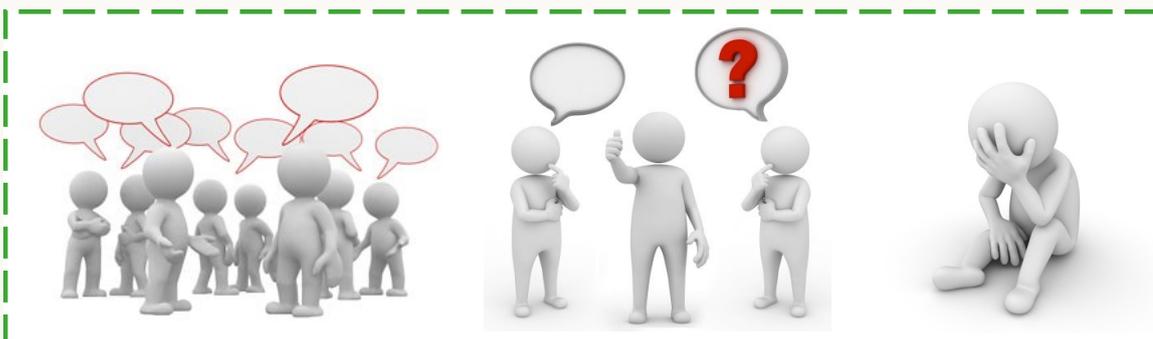


79% of colleagues feel they were not sufficiently informed about the implementation of open plan offices.

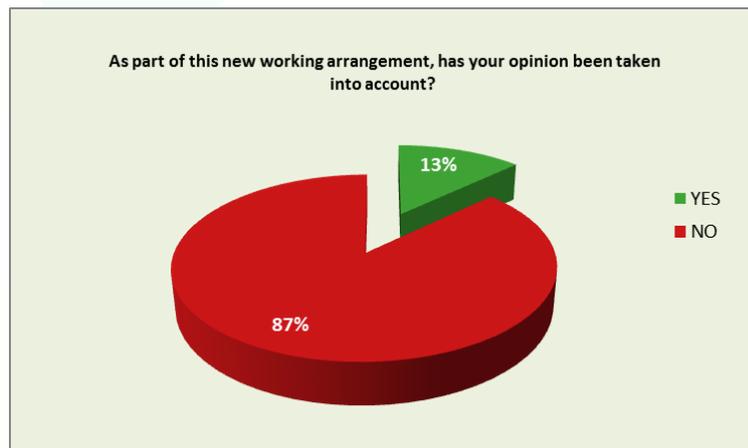
According to experts, the lack of consultation of staff in relation to decisions affecting them is a psychosocial risk factor cf: [Le Renard Déchaîné spécial Harcèlement et autres risques psychosociaux p43](#)).

*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?*

*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?*



## 2) As part of this new working arrangement, has your opinion been taken into account?



87% of colleagues considered that their opinion has not taken into account.

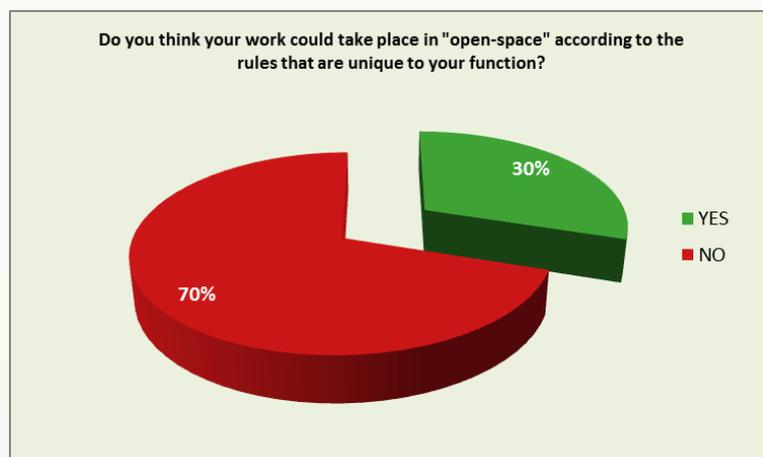
For the remaining 13% of colleagues who feel that their opinion has taken into account; 8% of them think that their opinion was taken into account, 4% partly and 1% not at all.

[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 work-stations) 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 take place in "open-space" according to the rules that are unique to your function?



70% of colleagues consider that their work cannot be done in open space. Staff working at DG NEAR is usually assigned

to tasks require high degree of concentration and many call phones.



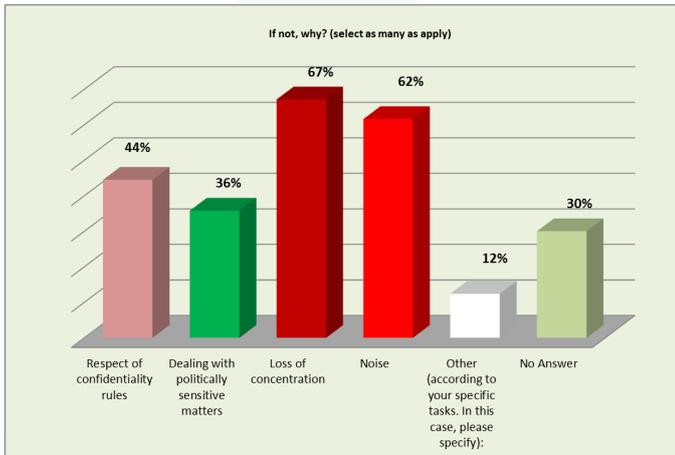
*I am afraid I will bother my nearby colleagues. Besides when having a small meeting of more than three, this will undoubtedly bother people working in the open space around you.*



*As external relation officer, dealing with rule of law topics, I am constantly meeting external stakeholders including to speak about sensitive cases (e.g. Ongoing indictments, political issues, handling personal data). I would find very stressful to be searching for rooms and lock documents.*



### 3.1) If not, why not? (select as many as apply)



**Loss of concentration** was the first concern to be raised by 67% 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 62% of colleagues, which complements the fear of losing their concentration.

**Compliance with confidentiality rules** is also a major concern for 44% of colleagues.

Then comes the **processing of personal data** for 36% of them.

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

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

- ⇒ Numerous telephone contacts with Delegations, partners, contractors
- ⇒ Analytical tasks
- ⇒ Highly confidential files which require preparation of documents and oral communications
- ⇒ Important number of paper files which need adequate space
- ⇒ Security
- ⇒ Regular visits from external persons which need meeting rooms whereas they could normally take place in offices
- ⇒ health

(cf: [read all comment](#))

*We have to do phone calls with Delegations, project partners, contractors etc. on a very regular basis, which will be very difficult in such an environment without disturbing the other colleagues. Our work also entails many meetings, which will be more difficult to organize without own office space.*



*I need to talk a lot over the phone to discuss things with line DGs, think to contribute to briefings etc. I have been sharing an office with 2 and then 1 person. I really felt a big difference of efficiency, well-being and motivation. Open space are tiring and counter-productive in the long run.*



## CONCERNING IMPACT

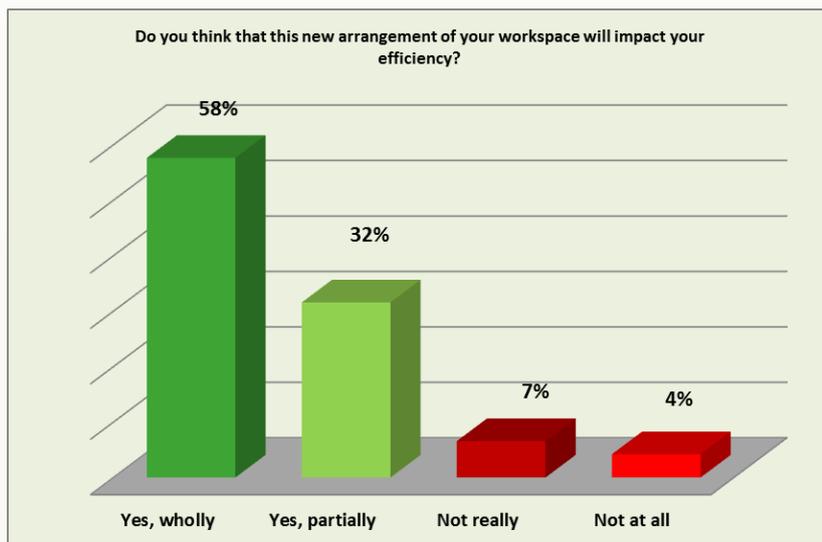
### 4) Do you think that this new arrangement of your workspace will impact ...

#### Your well-being?



84% of colleagues, including 47% that « strongly agree », believe that this new working arrangement will impact their wellbeing.

#### Your Efficiency ?



90% of colleagues, including 58% that « strongly agree », think that this new working arrangement will impact their efficiency.



*My tasks is 90% based on my concentration. Having to many people around me with different habits, different jobs and way of doing them, will not help.*



*I think I will be less efficient and much more tired given the need to adapt to the noise and open-space environment for work.*



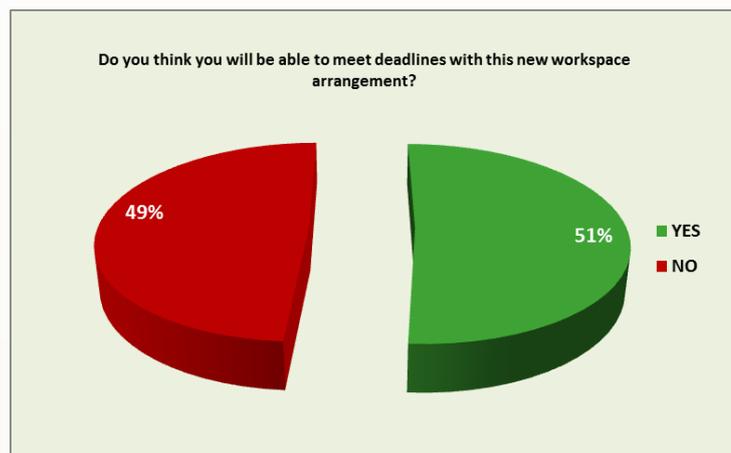
## yourMotivation ?



76% of colleagues, including 42% that "strongly agree", think this new working arrangement will impact on motivation.

## CONCERNING DEADLINE COMPLIANCE

### 5) Do you think you will be able to meet deadlines with this new workspace arrangement?



51 % of colleagues think you can meet deadlines with this workplace arrangement but some of them mentioned a decrease of quality of work.

#### 5.1) If not, why?

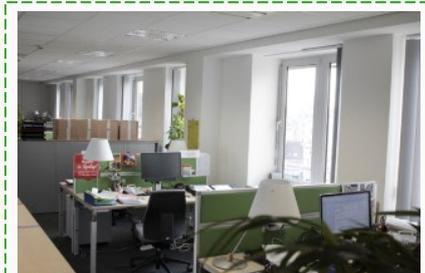
49% of colleagues who responded that they thought being not able to meet deadlines, evoke the following reasons :

- ⇒ Loss of concentration
- ⇒ Noise
- ⇒ Decreased quality of work
- ⇒ Distraction
- ⇒ Stress
- ⇒ Loss of efficiency
- ⇒ Loss of productivity
- ⇒ Lack of discretion
- ⇒ Confidentiality
- ⇒ Need to meet very short deadlines

Futhermore, some colleagues put forward that teleworking could not be a compensatory solution.

Indeed, their work requires a presence in the office as deadlines are very short and it is imperative to consult colleagues.

(cf. [read all comments](#))



Open Space offices in OIB



*Open space will have an impact on the productivity (both in quality and timing) of staff. Certainly it will have for me (lack of concentration, noise, more possibilities of being interrupted, etc.).*

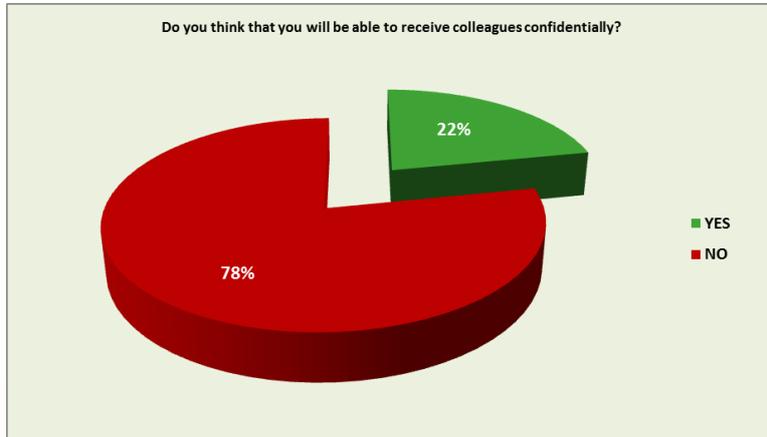


*We receive a lot of briefing requests and the level of noise, distraction and lack of privacy to deal with political sensitive information will have an impact on our efficiency.*



## CONCERNING CONFIDENTIALITY

### 6) Do you think that you will be able to receive colleagues confidentially?



Only 22% of colleagues consider that they will be able to receive colleagues in strict confidentiality.

#### 6.1) If not, why not?

A majority of colleagues, 78%, put forward the following reasons:

- ⇒ Confidentiality of files and tasks
- ⇒ Data protection
- ⇒ Sensitive data
- ⇒ Confidentiality of telephone conversations
- ⇒ Shared office = loss of confidentiality
- ⇒ Visibility
- ⇒ Need to receive colleagues in total confidentiality during the day

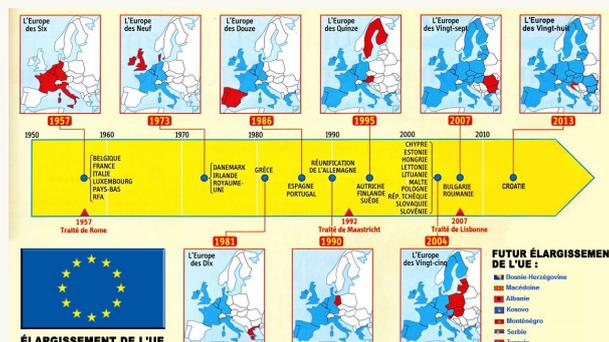
Furthemore, meeting rooms will not be sufficient. Given the specificity of the files, these rooms will be over solicited and therefore not disponible.

(cf. [read all comments](#))

#### 7) General comment

We have decided to publish all the comments so that DG NEAR management could consult and really know the point of view of its staff.

(cf. [read all comments](#))



Confidentiality sometimes is based on not to be seen meeting somebody, not only being heard. Who can this be solved if all your units sees you going into a meeting room? I guess teh alternative is Exki

Loss of elementary sense of human value and privacy. Why don't you replace us by robots? You wouldn't need any office space at all! Corporations did not introduce it for the employees' sake but only to save costs and exercise indirect pressure. Don't pretend that it has another motivation here.



# Reminder of the rules in force

## 1) Obligation of a preliminary study and the close involvement of staff in the definition of the project

The Commission's Housing Conditions Manual - Part 2, art. 3.3.1 provides ...

”

*...In advance of any request for space development, the applicant DG must carry out a preliminary study of the functional requirements directly and indirectly related to the entity to be installed ....*

*As soon as the preliminary study has been carried out, the requesting services must involve the staff concerned in the definition of the project (layout of premises and workstations) in consultation with the Office of the duty station ... Taking these elements and recommendations into account MIT, the Office will carry out a detailed space planning study and will check whether the conditions for the creation of a landscaped area are met, in particular with regard to Safety, Health and Welfare at work and whether they are Achievable by technical improvements. "*

*I need to interact with my colleague sharing the same office almost every 5 minutes. In an open space I think it will be very difficult for the other colleagues and for me if the colleagues in the same room need to do the same.*



## 2) Taking into account the specificities of the tasks performed by the concerned colleagues

The Commission's Housing Conditions Manual - Part 2, art. 3.3.1 also provides ...

”

*...in general, the layout of the workstation must meet the functional needs of the type of work performed. The landscaping office is notably to propose to the operational or administrative entities for which the communication between the persons is essential, whose tasks are not confidential or which carry out work that does not require a permanent concentration. The configuration of the workstations must reflect the functional differences and promote the proper execution of tasks ".*

*My daily work involves communication with colleagues (both from my DG/Unit and other DG) on issue that required discretion and confidentiality due to the nature of the tasks. It will not be easy to manage it in an open space office. This will have impact also on the volume of work achieved*



# Analysis of the results



*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.*



*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.*

## Global vision

### Staff consultation

The results of this survey clearly show that the staff considered that they were neither adequately informed (79%) nor consulted about their opinion (87%) about the move to an open space workspace.

### Jobs' requirements

In addition, colleagues from DG NEAR who stated that their work could not be done in open space gave the following reasons:

- ⇒ Loss of concentration (67%)
  - ⇒ Noise pollution (62%)
  - ⇒ Compliance with confidentiality rules (44%)
  - ⇒ Processing of personal data (36%)
- Other reasons are cited (see point 3.1)

### Impact

The new work arrangement will also have a negative impact on well-being (84%), efficiency (90%) and motivation (76%) of the staff.

### Respect of deadlines

51% of colleagues think they can meet the deadlines, but while mentioning for some of them a decrease in the quality of the work done. Other disadvantages are also raised by colleagues (see point 5.1).

### Confidentiality

Confidentiality cannot be respected by colleagues (78%) in terms both of file analysis and oral communication. Quiet rooms will be available, but given the specificity of the files handled, requiring regular meetings, the number of these rooms would not meet the demand. Several negative aspects emerge from the comments of colleagues such as:

- ⇒ Data protection
- ⇒ Sensitive data
- ⇒ Sharing an office = loss of confidentiality
- ⇒ Need to receive colleagues/visitors in complete confidentiality during the day

## Concerning the consultation of staff and the impact on their work

Last October, the Directorate of Resources of DG NEAR informed the staff of the **decision** of the senior management to move to building L-15, specifying that the space would be arranged in **open space**.

Subsequently, at the "NEAR breakfast" on 24 October, staff expressed their doubts and fears about the arrangement of this new workspace.

Four themes were highlighted:

- ⇒ Safety / health;
- ⇒ Noise / concentration;
- ⇒ Wellness / health
- ⇒ Confidentiality.

The same themes were mentioned by the staff in this survey.

On 3 November directors were invited to designate representatives to carry out an internal consultation with staff on the setting up of open space, with reference to the Housing Conditions Manual.

From the outset of his communication, Director General made clear that this process would not happen overnight and that discussions would take place with staff and staff representatives.

We can see from the answers to questions 1 (information on the implementation of the "open-plan offices") and 2



(opinion requested) of the survey launched by **R&D that the obligation to draw up a preliminary study of functional needs by involving concerned staff in the definition of the project was not respected.**

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

### Concerning professional needs such as compliance with the rules of confidentiality as well as the high level of concentration

DG NEAR's staff mission is to put in place the European Union's enlargement and neighbourhood policy, which is a highly sensitive political subject. Sometimes, they may be asked to respond to current events. These functions require very special attention since they require a high degree of confidentiality and vigilance requiring a high concentration rate.

**The work in open space would not allow them to meet the requirements of the specificity of their jobs as they invoked.**

**Moreover, these workspaces will not allow them a high concentration as well as a noise-free space, as required by their tasks.**

However, in view of the professional needs of our DG NEAR's colleagues, it is clear that open space cannot in any case be a feasible solution so that they can carry out their tasks in peace and respecting their well-being, as defended in the fit @ work program.

### The results of the Staff Survey 2016 demonstrate the profound uneasiness of DG NEAR's staff

In addition, the results of the Staff Survey 2016 are more than worrying. Indeed, the DG NEAR's staff commitment Index is 58%, it dropped by 6 points between 2016 and 2014. The average for the Commission is 64%.

#### DG NEAR is in 50th position among 53 DGs and Executive Agencies

We also draw attention to the results concerning senior management.

Indeed, only 39% of the colleagues consider that senior management listens to staff, 34% that it favours "two-way" communication, and 38% that it is committed to promote a fair, flexible and respectful work environment.

**SPEAKUP**  
STAFF SURVEY 2016

*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.*

The workspace has decreased over the years, especially because of budget savings and to facilitate communication and interaction between colleagues and teamwork efficiency.

However, several scientific studies have examined this subject following the opposite effect produced by these work arrangements.

Admittedly, companies have certainly realized budgetary savings of a real estate nature, but scientific research is all unanimous as to the loss generated by the open spaces following the consequences produced by:

- ⇒ Lower motivation
- ⇒ The decline in job satisfaction
- ⇒ Reduced perception of privacy
- ⇒ Increased stress
- ⇒ Lower productivity

### A false budget saving

According to the Management Issues article "Open-place offices are a false economy"<sup>1</sup>, which is based on recent scientific studies, open space would not respond to a budgetary saving but would contribute to distraction, an increase in stress and would be very noisy. These conditions do not allow to work effectively "*It would not be too wild to assume 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 that they are far from most of their inmates are concerned, open-plan offices are noisy, distracting and stressful, in which to work effectively.*"

Moreover, the scientific study "Workplace satisfaction: the privacy communication trade-off in open-plan offices -2013"<sup>2</sup> established among 40,000 American workers demonstrates that confining staff in a smaller workspace is very attractive financially but this is a false economy since no evidence has been found regarding the benefits of improved interaction and communication.

### A decline in staff satisfaction and performance

Indeed, several scientific studies have demonstrated a significant decline in work space satisfaction (Sundstrom, Herbert & Brown, 1982) with an increase in distract-

tion and a loss of perception of private space (Kaarlela- Tuomaala et al., 2009) as well as a decrease in performance (Brennan, Chugh & Kline, 2002) following the move of staff from an individual or shared office (2-3) to an open space.

Moreover, the majority of survey respondents did not adapt or become accustomed to this change in work environment. Several studies have linked the decline in workplace satisfaction with the deterioration in job satisfaction and productivity (Sundstrom, Town, Rice, Osborn & Brill, 1994; Veitch, Charles, Farley, & Newsham, 2007).

### A disturbing noise

According to a recent survey conducted by Ifop / JNA (3), it is estimated that about 6 million French people in working life would lose more than 30 minutes of working time per day due to noise and noise pollution. This would represent a loss of productivity of about € 23 billion per year (Insee 2014 estimate). One of the solutions proposed to counter the impact of the sound environment on productivity in open space would be the use of earphones and headphones. This solution could have the opposite effect of what open space should allegedly bring to the world of work and push the various persons concerned to break contact with the others in order to concentrate..

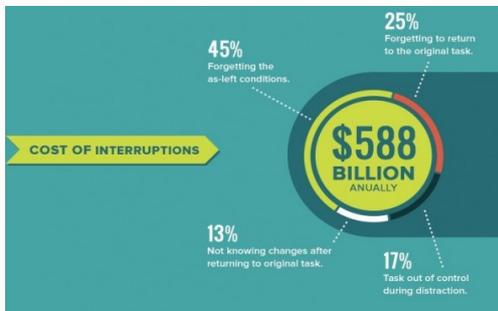
### A high rate of sickn leave

According to the study "Sickness absence associated with shared open-plan offices", people working in a shared office or in open space are twice as likely to be on sick leave as people occupying individual offices.

en arrêt maladie que les personnes occupant des bureaux individuels.

### High cost of work interruptions

According to the article "The detrimental Pitfalls of open-plan offices (GETVOIP)", a recent American study states that people working in open space are interrupted every 3 minutes, which corresponds to an annual loss of \$ 588 billion.



Source Getvoip

### A level of concentration which differs depending on the tasks to be performed

The "Individual difference in employee reactions to open-plan offices-2005" <sup>6</sup> study emphasizes that attention levels differ according to the tasks performed and this therefore requires different levels of concentration to accomplish them.



*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.*

- 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](#)
- 7- [Le bruit dégrade la productivité au travail des Français—Octobre 2016 JNA](#)
- 8- [Le bruit au travail nuit à la santé des salariés et à la santé financière des entreprises—Octobre 2016 JNA Associations](#)
- 9- [Take Off your headphones and listen— MEL](#)

# R&D PROPOSALS

Noting the negative results of the survey launched by **R&D** among the DG NEAR's staff concerning the rearrangement of its workspace in open space,

Noting that DG NEAR's directorate informed staff of the **decision of senior management** to move to building L-15, specifying that the space would be developed in **open space** since this option would be the most appropriate to meet the objectives of bringing staff together in a single building and thus improve the work, communication and mutual understanding within the DG,

Noting that DG NEAR's Director-General clarified that this decision was conditional and would be final only once the necessary conditions were met, namely the needs of the DG and the welfare of the staff,

Noting that internal consultation with staff has been initiated once senior management has taken this decision,

Noting that DG NEAR's staff expressed doubts and fears about the open space at the "NEAR Breakfast"

Noting that DG NEAR's jobs are constrained to requirements of a high degree of confidentiality and that the correspondent tasks necessitate a considerable concentration, given the political sensitivity of the European Union files,

Noting that scientific and academic studies reinforce the views of DG NEAR's colleagues



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*In order to restore DG NEAR staff's confidence, staff who had already brought forward*

- ⇒ a deep uneasiness both in terms of working conditions - by responding to the Staff Survey 2016 – and of*
- ⇒ communication with senior management,*

*R&D asks DG NEAR's Director-General to follow the example of DG TAXUD's Director-General who preferred to stop this project for the welfare of his staff and thus promote a win-win-win working environment.*

