



Overview Newsletter articles related to Ethics

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Edition n.5 - Friday 10 September 2010

Nouveau module 'Ethics' dans Sysper II



La DG HR vient de lancer un nouveau système d'autorisation électronique permettant de traiter toutes déclarations relevant du titre II du statut (p.ex. : autorisations à exercer des activités extérieures) **via Sysper2**, sous le nom de module '**Ethics**'. Le nouveau module est accessible dans Sysper II **depuis le 1er septembre 2010** et, dans un premier temps, couvrira les demandes d'activités extérieures pour le personnel en activité.

Toute nouvelle demande d'autorisation d'exercer une activité extérieure, ainsi que sa validation, se fera donc dorénavant à partir de ce nouveau module. Toutefois, pour une période transitoire d'un mois et pour des raisons exceptionnelles, les formulaires papier resteront disponibles à travers [MyIntracomm](#).

Des questions? Ecrivez à la boîte fonctionnelle: [HR-B1-ETHIQUE](#).

[Plus de détails](#)



Edition n. 9 - Friday 8 October 2010

Answer the quiz...

Background:

I have recently completed a survey on sensitive working matters in our DG. The following night I went to dinner with an old friend and I told him stories on my findings, on how incompetent some Units in my DG were, naming persons, units and details of findings. The next day I was called by the Director General in his office. Apparently his daughter was on the next table. After that, I have learnt my lesson on handling confidential information...

Which ethical principle did I primarily breach?

- 1.1) Independence
- 1.2) Impartiality
- 1.3) Objectivity
- 1.4) Circumspection - reflect before you act

Want to know the correct answer? Enrol- for the Internal ethics training of DG JUSTICE/DG HOME AFFAIRS!

On the horns of a dilemma: a practical approach to ethics



Half-day workshops on **28 and 29 October**
from **14.00 to 17.00**
In **LX46 – Fortescue room**

Registrations via [Syslog](#)



Edition n. 13 - Friday 12 November 2010



Le dilemme éthique...

Le cas : Vous êtes en mission à Paris pour préparer un projet de proposition législative et vous êtes invité(e) dans un cher et beau restaurant par un haut fonctionnaire du gouvernement français. Le dîner a été réservé et payé à

l'avance par cette personne et vous connaissez les règles de la Commission en matière d'acceptation de cadeaux ou d'invitations ... Cependant, il est très important de maintenir de bonnes relations avec le fonctionnaire et les autres acteurs participant au dîner ... Quelles sont les règles éthiques dans cette situation et que devriez-vous faire ?

Découvrez la réponse et discutez de ce cas avec d'autres collègues pendant des ateliers interactifs sur l'éthique !

Inscrivez-vous dès à présent à ce cours sur mesure pour nos DGs dans nos DGs (LX46 – Salle Fortescue) le **29 novembre (FR) de 14:00 à 17:00**

Cet atelier de trois heures, vous donnera l'opportunité d'exercer votre raisonnement éthique sur des cas concrets et de comprendre comment sont appliquées les lignes directrices de la Commission en la matière.

Inscriptions via [Syslog](#).



Edition n. 17 - Friday 10 December 2010

CAN I ACCEPT GIFTS?



The holiday season is here again! As we buy and receive gifts from friends and family, a key question is raised: **what about business or work-related gifts?**

According to the Staff Regulations, we should not accept gifts, favours, donations, or payments from governments or any other source outside the institution without obtaining prior permission from the Appointing Authority. As a general rule of thumb, we would recommend that you **decline all offers that have more than merely symbolic value** (such as diaries, calendars, small desk items, etc.).

In any case, if you are offered any gifts, favours or donations with a combined value of more than €50 from a single source in any given year and you want to accept them, you must **apply for permission**, giving a

justification and [using this form](#). Keep in mind that when considering the €50 limit you have to count in any lunch, drinks, or dinner invitations offered earlier this year, in addition to any gifts which that person or organisation wishes to give you now.

Questions?

- Check the ethics' [rules about gifts on MyIntracomm](#)
- Download the [DG HOME & DG JUSTICE Code on Professional Ethics](#) for more detailed explanations and other ethical questions
- Contact our local [Ethics correspondents](#)



Edition n. 22 - Monday 31 January 2011



Fraud awareness training for DG Justice and DG Home Affairs

Organised by the **Shared Internal Audit Capability unit (SIAC)**

Learn all you have always wanted to know about: fraud risks in the EU and particularly in DG Home Affairs and DG Justice; common fraud schemes; red flags; who is responsible for fighting fraud and much more!

1-day sessions on:

08/02/11 – LX46 **Schengen room** (00/125)

17/02/11 – LX46 **Schengen room** (00/125)

25/02/11 - LX46 **Vitorino room** (00/179)

[Registrations via Syslog](#)



Edition n. 25 - Friday 18 February 2011

A matter of ETHICS



Question: I'm a Commission official and a huge Beatles fan. In the evenings after work and on weekends, I do research on the Beatles and also am a member of a local Beatles association. I have grown to become a respected expert in the field, and sometimes get invited to give presentations or speeches on the Beatles. I am also in talks to publish a book on the topic and am thinking of starting a blog. Is this allowed?

Answer: This could be considered as a hobby, and officials are free to perform any such activity in their leisure time outside of the office unless the activity interferes with the

interests of the Commission. It appears in this case that there is no conflict and could not be any conflict or overlapping interest between this activity and your work in the DG. If, however, the activity could develop to be considered an activity of an occupational nature (i.e. a profession) or go beyond what can be reasonably considered a leisure activity, you would have to request an authorisation in advance (Art 12 b of the Staff Regulations) from the Appointing Authority.

For **publications** or speeches on non-EU matters, freedom of expression applies and you do not require any authorisation to publish. However, if the publication (including its writing/preparation) or speech could be considered an external activity, notably, if under contract, and/or would entitle you to any **financial payment**, you must ask your Appointing Authority for prior authorisation to accept it. Royalties received for publications are not subject to the annual ceiling of €4,500 that applies to work you undertake outside the Commission.

[Adapted from Commission en Direct, editions of 14.03.2008 and 10.09.2010]

Do you have any ethical questions?

Please send them to the [HOME NEWS](#) mailbox as a general/anonymous question and we will try to cover them in our next Ethics article in the newsletter, or contact one of our [Ethics correspondents](#).

ETHICS - Want to know more about...

- ... external activities?
- ... acceptance of gifts?
- ... invitations from third parties or hospitality during a mission?
- ... conflict of interest?

[REGISTER NOW](#) for Tuesday's half-day **interactive workshop on Ethics**, tailored to our DGs:

On the horns of a dilemma: a practical approach to ethics
Tuesday, 22 February, 9:30 to 12:30 in LX46, Fortescue (00/072)
Registration via [SYSLOG](#)



Edition n. 28 - Friday 11 March 2011

Planning to organise a Team building event with your unit?

We have plenty of suggestions for you!

- ✓ Do any of your team members ever face **ethically sensitive situations**? The work element of your team building could consist of an interactive session with discussions about cases your team might face...
- ✓ Are you interested in working more efficiently while encouraging **diversity**? An experienced facilitator can guide you through a workshop on an **equal opportunities** topic of your choice.
- ✓ Would you like to support the European Year of **Volunteering**? Spending time with your colleagues doing some volunteering work is an interesting and enriching way to spend an Away Day, and we can help get you started...



More information

Read more about [Team building activities in our DG](#)

Contact [HOME-JUST LEARNING & TRAINING](#)



Edition n. 36 - Friday 20 May 2011



Volunteer and share your experience!

Are you taking part in volunteering activities which you are proud of and you would like to promote among colleagues for a good cause? **Share your story with us!**

Home Affairs news will publish it and help you and us promote volunteering among colleagues.

Contact: [HOME-JUST INTERCOMM](#)

Read about other colleagues' volunteer experiences: [Edition 18/02/2011 \(page 3\)](#) ; [Edition 23/03/2011](#)

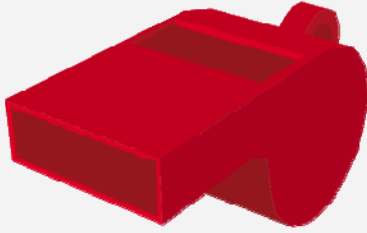
Ready to volunteer? A few **ethical considerations** to keep in mind:

1. Make sure the activity you would like to undertake:
 - does not interfere with your work for the Commission and takes place outside working hours
 - is not a source of conflict of interest or damage the image of the Commission
2. Submit an external activities request for the activity if needed (more guidance and examples [here](#))
It's easy: Go to Sysper 2 and under "Ethics" you will find the option "My ethics requests".
3. Need advice? Our [Ethics correspondents](#) will be happy to inform you on the best practice to follow!

[More information](#)



Edition n. 39 - Friday 17 June 2011



Whistleblowing: Key facts we should all remember

Whistleblowing or reporting serious wrongdoings by colleagues during the exercise of their functions is part of the duties of any member of staff in the Commission and is essential to stop illegal activities or fraud. We should therefore be aware of some basic information:

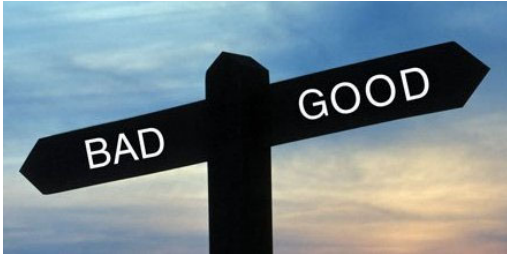
- The obligation concerns **facts of which one becomes aware in the exercise of his/her professional activity**. It does not cover disagreements over policy matters.
- A staff member who has reported a case of illegal activities, fraud, corruption or any serious wrongdoing, is **subject to an adequate protection**.
- Information on presumed illegal activities and serious wrongdoings must be given **without delay in a written form** (e.g. an e-mail) to your immediate superior or Director-General, or the Secretary General of the Commission or directly to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) depending on who the person involved is and **exercising the greatest discretion with regard to the facts**.
- Whoever receives information from a whistleblower on presumed illegal activities or serious wrongdoings should **transmit it onward to OLAF without delay** ("copy" to Head of Unit SRD.01, contact person for relations with OLAF). At this stage **disclosure of the transmitted information to other instances/persons (in particular to the press) is not permitted**.

Please read the full note sent by the Director General via ARES: [Ref. Ares\(2011\)614806](#)

Contact person for more information about [whistleblowing](#) (SRD.01)
[Ethics correspondents](#) of DG Justice and Home Affairs (SRD.02)



Edition n. 41 - Friday 1 July 2011



IDOC: tackling negligence, non-compliance and wrongdoing

The 2010 Activity Report of the Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission (**IDOC**) has just been published, and summarises

IDOC's activities, including inquiries, pre-disciplinary hearings and disciplinary procedures.

IDOC was set up in 2002, with the aim of ensuring that officials or former officials of the European Commission comply with obligations and duties reported in the Staff Regulations.

How does IDOC work?

The Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission (IDOC) has two main tasks:

- conducting administrative inquiries instructions from the appointing authority to verify whether any obligation as laid down in the Staff Regulations has been breached
- conducting disciplinary procedures once there is evidence that an obligation has been breached

What can happen in case the breach is proven after inquiry by IDOC?

Disciplinary actions range from a warning recorded in the personnel file for 18 months for minor violations to warnings recorded for 6 years for more serious breaches, deferment of advancement, downgrading, removal from post and reduction of pension entitlements.

Are there many cases of violations/disciplinary actions in the Commission?

In total, **19 disciplinary sanction decisions** were taken, including one dismissal. In addition, **five (non-disciplinary) warnings** were addressed to the individuals concerned.

What kind of cases does IDOC examine?

In 2010, the cases examined by IDOC dealt with, among others:

- abusive behaviour intended to achieve undue financial benefits
- alleged cases of harassment
- acceptance of unauthorised gifts
- abusive use of informatics and telephone equipment of the Commission



- behaviour constituting a legal offence

Why is it important for us to know this?

Giving visibility to the report within the Commission is of utmost importance to inform staff of the consequences of negligence or lack of compliance, and the administrative procedures one might go through in case of non-compliance with staff obligations. Such information is a vital part of our [ethics](#) strategy geared towards the prevention of wrongdoing.

[Read the IDOC report for 2010](#)

[Learn more about IDOC](#)



Edition n. 45 - Friday 9 September 2011

Ethics – test your knowledge!

How much do you know about Ethics? Here's a quick way to test some basic knowledge:

Question 1.

Your brother owns a small restaurant in Brussels and business is not going too well, so he has had to cut some staff to save money. Weekends, however, are busy so you offer to help him out by manning the bar every Saturday evening for free. Which statement below applies?



- (a) It is a family issue and the work is not being paid, so no permission is required.
- (b) The work is unpaid, but before engaging in it, I have to ask for permission.
- (c) I only need to request authorisation from my hierarchy and report to DG HR if I get paid.
- (d) I am allowed to work for a few weeks without seeking permission, but if it goes on for over 6 months, I will need to report it.

Question 2.

You have been invited to teach students a course on European affairs at your former university. This will involve over 60 hours (but less than 100) of teaching per academic year.

- (a) Before the activity, I must seek permission from the Director-General of DG HR.
- (b) Before the activity, I must seek permission from my own Director-General.
- (c) The person I need to seek permission from depends on my grade.
- (d) Verbal agreement or an email from my line manager is enough as long as I use flexitime or annual leave to cover my absences.

Question 3.

The same university offers a net amount of 5,600€ for the teaching activity mentioned in the previous question.

- (a) I must declare the amount of 5,600€ in order to be able to accept it.
- (b) I must declare the amount of 5,600€ but I can only keep the maximum amount of 4,500€ and must turn the rest over to the Commission.
- (c) I can accept a reimbursement of max. 4,500€ and consequently I declare and accept 4,500€.



(d) I declare only a part of the amount received, which I calculate by subtracting my travel, food, accommodation and other expenses linked to the trip from the 5,600€.

Questions adapted from [DG REGIO Ethics quiz](#)

Want to learn more?



1. Take the [Ethics & Integrity training session](#) (one day) or [e-course](#) (2 hours). The one-day course is mandatory for all newcomers, and equally useful for any other staff member.
2. Read about [Ethics on MyIntraComm](#) and download the necessary forms (e.g. [circulation sheets](#)) from our [local intranet](#)
3. Take a look at these previous articles on ethics:
 - [Acceptance of gifts](#)
 - [External activities](#)
 - [IDOC 2010 Annual Report](#)

Do you still have questions or need additional explanations? Contact one of our [Ethics correspondents](#)

➤ Answer key for the quiz: 1b, 2c, 3b.



Edition n. 60 - Friday 13 January 2012

On the horns of a dilemma: a practical approach to ethics



As a Commission staff member you may or may not have had ethical dilemmas so far. If you had, why not try and find the correct answer to them? If you did not have any yet: are you sure you haven't missed anything regarding professional ethics? To give you a flavour of what an ethical dilemma can be:

- ✓ You are a Commission official and a huge Beatles fan. In the evenings after work and on weekends, you do research on the Beatles and also are a member of a local Beatles association. You have grown to become a respected expert in the field, and sometimes get invited to give presentations or speeches on the Beatles. You are also in talks to publish a book on the topic and thinking of starting a blog. Is this allowed?
- ✓ Your brother owns a small restaurant in Brussels and business is not going too well, so he has had to cut some staff to save money. Weekends, however, are still busy so you offer to help him out by manning the bar every Saturday evening for free. Is this just a family issue, where no permission from the Commission is needed?

Want to know the right answers?

REGISTER FOR THE ETHICS & INTEGRITY WORKSHOP IN OUR DG!

[On the horns of a dilemma: a practical approach to ethics](#)

Three sessions:

27 January, 9:00 – 12:30 (EN)

16 February, 14:00 – 17:00 (FR)

15 March, 9:00 – 12:30 (EN)

Where: Fortescue room, LX46

[Register in Syslog](#)

The course has been customised for our DGs, incorporating the input from our managers as to which cases are most relevant and likely to come up at DG HOME and DG JUST.

Please note that these half-day workshops fulfil the DG HR requirement (one-day session) for newcomers!



Edition n. 69 - Friday 16 March 2012

New guidelines on gifts and hospitality for Commission staff

An official should not accept any favour, gift or payment from sources outside of the institution without the permission of the Appointing Authority (usually a Director-General). But does this correspond to reality? Is the acceptance of a small desk calendar or a cup of coffee really likely to create an impression of partiality? What about working lunches? Are there situations in which a refusal would be impolite or socially awkward? To date, information on these matters has been available, but not consolidated. The new guidelines seek to provide – in one single document – pragmatic and down-to-earth advice to staff. [[Read the full article in Commission en direct – 09/3 → 15/3/12](#)]

[Read the Guidelines on gifts and hospitality](#)

Main elements of the guidelines

Gifts	Hospitality
<p>The general prohibition on accepting a gift without authorisation remains.</p> <p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Gifts should only be accepted if in line with or if required by social, courtesy or diplomatic usage. If such a gift is worth less than €50, authorisation will be assumed to have been granted by the Appointing Authority and no additional approval is needed.➤ Gifts of this nature which are valued between €50 and €150 require the explicit prior permission of the Appointing Authority.➤ No gift worth more than €150 should be accepted as it will not be authorised.	<p>The general prohibition on accepting hospitality without authorisation remains. It can only be accepted if in line with or required by social, courtesy or diplomatic usage.</p> <p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Prior permission of the Appointing Authority is presumed to be granted in cases of hospitality in the form of lunches or dinners strictly linked to the function of the official and where approval has been sought.➤ Prior permission of the Appointing Authority is also presumed in respect of occasional offers of simple meals, refreshments, snacks, etc.➤ In any other situation where the staff member considers that he/she should accept an offer of hospitality, the explicit prior approval of the Appointing Authority should be sought.



An **accumulation of even low value gifts or offers of hospitality** can pose significant problems in regard to how the official or agent is perceived and should not therefore take place.



A new module gifts/hospitality in Sysper2

A new module has recently been created in [Sysper2](#) for requests of prior permission concerning gifts and hospitality. All requests should from now on be introduced through it.

If the Appointing Authority refuses authorisation or if you refuse a gift, the latter should be returned to the source with an accompanying letter if possible, or to OIB: OIB.OS.1 - DAV 1 1/255.

These presents, as well as the refused presents which could not be returned to sender, will be allocated to a charitable work chosen by OIB.

More information regarding [Ethics on the intranet](#)
See the [Gifts/hospitality page on MyIntracomm](#)

[Ethics correspondents](#) in DGs HOME & JUST



Rights & Privileges

[My payslips](#)

[Administrative certificates \(HRMforms\)](#)

[My personal file \(NDP\)](#)

[My missions \(MIPS\)](#)

Ethics

[My Ethics requests](#)

