

Dr. Inge Gräßle (EPP/CDU): Commission creates the 100th director general posting - number of high-earning - 'top brass' continues steadily upwards

"It is an administration coming loose", Inge Gräßle (CDU), EPP's spokeswoman in the Budgetary Control Committee, who feels "forced into the impression of a self-service shop", comments on Commission's latest administrative order to create three new posts for directors general.

Thus, Commission has produced the 100th post at the level of director general (A15/A16, basic salary 15.000 to 18.000 EUR per month), notwithstanding its own 87 strong target. The administrative order, which passed the College unrecognised by the general public as part of Commission's "summer package" in its last working-week, is "a display of a remarkable shortage of insight" in the face of austerity budgets in the Member States. In the wake of the upcoming budget negotiations between Parliament and Council, this also shows the Commission's losing touch as an administrative authority. The German federal counterparts of Commission's directors general ("beamtete Staatssekretäre" receiving a basic pay of around 11.300 EUR) count only 27."

Gräßle finds Commission's administrative apparatus more and more complicated to monitor "since the constant separation or creation of directorates general and the systematic establishment of deputy directors general does not come as a transparent process. It leads to a myriad of smaller subdivisions, which increase bureaucracy and generate an ever growing administration. Further to this, Commission is shifting its administrative workload on to agencies and other external service providers.

"The tendency towards creating new top posts applies evenly to all senior management", Gräßle claims pointing out that since 2007 the number of posts for directors general has increased by 16, those of directors by 41 (basic salary A14/A15 13.000 to 16.600 EUR per month), again overshooting by 25 Commission's self defined target of 313 posts for directors. Now, practically every director general has one or two deputies, notwithstanding the fact that there had been a working system for years. Commission's move was "lacking instinct": "While Member States are cutting down their budgets and slash posts, roughly 10.000 in the German federal administration, the EU increases the number of 'thoroughbred' officials."

Gräßle finds good reason to fear that this logic might apply even more stringent to the European External Action Service (EEAS), Commission's most recent spin-off. The Service will start with as many as 16 directors general and 12 special representatives in the rank of a director general, which will provide it with (compared to Commission) far smaller directorates general, directorates and 'mini-units'. Gräßle is concerned that 'the creation of the Service and the transfer of posts from Council and Commission so far is so little transparent that considerable increase in the number of posts and hierarchy (within the Council, the Commission and the EEAS) can only hardly be retraced in its aftermath." The High Representative so far had refused to provide information on the future evolution of the Service.