

Brussels, 2 February 2021

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## **HOT DESKING FOR ALL AND NOW?** **TAO SAYS NO TO POLICIES BASED ON FAITS** **ACCOMPLIS**



**TAO CALLS FOR A SUSPENSION OF THE STAFF TRANSFERS TO HOT DESKING  
OFFICES UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE STAFF  
REPRESENTATIVES**

As **TAO-AFI** has informed you last week, the Commission - taking advantage of the situation created by the Covid 19 pandemic - has decided to develop the workspace

without an assigned desk: the workstation based on *the first come, first served principle*. In the initial project, Heads of Unit would also be affected, but it is likely that top and middle management will be exempted eventually. This information is based on what was said during a meeting of the HR Director General with her staff on 18 January 2021. DG HR will be the first DG to adopt this revolutionary working modality, all the others following thereafter.

No more individual offices with your personal belongings, your computer, the children's photos, posters on the walls, no fixed desks, but a simple locker per person. No more morning reunions with colleagues next door. Gone are the relationships that a human administration needs. All this without respecting the framework agreement with the Commission's unions, which provide for negotiation each time working conditions are changed.

**TAO-AFI** is not against adjustments to the workplace when that is justified by qualitative improvements in working conditions and follows modern social changes such as environmentally friendly policies, better mobility and respect for neighbouring local communities. However, these adjustments can only bring benefits for everybody including an enhanced productivity, **if staff are a partner in the process of change as part of a genuine social dialogue**. Our administration is making a serious mistake by confronting staff with "*faits accomplis*" that can only increase the transition costs in a disproportionate way. Therefore, **TAO** says to the administration that we are open to discuss changes because we are not blind to social and structural changes and the implications for teleworking. However, please do not rush into this matter because we will all lose, if these adjustments to our workplace are not made calmly in a consensual way.

**TAO-AFI** believes that, in general, the staff needs a minimum of stability with personal space and peace of mind.

**The system proposed carries substantial risks to our health and could harm the Commission's productivity.**

This new workplace setup would be accompanied by a few days of home teleworking per week (HR is excluding 100% telework), again by decision of your head of unit. The cost of setting up this system will amount to millions of euros, before producing, perhaps, after years, the desired savings. **TAO-AFI** denounces the

unilateral ways demonstrated in the first implementation steps of this hot desking policy.

**THE COMMISSION IS NEITHER ENGIE, NOR TOTAL, NOR PROXIMUS.  
THE COMMISSION IS A POLITICAL AND VERY SPECIFIC ADMINISTRATION.**

Pretending to impose a “one size fits all” model on all, “justified” solely by the “efficiency of the buildings” principle is an erroneous approach. The Commission needs to take into account the diversity of functions we carry out and the requirements imposed on us to deliver a good service to the citizen.

This operation entails fundamental consequences to everyone, both professionally and privately. On the other hand, there are on-going restructuring of several DG; and we are amid the worst pandemic in a century.

**TAO** hopes it is just a bad start on the side of the administration and remains open to fully engage in discussions with DG HR and Commissioner Hahn’s team to mitigate the harmful effects of too quick moves and explore areas of improvement for the staff and the Commission business continuity.

**TAO** calls for a suspension of the ongoing transfers of staff to the new working spaces until the staff representatives and the administration reach an agreement.



**TAO-AFI Executive committee**

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