



Brussels, 19 August 2026

NOTE TO THE ATTENTION OF MR STEPHEN QUEST DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF DG HR

AND

Ms. CÉLINE GAUER, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF DG ENER

Subject: Staff reductions decided at the ITER Organization (IO) in July 2026: very serious concerns regarding the process, implications for programme delivery, and urgent requests for a social dialogue

By our open letter addressed to the ITER Organization Director-General and to the Head of the European Delegation to the ITER Council, we highlighted the unacceptable nature of the procedure implemented in connection with the staff reductions decided by the ITER Organization (IO) in July 2026, as well as the serious concerns raised by that process.

On that occasion, we stressed in particular that we were entirely entitled not only to raise these matters with the Director-General of the IO, but also to seek clarification regarding the position taken on behalf of the Commission and the extent to which that position had been coordinated with the relevant Directorate-General and the competent Commissioners.

In this respect, we are aware that, in the past, whenever reforms of the IO Staff Regulations were considered, the opinion of DG HR was systematically sought. It is therefore important to establish whether DG HR was consulted again in the present case and, if so, what position it expressed.

More fundamentally, it must be reaffirmed that the European Commission has a direct interest not only in the successful delivery of Baseline 2024, but also in ensuring that an international organisation established under an agreement to which the European Union is a party complies, at all times and in all its decisions and procedures, with the principles of transparency, respect, fairness, sound administration and meaningful social dialogue.

For this reason, these matters cannot be regarded as concerning the internal management of the IO alone, nor can they be considered as falling within the remit of DG ENER alone. They also engage the **political and institutional responsibility of the Commission as a whole**, which must at all times uphold—and be seen to uphold—the above-mentioned principles. Accordingly, they also directly concern the Commission's central services, including in particular DG HR.

This is precisely the purpose of the **strengthened governance framework** requested by the staff representation and put in place by the Commission, most recently reaffirmed by Commissioner Serafin in the context of the Large-Scale Review exercise.

This governance framework is not optional. It must be fully respected and consistently applied in practice.

It is for this reason that, alongside the attached memorandum addressed to the relevant bodies, we now consider it essential to organise, as soon as possible, a social dialogue meeting with you and with DG ENER.

We believe that such a discussion is necessary in order to examine in depth the implications of this decision also for the F4E Agency and to review the Commission's governance role and responsibilities in this particularly sensitive context.

Given the urgency and importance of these issues, we would be grateful if you could let us know your availability so that a meeting may be arranged as soon possible.

We thank you in advance for your attention to this request and remain at your disposal should you require any further clarification.

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Georges Vlandas
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Copy: Mr Ch. Roques, Deputy Director-General DG HR
Mr P. Leardini, Deputy Secretary-General