



Brussels, 09 March 2021

**Note for the attention of Mr Stephen Quest, DG JRC, Mrs Ingestad, DG HR and Mrs Ilze Juhansone, Secretary General**

Subject: Reorganisation of unit G.2, JRC – Geel site

Dear Mr Quest, Mrs Ingestad and Mrs Juhansone,

Generation 2004 has received serious concerns from staff of unit G.2 at Geel site with respect to the announcement made 05 March 2021 by Ms Betti, Director of Directorate G, to split the unit in two parts and integrate them in the currently existing units G.I.5 and G.II.8 under the lead of Mr Caciuffo and Mr Lützenkirchen, respectively, both physically located at the Karlsruhe site. This decision would dissolve the position of the G.2 head of unit (HoU), currently occupied (ad interim since 01 March 2018) by Mr Plompen.

Staff of unit G.2 at Geel site fails to see the added value of this decision, and strongly regret that this decision has been taken with a complete lack of transparency and ignoring the Management Pledge and the JRC Values, in strong contrast with your initiative to ‘Reset, Re-imagine and Re-energise’ the JRC.

The decision comes straight after the announcement (at the 22 February 2021 senior management meeting) of a cut of 19.7% in the Euratom budget, which implies a reduction in staff over the next 7 years of 96 permanent staff and 33 contract agents. At the same meeting, you informed that ‘the Deputy Director-General Mr. Magenmann and Ms Betti were working on a new nuclear strategy to realign the activities of Dir. G, that more information will follow in March or April and that you will plan a longer discussion in the coming weeks with the team’. Staff request clarification that the decision to split unit G.2 is part of this strategy, which seems only to exist in a premature phase.

We also would like to mention that there are about 40 open posts in the JRC Project Browser for Dir. G, which have currently not been filled. This corresponds to about 1/3 of the required reduction. This also means that there is no urgent need to take a rash decision now. There is time to develop a proper nuclear strategy and its implementation.

In addition, staff raise their concern on the following implications:

- By the Belgian Royal Decree of 20/12/2000, the European Commission is authorised to operate the nuclear installations of the JRC-Geel site. In order to comply with Belgian legislation, the Commission delegates the role of nuclear licence holder to the Geel site director (Ares(2019)7169099). Since the JRC's reorganisation in 2016, this is the director of the non-nuclear directorate F (Health Physics Service), a very uncomfortable situation. Consequently, the G.2 HoU has a key role in discussions with the Belgian authorities, together with the head of directorate F. With the announced reorganisation in directorate G, the operational management of the nuclear activities at the Geel site in compliance with regulatory requirements becomes unnecessarily complicated.
- The management of the nuclear installations will have to be done by two HoUs who are not familiar with these installations. The installations are unique and different from those at the Karlsruhe site. A good relationship with unit R.6 for the maintenance of the installations is essential. It is more difficult to maintain this relationship via two remote HoU instead of one, present at the site.
- Unit G.2 currently has excellent performance, demonstrated by the number of scientific publications and impact cases, which significantly exceeds the average. Other examples are the FP7 *ex post* evaluation, the *Interim Evaluation of the Direct Actions under the Euratom Research and Training Programme, 2014 - 2018 of the Euratom direct actions*, and the external expert evaluation on the JRC's activities on reference materials. Splitting the unit will inevitably have negative implications on its performance.
- Having HoUs not physically present at the nuclear site hinders good management of its activities.

Staff also want to remind you of the outcome of the 2018 JRC Speak-Up survey, in which senior management of directorate G scored very low in comparison with other directorates (satisfaction score of 27% for directorate G as a whole, compared to 43% for the JRC as a whole).

The decision to split the unit and the way it has been taken, apparently also ignoring the consequences on staff health in these extraordinary times, is even more detrimental.

We therefore encourage you to reconsider this decision and to establish an open dialogue with the staff involved as well as with the representative trade unions and staff organisations.

Kind regards,

Łukasz WARDYN



Chair of Generation 2004

CC: Bernard MAGENHANN, Deputy Director General JRC, Maria Betti, Director Dir. G, Guy VAN DEN EEDE, Director Dir. F.