



18 October 2017  
su17017hp

## **Mr Campinos will be the next President of the EPO**

Dear SUEPO Members, dear Colleagues,

Mr Campinos will be our President from July 2018 onward. We congratulate him on his election.

While the previous election required many rounds of votes, he was promptly selected in a single vote and with a very comfortable margin. We believe this is a testament to his competence and to the trust which the Administrative Council puts in him.

We have noted that the vacancy notice listed unprecedented requirements: to lead the EPO with modern management techniques and an outstanding ability to engage in social dialogue. We believe this indicates the Council's desire to re-establish harmonious working conditions and to dissipate the atmosphere generated over the past few years.

We want to express our wholehearted support for this endeavour. We are ready to embark on a road to fruitful cooperation with Mr Campinos – a road which we know to be steep and time-consuming, as a long list of tasks lies ahead of us.

Unfortunately, on taking up his post, the new President will inherit the following problematic legacy:

- violations of fundamental rights and an apparent systematic disregard for the rule of law;
- management by fear, isolation and punishment championed by the current higher management;
- a culture of arbitrariness and repression, targeting not only outspoken union leaders, but also the most vulnerable members of staff: the old and the sick. They are now branded by the appraisal system as “lazy” or “incompetent” and placed on a fast-track for dismissal;
- a code of silence that makes it impossible to raise awareness of a problem (particularly if it is due to the actions of top managers) without the fear of reprisal. This same culture also emerges in the EPO's unwillingness to investigate properly the six suicides that occurred during the current presidency. Fortunately, a potential seventh suicide was miraculously averted only two weeks ago

- a culture of repression and impunity worthy of the most autocratic of regimes and curiously reminiscent of the scandal currently afflicting [WIPO](#).

We must re-establish a social dialogue that is shaped by trust and cooperation, and not by fear, isolation or punishment. This dialogue must be held between management, Council and staff. We assure Mr Campinos that SUEPO, as the largest staff union within the EPO, wishes to take part in this process with a constructive attitude if there is a willingness on his side to create propitious premises. We propose bringing in an external expert and moderator, who may help to leave the previous path of [arbitrariness and repression](#).

We propose that the new President consider establishing a multilateral Working Group, charged to:

- a) Engage in truth-finding with respect to the following topics and recommend concrete action where necessary:
  - the respect of and compliance with the rule of law and fundamental rights
  - the dignity of staff, protection of the vulnerable
  - staff welfare
  - the relationship between working conditions and psychosocial risks
  - work pressure and its impact on work quality
- b) Revisit Council resolution [CA/26/16](#), including reversing the sanctions of all staff representatives and union leaders, which are widely perceived as having been politically motivated.
- c) Without questioning the spirit and goals of the recent reforms, identify any legal lacunae or incompatibility, identify any problems with implementation practices, and recommend concrete remedies.

We are aware that it takes time and good will to solve the problems lying ahead. SUEPO would readily accept an invitation to participate in such a working group and would spare no effort in working towards the success of its mission.

We can offer considerable legal and technical expertise and are ready to help as needed. Mr Campinos will find that SUEPO is a very reliable and predictable social partner. We look forward to being able to work with him soon.

Your SUEPO Committee The Hague