



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Two hundred and seventh session

207 EX/5.IV.B Add.2

PARIS, 15 October 2019
Original: French

Item 5 of the agenda

FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AT THEIR PREVIOUS SESSIONS

PART IV

HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES

ADDENDUM 2

COMMENTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

SUMMARY

B. Implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy 2017-2022

Pursuant to Item 9.2.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) submits its comments on human resources issues (document 207 EX/5.IV.B).

1. The strategy presented gives rise to a number of comments and, unfortunately, some criticism, especially on Annex IV (Draft amendments to Staff Regulations – Amendments to Staff Rules).

Classification Policy

2. ISAU regrets that the Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM) has **deliberately** chosen not to inform Member States that the Administration plans to abolish Staff Rule 102.2 of the Manual, which entitles staff members to make individual requests for post reclassification. It is surprising that no mention of the deletion of that Rule appears in the document or in Annex IV, considering that it is the subject of a proposed major amendment to the Staff Regulations – amendments to the Staff Rules, to be submitted to Member States at the General Conference (document 40 C/48). ISAU has clearly expressed its total disagreement with the abolition of Staff Rule 102.2, which states:

Staff Rule 102.2 - ***Compatibility with classification standards***

Any staff member who considers that the nature of the duties or the level of responsibilities required of him or her are not compatible with the classification standards or criteria applicable to the grade of his or her post may, at any time, submit to the Director-General a request for the



Job: 201913127

reclassification of the post, provided that there has been a substantial modification in the structure and responsibilities of the unit to which the post belongs, and consequently in the responsibilities of the claimant.

3. ISAU emphasizes that to deprive staff of the right to make requests for reclassification is a **violation of the acquired rights of staff**. We find it difficult to understand such a decision, given that individual reclassifications concern only very few cases, since such reclassification requests are already subject to strict criteria. We also recall that the act of making a request does not imply that it must be accepted.

4. It was surprising that HRM simply submit a paragraph which, moreover, is not clear, in paragraph 3 of Annex IV, Regulation 4.2.

“In appointing staff members, the Director-General shall, except in the case of appointments resulting from post reclassifications **as prescribed by the Director-General ...**” Indeed, we do not have enough information to go on. What is meant by “**prescribed by the Director-General**”? How can we understand this distinction, this contradiction even, between decisions and prescriptions of the Director-General? We seek clarification from the Administration. Under what conditions are these “prescriptions” made?

Statutes of the Appeals Board - Annex A to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules.

5. Here, too, we regret that HRM submitted its proposed amendments to the Executive Board when we had expressed reservations about the fact that there was no consensus on some points. It is regrettable that no discussions were held at the same time with the staff associations, the Advisory Council on Personnel Policies (ACPP) and the Appeals Board. We must therefore ask ourselves what good are the comments drawn up by the associations, the Appeals Board and the ACPP, if our concerns are not taken into account.

6. It would have been desirable, for the sake of clarity and transparency, that HRM should submit to the Executive Board proposals for changes to Annex A in “track changes” format, so that it could see the changes. This presentation suggests to us that there is a concealed desire to make reading the text confusing.

7. The proposed amendment on the composition of the Appeals Board contains inconsistencies. Why should the number of members elected be increased to 20 for each group, whereas the Board’s membership is reduced to three members? Moreover, the Appeals Board has informed us of the difficulty of finding 15 elected members for each group. Why then increase the number to 20? Reducing the membership to three members **with only one staff representative is to negate any real debate**.

8. Furthermore, we do not understand the need to have two Alternate Chairpersons. Are these Alternate Chairpersons paid only when they sit?

9. ISAU had also expressed its disagreement regarding the HRM proposal that a hearing should be held “*as soon as possible*” (Annex A, para. 18). We asked HRM to **specify the duration of this period**. In addition, ISAU regrets that the Administration has not followed its proposal to set the deadline for the Director-General to decide on cases at 30 days. It must be said that the 90-day period proposed in paragraph 24 is far too long.

10. ISAU does not accept that participation by the staff associations should be “**subject to the agreement of the Appellant**”. We do not object to the right for the appellant to challenge a member appointed by the associations, but **we absolutely cannot accept that the associations should be denied the right to participate in hearings of the Appeals Board**. We have also asked for the associations to be able to take the floor **during the debate** and we regret that the request was not accepted.

Disciplinary Procedures and Measures

11. ISAU acknowledges the need to simplify disciplinary procedures provided that the Administration shows itself to be **objective and impartial, ensuring fair treatment** for all staff.

Recruitment

12. Regarding the main document, a key point for staff relates to the reform of recruitment and promotion, which gives the Assistant Directors-General (ADGs) responsibility for recruitment of P-1 to P-4 staff. The pragmatic concern for savings and promptness put forward to justify this reform must not, however, outweigh the higher values of efficiency and justice, non-compliance with which regularly proves costly to the Organization in terms of time and money.

13. Delegating recruitment for P-1 to P-4 posts to ADGs cannot be effective without the **genuine involvement of HRM**, since that delegation is not accompanied by human resources-related capacity building in the sectors. **HRM must remain the guarantor of the consistency of recruitment and career management.**

14. ISAU continues to **denounce the lack of transparency in the recruitment of Project Appointments (PAs)**, which number over 450 and often duplicate existing posts. Their recruitment is subject neither to Appointment Review Boards (ARB) nor to geographical distribution, despite the fact that these are Organization staff members, some in senior positions in management, planning and representation; this should not be done by violating the principle of geographical diversity, which should guide all decisions relating to recruitment at UNESCO. We call once again for the Administration to take immediate steps to rectify the situation.

15. Furthermore, the recruitment of Young Professionals must not be the sole measure to improve geographical distribution. There is no point in including candidates from non-represented/underrepresented countries in short lists if a member of an overrepresented group is ultimately appointed. The geographical diversity of staff must be taken into account at **all** levels.

16. Information on geographical balance includes only Director posts (Table 1). Despite our repeated requests, the Administration continues to withhold this information on the total number of posts subject to geographical distribution.

17. ISAU welcomes the implementation of partnerships but regrets that HRM has not provided the information about the nationalities of directors and experts.

Mobility

18. It is regrettable that the outcome of the first mobility exercise is not included in this document. ISAU has asked HRM to take the school calendar into account so that staff can better reconcile their mobility and the demands of family life, and to provide better support services. We regret that functional mobility will not be implemented before the last quarter of 2019, that is, in a manner completely detached from geographic mobility. We believe that is a strategic error, which will lead to suspicion of a narrowly bureaucratic approach to the concept of mobility, which is still primarily functional. Geographical mobility is not inherently a matter of physical displacement, but a relocation of the functions of a member of the staff from one service where he or she has worked to another, where he or she is expected to best serve the Organization. On the topic of functional mobility, it hardly needs to be mentioned that the associations were not consulted on the modalities.

19. In addition, the human resources management strategy does not appear to have been closely developed in relation to the reform of the field offices and the development of aspects of matters relating to Pillar Three of the strategic transformation. This is particularly true of mobility which, more than any other reform, should have been performed in parallel with the reform of offices. Again, there is a risk of a reform whose transition will be costly in both budgetary terms and those of efficiency and effectiveness, as it will automatically result in an additional aspect of mobility. Thus, we fear that

staff will be the adjustment variable of such a planned reform, detached from geographical mobility as well as functional mobility.

20. The main part of the document on the strategy addresses the overall framework of the values and culture of UNESCO and the skills of staff members. However, it lacks a clear reference to those functions of UNESCO which must be considered in order to clarify the profiles required within the Organization to best fulfil such functions. This point is scarcely mentioned in the document, even though it is on this basis that the comparative advantage of UNESCO can be enhanced.

Global staff survey

21. ISAU is surprised to find no mention of the staff associations in the section of the document relating to the global staff survey. In particular, we draw attention to the second area for improvement, *“to ensure that the leadership of the Organization listens to and understands staff ideas and opinions, encourages innovation and creativity – so essential to this Organization – and is driving and managing change effectively”*. It is difficult to see how such a recommendation could be implemented without elected staff representatives being involved in such consultations. This omission cannot be innocuous, it reflects a lack of interest in our associations that will ultimately undermine the effectiveness of our Organization. It should be recalled that UNESCO's mandate makes its staff its first resource and its primary capital. If it neglects its staff associations, UNESCO would deny itself a source of information and advice from which the Organization as a whole, including, especially, the Member States, needs to benefit in a transparent manner and in the interests of efficiency and justice.

22. The Strategy is apparently focused on the creation of an enabling and engaging work environment. However, to date, we have seen no improvement. **The career development plan remains non-existent** despite statements by the Administration. **Likewise, there is no merit-based promotion policy** to motivate staff. Our colleagues are **overburdened and stressed and are lacking motivation in the absence of career prospects**.