

The wellbeing of the staff cannot be reduced to the disgraceful barter system designed by DG HR between teleworking and hotdesking, framed by the absence of any social dialogue and genuine consultation of the staff.



**Hello! Hello! Berlaymont! ...
We have a serious problem!**

Respecting the rules is not an option left to the goodwill of DG HR and OIB !

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We welcome Commissioner Hahn's commitments

We have already expressed our appreciation for Commissioner Hahn's commitment to **social dialogue**, excluding the adoption of any pre-established decisions, from scratch, even before they are presented.

Likewise, we have praised the change in culture that he advocated aiming to set up a real "**culture of trust**" between the institution and its staff, by putting an end to the more than painful approaches of certain small leaders focused solely on control.

Finally, we shared with conviction the reminder that **it is up to managers to set a good example** because it is unacceptable that they can "opt out" of these decisions imposed on the staff under their responsibility.

All these commitments were confirmed during the meeting with the staff representation on January 12.

On the contrary, DG HR is ever more a "managerial project manager" despising all social dialogue and neglecting the heart of the foundations: the staff!

Alas, we regret, once again, to note that Commissioner Hahn's message does not seem to have made it through the door of his office... and in any case it seems not to have made it through the door of the current DG HR building... we can but hope that the connection is re-established when the DG HR moves to its new premises ...



Hello! Hello! Berlaymont! ...

We have a serious problem!

It is, indeed, obvious that: -

- ⇒ **The disgraceful barter system between teleworking and hotdesking designed by DG HR from worked up results from its weekly lightning surveys launched in the midst of the pandemic obviously aimed at justifying such a decision, while considering it as having already been taken whereas it has not never discussed with the staff representatives nor subjected to a real consultation of colleagues;**
- ⇒ **The arrangements envisaged in this context for managers aimed at "protecting them" from these changes, as well as the allocation of reserved parking spaces....**

Are in total contradiction with the approach advocated, as well as with the culture change and guarantees offered by the Commissioner.

An increasingly worrying self-referential amateurism ...

What is more, beyond these glaring critical aspects, the whole project oozes amateurism in that it seems to be deliberately based on the failure to take stock of the experiences and lessons to be drawn from the changes. of this type already implemented in other contexts.

Of course, taking stock of the experiences and the critical aspects of the

past would no longer make it possible to continue to present the proposals as being inevitable and aimed at establishing... the paradise on earth...

R&D always bases all its reflections and proposals on scientific studies: we expect DG HR to do the same.

Proposals need to be based on in-depth prior analyses and DG HR / the Commission needs to be assisted by experts in order to identify the risks to its staff.

Pointless to recall Directive 89/390 on the employer's responsibility for the health of its staff ([link](#)).

Faithful to our always constructive approach, we are providing the administration with some elements for analysis.



Some historical reminders and the results of the studies that must be taken into account

A few months ago, DG HR, proud of its work, presented to the trade unions a project aimed at "modernizing" the management of Human Resources under the structure of 3Bs: the "Bricks", the "Bytes," and the "Behaviours".

Presenting this as a completely innovative approach ...

On the contrary, it turns out that this new organization of work is by no means "new" since it had already been established for nearly ten years, particularly in various private firms, faced with major changes and constraints such as spatio-temporal restructuring, digitalisation and costs.

In order to respond to these constraints, companies - much more than public administrations - have opted for more flexible organizational forms, particularly spatio-temporal (flexible hours, teleworking, hot-desking, etc.), and favouring staff autonomy. These new methods require increased use of new information and communication technologies (videoconferencing, electronic document management, paperless, etc.)

Several studies have been carried out to assess these new working methods, including that of G. Jemine on an insurance company based in Brussels which curiously resembles the DG HR project ... (**Un chantier de modernisation des contextes de travail: le « New way of working » dans une compagnie d'assurance » [link](#)**)

This study concludes that "the depersonalization of workspaces and the 'de-spatialization' of individuals pose new challenges in terms of human resources management. Operational

players must now reconsider two major problems, which are **trust in the managerial relationship and team cohesion**".

And underlines that "As the new working environment does not fit well with traditional forms of performance monitoring, the discourse of project managers urges team managers to work on the basis of trust. However, employee practices reveal a more complex reality, revealing both the pre-existence of trust within managerial relationships, the persistence of classic forms of control and the development of new control opportunities linked to new technologies. Beyond the question of control, it is up to middle management to guarantee the cohesion of the work collectives as well as the good coordination necessary for the accomplishment of the tasks"

According to the study results ([link](#)), "The implications of this system are numerous; ... The most salient are the loss of the personal office and the dispersal of teams in space... The loss of this personal space is likely to generate attempts take back, privatize and personalize new workstations... The flex desk is therefore carrying a double risk, since it can lead to a drop in the quality of work following a deterioration in the flow of information, and / or generate a feeling of isolation in the employee who feels disconnected from his team".

The services in charge of real estate policy praise this new concept by emphasizing the maximization of space as well as new flexibility for staff and the management of their working time.

UN CHANTIER DE MODERNISATION DES CONTEXTES DE TRAVAIL : LE « NEW WAY OF WORKING » DANS UNE COMPAGNIE D'ASSURANCES

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Introduction

Dans les réflexions récentes portant sur l'organisation du travail en entreprise, nombreux sont les auteurs qui s'intéressent à la question des « nouvelles formes d'organisation » (Roy & Audelet, 2002; Tassin, 2006; Aijet et al., 2015). Selon ces derniers, les entreprises seraient aujourd'hui confrontées à des changements majeurs tels que le développement et l'introduction de nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication (Chenouet et al., 2014), l'accroissement global de la compétitivité (Pichard et Schoups, 2012), la mondialisation (Van der Voort, 2004), les problèmes de mobilité (Berwell & Tassin, 2015) ou encore la transition vers une société de l'information et de la connaissance (Bick et al., 2011). Ces facteurs incitent les entreprises à adopter des formes organisationnelles plus flexibles et construisant l'autonomie du personnel (Roy & Audelet, 2002).

Plusieurs études de cas rendent compte de différentes formes qui peuvent prendre ces « chantiers managériaux » (Cegarra, 2007; Oetz, 2012; Boussin, 2013). Sous l'appellation « nouvelles formes d'organisation », nous retrouvons divers concepts basés sur la promotion de principes récurrents (flexibilité, digitalisation, autonomie, mobilité...) tout en adoptant des dénominations différentes. Ainsi l'entreprise libérée se donne pour principal objectif de « délivrer » le collaborateur de la règle formelle (Oetz, 2012), l'entreprise « virtuelle » repose essentiellement sur l'exploitation de technologies numériques et se veut éphémère et provisoire (Roy & Audelet, 2002), le « Management 2.0 » est davantage porté sur une redéfinition du rôle des cadres et des équipes de direction (Hamel, 2009).

Au titre de ces solutions organisationnelles candidates à la relève des bureaucraties modernes figure également le « New Way of Working » (NWW), un chantier principalement développé aux Pays-Bas et en Belgique depuis une dizaine d'années. Proposé au travers de recuits managériaux et de parcours cariers (Eijl, 2011; Fliemans, 2011), le NWW apparaît comme une méthode de réorganisation du travail aux contours souples et subtils. La diversité des contextes de travail locaux des entreprises se reflète dans le NWW, comme dans la réinvention d'une définition commune de ces chantiers au sein de la littérature sociologique. Nous proposons une définition provisoire et volontairement floue du NWW, comme étant une recombinaison spatio-temporelle des contextes organisationnels sous-tendue par une digitalisation des pratiques, sous des contraintes de coûts et de productivité, qui s'adresse principalement aux entreprises du secteur des services qui recourent à des travailleurs manquant de l'information.

[Un chantier de modernisation des contextes de travail: le « New way of working » dans une compagnie d'assurance »](#)

However, according to the results of the study: "These arrangements initially thought out and designed to promote flexibility - especially in time and space - come to have the opposite effects to their primary objective. The employee is

subject to a temporal injunction, that of arriving at the office early enough ... Ultimately, his freedom to work "when" and "where" he wishes is paradoxically limited by the measures put in place to promote it".

Respecting the rules is not an option left to the goodwill of DG HR



It would seem that in addition to forgetting to take into account the Commissioner's positions, the experiences of the past and the lessons to be drawn from them, it is a total amnesia that would have struck DG HR and the OIB which continue to move forward without even worrying about the reference legal texts that we take the liberty of recalling for them::

- 1) **Communication C (2019) 7450 "The Workplace of the Future in the European Commission"**, and in particular its principles 7, 8, and 9 ([link](#))

- 2) **The Housing Conditions Manual of the Directorates-General and Commission services** applicable to European Commission buildings in Brussels and Luxembourg ([part 1](#) and [part 2](#)) establish the rules and harmonized guidelines for the allocation of spaces for offices and other premises in the Directorates-General and services in Brussels and Luxembourg. However, part 3 relating to the use of hotdesking has not yet been adopted ... but is already implemented by DG HR!

Moreover, the Manual should be revised in accordance with the principles and recommendations contained in the Communication on "The Workplace of the Future in the European Commission"

R&D now and forever in favour of teleworking did not wait for DG HR to discover its advantages ... but staff fears linked to the pandemic should not be exploited

Throughout this pandemic, DG HR has launched a panoply of lightning surveys among staff with the obvious aim of revealing the broad support for teleworking.

R&D has always been in favour of an increased use of teleworking; it was at the head of the negotiations, which made it possible to widen this possibility

([link](#)) and fought against the unacceptable differences in its implementation and the abuses of "little chiefs" like in EASME ([link](#))

On the one hand, it is obvious that the increased use of teleworking also requires rethinking the layout of the workspace, with a significant number of workplaces remaining unoccupied

when colleagues are not in the office.

On the other hand, there can be no question of indulging in the apotheosis of individual offices when already, at the present time, less than half of the staff benefit from them and that almost all of the colleagues AST, AST-SC and AC are crammed into shared offices.

Nevertheless, the well-being of the staff cannot be reduced to a disgraceful barter system between teleworking and hotdesking, framed by the absence of any social dialogue and genuine consultation of the staff.

It is unacceptable that DG HR can claim, as acquired and indisputable, that a wider scope of teleworking is synonymous with the establishment and generalization of hotdesking ... and of hotdesking as currently envisaged. By deciding, alone, in the smallest details, of their implementation, starting with the fact that mana-

gers would be exempt!

This while the conclusions of the workshop "*Open spaces at the EU Institutions versus traditional work spaces: justification, evolution, evaluation, and results*", organized by the Budgetary Control Committee of the European Parliament, recommended especially not to call on hotdesking, to keep a personal workspace and that any new workspace had to be decided by associating the personnel concerned (cf "*Le Renard Déchaîné special 'OPEN SPACE' and was there light?*", DG HR and OIB, quietly, proceeded without worrying about the opinion of the staff and their representatives to set up their new "toy"!

This, while the scope and implementation modalities of this increased use of teleworking that R&D supports with conviction have not been presented or negotiated. ... And perhaps will be... when the hotdesking has already been set up.

But it is not only the total disregard for social dialogue that is problematic in the approach of DG HR.



The new motto of DG HR: lead by... bad... example

The management does not have to worry about reserving a place in hotdesking, since they will occupy a spacious and individual office as usual!

While this new organization of work was aimed at breaking down the boundaries of privileges between managers and ordinary staff, it is quite different at the Commission.

Far from being any modernization, it is simply a matter of preserving a part of the "corporate culture" worthy of the Middle Ages, whose tough roots are firmly anchored to the ground!

Management, who has decided to change course and opt for this new work organization without prior social dialogue or discussion with the staff, should set an example and renounce these privileges coming from another century!

If it is a question of putting all staff in hotdesking, management must set an example and push the door of hotdesking first!

THE ONE—L-107—[see more](#)



Office floors: a manager's office © EU



Office space with standard desks © EU

Parking spaces... for chiefs only and... well supervised!

According to the new COBRACE parking policy ([link](#)), parking spaces will be reduced in all Commission buildings. First come, first served ... So even if you reserve an office space, that does not mean that you can park your car in or around your building ...

However, places will be reserved for management ... just to confirm once again that staff members are all equal but that some are more equal than others ...

And so that managers are not worried about their reserved parking spaces improperly occupied by “simple” col-

leagues... Nothing is left to chance... the Security Department is already planning on detecting and severely punishing any abuse... in reducing our colleagues, whose skills are absolutely recognized, to the role of simple car park guards... probably the best paid in the world....

***C*onclusion : there is still time to stop this tasteless masquerade**

Since this new work organization is based on flexibility, it can now be modified and designed for a better staff well-being, preserving their mental and physical health and limiting any future psychosocial risk factors.

R&D always bases all of its thoughts and proposals on scientific studies. We want the Commission to do the same.

R&D calls on Commissioner Hahn to ensure that genuine negotiations are opened without delay on ALL aspects of these files.

**Cristiano Sebastiani,
Président**

Annex

Communication C (2019) 7450

" The Workplace of the Future in the European Commission "

- ◆ **Principle 7** which envisages the use of hot-desking when offices have low occupancy rates and stipulates that "Low average office occupancy levels (such as the average presence in the office of less than two thirds of the staff) due to the frequency of teleworking or missions, for example, are indicators of possibilities for rationalizing space by resorting to hot-desking or by freeing up individual spaces to replace them with other types of spaces depending on changing needs" but also "In practice, any type of office could be combined with hot-desking. For example, some departments have an occupancy rate of only 50% due to missions and / or teleworking, but their staff members need a high level of focus when present in the office. In this context, it might be useful to resort to office sharing using individual unassigned offices... Critical mass is important for hot-desking to be possible. A large group of staff will be more stable in terms of presence compared to a small group and it is more cost effective to provide a variety of spaces to a large group... "
- ◆ **Principle 8** provides that "the choice of the configuration of the workspace should always be based on an assessment of individual needs and consideration of available options offering a good cost-effectiveness ratio. Therefore, a thorough needs analysis should always be the starting point for implementing changes to the workspace, favouring changes such as a reorganization or a move to a new building ... confidentiality should also be taken into consideration in the choice of office layout. Specific solutions adapted to the different office configurations could be proposed. For example, work that requires a high level of confidentiality can be done in an individual office that has special lockers that can be locked. Likewise, highly collaborative work requiring a high level of confidentiality can be performed in collaborative spaces, provided that access is limited to certain staff members "
- ◆ **Principle 9** stresses that relevant staff should be involved throughout the process of conceptualizing and implementing the new workspace and that "It is essential to establish two-way communication before and during the implementation process. A consultative approach to the design of the new workspace requires good processes of dialogue and consideration of feedback. Therefore, affected staff should be closely involved in the process from the start, including expressing their needs for the workspace and helping to make decisions about its final design. It can call on relevant staff representative organizations to help it in this process ... The general design should be based mainly on the work profiles of the staff who will occupy the space. The design should not be tailored to specific people, as reorganizations and mobility go hand in hand with frequent staff moves ... "

