

I) Reactions out of the Commission

- "I see it's die Grässliche Grässle. What a cow - think what she rakes in! Mind, if they do away with the travel expenses it won't make much difference to me, as I can't even get as far as York one-way on what I get! And in our DG we are not even allowed to take complete half-days off under the flexitime system, never mind 2 days a month! If I can only keep my pension ...!"¹
- "Ihre in der Presse kolportierte Sichtweise, dass wir zu viele Feiertage haben, besprechen Sie bitte mit dem Belgischen Königreich. Der eigentliche Grund, warum man Sie nicht ernst nehmen kann, ist aber, dass Sie die Situation im EP und in der deutschen Verwaltung komplett ignorieren. Gerade MEPs sollten beim Thema Reisekosten vor der eigenen Tür kehren. Und ein Versuch Ihrerseits, die Arbeitsbedingungen deutscher Ministerialbeamten oder Diplomaten kritisch zu überprüfen, würde sicherlich von den EU Beamten begrüßt, dürfte aber politisch ein Rohrkrepierer werden. Für mich gehören Sie leider in die Kategorie der Zyniker, die von Oscar Wilde so beschrieben wurden: "The cynic knows the price of everything and the value of nothing."²

II) Reactions out of the Parliament

A) Additional Holiday

- "I work in Luxembourg and my home is Finland. I have wife, two kids and a dog ... We are travelling with own car because it is not allowed to take a dog in aeroplane and in Finland we need also car because of the long distances."³
- "My place of origin is ... in Greece ... This island is at a distance of 3212 KM from Luxembourg... Thus I need 4 days to arrive to my place of origin and another 4 to come back to Luxembourg which makes a total of 8 days. Instead I am credited with only 6 days."⁴
 - Reactions from the colleagues: "Those chaps in Athens. Couldn't they fly?"
- "As a Cypriot official I am entitled to 6 days additional holiday. That initially may seem a lot, but allow me to elaborate a bit on the matter.

For each leg of the journey I need ... 10 hours journey time. Add to this the inevitable fatigue and jetlag and I think it is easy to realise that two days in each (return) journey are lost."⁵

B) Agreement

- "Wo ich Ihnen Recht geben muss, ist in Bezug auf die 16% .Ich arbeite in Luxemburg und mit mir, arbeiten Leute, die in Ihrem Heimatort wohnen (das an der Luxemburger Grenze liegt) oder manchmal einige Kilometer weiter landeinwärts und "die"beziehen die 16% auf Basisgehalt und allen anderen Rechten , die ihnen"zustehen" obwohl sie nicht einmal , ein Examen bestanden haben, und keine 2 te Sprache sprechen können"⁶
 - "... gerade angesichts des SPAMs der Gewerkschaften kann ich Ihnen nur beipflichten und ich hoffe, dass Sie von vielen anderen Beamten auch diese Zustimmung erfahren!" ⁷
 - "Merci beaucoup. très intéressant en effet, tiens nous au courant car nous recevons souvent des emails de la part de citoyens indignés par les conditions de travail des fonctionnaires européens."⁸
 - [In the reform of the staff regulation involved EP-Members should] "... have a critical look at the protection the SR offer staff who persistently underperform. ... during the previous negotiations about the new SR 2004, Trade Unions have ... succeeded in making it virtually impossible to get rid of dead wood. ... I admit, in some cases, to not having had the energy (or time) to start the so called "procedure for professional incompetence" (article 51 of the SR), a procedure that can drag on for two years." ⁹
 - "So I do hope the new staff regulation will not touch the basic elements and will only introduce some cuts on these excessive entitlements which you rightly criticized."¹⁰
 - "You are right, the world has changed, which means also that people can choose and go anywhere in the world to earn much more than in the EU civil service. Once I tried
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to persuade my friend from Poland ... to work for the EP ... he said he was better off in Poland.

... the number of posts with AD12 and above has increased recently, the structure in the EP is blown beyond comprehension and managerial staff receive excessive salaries and privileges. My superiors are: my head of unit, director, director general and secretary general. Isn't it too many? You might be aware that 11 new directors have just been appointed in the EP - what for?

... Luxembourg is extremely expensive and therefore higher coefficient factor should be applied to salaries paid in Luxembourg...

However, I am afraid that as a result of changes to our working conditions, high ranked officials will not lose any privileges, they are too powerful and sometimes they have political support...

... Here are some of my proposals:

- expatriation allowance - lump sum instead of percentage of salary, adaptation according to individual family situation
- abolition of extra days off for grade
- cuts in director posts
- no overtime compensation for AD12 and above
- increase of entry salaries to encourage the highly qualified to work in the EU institutions
- revision of posts, reduction of useless posts
- revision of allowances, especially allowances for high ranked posts
- adaptation of salaries of staff working in Luxembourg to real market conditions
- revision of EPSO (input-output relation; do we really have to pay so much for recruitment? does the current system - very costly - enable us to get best people from the labour market?) "¹¹

C) Other

- "... als Mitarbeiter der EU Institutionen fuer den Fall einer Behinderung oder eines Familienmitgliedes mit Behinderung ganz erhebliche Nachteile ... weil die sog. "staff regulation" kaum anpassungsgerecht Massnahmen zur Adaptierung einer Behinderung enthaelt: dies ist ein klares Versaeumnis derjenigen, die fuer die "staff regulation" verantwortlich zeichnen."¹²
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- "... Europaeischen Schulen [bieten] kaum bzw. keine Adaptionen an um auch Kinder mit Lernbehinderungen oder Autismus - applied behaviour analysis - zu beschulen, in der jeweiligen Muttersprache des Kindes." ¹³
 - "Mein eigener Partner hatte, solange wir in Brüssel waren bei weitem mehr "Privilegien" als das Statut es den Europ. Beamten zugesteht: Zu seinem Basisgehalt (mehr als meines) kam eine weit höhere Auslandszulage als 16% dazu, eine "housing allowance" von in etwa EUR 1.300,- (ohne Nachweis des Mietvertrags), einen monatlichen Heimflug für die gesamte Familie, Sprachkurse und Geldzulagen für die Ehepartner, unbegrenzttes Roaming/Heimgespräche mit dem Diensthandy, unbegrenzte Kilometer inkl. Treibstoff mit dem Dienstauto, ebenfalls Urlaub für die Heimreise und einiges mehr. Dies nicht nur für einen begrenzten Zeitraum, sondern auf Jahre.
Ich gebe Ihnen Recht, wenn Sie einwenden, dass diese Zulagen nicht von Steuergeld gezahlt werden, sondern von einem privaten Unternehmen, trotzdem muß ich darauf hinweisen, dass unsere "Privilegien" nicht so obsolet oder weltfremd wären, wie Sie behaupten. Sie entsprechen nach wie vor der gängigen Praxis, auch in der Privatwirtschaft."¹⁴
 - "The changes that you propose seem grounded as far as it concerns senior staff. ... a lot of [the EU-Stuff situated in Luxembourg] are coming from the countries of the enlargements of 2004 and 2007. The translators and the assistants in these 12 units were recruited at the lowest possible grades, many of them only recently became officials ..."¹⁵
 - "Der Ton macht die Musik. Und der Ihres Schreibens ist meiner Meinung nach vollkommen fehl am Platz, ohne irgendetwas hineininterpretieren zu wollen. Mit der ganzen Familie für die gesamte Lebensarbeitszeit ins Ausland zu gehen, durchaus eher unüblich. Menschen, die in ihrem eigenen Land bleiben, können all die staatlichen Hilfen ... in Anspruch nehmen, haben ihren Familien- und Freundeskreis zur Unterstützung ... Auch bei der Schulausbildung der Kinder tauchen häufig große Probleme auf."¹⁶
 - "Obviously, it would make sense to increase taxes on higher salaries. Also, instead of cutting the 16% to everybody, why don't you give the 16% to the small salaries, and maybe 4% (or 0%) to the highest. Etc."¹⁷
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- "Since Poland joined EU, there was not a single competition in the field of economics for the higher grade than AD5. The rule is that officials are only hired at the lowest possible grade ... and promotion path is very slow in the institutions.
[Given] the current criteria for AD 5, it is allowed for last year students to take the competition ... the conclusion is that I am paid as the graduate. Even less qualified officials are paid more, only because they have started their careers in EU institutions earlier - and citizens of new member states never had that opportunity.
... as soon as salaries in Poland will become competitive to ones in western Europe - which I hope will happen - I will for sure consider very seriously to be in my home country with my family and also will not have to maintain two houses, as I am not really ready to sell everything back home and totally cut all the roots."¹⁸
 - "I read your mail with interest and it has left me furious! ... What about going back to the Treaties and removing Strasbourg sessions from the agenda.... What about the money supplied to run MEP's offices? What about tighter controls there? what about reimbursement for expenses paid (like us officials have to do) and not a huge lump sums without any justification?
Members come and go (they go with a pension - why not change that to a pension which relates to the 5 or 10 years in office which equates to a 30% pension?)"¹⁹
 - "... it is my firm belief that the EU institutions will have difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified, multilingual, motivated staff if there are any further cuts or reductions to our so-called benefits. The 2004 reform was more than sufficient (do you have any idea how much it costs to rent a flat in Luxembourg these days, let alone buy one??)... So please give us a break!!"²⁰
 - "... we who have very low salaries and we are struggling with high costs of living here in Luxembourg ... I pay half of my salary only for my flat (the other costs, invoices etc. not included). I have no car because I cannot afford it. Even a small flat in Luxembourg is over 1.000 euro/month ... the 16% expatriation allowance means very much to me with a small salary."²¹
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