

Ref.: EPO

Geneva, 23 May 2019

Dear Mr. Campinos,

As this is the first time that I write to you, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your election as President of the EPO and the uptake of your challenging duties as of last summer.

I am the President of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA), which actively represents the interests of more than 20,000 staff in the international civil service. The Staff Union of the EPO (SUEPO) is a member of FICSA. In 2017, FICSA wrote to your predecessor, Mr. Battistelli, concerning irregularities in the treatment of EPO staff.

I am now writing to you to express our Federation's grave concern about the apparent lack of meaningful progress in the social dialogue at the EPO as reported to FICSA. I understand that when you were elected, one of the explicit tasks identified was to take concrete steps towards restoring social peace and dialogue following years of widely reported social unrest and systematic violations of the rule of law by top management.

Hopefully you will agree with us, given your legal background and as a former EU official, that the leftover dysfunctional policies of the EPO would not be acceptable within the EU institutions, which are for all intents and purposes providing a benchmark of what is acceptable in European institutions.

It is appreciated that you have expressed good intentions in this respect. We have been informed that your own office-wide survey evidenced the discontent of staff. Nevertheless, we have not been informed of any concrete actions that are necessary to re-establish proper order. It appears that the same managers who were identified as the source of various problems remain in place. We understand that there have been several public calls for you to act by the Central Staff Committee, SUEPO and USF, to urgently redress the cases of the numerous union officials and staff representatives targeted and sanctioned by your predecessor. Our colleagues consider that continued lack of action amounts to de facto endorsement of the decisions of your predecessor which disregard the Administrative Council Resolution contained in document CA/26/16, which was passed unanimously. It is understood from ILOAT judgment no. 4052 that compliance with Administrative Council decisions is not optional.

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**FICSA**

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It is with keen interest that we have learned of plans for further reforms following the June meeting of the Administrative Council. We would like to respectfully request that included in this process be a thorough reappraisal of EPO's organizational culture and its values, its human resources practices, as well as the reported inadequate consultation patterns with the Staff Committee. We hope to learn in the near future of the introduction of reforms which are balanced and negotiated *bona fide* with EPO social partners, that the top managers responsible for the creation of the situation are held accountable and of redress for the abusively sanctioned staff representatives and union officials.

FICSA would like to draw your attention to the 2012 Report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Staff-management relations in the United Nations specialized agencies and common system" which found in its conclusions "that the attitude of the executive head serves as a critical factor in the success or failure of staff-management relations in an organization".

The JIU also found that "Good and effective interaction between the management of the United Nations common system organizations under review and their staff is critical for the delivery of high-performance services".

Lastly, in the interest of the well-being of EPO and its staff, FICSA would like to respectfully request you to urgently meet with the EPO staff representatives concerned, including those who have been dismissed, in order to jointly explore possible ways forward so that a conducive and healthy working environment can be restored in the interest of the organization and all its staff. We are confident that you will endeavour to foster dialogue and identify ways to move forward in a constructive and positive manner. In this respect, the FICSA leadership remains available to meet with you and all parties concerned.

On behalf of the Federation, I would like to express my appreciation for your attention to our requests and look forward to hearing from you.

Please accept, Mr. Campinos, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Brett Fitzgerald  
President

cc. SUEPO  
FICSA Executive Committee