

Dear Colleagues,

As some of you are already aware, representatives of the new WIPO Staff Council (created by the WIPO Director General) asserted at the opening of the all-staff meeting on 6 April 2017 at UNOG, relative to the ICSC's decisions to cut pay of Geneva-based staff in the Professional and higher categories, that they should have been represented on the podium instead of the Staff Council of the WIPO Staff Association which, by the way, has been recognized since 1958 by WIPO management as the valid interlocutor between the WIPO staff and the past and present WIPO Directors General.

The meeting at UNOG was co-organized by the staff federations of CCISUA and FICSA (of which the WIPO Staff Association is a member). The Director General's new in-house Staff Council had already been made aware that it cannot be a member of FICSA as it does not belong to and is not representative of any staff association/union.

You will recall that after the validly-elected Staff Council of the WIPO Staff Association blew the whistle on wrongdoing at WIPO at the highest levels, the current WIPO Director General fired the then President of the WIPO Staff Council and undertook activities to replace the Staff Council of the WIPO Staff Association by a stand-alone management-friendly Staff Council. Most recently, the WIPO Director General has recognized his new Staff Council as the valid interlocutor between the staff and himself and has decided to no longer recognize the Staff Council of the WIPO Staff Association as being representative of staff in discussions with him even though more than fifty per cent of WIPO staff are dues-paying members of the WIPO Staff Association. This means that the WIPO Director General has decided that the Staff Council of the WIPO Staff Association is no longer allowed to represent and defend the interests of the 600 WIPO staff who are members of the WIPO Staff Association.

It is important to know that the WIPO Director General's recognition of his new management-friendly Staff Council applies only to his internal authority within WIPO. What happens outside of the organization is a totally different matter as explained by the WIPO Polling Officers.

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To: Geneva-based staff associations/unions

FICSA

Federation of International
Civil Servants' Associations

Fédération des associations
de fonctionnaires
internationaux

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In fact, the WIPO Director General's stand-alone in-house Staff Council does not have recognition to defend staff employment conditions where nearly all the decisions are taken, such as the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM), the Human Resources Network (HRN), the UN Joint Staff Pension Board and the UN General Assembly. WIPO staff employment conditions are defended by the WIPO Staff Association through the staff federation, FICSA, of which it is a full member and with which it works closely at all levels of the UN common system.

From what we have observed thus far, the Director General's new stand-alone Staff Council is mainly dealing with small matters such as the opening of WIPO terraces to WIPO staff, whereas the WIPO Staff Association has consistently continued to take on substantive staff employment issues such as salaries and allowances, recruitment policies and procedures, proper performance evaluation systems, career development, internal system of justice, to list but a few of the staff employment conditions which they have been defending.

As already reported by FICSA to its entire membership, it is obvious that the WIPO Director General has been seeking all possible means and avenues for silencing the WIPO Staff Association after its Staff Council blew the whistle on wrong-doing at WIPO, and his creation of this new stand-alone Staff Council with minimal resources and no experience is but a way of creating a management-friendly in-house Staff Council.

We must also inform you that the WIPO Director General's decision to create a new management-friendly Staff Council, as well as the alleged irregularities in the elections thereto, are being legally contested, firstly at the internal level and then at the ILOAT.

With great disappointment and alarm, FICSA learned that two days ago the WIPO Administration informed the WIPO Staff Association of the following: 1) The WIPO Staff Association must vacate their office and meeting room; 2) The Secretary of the WIPO Staff Association will be transferred to another sector; and 3) There will no longer be any release time for staff representatives of the WIPO Staff Association.

FICSA is drawing this matter to your attention not only in the interest of staff and staff representation, but also because if the WIPO Director General succeeds at replacing the Staff Council of the WIPO Staff Association by a management-friendly in-house Staff Council created by him, this could encourage similar actions in your respective organizations.

What the WIPO Director General is doing is an age-old union busting practice whereby if the current Staff Council/Association/Union does not do his bidding he conveniently creates a new one.

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Let us all say no to this by not entering into any contact with the WIPO Director General's new management-friendly Staff Council and follow the same policy which the Geneva-based staff associations/unions have always applied with ITU whereby all our contacts relative to ITU staff issues are with the ITU Staff Union (which is a member of FICSA) and not the ITU Staff Council which does not belong to and is not representative of any staff association/union. We kindly call upon all staff associations/unions in the common system to apply the same practice concerning WIPO, and discuss staff matters only with the staff representatives of the WIPO Staff Association.

We trust that we can count on your understanding, cooperation and solidarity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. El-Tabari', written over a large, light-colored oval shape.

Diab El-Tabari
FICSA President

cc. FICSA Executive Committee