

# Kluwer Patent Blog

## Silence at the EPO after angry outburst president António Campinos

Kluwer Patent blogger · Tuesday, May 17th, 2022

The [industrial actions](#) at the European Patent Office, which were organised by trade union SUEPO with the support of the Central Staff Committee (CSC), go into their fourth month next week.

The main reason for discontent with the EPO management is a new salary adjustment procedure which, according to SUEPO, 'causes a disastrous immediate and long-term loss of purchasing power and denies the massive efforts made by EPO staff during the last two pandemic years.' In a letter circulated among EPO staff it specified the "inflation in the Netherlands of 11.2% and in Germany of 7.8% over the last 12 months accounts for far more than a double step reward (on average 1 step equals 2%). Less than 60% of eligible staff (actually less than 50% of all staff) may receive a single step let alone a double step this year. This is the worst year in the career of EPO staff which comes at the time when staff worked diligently through the worst pandemic of the century and the worst inflation since the EPO inception.'

SUEPO also demands the revision of the EPO Service Regulations so that they comply with fundamental rights and the principles of legitimate expectations and acquired rights (in line with judgments of the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO); restoration of a deterministic career system; the review and elimination of the detrimental effects of the Education Reform.



The social tensions at the EPO led to an unprecedented outburst of anger of president António Campinos last month. In a meeting on 26 April 2022, described as 'abysmal' by the CSC, he reportedly 'used foul language throughout (...) and insulted most of the speakers. The CSC members were not just interrupted but prevented from speaking multiple times (...) up to a point where the EPO president told CSC members: 'You will never have such a nice person being the f\*\*\*ing President for the next fifty f\*\*\*ing years. So you wake up and make agreements with me, or you never will for your f\*\*\*ing life.'

This is at least what the CSC wrote to staff. In the official EPO report there is only a vague and short reference to what happened: 'The latest General Consultative Committee (GCC) meeting took place on Tuesday 26 April. Unfortunately, the meeting was less constructive than expected, with some issues creating tension at times. Three topics, previously discussed productively in joint working groups or previous exchanges, were presented to the GCC.' The rest of the report is dedicated to the Young Professionals programme and secondment of national experts, among

others.

Kluwer IP Law contacted the EPO for a reaction on the CSC's letter, asking expressly if it could confirm or deny whether the CSC's report was accurate and correct, including the description of the behaviour and texts of president Campinos. But a spokesperson replied the EPO didn't wish to comment.

Silence so far also from Josef Kratochvíl, elected Chairman of the Administrative Council, who was contacted by this author about the occurrences of 26 April as well.

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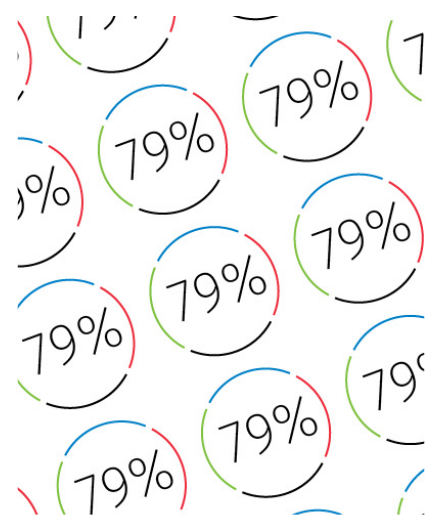
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