



41st Staff Union Council 2023-2024

Ref. SU-41-EB-7

Executive Bureau Minutes of the 7th meeting

Held on 13 April 2023 at 9 a.m.
via MS Teams

Adopted on 19 April 2023.

Members of the Executive Bureau:

ABDELLAOUI Naima	<i>Present</i>	GONZALEZ Pablo	<i>Present</i>
BALI Mohamed	<i>Present</i>	HERMELINK Ursula	<i>Present</i>
MARTINEZ Begoña	<i>Present</i>	JOHNSON Laura	<i>Present</i>
DUPARC Philippe	<i>Present</i>		

President of the UNOG SU:

RICHARDS Ian *Absent*

Vice-President of the UNOG SU:

SMITH Bradford *Present*

The meeting began at 9 a.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with changes as reflected below.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 6th meeting

The minutes of the 6th meeting were adopted without changes as recorded in the Union secretariat.

3. Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC)

The EB was informed of the upcoming JNC meeting to be held on 2 May. Items to raise would include: recognition of partnerships, continuation of the Tennis Club, inclusion of the Union in the orientation programme for new staff, SSS and CSS staffing and recruitment issues.

4. Meeting with the Director-General

The EB was informed of the upcoming meeting with the Director-General to be held on 17 April. Items to raise would include: reclassification of G3 SSS posts, the end of business continuity following Covid (especially as it concerned interpreters), the new OSH framework and committee in Geneva. The question of whether to discuss UNSMIS complaints related to mental health coverage was also raised. The leadership of the Union would ask the DG's office to hold a hybrid meeting to allow the participation of EB members on leave.

5. Report on meeting with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

EB members were briefed about the meeting of the Executive Secretary and the President of the OHCHR Staff Committee with the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HC) to inquire about his new vision and plans to reform OHCHR, and whether staff would be consulted as per rules and regulations. The HC confirmed at the meeting that his Office would carry out any exercise in accordance with all relevant administrative issuances including consultations with staff representation. The HC mentioned that the reforms being planned would not be focused on cutting jobs but rather build further on his human rights mandate, hence hoped to count with the support of the staff.

A discussion ensued. Suspicions were raised about the intentions behind the reforms under planning, namely that it would be used to move posts to the field. Some angst among Geneva staff was confirmed as it was being said informally that the aim was to reduce OHCHR's footprint in Geneva. The EB would continue to monitor any development.

6. Security and Safety Service

- The EB was informed of a communication by UNOG HRMS whereby any application by active SSS G3 staff to the 17 G3 job openings that were recently open in Inspira would not be admitted. The rationale behind this refusal was understood to be the intent of management to increase the number of new SSS staff. However, this did not seem to be based on any applicable rule or regulation. The context remained

that many current G3 SSS staff were being prevented from obtaining continuing appointments because their recruitments did not go through a central review body. The Union had already expressed to management its support to any current G3 staff who wished to apply to the mentioned job openings at their same grade so they could potentially go through a CRB review and become eligible for a continuing appointment.

A discussion followed. The legal basis to prevent staff from applying to job openings at their same grade was put into question. Depending on discussions with management, this could be an issue to escalate to OHRM in New York. OSLA's legal view would be useful to receive. Current staff were not responsible if their recruitment to a post laterally would delay the engagement of additional staff, which was rather management's planning responsibility. The refusal to accept their applications could in fact cause more delays as the central review body could send back the final decision of the hiring manager upon verification that candidates were unduly not shortlisted.

The EB was of the view that there was no legal basis to prevent any staff from applying and being duly considered to job openings of their same grade, and this view would be conveyed to management at the upcoming JNC meeting. The issue of non-eligibility of non-CRB-reviewed G1-G4 staff to continuing appointments was expected to be the subject of discussion at the SMC level in the near future.

- b. The EB was briefed on the recent meeting of the joint working group with SSS management on Appendix B and working hours, where staff representation raised the issues of discrimination towards SSS staff whereby they did not enjoy the same conditions as other GS staff, and the extra non-paid hour of work that staff put in every day on pre- and post- workday arrangements. SSS management did not agree on any commitments at the meeting and staff representation noted they could escalate the matter to JNC if an agreement was not reached. It was further raised that staff representation did not consider Security handbook to be a binding document at the level of UN rules and regulations. Other items not raised at the meeting due to time constraints included health and well-being issues related to night work. Views from OSLA on the issues, as requested by the Union, were also expected. It was noted that the Joint Committee on Health and Safety was due to meet the following week and the issues could be raised there as well.

7. Any other business

- Concerning training on staff issues, the EB reiterated its support to Naima Abdellaoui to be OSH focal point; a particularly important role as the UN Secretariat was expected to soon implement an OSH framework and an OSH committee would be put in place in Geneva. The EB encouraged Ms. Abdellaoui to contact the OSH trainers in Brindisi on its behalf to inquire about related training opportunities and reiterated its support to undertake such trainings.
- A suggestion was made to establish a direct line of communication between OSLA and the Union, especially when it came to consult OSLA's views on general questions. This was particularly relevant to ensure cooperation between the elected representatives and the legal representatives of staff.
- A suggestion was made to ensure the inclusion of action points in EB minutes when applicable.
- Concerning issues well-being and work-life balance, these were noted to be cross-cutting and discussed in different working groups and fora. A suggestion was made to look into the issues collectively and ensure coordination for a unified front when tackling them.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.