

Zentraler Vorstand . Central Executive Committee . Bureau Central

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To:
Jesper Kongstad
Chairman of the Administrative Council
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To:
Benoît Battistelli
President of the Office
president@epo.org

Review of the social situation at the European Patent Office

Dear Mr Kongstad,
Dear Mr Battistelli,

In the [report](#) of the 145th meeting of the Administrative Council that appeared on the external website of the EPO you informed the public that:

*The Council decided to initiate **a review of the social situation** at the European Patent Office after five years of reform setting and implementation.*

Several measures could contribute to a possible progress in this context:

- *continuing the exercise aiming at staff union recognition, despite the difficulties met*
- *aiming at the elaboration of a negotiation strategy preserving all the results already obtained*
- *launching an independent external social study, in close co-operation with the President*

SUEPO agrees that after five years of reform setting and implementation, a review would be appropriate. We also fully support the notion of an **independent** review. In view of the latter, a close co-operation not only with the President but also with the staff representation would seem necessary.

We are equally open to continue the union recognition talks. We remind you that the initial Union recognition talks were interrupted because, at precisely the same time as the talks were starting, the Office Administration considered it appropriate to accuse Staff Committee members and Union officials of harassing a colleague in the staff representation. These accusations of harassment, levied not by the alleged victims but by Ms Bergot, Principal Director Personnel, are clearly vexatious and entirely without merit. The closure of this investigation and any other investigation or disciplinary procedure targeting staff representatives and/or union officials - without prejudice to the accused - is a condition *sine qua non* for recommencing the talks.

Finally, we are somewhat surprised by the statement that the negotiation strategy should “*preserve all the results already obtained*”. If preservation of all the results is the aim, that would render both the review and the negotiations futile. We understand that you mean “all the **positive** results”. We can obviously agree with that aim but it may be judicious to point out that opinions may differ on what can be considered positive results.

We are looking forward to discuss these points with you at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sincerely yours,

SUEPO Central