



39th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council 39^{ème} Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

Le Bureau exécutif | The Executive Bureau

Minutes of the 10th meeting

held on 1 June 2021 2021 at 9 a.m. via MS Teams

Members of the Executive Bureau	BALI Mohamed	Present
	DUPARC Philippe	Absent
	JOHNSON Laura	Present
	KALOTAY Kalman	Present
	MEYER Olivier	Present
	RICHARDS Ian	Present
	SMITH Bradford	Present
President of the Council	CHAOUI Prisca	Present
Vice-president of the Council	PECK ARIF Catherine	Present

The meeting began at 9.05 a.m.

Point 1 Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted with changes as reflected below.

Point 2 Adoption of minutes of the 9th meeting

The minutes of the 9th meeting were adopted without changes as recorded in the Council Secretariat.

Point 3 Meeting with ECE

The EB noted that a meeting would be taking place the following day with the ECE Executive Secretary. Said meeting was called by ECE management to ask staff representatives about a recent broadcast where the Council raised issues in DCM under its purview. However, at first ECE management had invited only staff representatives working in ECE, but the leadership of the Council intervened to let management know such a matter was to be discussed with the Council leadership and not with staff representatives of the Council working at UNECE.

EB members were of the view that the calling for a meeting to question staff representatives on the content of a Council communication was tantamount to intimidation and that the Council had the right to express its views.

Issues to raise at the meeting would include complaints from staff and favoritism in recruitment exercises, among others. Concerning policy on gender, the EB took note of a recent case that went to trial at the UNDT concerning discriminated based on gender.

Point 4 Follow-up to Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC)

The EB was briefed on the JNC meeting that took place the day before where a number of issues were raised, namely staffing and working conditions issues in SSS (discussion postponed due to time constraints and complexity of the issues) policy and action against racism (staff representation would submit terms of reference to set up a joint working group), long service awards, access to legitimation cards by staff and their families, distribution of external bulletins in the Palais conflicting with the Council's bulletin UN Today. A report would be circulated to all staff via broadcast.

Point 5 Return to office

The EB recalled the “Covid-19 update” broadcast sent out the week before from UNOG management. It was noted that Swiss authorities began deeming telecommuting as a recommendation, should employers conduct regular Covid testing at the workplace, which was not the case of UNOG, meaning mandatory telecommuting arrangements would remain in place. Some EB members expressed concern, however, that such decision could be linked to health risks in the new H building. It was agreed to follow-up on return to office, in particular as to how managers were implementing mandatory telecommuting.

Point 6 OCHA

The new USG of OCHA was said to be expected to take up office soon. The EB recalled OCHA issues to follow-up, namely its decentralization process where Geneva had already seen 23 positions moved to other duty stations or abolished in 2020. With the exception of G staff, all P staff were accommodated if they accepted to go to the field. The EB agreed to ask for a courtesy meeting with the new management.

A discussion ensued. EB members feared the possible start of a trend of posts being moved to field or regional offices, but moreover concerning posts encumbered by staff mostly close to retirement, which could open the door for management to abolish posts to be replaced by national officers in the new duty stations.

The EB further agreed that in order to protect Geneva jobs the Council should promote the continuation of Geneva as a humanitarian hub, and prevent it from becoming an “empty shell”.

Point 7 Any other business

- On the issue of Pension Fund staff not being able to run for elected positions at the Staff Pension Committee (SPC) due to a misreading of the staff regulations, the Polling Officers of the SPC were yet to take a decision. EB members agreed to circulate a petition in that regard.
- The CCISUA GA was noted to be scheduled for that week.
- Concerning the Geneva pay cut case handled by the external lawyer where an Order on case management was issued by the UNDT, the EB agreed to write to AOJ with a copy to UNDP raising concerns about the high level of burden placed in the applicants which has the effect of frustrating their access to justice. It was also agreed to write to the Nairobi registrar to ask for proof of the notification because it had not been received by the applicants. (Subsequently, confirmation was received that notification was provided to the applicants’ counsel.)

The meeting was adjourned at 9.40 a.m.