



**Does the Commission still believe
in social dialogue?**

**Does it really care about the working conditions of its
officials and staff?**

***The bad example set by the current Commission to the Member
States, European citizens and its own staff***

In a play in three acts, **the Federation** presents to you the exemplary social dialogue that the Commission wishes to promote in our Member States and compares these fine principles with the very different way it is actually implemented within its own Institution.

In practice, the current Commission is exploiting the absence of staff from its offices because of the Covid crisis to force through, without any consultation of its staff, moves to unsuitable premises offering non-validated accommodation conditions (Flexidesking / Hot-desking).



Would you like to understand how 2 500 colleagues could soon find themselves 'hotdesking' in the "COPERNICUS" LOI 51 and "the ONE" LOI 107 buildings... without any consultation or concertation? Then read on ...



The abracadabra trick of "HotDesking

or

**When the Commission ignores its own commitments to social dialogue
and worse still**

**when certain services try to circumvent the Commission's own internal rules
and a Communication from the College!**

But what exactly is "HotDesking" ?

It consists in having several employees share the same office at different times... 'Perfect' in these Covid times...

It is also termed "flexible offices" or more discreetly "dynamic offices", probably because you have to be quick to get a seat?

The "HotDesking" saga began at the end of 2013 with the creation of a "Hot desking working group" which immediately changed its name to the "Dynamic offices working group".

This group began its work ([note of 9 June 2015 addressed to Ms Souka DG HR, part highlighted in yellow](#)) with the objectives of *addressing the budgetary and human aspects, clarifying the working conditions to be respected (professions concerned, specific and adapted posts, teleworking, Staff Regulations, etc.), and drafting a proposal for a text for the Manual of Housing Conditions: HCM 3, which was then presented to the Brussels and Luxembourg Health and Safety Committees (CPPT and CSHT).*

In 2015, the group presented its results to the abovementioned committees and obtained in June 2015 ([note of 9 June 2015 addressed to Ms Souka DG HR part highlighted in green](#)) *the provisional approval of the Draft Manual on Accommodation Conditions (HCM 3) insofar as this project is only intended to be a pilot phase. The Committee approved the creation of a pilot project on flexible offices and mandated the Dynamic Offices Working Group to analyse the results of the pilot project and to report back to the Committee. The Committee will decide on the final version of the HCM 3 afterwards.*

Immediately alerted by the staff representatives to the risks of this experiment going off the rails, the erstwhile Director General, Ms Souka, expressed certain reservations in her [note of 25 August 2015 \(part highlighted in green and purple\)](#) and put in place certain safeguards:

HCM 3 is not an instrument of building policy, nor a text promoting a new working method; the staff concerned must be involved in the process. This is a point to which I attach great importance.

The final text of the HCM 3 will be reviewed in the light of the results and lessons learned from this pilot experience.

Finally, DG HR wishes to reaffirm the importance it attaches to the working conditions of staff, an importance that is reflected in particular in the fit@work programme that has just been launched.

AND THE FARCE BEGINS !

A first attempt was unsuccessful in Brussels, so the pilot experiment was transferred to Luxembourg in 2019 with 32 guinea pigs.

[All the juicy details are recorded in the minutes of the CSHT meeting of 14 December 2020](#), but here are the main ones:

Intramural DIGIT contractors tested out the space, which consists of 28 pre-arranged workstations where each user brings his or her own laptop and headset.

Carpeting on the floor improves the acoustics and a green or red light system (Flex-buddy) indicates which workstations are free or occupied when a user enters the space.

Yes, just like in a car park!

Of the 32 people who were asked to use the workspace, only 8 responded to the satisfaction survey (sic) which in terms of statistical validity is very poor....

The choice to take on external staff from within the city was a decision taken by the former Director General of DG HR, Ms Souka, who did not want to bother with statutory staff for such a project.

IT IS BASED ON THIS 'SOLID' PILOT EXPERIENCE and above all by taking advantage of the absence of colleagues due to generalised teleworking that the administration is now transferring 1,500

colleagues from HR, EPSO, DIGIT and SCIC to "The ONE" building and its 170 parking spaces, and then 1,000 from other DGs to "COPERNICUS".

- However, there is no regulatory or legal basis for this!
- The pilot experiment is not conclusive
- HCM 3 is not approved
- The CPPT and CSHT committees have not validated anything

Why bother with these details when you can do worse elsewhere?

The ground rules for transforming our workspaces are prescribed in the Commission's Communication on the "Working Environment of the Future" ([COM\(2019\) 7450](#)), but not respected....

This communication from the College clearly provides for the information and consultation of staff (words that our administration no longer likes), but also for the creation of a supervisory committee to oversee the changes, but it still does not exist...

DG HR is therefore questioning the need to respect the provisions of this inconvenient communication...

Unfortunately, the [Legal Service itself](#) confirms the need to apply the College's guidelines! One would have been surprised if the opposite had been true...

Anyway, DG HR will act as if nothing has happened and is now asking the Board of the OIB and OIL (the Brussels and Luxembourg Infrastructure Offices) for: *"a provisional approval of the Housing Conditions Manual - Part 3 (HCM 3) in order to allow for a larger scale evaluation of the collaborative dynamic spaces in the context of the move to the L107 and L-51 buildings"*.

Even if some DGs such as Eurostat, BUDG and EMPL have doubts and reservations... the machinery is already in motion...

The fight is still going on, but this cognitively challenged administration is continuing headlong along its path and trying to force its way through by taking advantage of the exceptional situation created by the health crisis to impose its disastrous plans...

This dangerous current has exceptionally led 13 Directors General to co-sign a common letter addressed to DG HR and the OIB to ask them to take more consideration of their needs... The Directors General demand to be heard! and also recall that consultation and involvement of the staff is essential!

When Community law is flouted in our Member States, judges, like the Belgian judge in the Ciano case (see [ACT 1](#)), can condemn those at fault and enforce the law.

However, the directives produced by the Commission do not apply to itself... So do the words "information and consultation" of the staff and its representatives, as stated in our internal rules, have a different meaning in the Member States and in the European institutions?

Unfortunately, it is clear that the virtuous principles that the Commission intends to see implemented in the Member States are being circumvented or simply ignored in its internal practices!

At this stage of complete and deliberate denial of the elementary rules of respect for staff and social dialogue in our Institution, despite being a signatory of the Framework Agreement which organises

this dialogue, all that remains is to denounce these abuses and this maladministration to the European Ombudsman and to assert our rights before the competent courts.



The Federation believes that it is high time for the Commission to put its house in order and to return to the practice of genuine and trusting social dialogue, and that management in times of crisis makes this requirement even stronger. More than ever, solidarity and dialogue must replace authoritarianism, unilateralism, and the empty rhetoric that we are all so tired of hearing.

The Federation

You will never walk alone !