



Open space

On this file, we have...

Progress achieved ...

R&D requests ...



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Dear colleagues,

Ever since 2010, when we became aware of the so-called OIB's "avant-garde" real estate policy proposing open space as modern workspaces, [we have continued to denounce this project.](#)

Given the sensitivity of this issue and the impact of these new workspaces on staff wellbeing and health (noise, concentration, fatigue, quality of work, relationship problems, sleep disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, cardio-vascular disorders, etc.), we decided to act in close collaboration with the staff concerned.

This is how we launched our first consultation with PMO staff and then with our colleagues at DG NEAR, at their request.

We have always been the trade union that acts after consultation with staff and based on expert studies...

On this file, we have:

- ⇒ surveyed PMO and DG NEAR staff;
- ⇒ analysed the results based on expert work and scientific data;
- ⇒ denounced the risks relating to the health of the staff and the efficiency of the service;
- ⇒ communicated on PMO, DG DIGIT, DG TAXUD, DG NEAR and JRC projects.

Progress achieved:

- ⇒ abandonment of open space at DG TAXUD, DG NEAR and JRC

We remain vigilant and will continue to intervene.

R&D requests:

- ⇒ *the launch of a survey integrating the evaluation of the WIP (workspace evaluation index) for services that have already opted for the open space, i.e. 4,000 colleagues concerned;*
- ⇒ *the integration of the WIP evaluation into the next Staff Survey*
- ⇒ *the introduction of a vigilance policy at the first signs of psychosocial risks and of physical health loss for colleagues working in services that have opted for the open space, in particular PMO, OIB and DIGIT*
- ⇒ *the mandatory participation in a specific risk prevention in open space training for the managers of services who have opted for this workspace*
- ⇒ *the abandonment of any approach aiming to establish a real estate policy solely on the basis of rationalization of spaces and decrease of budget expenditures. In this respect, OIB's real estate policy, forecasting a restriction of around 20,000 m² of workspace by 2021, is unrealistic and incompatible with the staff well-being.*

R&D thanks M. Danielsson

With his message to the staff, Mr Danielsson has confirmed his decision to abandon the Open Space project for the L-15 building, by conveying a message to his staff.

In particular, all the objections raised by R&D, including the technical ones, have been confirmed by the external consultant.

From the beginning of the process, R&D has been listening to DG NEAR's staff

This shows clearly that: if the staff express their views with clarity; if the staff representation supports the requests by accompanying them with rigorous technical reasoning; if the Director-General concerned shows an appreciable willingness for dialogue and a true spirit of listening and not a regrettable dogmatism, as is unfortunately often the case these days - then the most appropriate solution can finally be found.

In particular, from the outset, R&D has responded to the request for help from DG NEAR's staff and at each stage, we have always reported on our actions (link).

As always, we were well aware that it was essential to organise a credible and technically irreproachable consultation. in order for staff demands to be taken seriously

The R & D survey among DG NEAR's staff was an essential part of the dialogue

On 20 October 2016 we launched by e-survey, in secure mode, the "OPEN SPACE DG NEAR" survey which generated a very wide participation of the staff (62 %).

On 28 November 2016 we published the results of that survey (link) demonstrating that, for strictly professional reasons, DG

NEAR's staff did not wish to move to an open space (link).

On this basis we then followed the whole process, by defending the will expressed by DG NEAR's colleagues at every opportunity, notably during the occasion of our meetings and contacts with DG NEAR's management.

We also put a lot of attention into generating the greatest unity of action of the staff representation.

Mr Danielsson has always confirmed that the results of the survey would be taken into account in an appropriate way and that the consultations that were going on were not intended in any way solely to decide on the establishment of the Open Space, while the decision to use it would have already been taken and could no longer be questioned.

Mr. Danielsson has kept his word and we want to thank him very sincerely for that.

We regret, however, that it has taken so long to take a decision that was clear from the beginning of the process, leaving DG NEAR's staff in a state of uncertainty over many months.

We hope that this may inspire other Directors-General who seem to be totally cut off from any real dialogue with their staff!

OPEN SPACE... COLLABORATIVE SPACE... DG NEAR...

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Dear Colleagues,

You asked for the presence and support of R&D as soon as you heard about senior management's decision to move into L15 building and convert it to Open Space.

According to senior management, this option would be the most appropriate response to the objective of regrouping staff in a single building and thereby improving work, communication and mutual understanding within the DG.

We have responded to your request and we are now giving an account of what we have done

On 19 October: At your request, R&D took part in a meeting of DG NEAR staff

Noting the absence of any real consultation organised by DG NEAR, R&D decide to consult all colleagues.

On 20 October R&D launched the survey entitled « OPEN SPACE DG NEAR »...

This survey was sent to 614 colleagues via EU Survey in secure mode. Only people having received a personalised link could reply. 380 colleagues (62%) took the time to reply to the questions and made comments about their fears with about this new organisation of their work.

We wish to once more thank all those colleagues who took part and for the confidence which they showed us.

On 28 November R&D published the negative results...

The results of this survey show that DG NEAR staff do not want to move to Open Space for strictly professional reasons ([Survey OPEN SPACE: Results and Analysis](#)).

On 1 December R&D called a meeting to present the detailed results of the survey and to draw up conclusions to present to your Director General, Christian Danielsson

On 12 December with our colleagues from the US, R&D met Mr Danielsson and his team...

During this meeting, we gave each participant the results of the OPEN SPACE survey and laid out the following points:

- 1. The negative results of the DG NEAR OPEN SPACE SURVEY**
- 2. That open space is not adapted to the tasks of DG NEAR**
- 3. The need to consult staff**
- 4. The safety and security of L15 building**
- 5. The quite low results of the 2016 STAFF SURVEY**

Christian Danielsson confirmed the following points :

- 1. Thanked R&D for the quality of the survey carried out and confirmed that the results would be taken into account.**
- 2. The objective is to regroup staff in a single building in order to "be together".**
- 3. The decision will be taken if, and only if, the best conditions are guaranteed.**
- 4. Consultation with staff is underway in each unity and directorate, without any time pressure being imposed. The Director General intends to meet each unit and commits to leading a real consultation without any pre-established result. This commitments naturally also valid for DG NEAR's management.**
- 5. In reply to our question, Mr Danielsson firmly denied that in reality the consultation was only to decide how to implement Open space for which the decision had already been taken and could no longer be called into question.**

In conclusion...

Christian Danielsson committed to giving up the collaborative space project if the results of this consultation are negative and optimal conditions are not obtained..

R&D encourages you to take part in this ongoing consultation and to bring your sincere contributions and fears concerning the organisation of the working space.

We will have a meeting with the Director General in January 2017, to follow up movement in this affair. As we have done since you first asked us to intervene, we will keep you informed of progress.

We remain at your disposal if you wish to send us any new information to submit to your Director General.

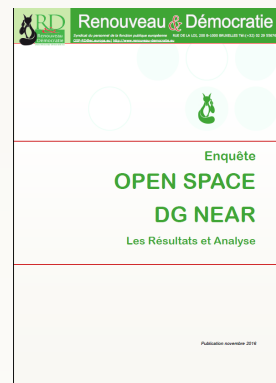
Cristiano Sebastiani,

President

Copie: Staff Commission

ENQUETE OPEN SPACE DG NEAR LES RESULTATS & ANALYSES

RENDEZ-VOUS JEUDI 01 DECEMBRE A 12.30
GRANDE SALLE DU CCP
JII79—LOI 80 2ème étage
PRESENTATION DES RESULTATS
ELABORATION DES CONCLUSIONS
A REMETTRE AU DIRECTEUR GENERAL DE LA DG NEAR
ENEZ NOMBREUX!



[lire](#)

Dès octobre 2010, et par la suite, **R&D** a dénoncé l'adoption d'une politique immobilière par l'OIB favorisant la prolifération d'Open space au sein de notre institution.

Les études scientifiques renforcent la position de R&D

Tout au long de notre démarche, nous nous sommes basés sur des études scientifiques afin de renforcer notre position concernant les effets négatifs du travail en Open space pour la plus grande majorité des services.

En effet, la plupart de nos collègues doit effectuer son travail dans une grande concentration alliant un espace dépourvu de bruits. De plus, nos collègues sont souvent confrontés au traitement des données à caractère sensible ou confidentiel.

R&D lance une enquête «OPEN SPACE » au PMO et à la DG NEAR

Afin d'être encore plus proches de nos collègues et de leur permettre de s'exprimer dans la plus grande et stricte confidentialité, nous avons lancé des enquêtes « OPEN SPACE » au PMO et à la DG NEAR.

Que ce soient nos collègues du PMO ou ceux de la DG NEAR, leurs réponses sont catégoriques et sans appel : leur travail ne peut s'effectuer en Open space, vu les exigences de leurs métiers.

Le Directeur général de la DG TAXUD a écouté son personnel et stoppe le déménagement vers des Open space (cf [Stephen Quest's blog](#))

D'ailleurs le Directeur général de la DG TAXUD a bien ressenti les craintes de son personnel. Il a de ce fait procédé à une introspection au sein de sa DG pour être sûr que cet espace de travail répondait bien à ses attentes et celles de son personnel en regroupant les 3 C : « Content, Collaboration, Communication » favorisant un réel « win-win-win ».

Il a écouté son personnel et a pris la sage décision de stopper tout déménagement en Open space.

Une formule d'espace de travail non conforme avec la plupart des métiers de la Commission

Il est donc évident que cette formule d'espace de travail ne peut correspondre à tous les services mais doit être étudiée au cas par cas et selon les spécificités des métiers, tel que le stipule le Manuel des conditions d'hébergement de la Commission – partie2.

Le Directeur de l'OIB rejoint la position de R&D sur les Open space

Enfin, le Directeur de l'OIB rejoint notre position en reconnaissant que les Open space sont devenus un *terme toxique* (cf [vidéo à 04.40 minutes](#)), qualifiant cette solution d'ancienne et très en-deçà des projets de l'OIB qui sont de mettre en place des « Espaces collaboratifs ». Ces espaces dit « dynamiques » auront pour objectif de choisir l'espace de travail selon la flexibilité et le type de travail effectué.

Open space... Espaces collaboratifs... Deux termes différents mais toujours les mêmes contraintes...

Nous avons été les premiers à soutenir les nouvelles formules de travail permettant une flexibilité de chacun afin de concilier vie professionnelle et vie privée, surtout après le passage aux 40h. Mais nous n'avons jamais souhaité ou envisagé que cette avancée puisse permettre d'ouvrir la boîte de Pandore... Et encore une fois au détriment de tout le personnel !

A cet effet, nous rappelons que « The Economist » confirme la position de **R&D** sur les Open space et l'espace collaboratif (cf [article](#)) : « *on ne peut forcer les collègues à partager de larges espaces bruyants... interrompre leur concentration... les travailleurs souffrent en silence... distraction... le problème est sérieux... interruptions fréquentes... augmentation du temps pour terminer un travail... les multitâches réduisent la qualité du travail... baisse de l'efficacité en passant d'une tâche à l'autre car le cerveau continue à penser à l'ancienne tâche...* ».

R&D a donné la parole au personnel de la DG NEAR

Rappel des faits

En octobre dernier, la Direction Ressources de la DG NEAR a informé le personnel de la **décision** du Senior management de déménager au bâtiment L15 en précisant que l'espace serait aménagé en **Open space** puisque cette option serait la plus appropriée pour répondre aux objectifs de réunir le personnel dans un seul bâtiment et d'améliorer ainsi le travail, la communication et l'entente mutuelle au sein de la DG.

Le Directeur général a bien précisé que [cette décision était conditionnelle](#) et ne serait applicable que si certains éléments étaient réunis tels que les besoins de la DG et le Bien-être du personnel.

Par la suite, lors du « NEAR breakfast » du 24 octobre, le personnel a émis ses doutes et ses craintes concernant l'aménagement de ce nouvel espace de travail.

Quatre thèmes ont été mis en avant:

- ⇒ sécurité/santé;
- ⇒ bruit/concentration;
- ⇒ bien-être/santé
- ⇒ la confidentialité.

Le 03 novembre, les directeurs ont été invités à désigner des représentants afin de procéder à une consultation interne avec le personnel concernant la mise en place d'Open space et ceci en se référant au Manuel des conditions d'hébergement.

Dès le début de sa communication, le Directeur général a bien précisé que ce processus ne se produira pas du jour au lendemain et que des discussions auraient lieu avec le personnel et les représentants du personnel

R&D à l'écoute du personnel de la DG NEAR

En octobre dernier, sollicité par le personnel **R&D** a participé à une réunion organisée par les collègues de la DG NEAR.

Constatant l'absence d'une véritable consultation organisée en bonne et due forme par la DG NEAR, **R&D** a décidé de consulter l'ensemble des collègues et **lancer une enquête par le biais de EUsurvey sur la mise en place des OPEN SPACE à la DG NEAR.**

Cette enquête a été diffusée auprès de 614 collègues via EU Survey et en mode sécurisé. Seules les personnes ayant reçu un lien attitré ont pu y répondre. **380 collègues (62%) ont pris le temps de répondre** aux questions et ont déposé leurs commentaires reprenant leurs craintes face à ce nouvel aménagement de travail.

Nous remercions tous nos collègues de leur participation et de la confiance qu'ils nous ont accordé.

Les résultats de cette enquête démontrent bien que le personnel de la DG NEAR ne souhaite pas déménager en Open space et ceci pour des raisons strictement professionnelles.

R&D a procédé à l'analyse approfondie de cette enquête et vous présente les résultats.

Cristiano Sebastiani,

Président



Renouveau & Démocratie

Syndicat du personnel de la fonction publique européenne RUE DE LA LOI, 200 B-1000 BRUXELLES Tél: (+32) 02 29 55676 |
OESP-RD@ec.europa.eu | <http://www.renouveau-democratie.eu>



Survey OPEN SPACE DG NEAR Results and Analysis

Publication November 2016



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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 EU Survey 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: Pearl 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...](#)

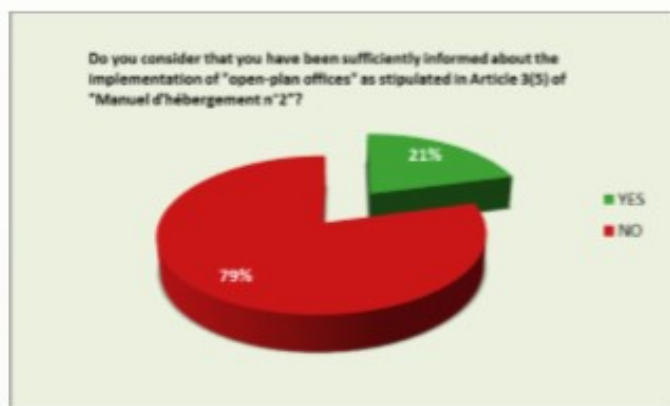
JRC

[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.

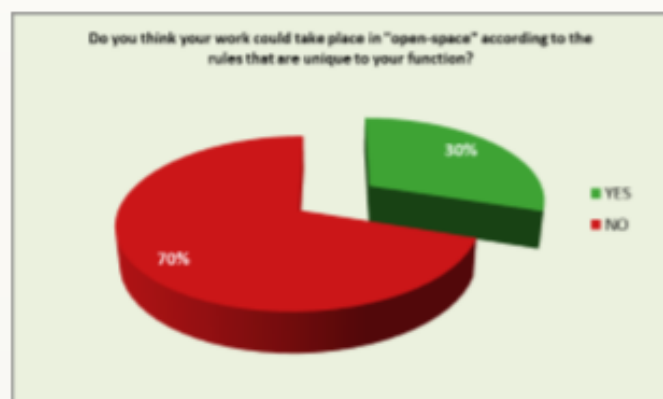
For the remaining 13% of colleagues who feel that their opinion has taken into account; 8% of them think that their opinion was taken into account, 4% partly and 1% not at all.

[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 workstations) in consultation with the Office of the place of employment. This is part of the double objective to promote ownership and personalization of space

CONCERNING JOB REQUIREMENTS

3) Do you think your work could 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.

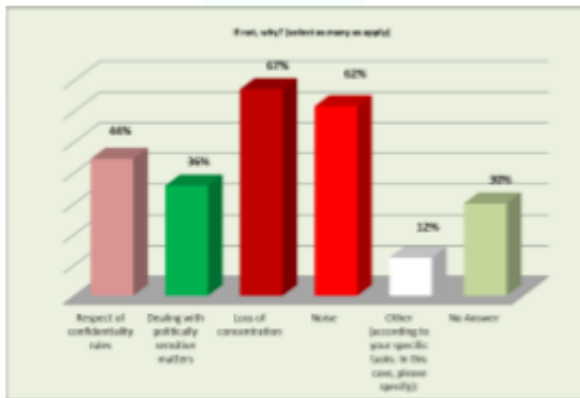
I am afraid I will bother my nearby colleagues. Besides when having a small meeting of more than three, this will undoubtedly bother people working in the open space around you.



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 work 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.

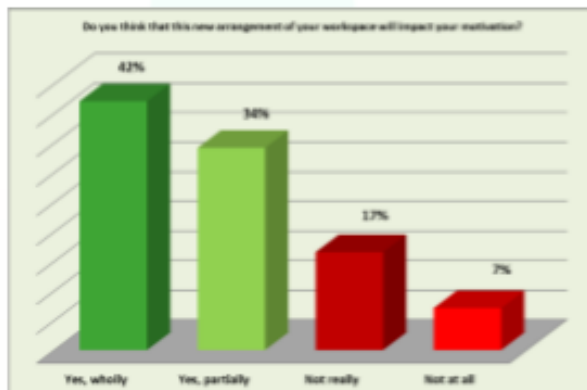
My tasks is 90% based on my concentration. Having too many people around me with different habits, different jobs and way of doing them, will not help.



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?

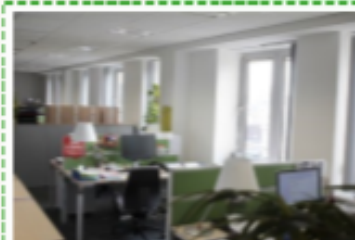
49% of colleagues who responded that they thought being not able to meet deadlines, evoke the following reasons :

- ⇒ 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.).

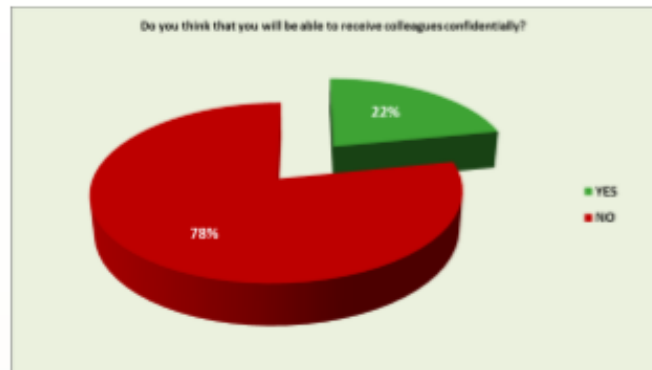


We receive a lot of briefing requests and the level of noise, distraction and lack of privacy to deal with political sensitive information will have an impact on our efficiency.



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

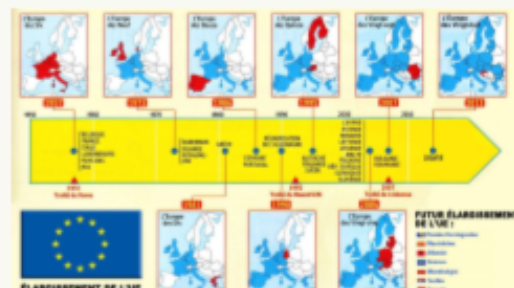
Furthermore, meeting rooms will not be sufficient. Given the specificity of the files, these rooms will be over solicited and therefore not disponible.

(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](#))



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





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.



Analysis of the results

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.

What scientific studies say

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"¹, 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"² 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 distraction

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.

s 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" ⁶ 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

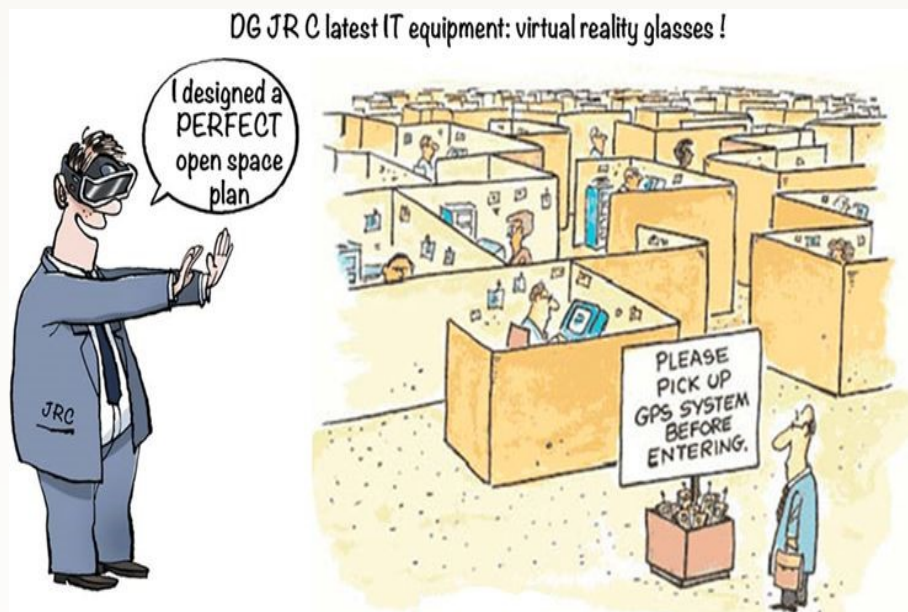


”

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.



Il faut reconnaître que le Directeur général du JRC n'aime pas les démarches banales.

Saga Réalité OPEN SPACE au JRC

Une conception quelque peu originale du dialogue

Nous avons déjà pu apprécier sa conception du dialogue social fondée sur la vertu du monologue à écouter religieusement en silence ainsi que son allergie irréfutable à l'égard de toute contradiction exprimée par rapport aux vérités présentées (*cf. note: « [Use of national law contracts at the JRC](#) »*). Les syndicats ne voulant plus jamais heurter sa susceptibilité, se sont déjà engagés à être représentés à l'occasion de la prochaine réunion de la COCORE par de petits chiens en peluche marquant sans cesse leur accord par le mouvement mécanique de leur tête .

Le Directeur Général du JRC au cœur de la saga !

Dans ce contexte, en considérant sans doute intolérable l'échec des efforts déployés par l'ancien Directeur du PMO pour obtenir l'accord de son personnel sur la mise en place des "open space" et, étant sans doute outré par la décision du DG de la DG TAXUD d'écouter et respecter son personnel en renonçant à l'instauration des "open space", le DG du JRC a donc décidé de faire simple et de lancer un exercice pilote à son étage, à savoir le sixième étage du CDMA. Nous imaginons qu'il va commencer par aménager son propre bureau en "open space".

Un exercice pilote mémorable!

S'agissant donc de se consulter lui-même, de recueillir l'avis de ses collaborateurs directs, de ses Directrices générales adjointes et de leurs équipes, il a ainsi mis en place une stratégie très efficace pour ne pas devoir se lancer dans la consultation du personnel du JRC et éviter ainsi le moindre risque d'échec de l'exercice pilote...tout en clarifiant d'ores et déjà dans son message de lancement de cette saga qu'il est profondément convaincu de tous les bénéfices de

l'open space...à bon entendeur...

Et c'est donc avec un certain degré d'assurance – ou, mieux, avec un degré d'assurance certain – qu'il a annoncé que si jamais l'exercice pilote devait donner des résultats satisfaisants, la mise en place des "open space" serait alors généralisée et imposée à tout le reste du personnel du JRC... à savoir, aux collègues qui n'auront pas été consultés et concernés par le mémorable exercice pi-lote.

Pour la mise en œuvre de ces démarches et plus généralement pour la gestion des services qui sont confiés à sa responsabilité, le DG du JRC donne l'impression de vouloir transmettre une interprétation toute personnelle ...de l'enseignement de Galilée : ***"l'autorité d'un seul homme compétent, qui donne de bonnes raisons et des preuves certaines, vaut mieux que le consentement unanime de ceux qui n'y comprennent rien"***.

Néanmoins, il ne relève pas de l'approche rationnelle et scientifiquement rigoureuse que nous serions en droit de prétendre du JRC de lancer un exercice pilote pour soi-même et ses propres collaborateurs, d'être en charge de sa propre évaluation en faisant d'ores et déjà l'apothéose de tous les bienfaits des "open space".

Quoi qu'il en soit, dans une approche ...zéro émission...d'avis critiques... le DG du JRC a décidé de demander au désormais légendaire département "ventes open space" de l'OIB de faire une présentation permettant de bien saisir toutes les merveilles de sa marchandise. Sans doute en attirant toute son attention sur la nécessité d'éviter un nouvel échec comme lors de la brocante organisée à l'intention du personnel du PMO.

De l'hôtel 6 étoiles au CSM2 destiné au personnel du PMO ...

En effet, par [notre tract du 21 avril 2016](#)

concernant la mise en place des “open space” au PMO, nous avons déjà fait état du show mémorable organisé par ce collègue plein d'enthousiasme. A cette occasion, il avait plus ou moins expliqué au personnel du PMO que le CSM2 situé dans un quartier chic, verdoyant, desservi à merveille par les transports en commun, avec une petite panoplie de commerces avoisinants offrant des prix défilants toute concurrence, allait subir une rénovation en profondeur en respectant les standards imposés aux hôtels pour leur octroyer les 6 étoiles. A la suite de cette parodie de consultation du personnel du PMO et de cette présentation caricaturale, **R&D** avait organisé un sondage en bonne et due forme dont les résultats démontrent que l'OIB devrait faire encore des efforts dans la mesure où aucun collègue n'a été convaincu par cette maladroite présentation ([enquête “open space” PMO – les résultats et ana-lyse](#)).

simplement de garantir le paradis sur terre.

La présentation a été tellement enthousiasmante qu'il semblerait que le JRC envisage de recruter ce collègue pour répéter l'essai dans ses laboratoires en charge de la gestion et de la synthèse des ressources humaines.

Néanmoins, lors de la présentation, les collègues n'ayant pas exprimé tout l'enthousiasme espéré, nous apprenons de sources sûres qu'afin de dissiper tout doute résiduel, l'OIB finalise actuellement la maquette de l'aménagement envisagé au sixième étage du CDMA. **R&D** est entré en possession d'un premier essai :

Au sixième étage du CDMA... à savoir le paradis sur terre !

C'est ainsi que, pour le sixième étage du CDMA, à la différence du CSM2, il ne s'agit plus d'implanter un hôtel 6 étoiles mais tout



Il est à préciser qu'il manque encore les jacuzzis individuels et les tables de massage qui seront mis à la disposition de chaque collègue!

R&D lance une consultation à... l'intention du DG du JRC...

entamer de son propre gré, eu égard aux procédures en vigueur, nous lançons donc un sondage à l'intention du DG du JRC :

Pour **R&D**, le respect des procédures étant essentiel et chaque membre du personnel mérite d'être représenté et défendu quel que soit son rôle et son grade, aussi contre les initiatives mala-droites qu'il aurait pu

« Cher collègue,

Avant de vous livrer à la mise en place de cet exercice pilote, avez-vous bien reçu toute la documentation nécessaire y inclus les études scientifiques concernant les conséquences négatives des OPEN SPACE? A la lecture de votre message nous imaginons que tel n'a pas été le cas et nous vous invitons à la consulter sur notre site ([dossier OPEN SPACE](#)) .

Avez-vous été bien conseillé sur les règles en vigueur du Manuel des conditions d'hébergement-Partie 2, notamment l'art. 3.3.1 qui stipule qu'une étude obligatoire préalable des besoins fonctionnels, par la DG demanderesse doit être effectuée et que le personnel concerné doit être associé à celle-ci?

Notre équipe d'experts et de chercheurs dans ce domaine est disposée à vous seconder et vous apporter toute l'assistance nécessaire pendant ces mois pour la réussite de ce nouvel épi-sode de la SAGA OPEN SPACE.

Vous pouvez envoyer vos réponses à notre boîte fonctionnelle osp-rd@ec.europa.eu

Cristiano Sebastiani »

Trêve de plaisanterie

R&D demande de stopper cette parodie d'exercice pilote et de respecter les procédures en vigueur. Si le DG du JRC est tellement enthousiaste et veut aménager son bureau en "open space", il est libre de le faire. S'il veut renforcer "l'empathie visuelle" avec son encadrement supérieur, il peut demander aux services de l'OIB de remplacer les cloisons ...par de précieuses parois en cristal.

Néanmoins, ce sont certainement pas les résultats de "l'exercice pilote" organisé par le DG pour son propre compte et à son étage en annonçant, d'ores et déjà, tous les bienfaits de l'open space, qui peuvent être utilisés pour imposer par la suite le passage progressif en "open space" à TOUT le personnel du JRC

déjà an-noncé si jamais le DG devait apprécier que son propre « exercice pilote » aura été « satisfaisant » et aura confirmé tout le bien qu'il pense de l'aménagement en open space.

Note à l'attention de Mme Veronica Gaffey, Directrice du PMO:
«Open Space» au sein de vos services

R&D vous félicite pour votre nomination en tant que Directrice du PMO. Nous espérons pouvoir à l'avenir engager une coopération constructive afin d'assurer la continuité d'un service de qualité rendu à tout le personnel de l'institution.

Cependant, vu l'importance des services délivrés au quotidien par votre personnel à plus de 40.000 collègues ainsi que la charge de travail qui en découle, il est de première nécessité de lui garantir les meilleures conditions de travail et de Bien-être.

... aucune étude préalable, ni consultation sérieuse des personnes concernées...

De ce fait, nous attirons votre attention sur l'instauration des "Open Space" au sein de vos services sans qu'aucune étude préalable, ni consultation des personnes concernées n'ait été réalisée sérieusement tel que le stipule le [Manuel des conditions d'hébergement des services de la Commission –partie 2](#).

R&D a dénoncé tout projet de ces nouveaux aménagements de bureaux mettant en péril le Bien-être du personnel et ce, depuis octobre 2010 ([« Open space »: des collègues entassés dans les bureaux](#)).

Certes, si certaines fonctions dans certains services sont plus propices à être réalisées dans des espaces partagés, d'autres en revanche, de par leurs spécificités et spécialités, nécessitent d'être effectuées dans un bureau individuel.

Le Bien-être du personnel... Une priorité de la Commission....

Les 3 Vice-Présidents en charge des affaires du Personnel, S. Kallas, M. Sefçovic et K. Georgieva, ont reconnu que sans pour autant déroger aux contraintes budgétaires, l'environnement de travail et le bien-être du personnel doivent être et doivent rester une priorité de la Commission.

Contrairement à l'approche irréfléchie et erratique de l'OIB, la rationalisation de l'espace doit être posée et réfléchie en analysant les situations au cas par cas et en apportant les solutions optimales pour chaque service concerné.

De plus, les nouvelles formules d'aménagement du temps de travail (télétravail, horaire flexible et temps partiel) ne peuvent être un alibi pour réduire automatiquement et à tout jamais les conditions de travail et les espaces de bureau des collègues qui en bénéficient.

Malgré les études scientifiques démontrant les méfaits des « Open space » et « Hot

desk » sur la santé et l'efficacité des services et du personnel, l'OIB continue à imposer de manière irréflectie cette politique immobilière aux différentes DG et Offices.

Le manuel des conditions d'hébergement exige de recueillir l'avis des collègues concernés avant de mettre en place tout « Open space ». Or, les services se sont livrés à des consultations bâclées en prétendant, par la suite, disposer de l'avis favorable des collègues.

Tel a été le cas en ce qui concerne le PMO avec une présentation tellement caricaturale qu'elle restera dans les annales ([Déménagement du PMO vers CSM2. Tous en Open Space!](#)) même si elle vient d'être dépassée par un nouvel exploit concernant la mise en place des open space au JRC à Bruxelles.

R&D toujours à l'écoute des collègues s'adresse au personnel du PMO Bruxelles...

C'est pourquoi, fidèle à son engagement d'être toujours à l'écoute des collègues, **R&D** a décidé de s'adresser directement au personnel du PMO Bruxelles en lançant une enquête, en bonne et due forme, garantissant l'anonymat des réponses et la fiabilité des résultats afin de pouvoir défendre ce dossier avec les arguments et commentaires des propres intéressés.

285 collègues ont répondu à cette enquête, soit un taux de participation de 67% du personnel du PMO Bruxelles, c'est dire si cette politique n'influe pas sur le moral de ce Personnel à notre service et en majorité Agent contractuel.

...Les résultats...

Nous avons procédé à une [analyse détaillée des résultats](#) en nous basant sur les textes de référence de la Commission et en nous appuyant sur des études scientifiques propres à ce domaine.

Ainsi, à l'occasion de votre prise de fonctions, nous vous invitons à lire ce rapport et à prendre les dispositions nécessaires pour revoir en profondeur les mesures envisagées pour que votre Personnel puisse travailler dans les conditions les plus adaptées aux exigences des différents métiers et qu'un climat de Bien-être puisse être instauré dans les services concernés.

Cela constituerait le meilleur départ de votre Direction et votre personnel ne manquerait pas de vous en être profondément reconnaissant. Comme il a été le cas pour l'ap-proche retenue par le nouveau Directeur général de la DG TAXUD.

Nous restons bien évidemment à votre disposition pour vous apporter toute l'aide souhaitée.

Cristiano SEBASTIANI

Président

Annexe: [Enquête OPEN SPACE PMO—Les Résultats et Analyses](#)

Survey OPEN SPACE PMO: Results and Analysis





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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2 - Manual of standard building specifications

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

4- Manuel des conditions d'hébergement des services de la Commission—Partie 2



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cristiano Sebastiani,
President

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

Other communications R&D :

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



METHODOLOGY

Concerned staff

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

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

Collection method

EU Survey

Duration

From 02 to 25 May 2016

Method used

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

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

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

Protection of personal data in this survey

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

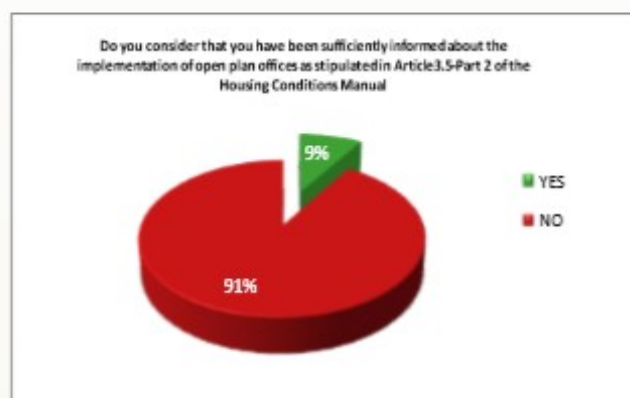




RESULT

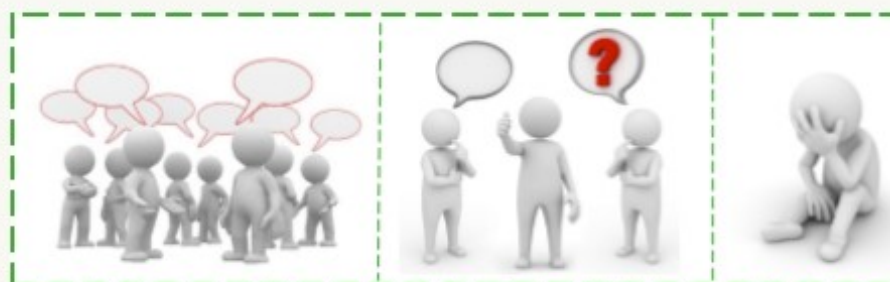
CONCERNING THE STAFF CONSULTATION

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

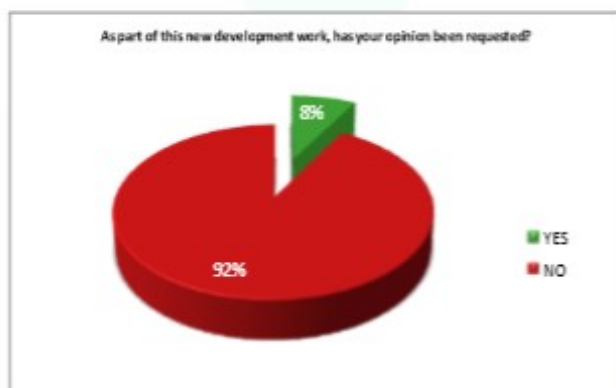


91% of colleagues feel they were not sufficiently informed about the implementation of open plan offices.

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



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



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

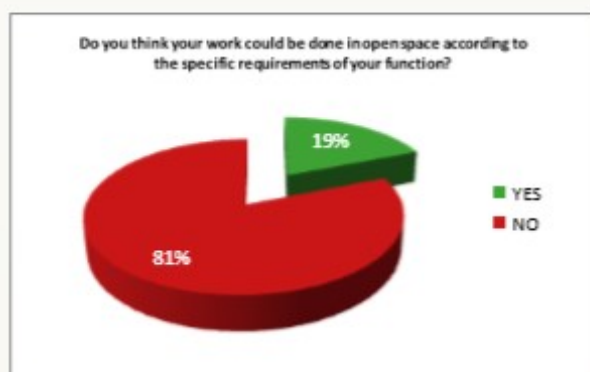
For the remaining 8% of colleagues who feel that their opinion was requested; 5% of them think that their opinion was taken into account 2% partly and 1% not at all.

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

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

CONCERNING JOB REQUIREMENTS

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

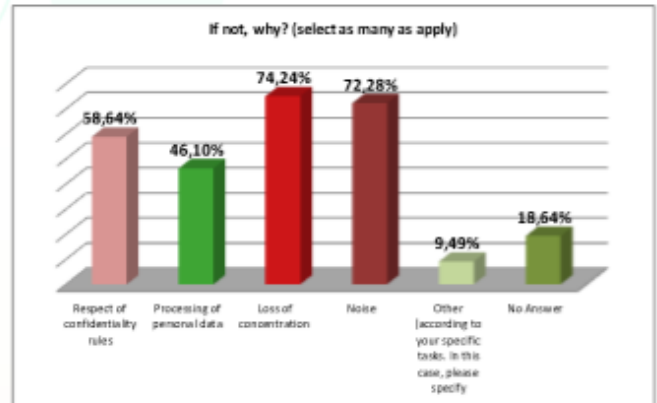


81% of colleagues consider that their work cannot be done in open space. Staff working

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



3.1) If not, why?



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

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

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

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

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

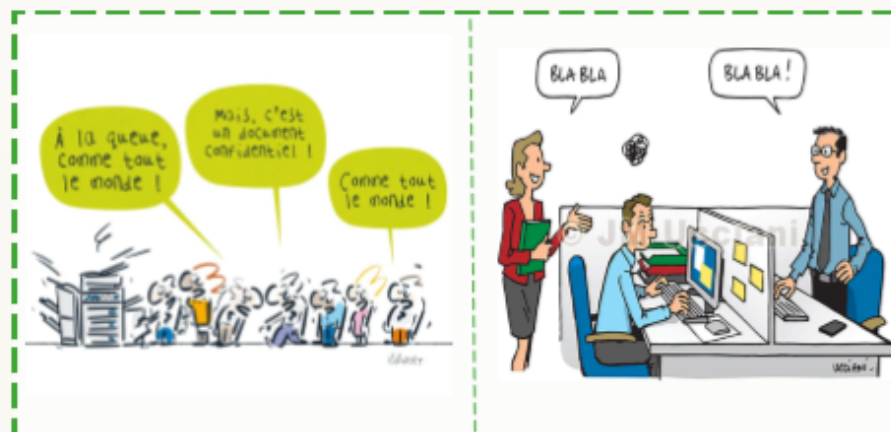
Compliance with confidentiality rules is also a major concern for 58.64% of colleagues.

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

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

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

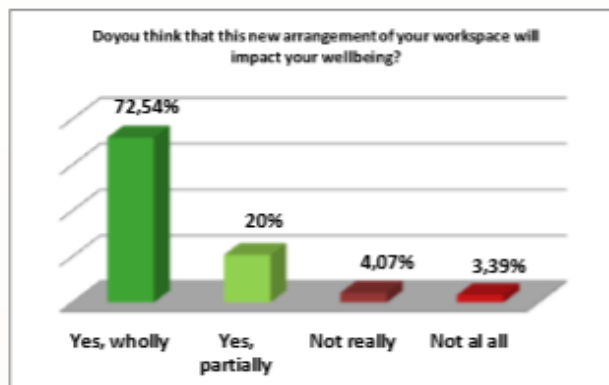
- ⇒ the absence of a personal printer for work requiring, at 99%, the management of paper files,
- ⇒ the reception of visitors without confidentiality
- ⇒ the processing of cases by telephone,
- ⇒ the limited working space for the needs of the tasks performed,
- ⇒ the management of special files including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



CONCERNING IMPACT

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

Your wellbeing ?



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

Your Efficiency ?



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



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



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

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



Your Motivation ?



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

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

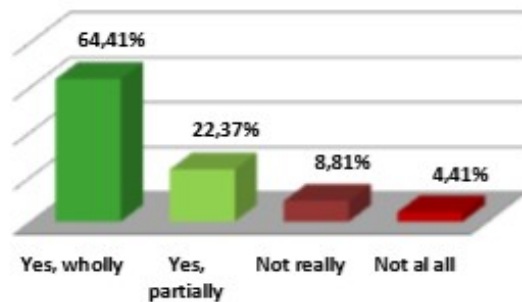


Un dossier de dette se compose d'abord d'un email et/ou d'un document ARES pour justifier le montant à prélever. Nous n'avons donc pas d'application pour attacher ce dossier à la lettre de dette. Nous devons donc imprimer et archiver physiquement le tout.

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



Do you think that this new arrangement of your workspace will impact your motivation?



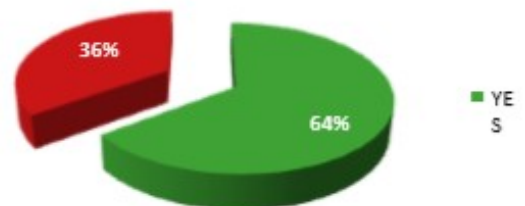
86.78% of colleagues, including 64.41% that "strongly agree", think this new working arrangement will impact on motivation.



CONCERNING WORKING TOOLS

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

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



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

5.1) If not, why?

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

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



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

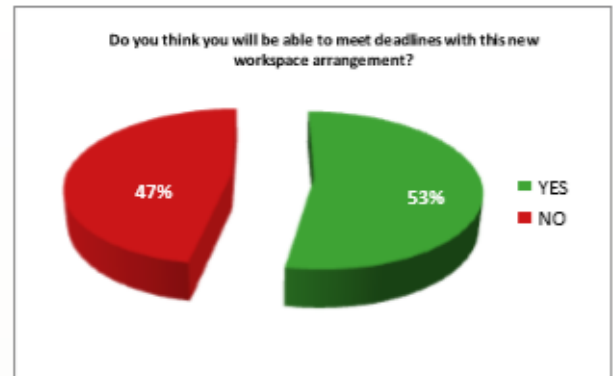
Most colleagues are contractual agents and I feel that this is non-respectful treatment of them, as well as the few officials. Other DGs already refused working in an open space (eg TAXUD) but PMO, with ever increasing work load with sensitive stuff - and the management still keeping up with the 5% deducton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

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



CONCERNING DEADLINE COMPLIANCE

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



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

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



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



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



6.1) If not, why?

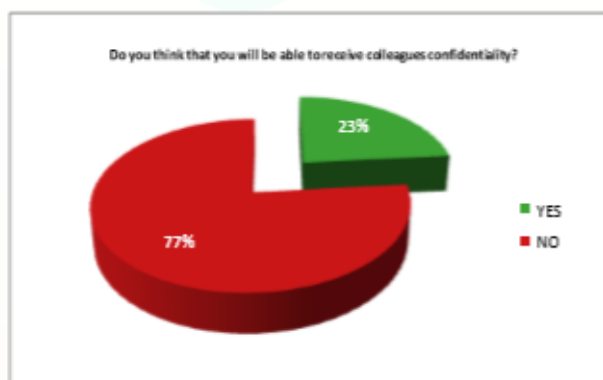
47% of colleagues who responded that they thought being not able to meet deadlines, evoke the following reasons :

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



CONCERNING CONFIDENTIALITY

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



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

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

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



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



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



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



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

7.1) If not, why?

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

- ⇒ Breach of confidentiality rules
- ⇒ The office layout does not allow privacy and discretion
- ⇒ No chairs provided for visitors
- ⇒ Constant need to receive colleagues in strict confidentiality during the day
- ⇒ « Quiet room »
 - * Lack of flexibility to accommodate visitors due upon booking in advance of the "Quiet Room"
 - * Poor soundproofing
 - * Tensions between the colleagues because of the use of the "Quiet Room"
 - * Insufficient number of rooms
- ⇒ Loss of discretion during telephone conversations
- ⇒ Nature of data

8) General Comment

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

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



EVALUATION OF RESULTS

Global vision

Staff consultation

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

Job requirements

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

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

Impact

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

Working tools

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

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

Deadline compliance

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

Confidentiality

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

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



Concerning the staff consultation and the impact on their work

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

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

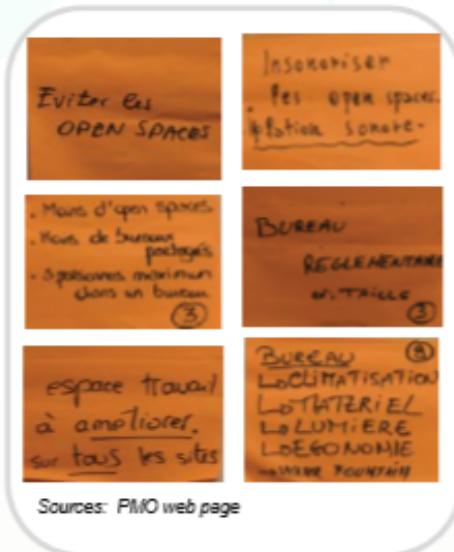
However, we can see from the answers to questions 1 (information on the implementation of the open office) and 2 (required opinion) of the survey launched by R&D, **that the obligation to make a preliminary study of the functional requirements involving concerned staff in the project definition has not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

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

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

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

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



Sources: PMO web page

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

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

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





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

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

These financial rights or "individual pecuniary entitlements" are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What scientific studies are saying

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

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

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

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

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

A false budgetary saving

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

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

A decline in satisfaction and staff performance

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

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

A disturbing noise

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

A high sick leave rate

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

A high cost of labor disruptions

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



Source Getvoip

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

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



1 - Open-plan offices are a false economy - August 2013 Management Issues

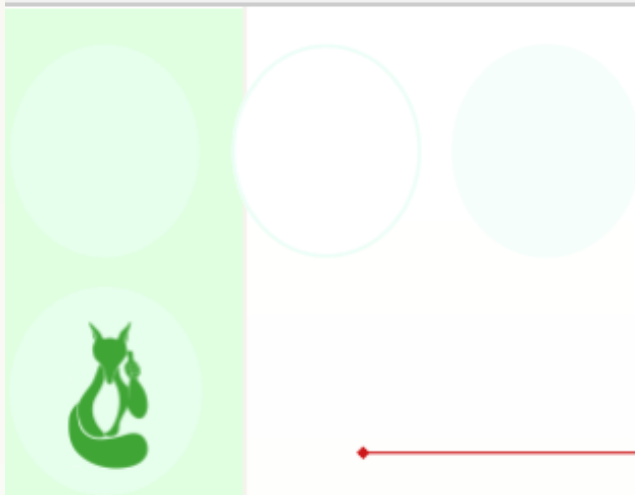
2 - Workspace satisfaction: The privacy-communication trade-off in open-plan offices—December 2013 Journal of Environmental Psychology Elsevier

3 - Mental arithmetic and non-speech office noise: an exploration of interference by content—2013 Noise & Health

4 - Sickness absence associated with shared and open-plan offices—a national cross sectional questionnaire survey by Petersen JH, Feveile H, Christensen KB, Burr H 2011

5 - The detrimental Pitfalls of open-plan offices (infographic) - GETVOIP Mai 2015

6 - Individual differences in employee reactions to open-plan offices—2005 University of New South Wales, Australia



CONCLUSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



R&D PROPOSALS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Survey on staff satisfaction Open Space PMO

We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to reply before the close of business on 25 May 2016

Dear colleagues,

We had already drawn your attention in [our leaflet of 21st April](#), to certain excesses in the establishment of “Open Space” offices for the staff of PMO as a whole.



In particular, we denounced from the outset the grotesque (even burlesque) presentation made by the OIBP (“Office Initiateur Bureaux Paysagers”) representative during his participation in the meeting with PMO colleagues, in order to “sell” a pre-determined solution.

Once again, **R&D** condemns the confusion which the OIBP and DGs are attempting to sow by pretending that they don’t understand the essential difference between a real prior consultation of staff, imposed by the existing rules in the event of setting up open space offices, from the fait accompli by means of a simple ex-post information. The latter is intended solely to sugar the pill of decisions already adopted without the slightest consultation with staff or their representatives.

R&D always tries to represent colleagues’ opinions as accurately as possible. and to that end, we have pre-pared a detailed opinion poll to allow you to express your point of view on the setting up of open space of-fices in the PMO.

Your participation in the survey is essential so that we can defend your rights and interests to your hierarchy.

As your work meets certain confidentiality rules and contains some certain special characteristics related to your business area, you are the only people who can provide the necessary elements to help us to help you as much as possible!

We ask that you take the time to answer this survey and we’ll do the rest!

NB: **R&D** will also launch a [more thorough survey](#) on the same subject very soon to all colleagues in the Commission. This survey will address more general issues. Feel free to answer also.

THANK YOU

For Renouveau & Démocratie,

Cristiano Sebastiani,

President

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.



Removal of PMO to CSM2. All in Open space!

By demonstrating sensitivity and a commitment to inform (albeit ex-post) that other Directors-General have not shown, Mr. Lemaitre, Director of PMO, invited,, all Office employees to attend an information meeting on 15th April to present them their new workspace.

Naturally, we were once again in the after-sales service to the extent that the decision was already made and it was only matter of selling it properly to sweeten this pill.

Only a minority of staff went to the great hall of Charlemagne! Are you surprised???

R&D, as well as the other OSP were able to attend as observers.

The dream of a new luxury resort in the heart of the European Quarter ...

To this end and in order to sell all the merits of these revolutionary work spaces, the official responsible for the setting up of CSM1"open spaces" came there in person to present a little explanatory video ...

The CSM2, located in an upscale and leafy area, served very well by public transport, with a small range of nearby businesses offering unbeatable prices, will undergo a thorough renovation in accordance with the standards laid down for granting 6 stars to hotels and will be equipped with 119 internal parking places and 24 outside parking places. Although it was not clearly indicated, it seems that staff will find valets at the car park entrance, who will park and even wash their cars.

Amazed by the explanations given, right after the meeting, a number of colleagues have asked the OIBP (Office Initiators of open-plan offices) if they move into those spaces and spend their holidays with their families, because the comfort was far superior to that of a luxury spa.

We have just been informed that the Bongo Company decided to add to its Health and Well-being Catalogue, "CSM2" vouchers and the success was such that they are already out of stock!

After such a powerful presentation, more than a caricature..., what more can you ask for?

The truth of the facts ...

The truth is that colleagues, puzzled by all the talk, were presented with a fait accompli. One more time!

They therefore called upon **R&D** in order to work in optimal conditions, appropriate to the requirements of their function.

We also wish to recall that already last year, PMO has faced a negative experience when installing Open offices at SC27 and Route d'Arlon (*if it is Brussels, surely Rue d'Arlon*). Although only a small minority of colleagues were concerned, these projects had already caused enormous dissatisfaction. The CPPT and the Local Staff Committee had to intervene several times.

Today, all PMO staff is concerned! There is a need for a great deal of thought!

R&D advises Mr. Lemaître to take as an example Mr. S. Quest, Director General of DG TAXUD, to whom it had already been proposed the CSM2 in "open space".

Indeed, the Director-General of DG TAXUD's had decided to forego the transfer of its staff by recognizing that, as R&D had indicated, this project required extensive discussions with the staff as well as further reflection to conclude a common agreement.

It is important that the space allocated to each is in accordance with the duties performed, taking into account various aspects such as confidentiality, external contacts, the need for concentration ... and health status, if applicable.

The "take it or leave it" choice proposed by OIBP

OIBP's role is to carry out the projects submitted by the Directorates-General and not to impose the widespread use of open-plan offices by offering absolutely unacceptable alternative to scatter the staff of a DG on a wide range of buildings ... with the sole purpose being to force the DG to suffer the consequences of their choice

We believe that, if ever a Director-General should firmly refuse to accept such an approach, OIBP would be perfectly able to offer him or her, as an alternative, to displace half of its staff to the North Pole and the other half to the South Pole ..., while stressing that it would be impossible to convince STIB to take this into account in the route of bus 21!

It is necessary that the institution takes control of its building policy by returning OIBP to its role of implementing the strategic decisions of the Commission.

Mr. Lemaître, you are the only Master of the decision to be taken, so that your staff can benefit from better working conditions. Listen to them! Open the dialogue! You can only come out of the process as a winner!

Black Pearl – Finaly DIGIT opens the dialogue

Colleagues: take the floor and defend your rights!
This is really the last step in order to be heard!
Be all present on 4 March...



By its [leaflet of 15 February](#), **R&D** denounced the practices of services, namely DG DIGIT, regarding the implementation of open-plan office.

Many of you have thanked us for the effort to defend your rights and the compliance with procedures.

R&D welcomes the decision of DG DIGIT to finally open, in a structured way, discussions with its staff about the planned move to the "Black Pearl" building and the granting of the workspace.

We strongly encourage all colleagues to participate in the meeting scheduled for Friday 4 March so that you can defend your rights and get the answers you need!

To do so, we remind you that according to Regulation on the establishment of "open-plan office" - *Lodging Manual No. 2, Article 3(5)* - *"any open-plan office implementation project should be subject to an internal preliminary study within the applicant DG in association with the staff concerned, in particular to check compatibility of tasks with an open-plan office environment."*

It is important to remember that the space allocated to each shall be in accordance with the tasks performed by taking into account various aspects such as confidentiality, external contacts and the need for concentration ..., as well as your health, if applicable.

R&D remains at your disposal to bring you all the support and assistance you will need during this exercise.

"OPEN SPACE" ODDYSSEY

Act II Scene III

DIGIT enters the stage without consulting staff!



R&D has been closely following the case of the "Black Pearl" building since May 2015. Twice ([Black Pearl 1 & 2](#)), **we had already identified the in-herent drifting in the realization of "Open Space"**.

Today, the decision was taken, **without prior consultation with staff**, to place off all staff in Open Space offices.

After Act I Scene I of DG TAXUD, Act II Scene III DG DIGIT continues the "Open Space" Odyssey within the Commission!

What will be Act III?

The regulations (["Manuel des conditions d'hébergement—Partie 2"](#) only in French version)

require that all decisions should be taken in the most transparent manner possible by involving the staff and all stakeholders, in order to achieve an effective solution.

This was not the case! The policy of "fait accompli" triumphed!

ACT II SCENE IV: A MONOLITHIC Monologue!

Indeed, if the Administration of DG DIGIT considers that its duty as an employer to consult its staff in order to protect their health and prevent psycho-social risks is accomplished by simply sharing minutes of meetings and making a short film, then we are facing a monolithic monologue! "

The vast majority of DG DIGIT staff is firmly opposed to this type of office which degrades their working conditions by challenging the effectiveness of services.

Amongst the scientifically recognized most harmful consequences of this type of office are: excessive noise, problems of light and temperature as well as a lack of privacy and excessive stress...

Without forgetting that excessive zeal is a heavy burden on the proper use of budget resources.

In this regard, **R&D** is pleased with the response given by the Director General of DG TAXUD to his staff demands communicated by [our leaflet of January 27, 2016](#) aiming at a stay of execution of the hasty and ill-thought-out "Open Space" proposed by the **OIB P** ("Office Initiateur Bureaux Paysagers").

The Director-General of DG TAXUD decided to give up for now in the transfer of its staff in the "Open Space" recognising that, as **R&D** had indicated, this project requires extensive discussions with the staff and further reflection. It is clear that the OIB P continues its destructive policy to break the morale of staff who are the "Crown Jewel" of the institution.

Why does a DG make such a mistake?

For a more realistic and less theoretical approach and in order to assess the extent of staff rejection of such practices, just remember the results of the staff survey organised by OIB for the Philippe Le Bon building. Unsurprisingly, the concerns expressed by colleagues wholly confirm the results of scientific studies ([Collaborative Overload Harvard Business Review](#), [Deep Work: Rules for Focus](#), [American Psychological Association](#)) published by "[The Economist](#)".

R&D therefore asks the DG DIGIT following a benchmarking logic, to follow the good practices initiated by the Director General of DG TAXUD, who was also the former Director General of DG DIGIT and to establish a genuine dialogue with all the staff and their representatives.

To make your voice heard, **R&D is at your disposal to hear your views and your wishes. Your opinion counts!**

BLACK PEARL

Peal peril for passengers of the Black Pearl

L'OPEN
SPACE
M'A
TUER

15 days ago R&D reported on a storm warning on the Black Pearl building. The danger is real and now confirmed: DIGIT staff will work in open space. The installation plans are ready. It's not a pilot or provisional operation, but a large real estate transaction for which all colleagues will pay the price. We did not want to use that argument during the campaign period, but now as the danger is imminent, this is emergency. The hierarchy is trying to cover it up and calm things down, but it is your health which is at stake.

Even in the European Parliament President Schulz has thwarted the Secretary General's plans to introduce open space.

(See <http://www.politico.eu/article/parliament-power-martin-schulz-klaus-welle/>).

We ask the director and heads of unit to think carefully and read the reference book on the subject: "L'open space m'a tuer" (Alexandre des Isnards).

Degradation of Working Conditions in sight in the New Black Pearl Building

The removal of DIGIT to the new Black Pearl building, rue Montoyer 15, is foreseen for the first quarter of 2016.

The administration has already arranged open spaces for 600 persons with an area of 7 square meters per person, which is far, far away from the "normal" space per person, currently 10 m². According to the standards of the Housing Conditions Manual, this building should not accommo-

date less than 300 persons in personal office.

R&D formally objects to this project and appeals to all colleagues to the greatest vigilance.



Do you know that the Commission wishes to make from an old building a new "window" for the Institution?

The CSM2 will be the first experience of a fully finished building transformed into an open space, it will be a "key-building showing the modern face of the Commission", said a senior official. The colleagues from TAXUD will be the guinea pigs.



While everywhere all the European employees prefer an individual office (between 91% and 97% depending on each country); while the adverse effects of open spaces are denounced (noises, annoyance, disturbances, heating problems and light inconvenience, lack of private space and privacy, difficulties in concentration), nevertheless the Commission persists and signs, claiming that it is a sign of modern living when as a matter of fact it is a question of saving money.

The experience made at the Commission is not even taken into account: 2000 colleagues already work in an open space area. At Philippe le Bon building a recent survey conducted by OIB shows that two thirds of the staff do not work on location during the 5 days of the week and that 70% expressed their dissatisfaction due to the lack of privacy, noises and inconveniences. This system does not facilitate the cooperation among the services.

The "evidence offices" at the CSM1 building are just window dressing. You can witness the real situation by going and visiting the open space at the Philippe le Bon building.

Mr Martin Schulz, the President of the Euro-

pean Parliament has decided to stop all the projects of this nature.

We would like to stress that according to the manual of housing conditions the relevant services must involve the participation of the staff in the definition of the project. The tasks performed by the staff must be taken into account (namely the respect of confidentiality), as well as the security conditions, health conditions and the well-being at work.

Please do not give your approval without having first discussed the project and analyse the plans. Do not hesitate to contact our R&D teams.

**The Commission always behind the times:
The Economist confirms R&D's position on the adverse effects of open
-plan offices...**

Too often the message of the Staff Representation is trivialized or downgraded by the Administration which claims to be at the forefront of modernity and accuses unions of not being able to modernize their analyses. In fact it is very often the institution that acts like a dinosaur that has missed the train regarding the results of scientific studies, and best practices....

R&D remains faithful to its commitment to do everything possible to ensure that the rights and expectations of staff are fully respected, and is not discouraged by these contemptuous attitudes.

In addition, **R&D** isn't afraid to denounce the dysfunctions observed and systematically frames its analyses and policy positions in a wider context, also taking into account the best practices of the other institutions and the outside world, as well as the results of recent scientific analyses.

The Open-plan office saga is a striking example of this gap between the orientation of our institution and reality.

In our flyer of 21st January we denounced for the umpteenth time the umpteenth misconduct - namely the imposition of a widespread implementation of open-plan offices in DG TAXUD which is advocated by the new Director General of the DG in cooperation with OIB, and that **R&D** proposes to rename "OIBP" ("Office Initiateur Bureaux Paysagers")!

Today, « [The Economist](#) » (a newspaper and not "a dusty union flyer") illustrates the results of university studies that rule in favour of **R&D** positions on the adverse effects of open space on quality of work, collaboration between colleagues and staff well-being. Accordingly, the Commission yet

again finds itself promoting an outdated policy.

In particular, [The Economist](#) and scientific studies which are mentioned in the article ([Collaborative Overload Harvard Business Review](#), [Deep Work: Rules for Focus](#), [American Psychological Association](#)) confirm that the open-plan offices, far from constituting a modernization of work organization, do great damage to employees' thinking ability, to their efficiency and thereby to that of the organization.

The following extract gives the tone of the whole article. We could have cited you others, but we leave you free to discover by yourselves:

« Talking to your colleagues can spark valuable insights. Mixing with people from different departments can be useful.

But this hardly justifies forcing people to share large noisy spaces or bombarding them with electronic messages...

Helping people to collaborate is a wonderful thing. Giving them the time to think is even better.»

The Economist

These analyses are fully confirmed by the results of the investigation launched by the OIB to staff who "benefit" from open-plan offices in the building Philippe Le Bon. They confirm that that an overwhelming majority of colleagues (75%) deplored that after the establishment of open space it has become impossible to work without being interrupted and disturbed by noise and this greatly impedes their ability to concentrate. These results are even more important given the very heavy atmosphere in these services

where zealous management seem to have started an ideological crusade on the development of open space.

Who is then the nostalgic and the dinosaur?

R&D - who bases its analysis on indisputable data and taking into account the results of external and internal investigations - or OIB(P) and heads of services who fell in love with open-plan offices unconditionally...?

R&D invites DG TAXUD and officials of OIB(P) to examine in depth the harmful effects of open-plan offices by reading at least « [The Economist](#) » that should already be part of their morning readings and thus to project themselves towards the future ... to finally align with the working methods of our time ... the 21st century...

Similarly, the question of the proper use of budget resources, increasingly reduced, arises. The excess of ideological zeal in favour of open space, and the increasing proliferation of tens of thousands of moves per year, raise questions also from the outside world.

Being always behind the times and completely cut off from external developments, it is urgent that the Commission retakes the leadership and behaves as an exemplary employer and that the well-being of staff - as well as the taking into account of its views expressed in a number of surveys - go beyond the stage of mere slogan to become in fact the first parameter to be respected in the decision-making process!



All Brussels EEAS Staff in open space - EEAS wants to circumvent Commission rules

David O'Sullivan sent a letter to Staff Representatives late on 29th March suggesting to create an ad hoc CPPT (Joint Committee Health and Safety at work) for the EEAS HQ building. The timeframe is too tight, EEAS management argues, to respect either Commission or Council rules. Everything has to be ready by the end of June 2011 even if everybody knows that this building is not adapted to EEAS needs.

260 people (FPIS – SC 15) will have to move to the new premises this year. Various options are on the table to "reconcile" the limited space offered and the number of colleagues involved. It will be up to each department to decide how to squeeze as many people as possible into the available space, while the existing Commission and Council rules will just be examples to be considered (but not strictly followed).

A new "mixed office environment" - ie open-plan - is to be introduced to facilitate collaborative work. Majorité Syndicale believes that speed-dating would be much more efficient but it **HAS NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER TO PUT OUR COLLEAGUES HEALTH AND SAFETY AT RISK**. Majorité Syndicale requests that both Council and Commission Staff Committees confirm and re-establish the full competencies of the Commission's Health and Safety Committee.

Majorité Syndicale has insisted on using a proper existing structure dealing with this important issue for three months. It reminded EEAS management that there should be only one CPPT for all EEAS buildings and not some kind of ad-hoc non competent grouping with no legal existence for the KAPITAL building alone. MAJORITE SYNDICALE has however noted that one trade union believes that Majorité Syndicale's approach is too "legalistic" and that anyway Commission joint bodies are not competent to defend EEAS staff even during the transition period. Thanks for its help on that matter.

« Open space » : colleagues to be crammed into offices!

R&D has always been sensitive about respecting the policy of well-being at work of our Commission colleagues and fights for them to be enabled to carry out their allotted tasks in a working environment which respects the necessary standards of safety, hygiene and well-being. Despite the commitments undertaken by Mr. Chêne (DG ADMIN) in 2007 and by Vice-President Kallas concerning the Standard Building Manual,(MIT) presented as an avant-gardiste document, **R&D** has observed that the OIB is moving towards a supposedly innovative policy proposing so-called « open space ».

This document, which presents itself as "revolutionary", is in fact nothing of the sort. On the contrary its only aim is to save money to the detriment of the health of the staff and the efficiency of their work. Unfortunately the technique consists of literally cramming our colleagues into offices which have been neither conceived nor foreseen as "open spaces ». **R&D** cannot accept this. What is more, this new buildings policy doesn't respect any of the criteria foreseen by the MIT!

It is not enough to give the name of a new policy for re-arranging workplaces, to a policy which has not been "thought through", discussed with social partners and devoid of financial means, to resolve the ever-increasing policy of space for the Commission services.

If « open spaces » ever prove to be necessary and useful for the well-being of staff, **R&D** will demand as a pre-condition a rigorous analysis of this type of organisation which needs to respect precise criteria (buildings adapted for the purpose, mate-

rial, furniture, careful selection of the tasks which can be carried out in an "open space," respect for safety measures etc)

R&D strongly insists once more that buildings policy is the responsibility de la Commission and not the OIB. The latter is responsible, along with the Staff Committee, for implementing the political decisions of DG HR after negotiation with the Trade Unions.

R&D therefore firmly requests :
-That the competent services of DG HR take responsibility for the role which falls to them by ensuring, amongst others, a respect for the basic principles of the policy of health, safety and well-being at work;
-That the Commission asks the Budgetary Authority for the necessary resources in terms of buldings to respect the MIT.



Renouveau & Démocratie

Syndicat du personnel de la fonction publique européenne RUE DE LA LOI, 200 B-1000 BRUXELLES -
Bureau JII 70/ 01 48 Tél: +32 02 29 55676

OSP-RD@ec.europa.eu <http://www.renouveau-democratie.eu>