



Brussels, 17 April 2018

Note to Director General Irene Souka, DG HR and Security

Subject: Request for administrative consultation for the draft decision on home leave for staff in Delegations

Reference: Ares(2018)520355 -29/01/2018 - EEAS/DEVCO Note 'New measures on work-life balance for staff in Delegations'

Dear Ms. Souka,

With reference to the above-mentioned note, the undersigned Trade Unions respectfully request an administrative consultation meeting on the draft decision on home leave for staff in Delegations. In order to facilitate the discussion for the meeting, please find below our preliminary comments on the proposed decision.

The EEAS/DEVCO note 'New measures on work-life balance for staff in Delegations' generated a high number of alarming emails from colleagues in Delegations who expressed concern over the continued poor work-life balance in Delegations. The main factor is the insufficient allocation of travelling days foreseen by the proposal.

In particular, it should be considered that colleagues in third countries need to visit their country of origin at least twice per year to maintain stable relationship with their family/relatives, and to take care of the administrative obligations which cannot be

delegated. Furthermore colleagues are often unable to take advantage of public holidays in order to return to their places of interest and origin because this is simply unfeasible given the time required and the distances involved. The current situation is reducing staff satisfaction and lowering morale in Delegations – where staff have manifest their discontent in the results of the most recent staff surveys. Trade Unions consider that it is in the interest of the service to address staff concerns - given that failure to ensure a fair and healthy work-life balance causes loss of productivity and deterioration in the quality of our work.

Trade Unions suggest increasing the proposed allocation of travelling days taking into consideration the principle of proportionality, and the specific conditions in third countries (for instance, longer duration of travelling time due to the lack of direct flight connections, lack of daily flights which results in the use of additional leave days, longer time spent at the airport for check in / check out due to heavy security controls, change of time zone, etc.) and in ability to take advantage of public holidays to the same degree as many colleagues based within Europe. Indeed, staffs have suggested that improvements should have a retroactive effect as of 1 January 2018 - rather than the proposed 1 January 2019.

Trade Unions are open to discussing the above points under the remit of an administrative consultation with the aim of enhancing the current draft decision in the interest of both the service and staff based in Delegations.

Commission Trade Unions (signed)

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