



GUIDELINES

2015-2020

Congress – Guidel, 1 -2 October 2015

INTRODUCTION

At the Congress of Protaras in 2010 a set of Guidelines were adopted and have guided our actions in the last five years. Since then many things have changed and we have come through a major financial crisis. In addition we have also welcomed new member trade unions to SCECBU.

We are also very pleased to have among us the trade union organisations of the central banks from those countries not belonging to the European Union, but sharing with us common values and wishing to belong to a larger social Europe defending the well-being of all men and women.

Like in 2010, we will be relentless in our fight towards a growing social Europe. Loyal to our historic roots and values, we strongly reject any racist and/or xenophobic ideology or any form of discrimination.

The Congress is increasingly concerned about the negative developments in jobs, labour contracts and social provisions within the European System of Central Banks (ESCB). The Congress considers that one of the most important aims of the Standing Committee is to address and reverse these current negative trends.

Therefore, it is also our aim to improve our working processes in order to enhance the impact of trade union cooperation within the ESCB social dialogue. To this purpose, we will continue our actions, supported by strong communication and networking with our members.

KEY ISSUES

Attacks on the NCBs

The ECB/ESCB is one of the four federal institutions of the European Union. Its internal structure is based on a federal framework of the ECB and 28 NCBs of the European System of Central Banks.

European legislation provides for the principles of subsidiarity and “a decentralised organisation” within the Eurosystem, because historical expertise and knowledge of national economies (financial system, policy framework, fiduciary distribution networks) are essential assets.

The financial crisis has highlighted the unique and **important role of the National Central Banks (NCBs)**. Together with the ECB, they have prevented a meltdown of the financial system and saved the European economy from a total collapse. Yet the independence of these NCBs is put in jeopardy from different sides: by their own national governments but also by the ECB, the “Hydra” they have created themselves.

a) The national governments

In some cases the attacks on the independence of NCBs are politically motivated, but very often the reason is very pragmatic. For national governments in desperate search of money, the profit made by NCBs is a welcome source of income. So they exert pressure on the NCBs to lower their costs, conveniently forgetting that this leads to the depletion of services to the public and causes deterioration in the working conditions of the staff concerned. But in order to play their unique and essential role, central banks need to have resources to employ highly qualified staff under good working conditions.

b) The ECB

The trend towards centralisation:

The implementation of SSM, the most obvious example of centralisation, reduces the competencies of national authorities and affects the relevant staff. The move to an excessively centralised system, which only focuses on cost optimisation inside NCBs, particularly in relation to staff costs, is weakening the structural elements of the NCBs. This will endanger the entire Eurosystem by reducing its visibility vis-à-vis the European citizens.

The Mission Statement:

The introduction of the Mission Statement resulted in a process of harmonisation of the organisation of euro area NCBs’ activities, in a quest for cost efficiency, with the focus on the Anglo-Saxon central bank model, only involved in the core business.

No one can object to the improvement of **effectiveness** by harmonization of procedures, but this doesn’t mean that all NCBs should be reshaped to the Anglo-Saxon model of a central bank, only involved in monetary policy. Historically a number of central banks were entrusted by their national governments with specific tasks of public interest. These tasks are not a waste of means, but are socially

relevant and should not be sacrificed to the false ideal of a single slim central bank model all over the Eurosystem.

Within central banks all over the ESCB the very narrow interpretation that is given to **cost efficiency** results in cutting staff costs by outsourcing all kinds of support activities, such as IT, facilities management, security. Very often outsourcing is not cheaper and less effective than providing these services in house. Depending on private providers, often chosen on price based instead of quality based criteria, it exposes central banks to operational risks with incalculable consequences for our economy.

In spite of this, NCBs continue this strategy. A number of NCBs have set out the strategic aims they want to achieve by 2020. All these projects have one common denominator: a significant decrease of staff by 2020.

There is no real proof of a central orchestration by the ECB, but the similarities are too striking to be a coincidence.

Exploiting synergies and **avoiding duplications** has resulted in specialisation. This specialisation is a severe risk for the smooth operation of the ESCB as a system of independent central banks. It divides NCBs into “service providers” which have expertise for all central banks tasks and “service users” which don’t have this expertise anymore. Service users are not independent anymore but very much dependent on the expertise of other central bank(s). However, problems starting within a service provider will cause a crisis in the operational capability of the whole ESCB system, which will have severe consequences, for example, for the European financial system.

The division of NCBs into “service providers” and “service users” causes inequality between employees within the ESCB. The more important the NCB is within the system, the more important are its employees. They have better working conditions and benefits, better job security, better career opportunities. Those NCBs not offering crucial services to the system will turn into an unimportant office, doing their statutory minimum with minimum amount of employees.

The organisational principle of **cohesion and unity** has led to the pursuit of a common corporate culture which is being “imposed” more and more by the ECB to NCBs. No one is against sharing common values, if this will help to improve the performing of the system and the communication between the different members of the System. But differences should be respected as they are important to keep national identity and staff motivation.

A Common Corporate Culture (CCC) should grow by respect and consultation and cannot be imposed by any Board. The fact that the ECB, an institution that is not subject to any social legislation and where collective bargaining doesn’t exist, is presented as the model for this CCC, is a severe threat to the working conditions and the social relations within the NCBs.

THREATS

Defending the autonomy of NCBs

The financial crisis has highlighted the unique and **important role of National Central Banks** and the ECB. Together they have saved the European economy from a total collapse.

In order to play their essential role, the autonomy of central banks needs to be guaranteed. They must have the means to employ highly qualified staff under good working conditions and need to be safeguarded from any financial or political attacks coming from national governments in desperate search of money or trying to increase their power. Whenever central banks are urged to abandon tasks of public interest and so losing their independence or whenever the statute of their staff is at stake, SCECBU will not hesitate to address national governments and the European institutions and inform the European public.

SCECBU's demands

There is however one interpretation of autonomy we do not accept: the one that labour legislation is not applicable in the ECB. The SCECBU will continue to insist on this point in its contacts with the European institutions until the ECB staff has the same rights to collective bargaining as their colleagues in the national central banks.

The loss of equilibrium between centralisation and decentralisation

The ECB/ESCB is one of the four federal institutions of the European Union. Its internal structure is based on a federal framework of the ECB and 28 NCBs of the European System of Central Banks.

Throughout its history, SCECBU has fought for an optimal balance between centralisation and decentralisation.

European legislation provides for the principles of subsidiarity and of “a decentralised organisation” within the Eurosystem, because historical expertise and knowledge of national economies (financial system, policy framework, fiduciary distribution networks) are essential assets.

The move to an excessively centralised system, which only focuses on cost optimisation inside NCBs, particularly in relation to staff costs, must be strongly resisted.

The implementation of SSM, the most obvious example of centralisation, reduces the competences of national authorities and affects the relevant staff. Weakening the structural elements of the NCBs will endanger the entire Eurosystem by reducing its visibility vis-à-vis the European citizens.

SCECBU's demands

SCECBU demands that the current level of decentralisation of the system be kept in place in order to guarantee its robustness. We condemn any restructuring within the NCBs that will

endanger the delicate balance between centralisation and decentralisation. This will jeopardize the continued existence of NCBs.

Specialisation brings the risk of division

SCECBU sees the specialisation of NCBs as a severe risk for the smooth operation of the ESCB as a system of independent central banks. It divides NCBs into “service providers”, which have expertise, and “service users” which don’t have it anymore. “Service users” depend on the expertise of the “service provider” central bank(s). Problems starting within a “service provider” will cause a crisis in the operational capability of the whole ESCB system, which will have severe consequences, for example, for the European financial system.

SCECBU also notes that division of NCBs into “service providers” and “service users” causes inequality between employees within the ESCB by dividing their employers in categories of importance. The more important the employer for the system is, the more important are his employees. They have better working conditions and benefits, better job security, better career opportunities. Those NCBs not offering crucial services to the system will turn into an unimportant office, doing their statutory minimum with minimum amount of employees.

SCECBU’s demands

SCECBU opposes any process of NCB specialisation within the ESCB. SCECBU supports closer cooperation between independent central banks, in respect of national specificities and job maintenance.

ECB moulds NCBs in its own image

The introduction of the “Mission Statement” resulted in a process of harmonisation of the organisation of euro area NCBs’ activities and a quest for cost efficiency.

No one can object to the improvement of effectiveness by harmonisation of procedures, but this doesn't mean that all NCBs should be reshaped to the Anglo-Saxon model of a central bank, only involved in monetary policy. Historically a number of central banks were entrusted by their national governments with specific tasks of public interest. These tasks are not a waste of means, but are socially relevant and should not be sacrificed to the false ideal of a single slim central bank model all over the ESCB.

SCECBU’s demands

SCECBU strongly condemns the very narrow interpretation that is given to cost efficiency. Within central banks all over the ESCB this aim is being translated as cutting staff costs by outsourcing all kinds of support activities, such as IT, facilities management, security etc... Very often outsourcing is not cheaper and furthermore also less effective than providing these services in-house. Depending on private providers, often chosen on a basis of price instead of quality criteria, exposes central banks to operational risks with incalculable consequences for our economy. SCECBU will continue to defend **all** activities within central banks, not merely to protect the employment and the working conditions of central bank

staff, but because the European citizens are entitled to a strong, independent, self-sustaining system of central banks that are also capable of responding to the needs of their own national societies.

An ESCB Common Corporate Culture (CCC) cannot be imposed

Some believe organisational culture can be imposed from the top down. Some believe it emerges on its own from the bottom up. For us, central bank staff, it must be built iteratively, collaboratively and over time from the inside out, as it was done since the beginning of the ECB. But this is not the way things are happening nowadays. The ECB is not the supreme body able to dictate to NCBs how to act or feel. On the contrary it has to reflect NCBs' different cultures.

The establishment of the European Central Bank and the European System of Central Banks in 1998 set in train a series of events that have had as consequence the transfer of certain functions and powers from the National Central Banks to Frankfurt. As from then, organisational innovations involving co-ordination, centralisation and harmonisation of practices have been attempted in some cases and implemented in others.

Although corporate or organisational culture is something almost everybody seems to know, we are aware that when it comes to defining a CCC for the ESCB we encounter many difficulties when trying to find a feasible definition. Adding to this perspective, all NCBs are accountable to the citizens of their country of origin in the first order, and only then the international perspective comes.

Of one thing we are sure: CCC is being growingly "imposed" by the ECB to NCBs. And here lies the very big problem. We, the staff representatives, are in favor of sharing common values, if this will help to improve the communication and relationship between its different members. But we are also in favor of sharing common values as these are important to keep national identity and staff motivation.

A CCC is grown by respect and consultation – not by imposition and *diktat*.

But this is what the General Council wants to impose to us. The introduction of their system is their only aim, even if staff are ignored and "trampled on" by all these common rules and values.

Our aim is mutual respect and acceptance built on the understanding of our differences, exploiting these, drawing strength from subsidiarity. This will create a sound environment for a CCC to develop!

ACTIVITIES

ESCB Printing Houses

The situation for public banknote printers has not improved during the last five years. Since 2010, it has been announced that the printing house in Belgium will close down by 2020, the printing house in Ireland is under threat and the remaining in-house printers suffer from a lack of orders on one hand and a dramatically reduced opportunity to acquire printing jobs in the market.

This situation is already disturbing the European System of Central Banks. One after the other Central Bank – out of a self-imposed “austerity” policy – chose to piggy back as “free-rider” and is not willing to contribute to the development of our common currency more than absolutely necessary – if possible, even less.

The European Public Procurement System (EPPS) as such is a good move in the right direction – but not more. It is, in the current version, more an ever present restriction for Central Banks than a masterstroke for the future. National Central Banks, still maintaining a printing house, a factory, are restricted in every possible way in their leeway to succeed in the market, to turn their printing house and their paper manufactory into a profitable and productive NCB department. These crippling restrictions – only benefit of the private printers and producers – have reduced the pride of any National Central Bank to a dwindling shadow of its former self.

Vertically implemented, monopolistic suppliers have succeeded in depleting the former vital, resourceful and creative, loosely interacting cluster of Central Bank owned printing houses. What in earlier times was a cornucopia of plenty in terms of security features, printing methods and staggering quality aspects is now degraded into a mere reproducing machinery; ruled, steered and bossed around by private suppliers of raw material, detectors and security features.

Security features terms of usability are not determined by their usefulness. In fact, it is the time limit, awarded to them by the European Patent Office, that dominates the European currency. At the very moment patent based royalties cease to flow, the same feature, only slightly amended, will be registered and sold again to the ESCB. This perpetual motion machinery always grants high profits to the patent owners. And the ESCB is paying dearly and receives virtually nothing in added value for the European currency system.

In addition to that, the situation of the private suppliers is not a stable one. Shareholder value based decisions have created a highly unpredictable environment.

Due to price cutting attitudes of National Central Banks, high costs for raw materials and a staggering greed for higher and higher returns on investments, private production sites are re-located to places well known for lower labour costs for personnel. But in doing so, those private providers have already reached the borders of Europe – in more than one meaning. In a couple of years – when all public printers have closed down and thousands of jobs are lost – the private printers will blackmail the ESCB into conceding printing the European Money outside of Europe, just to increase revenue for the greedy few.

For the last 10 years and more the slogan of SCECBU *“Money is NOT a commodity...”* has not lost its significance and importance. For the future we have to add *“... and Central Bank employees are an asset - NOT a nuisance!”*

The next five years will be crucial for the survival of the public pillar in banknote provision. SCECBU is doing its utmost to grant a stable, public system for the European citizen.

On a national level, there are local unions, local staff committees and local staff representatives carrying the burden of this – ongoing – fight. SCECBU will, on demand:

- provide information on banknote production
- provide information on banknote handling and sorting
- provide information on staff-related decisions made by the ECB
- support local Unions, staff representatives and staff committees when dealing with governors and/or governments and during their actions

On a European level, SCECBU is carrying the fight for the rights of NCB employees to the relevant institutions and the broader public. SCECBU will:

- press the ECB and the ESCB to turn the EPPS into a useful supporting tool for the system of public providers;
- demand that the EPPS is used as a tool to provide incentives for National Central Banks who actively support the Eurosystem by either running a public printing house, a factory or R&D units;
- urge the EPPS to grant an optimal operating grade for the public providers – notwithstanding the existing quotas;
- challenge the outsourcing of manual and/or technical tasks whenever and wherever it happens;
- challenge the naïve fallacy, adopted up by the ECB, vis-à-vis the banknote production;
- work that public providers will get back their standing within the system;
- pull the choking grip of monopolistic suppliers on the European currency into daylight;
- see the instability and unpredictability of the private supplier situation as a top priority topic;
- make the needs for maintaining the public pillar in banknote production clearly understandable and undeniable by ECB and NCBs alike;
- demand the abandoning of any neo-liberal approach vis-à-vis banknote production and handling;
- insist that the tasks on currency, as foreseen by mandatory regulations, are taken back into the hands of the National Central Banks;
- place the needs of the broad public as the basic rule for the provision of banknotes – and not the greed or interests of a few;
- defend the current status of staff.

Cash-Handling

Nowadays NCBs succumb to a new general trend: outsourcing of its duty of sorting and counting banknotes to private players – “to the market”!

Though this is following the mandate given to them on behalf of the ECB to the very letter: “to maintain banknotes of a good quality in circulation”, it is most certainly against the interest of the public. A public that sees a NCB and not some anonymous private company as a stone wall against forgeries and bad banknotes.

After the issue of the framework on “cash-handling” in 2006 by the ECB, the doors have been opened to the private sector for the task of sorting and counting banknotes. Since then we have seen how a large number of branches of Central Banks have closed down or are to be closed, with a big impact on NCBs’ staff. In this way the European citizens have lost the guarantee of quality banknotes and useful tools to fight against counterfeiting.

One of the main tasks of National Central Banks is to guarantee the citizens that any counterfeit will be withdrawn from the cash cycle. This will only be guaranteed by using NCB sorting machines and their 3rd level “Central bank only sorting capacity”- a capacity that NONE of the private companies shall ever have.

So only a constant checking by a Central Bank will ensure a “counterfeit free currency” in circulation. That just a few NCBs are as diligent as intended is a problem. This neglect of the job – and most NCBs are culpable in this respect – must be discussed in front of the ECB. We demand to ensure that this duty is kept assigned to the NCBs.

The trend to concentrate all handling activities in a few big centers throughout Europe will have a negative impact in the security situation for cash transportation and will deteriorate the working conditions of employees. Also we regret the setting up of the Cash Processing and Training Center between Deutsche Bundesbank and Banco de España that is a clear example of specialisation with the direct impact on the staff and with a total lack of respect with the principle of subsidiarity and the specificity of the different countries.

Finally we are worried with the lack of hiring of new staff for cash-handling activities, as well as with the lack of professional career, the average age is too high to carry on appropriately this task and the future of branch network is at risk.

Moreover we are facing a monopolistic situation with the new Euro series banknotes in relation to software and hardware. Gieseke+Devrient has the monopoly of security features and other companies have to pay for updating the software of their machines. In the end, the cost for the banknotes and the related services are continuously increasing for the European citizens.

SCECBU's demands

At European level:

- SCECBU sees the overall duty of cash handling as one of the fundamental pillars of central bank activity. The role of private companies in the cash cycle should be limited to the tasks complementary to NCBs' services – like transport and collecting. They must NEVER replace the NCBs duty to ensure the impeccability and flawlessness of banknotes;
- Cash has to remain a free means of payment for the citizens;
- We reject the idea of concentrating the cash handling tasks for the sake of pure cost efficiency. Concentration and/or transportation of large amounts of banknotes presents additional hazard.

At National level:

- SCECBU calls for maintaining the current network of branches as a useful service for all members of the public, consumers and professionals alike. Providing them with banknotes, advice and assistance is one of the core functions of a central bank. The branch network is a cultural identity that must be preserved under the principle of subsidiarity.
- In order to fulfill efficient cash handling and assure proximity to the public, we support national staff representatives in their demand vis-à-vis their NCB to hire a sufficient number of young professional staff based on permanent contracts and to invest into the development of their professional career. SCECBU will provide, on demand, data and facts, best practices and details of lessons learned.

Single Supervisory Mechanism

The financial crisis has highlighted and strengthened the role of Central Banks in the field of banking and financial supervision. This role becomes more and more essential to preserve the stability of the system. The measures adopted by the European Union have completely changed the previous situation. Now, the ECB is responsible for carrying out this task in collaboration with the National Central Banks and the National Competent Authorities (NCAs) in supervision.

As a result, during 2014 we had the opportunity to discuss and sign an Addendum on Social Dialogue Agreement with the ECB, which gives us an opportunity to meet and discuss with the ECB the concerns about the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) and its implementation across Europe. This new Platform of Social Dialogue has demonstrated its usefulness and

should be a powerful tool in the future to address these specific problems regarding this new mechanism and its impact on the labour conditions of the staff involved in it.

This new scenario will bring new challenges for the staff involved in this task and also brings changes in the structure and composition of the NCBs/NCAs as we have known. In this regard, the changes must respect the following conclusions:

- **Whatever the model, there should be no interference with the national negotiation process and legislation framework.**

The Maastricht Treaty recognizes that, after consultation, the ECB may take on the duty of supervision. This task is also performed by the different NCAs/NCBs in conjunction with the ECB. In this new situation we demand respect for the above mentioned principle in order to guarantee job positions inside NCBs/NCAs.

- **Situation of Joint Supervisory Teams**

The Joint Supervisory Teams (JSTs) will remain a complicated issue to deal with in terms of equal treatment of the staff members but also in terms of transparency of rules applicable. All the more important is a good and clear communication from the ECB to staff. At ESCB level, SCECBU is ready to contribute to and to be consulted on smooth implementation in practice and in developing solutions for practical problems that may arise.

SSM on-site mission travel arrangements are for the moment far from harmonised. Staff members with different contracts have different working conditions and different levels of pay. SCECBU will be very attentive to the new travel policy which must include mission allowance, provided by the ECB, and will give it due consideration. In any case, the proposal of the ECB has to respect the national agreement/policy on travel of our respective NCB/NCA when this is more beneficial for staff.

EMPLOYMENT

CAREER

Short term contracts and outsourcing

In the past working in a central bank was seen as a good career move. People saw this as a long-term option where such a career could possibly last one's lifetime. Central banks provided employment for both unqualified workers and highly skilled academics. The world has changed dramatically over the last ten years. On the one hand, the possibility of having a long-life career is not expected or even wanted by a new entrant to the labour market and on the other hand, it is considered as normal that everything related to providing facilities is outsourced.

Working for a National Central Bank is not immune from such measures

We see the corporate face of NCBs across Europe anxious to minimise staff costs now offering short-term contracts to new recruits and outsourcing all kinds of non-core and even core activities. But, is it right? Does this corporate greed for minimising costs work to the advantage of the NCBs themselves and of the public interest? Experience in many instances would say no. The experience gained and know-how necessary to operate and provide the services required of Central Bank staff is not something which can be purchased on the market, but has to be built up within the institution. It is necessary for NCBs to assess the impact of these cost cutting measures versus the loss of built up specific knowledge and loyalty towards the employer.

NCBs by their very nature are the protectors of our money, not just physically but in the records that we maintain. It is a confidential business requiring integrity and professionalism from its employees.

We, as Trade Unions, strongly condemn the widespread use of short-term contracts and outsourcing by NCBs on the basis that the operational risks are enormous, for example when staff members involved in supervision take their experience to a private bank after the end of their short term contract, or when a consultant who has no direct link with the NCB knows the inside and outside of our IT systems.

SCECBU's demands

For reasons of continuity, security and confidentiality, permanent contracts must be the rule and short term contracts the exception. For the same reasons all activities, be it core or noncore-business or general and technical support services, need to be ensured by in house staff and not by cheap workers provided by subcontractors.

Central banks have to grant their staff the right to intensive training during working hours. Investing in training may be expensive, but in the end it is a win-win situation for both the institution and the staff members. The central bank will have staff on hand that combines.

This is a way to ensure their employability, work on their career development by preparing themselves for jobs with a higher level of responsibility.

A fair and transparent promotion system is a key element to keep up job satisfaction, thus ensuring the central bank of experienced, competent and motivated staff.

How do we want to achieve this?

At National level:

- By supporting national staff representatives in their actions against the outsourcing of activities.
- By exchanging information about best practices and collective agreements, concerning recruitment, training opportunities and promotion systems.

EQUAL PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

SCECBU fights to defend equal professional opportunities in accordance with the international conventions of the ILO and European directives on antidiscrimination and the relevant national legislation.

SCECBU will, in the respect of the aforementioned, focus on equal pay for the female and male ESCB staff when they are performing equal jobs with equal responsibilities. Besides the purely financial aspects of equal pay, we are monitoring the practical implementation of the so-called "*acquis social*" (holidays, sickness leave, maternity leave, training, etc).

When comparing women's diplomas and skills with those of their male competitors we see that women have at least equal competences. Therefore, we defend their right to have equal access to positions of responsibility and the evolution of their career must become a reality.

The ageing employees with a long NCB career and experience are a valuable asset for the organisation. Therefore, NCBs must invest in their training and working conditions.

SCECBU sees that it is a social responsibility also for NCBs to employ and to promote employment of disabled persons.

SCECBU's demands

Together with the national trade unions we fight to ban any discrimination on whatever made-up reason.

BURNOUT¹

Burnout is an individual's response to chronic emotional and high work related stress levels. The three key dimensions of this Burnout are: an overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment.

Burnout has been associated with different effects at the workplace:

- absenteeism
- intention to leave the job, and actual turnover;
- lower productivity and effectiveness at work;
- decreased job satisfaction and a reduced commitment to the job or the organisation;
- people who are experiencing Burnout can have a negative impact on their colleagues, both by causing more personal conflict and by disrupting job tasks. Thus, Burnout can be "contagious" and perpetuate itself through informal interactions on the job.

Also, Burnout has been associated with negative consequences at the personal level:

- a common assumption is that Burnout causes mental dysfunction—that is, it precipitates negative effects in terms of mental health, such as Anxiety, Depression, drops in self-esteem, and so forth. An alternative argument is that people who are mentally healthy are better able to cope with chronic stressors and thus less likely to experience Burnout;
- there is also some evidence that Burnout has a negative "spill over" effect on people's home life;
- in addition, there is evidence supporting the association between Burnout and health. Burnout has been associated with a higher risk of myocardial infarction, diabetes mellitus and hypertension.

The European Directive (89/391/EEC) and the 1999 Resolution A4-0050/99 of the European Parliament on "Guidance on risk assessment at work", stipulate that employers are obligated, with respect to their employees, to:

- avoid risks
- evaluate risks that cannot be avoided
- fight risks at the source
- adapt work to the employee
- develop a coherent prevention plan

This translates into the fact that employers are responsible for:

- preventing Burnout
- assessing Burnout on a regular basis

¹ Source: Report Psy@work of 5 November 2014

This means that companies not only have a clear interest, but a legal obligation to prevent Burnout. Yet several studies indicate that the European, cross-professional Burnout average, is situated between 10 and 20%.

A recent study held at the ECB, ordered by IPSO, showed alarming figures. From a statistically valid sample of employees, 30.9% were likely to suffer from Burnout and another 32.1% showed symptoms of exhaustion (an important Burnout risk factor). These findings raise severe questions about the situation in the NCBs.

SCECBU considers Burnout and other psychosocial risk factors as a serious threat not only to the health and the well-being of the central bank staff but also to the sound functioning of the whole system.

Therefore we demand the introduction of a Burnout prevention policy throughout the ESCB, based on the results of studies that have to be organised in the different NCBs.

How do we want to achieve this?

At European level:

- By claiming that the Burnout issue should be discussed with the staff representatives during a HR Seminar;
- By creating database showing which NCB has done a similar study providing contact data.

At National level:

By supporting national staff representatives through exchange of information about results and consequences of studies and initiatives that were already taken in some NCBs, as well as legislation and collective agreements in the different countries.

Furthermore:

- **we insist on the respect for working hours and the limitation of overtime;**
- **we will seek a fair distribution of the workload among the employees;**
- **we look into the root causes of Burnout (lack of motivation...).**

TOOLS

SOCIAL DIALOGUE AT NCB LEVEL

At national level, there is a sharp deterioration of social relations in some central banks.

There are at least three cases where the SCECBU can and must play a fundamental role:

- . inside a central bank, including the ECB, where union rights are not respected;
- . inside those central banks putting pressure on the staff wishing to engage in the setting up of a union structure (whether autonomous, federal or confederal);
- . when alleged that unions have lost the real capacity to defend their staff, as it happened, for instance, to the trade unions at the Sveriges Riksbank. In fact before 2010 there were three unions active in Sweden. However as this country is renowned for its quality of social dialogue, it is clear that the loathing vis-à-vis unionism that is taken up by the Board have prevented staff to invest and to work at union level.

To be linked with the ESCB Social Dialogue

Before and after each ESCB Social Dialogue meeting, national central bank trade unions should have, at their request, the opportunity to meet their respective HR and relevant experts which are involved in the agenda of the ESCB Social Dialogue.

This kind of meeting can be an occasion for both parties to link the ESCB Social Dialogue structure with the National Social Dialogue.

The fact that the ECB is used to invite, for every ESCB Social Dialogue meeting, a national central bank HR representative, reinforces the need to jointly prepare the agenda at European and national level in due time.

SCECBU's principles

- SCECBU must be an expression of solidarity between ESCB trade unions;
- Within a few central banks whose union rights are not respected, SCECBU must go on helping colleagues wishing to invest in a union stroke representative role;
- SCECBU reserves the right to take action, lobbying to the competent authorities to enforce the rights of the ESCB workers;
- SCECBU must be vigilant vis-à-vis the existing union structures which may, as in Sweden, become an empty box.

This danger is knocking at the door of each of our structures. We must keep a vigilant eye.

- All SCECBU members must be ready at all times in case of need to show the spirit of solidarity through common actions on the defense of unions possibly in danger. The

same goes for those colleagues facing difficulties and pressures at different stages to fight for the benefit of a union.

The impact of the ECB

With the introduction of SSM a new threat to career development within the NCBs has emerged. The JST staff members of NCBs will have to work under the direction of local managers and an ECB coordinator, who would give feedback on their achievements. The staff members concerned might have to face conflicts between the expectations of their own national management and those of the ECB coordinator. They will be subject to two, sometimes contradictory, ethical frameworks. This schizophrenic situation makes them vulnerable to negative appraisals and possible sanctions that will have a negative impact on their career development.

SCECBU's demands

SCECBU will not accept any attempt of the ECB, an institution where collective bargaining doesn't exist, to break into the collectively negotiated codes of conduct, systems for appraisal, and promotion systems in the NCBs.

How do we want to achieve this?

At European level:

By continuing our fight for a real consultation procedure in the ESCB/SSM Social Dialogue framework. We want to give our opinion before decisions are taken that have an impact on working conditions in the NCBs. We expect our recommendations to be taken into account or to receive a well-reasoned motivation in case they are not followed.

At National level:

By supporting national staff representatives in their actions against the dismantling of their collective agreements.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE AT ESCB LEVEL

For more than 16 years now, NCB trade unions have been able to exchange information and follow up, on behalf of all the staff of national central banks, in relation to the evolution of the activities of the ESCB.

The position the NCB staff and staff representatives find themselves in today has highlighted one thing: the need for dialogue, particularly for social dialogue to address complicated and risky situations. But the last decade has also shown the weak points of the system, which is primarily the limitation of the scope for social dialogue.

Although the ECB provides a lot of basic information, in general this information does not enable us to analyse, beforehand and sufficiently, the qualitative and quantitative consequences of the implementation of the announced measures. This is why the SCECBU demands that, in the future, information given by the ECB and the national central banks be better coordinated and that those NCBs which are concerned by the measures participate in in-depth analyses and discussion of the items during the social dialogue meetings.

Logistic and practical matters play also an important role in the improvement of the ESCB Social Dialogue for several reasons:

1. the delay in the distribution of the list of participants to the ECB is one of the complaints by the ECB;
2. the difficulties met for sending the concluding remarks on time;
3. lack of coordination vis-à-vis the decisions taken and decided with the ECB (last example: to insist on the fact that it was agreed in the pre-meeting to have a presentation of the “underperformance procedure”);
4. some misunderstandings regarding the drafting of the documents to be presented by the staff representatives during the ESCB social dialogue meetings.

SCECBU’s demands

Setting up of an ESCB Social Dialogue administrative secretariat:

- The proposed secretariat structure will be responsible for the coordination of the list of participants on behalf of the three federations and of the deadline for delivering the list to the ECB;
- The secretariat will also be in charge of reminding the contact persons about the agenda of the different meetings as well as delivering on time all the documents provided by the three Federations to the ECB;
- The secretariat will have no political responsibilities. Its duties will be limited to make the link with the three Federations and the ECB in what regards logistical matters;
- Only the contact persons of the three Federations, as mentioned in the internal rules of the ESCB SD, will take the decisions on the nominations of the participants in the SD in case of strong and unsolved disagreement between unions at national level.
- This new structure shall be designated as **SDSR Secretariat (Social Dialogue Staff Representatives)**

The SCECBU can collect information from more than 90% of ESCB trade unions and staff associations. Most of SCECBU’s works are developed at ESCB level. Therefore, we consider that the SCECBU is ready to assume the **SDSR Secretariat** for a period of 2 years in order to

check the feasibility of these proposals. In 2018 the three Federations shall prepare a report on the functioning of the **SDSR** Secretariat.

A MORE REGULAR AND MORE POTENT INTERVENTION WITH THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

SCECBU is convinced that the role and activities of NCBs and the ECB are so unique and specific that they need to be defended in all *fora* and European institutions. As we did in the past, we must continue to meet Members of the European Parliament and of the European Commission.

SCECBU's goals

We must build on our relationship and strive for more meeting with the members of both institutions. We need to intensify our efforts to throw more light on the pernicious impact of the policies carried out by the NCBs on the activities of a public utility.

SCECBU must stand up and fight for our vision and program for an alternative HR policy within the ESCB. A program based on equality and social justice will serve to strengthen the influence we can exert on European organizations.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS

In the last years, especially in the last decade, we have witnessed the political breakthrough of neo-liberalism with its massive wave of privatisations, deregulation of the financial sector and of employment relations, as well as the ongoing dismantling of social security systems. This whole situation, as a result of severe economic crises, has led to catastrophic social impacts and the growing of an authoritarian hegemony. These developments have had major consequences bringing very hard times and enormous challenges for the international trade union movement.

SCECBU's goals

Taking this context into consideration, the Congress stresses the specific role of the SCECBU next to UNI-Europa and EPSU. Cooperation between the three Federations needs to be improved while leaving each federation the freedom to speak on behalf and in the interest of their members.

SCECBU will continue its discussions with UNI Finance and EPSU in order to explore the possibilities for an agreement on points of common interest and common actions to build a specific structure responsible for the ESCB Social Dialogue.

NEED FOR INCISIVE COMMUNICATION AND MUTUAL RESPECT

The Congress insists on the need to fully respect and accept the differences in culture. We are convinced that, regardless of the specific (cultural) form of communication, the most important aspect, for national central bank staff, is the message it contains.

Notwithstanding linguistic and practical difficulties, the Standing Committee will continue to give accurate information and breaking social news on central banks. The communication effort made in the last five years will be improved inside and outside the national central banks.

This communication should not be reserved to some initiatives only, but should provide reliable trade-union information about important actions and events in Europe. Promoting the Standing Committee's work on behalf of our members and points of view at European level is our main goal. Moreover, reporting about the activities of our member organisations is also one of our concerns.

SCECBU has noticed that the general messages of the Governors released in Frankfurt do not always reflect the real situation in their respective NCBs.

Confronted with this "*rosy view*" campaign of the ESCB, the SCECBU wants to reveal the reality of what is happening behind the scenes, i.e., the slow erosion of social rights and working conditions. Therefore, we want to enlarge the scope of items considered in the social dialogue and analyse them in their overall context.

SCECBU's goal

Improving our communication network.

CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION

The Congress endorses the Standing Committee with the political and organisational means to have an impact at all levels and certainly far beyond the borders of Frankfurt.

To achieve this aim the Standing Committee is acting on a daily basis, representing the member organisations inside all central banks and helping those who, until now, do not have a genuine staff representation. This is our first goal because without a genuine representation the staff cannot express itself and be represented within the ESCB social dialogue in Frankfurt.

SCECBU's goal

Our construction efforts have to include the staff of Central Bank of Bulgaria, Estonia and Croatia.

THE PAST SHAPES OUR FUTURE!

Globalisation, flexibility, outsourcing, dismissals, early retirements, inversion of the population age pyramids, loss of corporate culture, lack of training programs, loss of purchasing power, threat on existing pension schemes, membership decrease in some countries, rise of individualism, closing down of branches, etc. These are some of the ongoing problems, which appear to be never ending, that trade unions are facing, in or outside the central banks.

This is why SCECBU calls for ongoing awareness and mobilisation initiatives to be taken at national and European level, taking into account the local trade union traditions and practices.

Even the paradigm of the NCBs has strongly changed over the last decade. New forms of work, mainly based on so-called collaborative schemes, are being implemented more and more within the ESCB. The new recruits are the ones most affected by this situation, especially if we take into account how the ECB has implemented SSM.

This new reality brings the need to bring on board young trade unionists who are more capable of dealing with such situations. On the one hand, they are imbued with the spirit of internationalism and consider trade union work to be a mission and not just a job and, on the other, they are closer to the new working and communication methods.