

Teleworking for the benefit of removal companies? DG HR must not force through 'hot-desking'



Following the management meeting of 18 January 2021, [the Federation](#) was very surprised to learn from the Director General of DG HR that the relocation of DG HR colleagues is now taken for granted without consultation.

Of course, this has been the way the Administration has been acting for many years. But what we are concerned about is that there is now no longer any doubt that there will be a generalised shift from working in individual offices to 'hot-desking' in shared spaces, pure and simple.

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The 'new normal' (meaning post-COVID) now seems to be the Trojan horse and the pretext for DG HR to force through their old favourites of shared offices, temporary offices, and the faded old concept of "open space" which was such a disastrous experience in all respects.

The new communication on the working environment of the future (https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/dg/env/staff_issues/DG%20ENV%20on%20the%20move/C_2019_7450_F1_COMMUNICATION_TO_COMMISSION_FR_V3_P1_1052376-1.pdf)

foresees in its 7th principle a possible recourse to hot-desking when offices have low occupancy rates over a long period of time. However, it sets out a whole series of pre-conditions that must be met and which the Director General seems to disregard.

Worse still, the implementation of any new office standard must have a legal basis in ad hoc regulations. These regulations are laid down for standard offices in the Housing Conditions Manual (HCM)

(https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/dg/oib/docref/Documents/ec-housing-conditions-manual_en.pdf)

and for shared and open space offices in HCM2 (Housing Conditions Manual 2)

(https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/dg/oib/docref/Documents/ec-housing-conditions-manual-part2_fr.pdf).

A corresponding regulation does not yet exist for hot-desking and must be specified in a document to be called HCM3 (still in draft), which has not yet been validated by the bodies designated for this purpose, namely the Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work (CPPT) in Brussels and the various Safety and Health at Work Committees (SHC) at other Commission sites.

This Housing Conditions Manual part 3 has been going through a long and painful gestation process since 2015 with no prospect of ending with a success!

Even if DG HR and OIB, responsible for building management, have known for many years that the date of leaving MO34 (rue Montoyer 34) and SC11 (rue de la Science 11) was approaching, it is only in this period of COVID while its personnel are teleworking, that they have decided to use them as guinea pigs for this experiment. The Director General is failing to respect the rules of which she and her administration should be champions.

No excuse in terms of time or budget can serve as a pretext for such a sleight of hand, when the project has been dragging on for 5 years. Now they suddenly see the COVID emergency as an excuse for riding roughshod over all the rules relating to the consultation of the Staff.

It is not only the staff as a whole (by definition at home in front of the screens...) that is thus silenced, but also ad hoc bodies such as the Joint Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work, whose vocation and competence are being flouted in the face of such radical and definitive changes in office life.

Will this be the first great blunder of the new DG HR? Or will we return to a proper respect of the imperative of good management that we must expect from our Administration?

The Federation asks DG HR to:

- 1. Open discussions immediately in a proper social dialogue concerning the aspects of the new framework including telework.**
- 2. Start negotiations with the ad hoc bodies on the implementation of regulatory standards related to hot-desking, the exact nature of which must be clarified without resorting to buzzwords.**
- 3. Involve closely and through all means the staff concerned by this new way of working.**
- 4. Respect the various regulations in force, particularly with regard to the working environment, the balance between individual and shared offices and the psychosocial risks of this new working environment.**

COVID should not be the sad and opportunistic opportunity ("a unique opportunity" as the Director General HR once boasted...) for the Administration to force through a long list of reforms that the staff will never accept.

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