



42nd Staff Union Council 2024-2025

Ref. SU-42-EB-7

Executive Bureau Minutes of the 7th meeting

Held on 1 May 2024 at 1:30 p.m.
via MS Teams

Adopted on 27 May 2024

Members of the Executive Bureau:

ABDELLAOUI Naima	Absent	LEWIS-LETTINGTON Nicole	Present
DUPARC Philippe	Present	MARTINEZ Begoña	Present
JACQUIOT Cédric	Present	PUHALOVIĆ Janet	Present
JOHNSON Laura	Present		

President of the UNOG SU:

RICHARDS Ian Present

Vice-President of the UNOG SU:

Vacant

The meeting began at 1:35 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as reflected below.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 6th meeting

The minutes of the 6th meeting were adopted without changes.

3. Date of next Council meeting

The EB agreed to hold the next Council meeting on Tuesday, 28 May, at 1:30 p.m.

4. UN Special domain

The EB was informed by ICT that the domain name of the UN Special (<https://unspecial.org>), the predecessor of UN Today magazine, belongs to the SU and will become available on the market as of 10 May if not renewed. The EB members noted that the domain name was still kept to maintain brand recognition and continuity for readers. For that reason, all visitors of the UN Special website were redirected automatically to the UN Today website. The members agreed to renew the registration of the UN Special domain for the maximum period possible - 9 years, that would cost CHF 138 + 5% for admin fees.

5. Investments of the Council

The SU funds were placed into two investment accounts in UBS – one for a year and another for 6 months. The one invested for six months with CHF 300,000 came to term, and the return was CHF 1,230. The EB was requested to renew the investment for another 6-month period, which was approved by the members, while recognising that such investment decisions were the prerogative of the Financial Commission

6. Palais closure

The ES updated the EB on the recent development on the matter. The SU sent a letter the day before to the UN Secretary-General informing him of the UNOG measures to address the liquidity crisis and asking him to intervene. The letter was shared with the Council and would be shared with all staff. The ES would also ask to meet with the management to discuss these issues further. ES and DES took part in the OCHA staff meeting regarding the move and the staff concerns would be brought up to the attention of the

management. Also, met with UNCTAD management the day before who had unsuccessfully tried to lobby, with member States' support, for DG reversing her decision regarding Palais partial closures.

The EB members deliberated on the move effects on staff such as space allocation issues and potential conflicts that may lead to, and the ways the SU could react. Some members indicated that the management of each entity should be working on addressing those issues, and the Union shouldn't substitute the management. Others argued that managers were not very helpful in that process (lack of information, guidance) and did not get involved in details (lockers, cabinets, space allocation) while staff were facing difficulties. In some cases, management has fully discharged its responsibilities, but the issues were inter-entity and required UNOG to take action. In this case, the SU should play a more active role since staff was relying on the Union. However, the Union should stay focused on a bigger picture; focusing on details would send a wrong message that the Union agreed with the squeezing of staff in H building, which was not the case, and keep working on reversing the management decisions regarding partial Palais closures.

The EB agreed to ask for a meeting with the DG to bring up the issues and staff concerns. It was also agreed to send a broadcast on the SG letter.

7. Surveys by entity

It was recalled that in a previous meeting the EB agreed to conduct a survey for all entities to assess broader issues such as humility, humanity, organization culture, lack of respect towards colleagues and UN values. However, subsequently it became clear that the issues differed from one entity to another. The EB revised its previous agreement to instead keep surveys concise to tackle specific issues to allow for more specific results. The EB agreed to conduct tailored surveys per entity starting from OHCHR.

8. OCHA change process

OCHA started the decentralization process in 2018, which was still not concluded. The rationale for the decentralization included, among others, moving staff closer to the "field" and cost savings. Some staff relocations resulted in split teams, but for some, relocations did not occur due to various operational and logistical reasons. The decentralization was a source of great anger and frustration among OCHA staff and OIOS was requested to carry out an audit of the decentralisation process. While the audit report has some limitations, it produced 6 recommendations for OCHA to address issues identified. One of the recommendations suggested to conduct a review of the impact of relocating staff who frequently travel to their original duty stations to carry out their duties, the impact of splitting teams geographically, and staff who were relocated but never moved to their new duty stations and take corrective action. As of 6 May, the implementation of that recommendation would start, and the DES was included in the implementation committee.

EB took note on the developments in OCHA change process and agreed that the case could be used to warn entities against future relocations that may also be more expensive and present much more difficulties in terms of logistics and have adverse impact on work and wellbeing of staff. EB would closely follow the developments in the OCHA change process.

9. Special post allowance (SPA)

As reported at the previous EB meeting, the management had submitted a paper on amending SPA policy, among others, at the SMC meeting in Cyprus. The staff side acknowledged that staff remain on SPA for years when there should have been a proper recruitment process but had to disagree with that paper as the changes proposed unduly penalized the staff member and not the manager. As staff side did not agree with the management's proposal, management offered to dedicate a special ad hoc meeting on SPA that should take place end of May.

The EB members urged to take a strong position on SPA: staff on extended periods on SPA was a symptom to the problem and the problem was non-advertising the jobs while keeping staff on higher-level functions for longer than a year.

10. Any other business

- It was reported that some management staff from security services quit, which impacted the

decision-making process and the staff requests regarding modified shift hours, cancellation of overnights at night to make savings were not responded for some time. As agreed under agenda item 6, ES would request a meeting with DG to also bring up issues in security services. Security and Safety Service Sectoral Assembly would also ask for a meeting with security management to discuss these issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Acronyms and abbreviations:

SU: Staff Union of the UNOG

EB: Executive Bureau of the Staff Union

ES: Executive Secretary of the Staff Union

DES: Deputy Executive Secretary of the Staff Union

DG: Director-General of the UNOG

UNOG: United Nations Office at Geneva

SMC: Staff-Management Committee

OIOS: United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services