



Staff Committee of the European Central Bank

To: Mr. [REDACTED]

10 May 2004

CC: Mr. [REDACTED] Mss. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Re.: **Staff Committee Opinion on the Guidelines for Secondary Training – Ref. 2004/0025**

Dear Mr. [REDACTED],

We refer to your letter (04) 230 CSR BK/sc TRAI received on 6 May 2004.

We recall to have been given the opportunity to comment at an early stage. Against that background, and in view of the fact that this indeed a policy that will be most welcomed by staff, we consent to consider this communication as the 2nd round of consultation. The accompanying letter addresses and clarifies the concerns we had voiced in February of this year.

Already in February, the Staff Committee emphasised that the policy should be implemented as soon as possible. We therefore welcome the commitment to officially introduce it from 1 June 2004.

We understand that for this year the budget situation is fixed. It is welcomed that consideration will be given to our suggestion that the budget as well as the decision-making should be centralised with D-HR/DG-A for the next budget year.

The Staff Committee has no further remarks to make.

Best regards,

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

On behalf of the Staff Committee



Staff Committee of the European Central Bank

To: Mr. [REDACTED]

10 February 2004

CC: Mr. [REDACTED], Mss. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Re.: Staff Committee Opinion on the Guidelines for Secondary Training – Ref. 2004/0006

Dear [REDACTED],

We refer to your letter (03) RSD HP/ TRAI received on 26 January 2004. We appreciate being given the opportunity to comment at an early stage. In what follows, please find a couple of initial remarks for your information.

First and foremost, we would like to stress that we welcome this change in training policy. It clearly goes beyond the essential training which is needed to master the current job, and on which the ECB has solely focused in the past and in particular appreciate that secondary training measures may also include certificate/diploma/university study. In that light, we see that it reflects the spirit of the EiM programme. The Staff Committee also acknowledges the idea of a policy provision for burden sharing.

However, we would see some clearly defined cases where such policy could be problematic and sound common sense may need to be used.

1. How to deal with cases of prolonged sick leave, accident or incapacity to fulfil the duties?
2. How to handle moving to another position (promotion) or horizontal mobility to a function where the acquired skills may not be that useful anymore?
3. Who guarantees that a longer-term study commitment can be finished (change in line management may shift or even radically change local priorities)?

Second, we agree to the idea that the envisaged training needs to be relevant to the business of the ECB. This said, we would like to stress that this new category of training should be open and available to all permanent staff members, irrespective of the position in the salary grid. More specifically, the principle of equal treatment needs to be respected and no discrimination between the different categories of staff should take place. The opportunity should be given also to support staff (guards, agents, secretaries, administrative assistants, switchboard operators, drivers, messengers) with a view to improving their personal career perspectives in the organisation.

Third, the Staff Committee would like to emphasise that the policy should be implemented as soon as possible. In the years to come, we believe that the budget as well as the decision-making should be centralised with D-HR / DG-A. In our view this would avoid to a rather large extent unequal treatment between different business areas and favouritism.

As to the main criteria we have some observations which we would like to share with you.

- permanent staff members (i.e. holding an indefinite contract) with at least satisfactory performance during the two last years may request benefits under the secondary training category

While we do accept the principle, it raises some concerns with respect to the forthcoming changes in the recruitment policy. It is foreseen to phase-out more and more permanent contracts and issue initial 3-year contracts, which might be prolonged after the initial three years. Set against this the foreseen change in recruitment policy might impair in the context of this measure with the principle of equal treatment.

- the envisaged training measure should be related to the ECB's business needs

ECB needs should be well defined to avoid "hiccups". Staff applying for such training, learning afterwards that the request has been deemed inconceivable because the envisaged training does not meet the criteria would be most unfortunate and could be detrimental to this valuable initiative

- tuition must be available to be undertaken by staff members on their own time

In this connection, it would be important to define the concept of "own time", staff may well chose to go for a 3- or 6-months full-day training and make use of e.g. the special leave/unpaid leave provision

- financial support up to EUR 5000 p.a. in total can be granted (tuition, materials, travel, accommodation), as well as special leave up to three days p.a.

As aforementioned, it would be important to define the criteria for reimbursement of tuition cost (level up to = percentage of cost, lump sum, proven cost), includes also random cost (travel, accommodation...)

Best regards,

 
On behalf of the Staff Committee