



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR TRANSLATION

Director-General (acting)

Luxembourg/Brussels,
DGT/CE/JV/dj (2022)2843919

Dear President of the Central Staff Committee,

On behalf of the Director-General of DG HR, Ms Ingestad, and myself, I would like to thank you for your note of 3 February 2022 on “Abuses of DGT standby duty system and lack of overall compensation” (ref. Ares(2022)793994).

I have already discussed the Duty Officer and stand-by duty system with the Permanent Delegation of Translators during a DDG/ABCD senior management meeting on 8 February with the participation of all translation Directors and subsequently at a more recent meeting on 7 April. I confirmed during these meetings that DGT’s Duty Officer and stand-by system should indeed only be used for particularly important, unforeseen and urgent documents that need to be translated outside working hours. It should not be confused with urgent translation requests arriving through the standard channels, which also require additional effort from DGT staff in translation and support units. Of course, in either case, it is not for DGT as a service organisation to challenge the political urgency and sensitivity of translation requests from our customers, including the cabinets of the President and Commissioners.

Please note that the number of pages delivered and nature of requests processed through the Duty Officer and stand-by system indicate that the scheme is used in line with its purpose. There was an increase from around 260 pages in 2019 to a peak of almost 30 000 pages during 2020 in response to the unravelling COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a marked decrease in 2021 to some 1 000 pages.

At operational level, DGT’s Duty Officers will continue to analyse and assess the requests they receive in cooperation with the customers to decide on the appropriate handling. Clearly, requests that can be translated within regular working hours should not lead to the activation of the Duty Officer and stand-by system.

DGT’s Portfolio Managers would also continue to remind DGT’s customers of the purpose and principles of our Duty Officer and stand-by procedure during their regular meetings. We are also looking at technical possibilities aiming to streamline and improve further the scheme. All relevant stakeholders will be consulted on the viability of possible options prior to implementation. At the same time, the organisation of the scheme at language department level takes into account specific situations of colleagues based on the principles of collegiality and flexibility.

Regarding compensation, DGT already assessed the scheme with DG HR in the past. This assessment resulted in the current design of the scheme. As stated in DGT's Duty Officer and standby duty guidelines, the legal basis lays in Articles 55 and 56 of the Staff Regulations. Furthermore, this scheme is part of the Business Continuity Management of the Secretariat General. As was decided for the scheme in place in DGT, the time worked outside normal working hours is, of course, registered and compensated by the same amount of recuperation in agreement with the line manager who is best placed to take into account the specific situation of the colleagues involved.

To conclude, the Duty Officer and stand-by system is a key service provided by DGT as the Commission's in-house translation department. So far, the commitment of DGT staff to deliver on urgent requests coming during and outside regular working hours has supported our institution in communicating, and facilitated decision-making on urgent and politically important issues. Indeed, I can only highlight the appreciation and gratitude DGT receives from Commission services for this support, including during Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This demonstrates the importance of the scheme and how much the demand and deadlines are driven by Commission's response to external developments.

Thank you once again for your input and useful contribution in this important file.

Yours faithfully,

Electronically signed

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