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Zentraler Personalausschuss  
Central Staff Committee  
Le Comité Central du Personnel

Munich, 04.10.2019  
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## Report on the meeting of Staff Representatives with VP 1 Stephen Rowan on CQI

In September 2019 your staff representatives met VP 1, Stephen Rowan, to discuss the Collaborative Quality Improvements (CQI) pilot project, which we have justified reason to believe will, at the latest from 2020, be rolled out office-wide and hence affect all examiners in their daily work.

We thanked VP 1 for the invitation, while stressing that we had been waiting more than nine months to meet him since he took up duties at the Office, despite several attempts from our side to arrange a meeting.

We then began with a positive note, explaining that we support Office efforts to foster collaboration within the Examining Division. There is thus consent in respect of the objective of CQI, although the suggested way of achieving that objective does not have our approval.

In particular, the bureaucratic overhead arising from recording deliberations between examiners involved in the pilot, and the permanent storage of these recordings, were criticised by us: according to VP 1 however there is no bureaucratic overhead. We explained then that deliberations in the examining division should remain confidential and a bureaucratic approach only fosters self-censorship ("*die Schere im Kopf*").

We continued to note that, in order to find acceptance, incentives should be provided, in particular, to the 2<sup>nd</sup> examiner and Chairman, in the form of time deduction or points. Some examiners in the pilot perceived CQI as an unnecessary burden, due to a loss of time when they could be working. Still, some 1<sup>st</sup> examiners and new recruits mostly welcomed the knowledge transfer opportunity.

We added, deviating a bit from the CQI pilot topic as such, that the quality of an examiner's work is not only affected by the degree of collaboration but also by working conditions, which have deteriorated considerably. Competition for steps and promotions in the New Career System torpedoes collaboration, whilst the fear of job loss in five/ten years' time for those on fixed-term contracts deprives younger recruits additionally of independence and impartiality. A short but controversial discussion on the document "Good enough?" ended with the statement that the administration is ready to discuss the document with us and prove that its entire assessment is wrong.

We mentioned that overloading examiners regularly with high production/productivity targets contributes also to a deterioration of quality. Furthermore, there is a correlation between the measured increase in sickness, the increase in granted patents, and the decrease in [DQA non-compliance indicators](#), the most problematic cluster currently being ICT. Last but not least, redistributing files from technical fields with sufficient backlog to examiners working in a significantly different technical field with insufficient backlog, as practiced in HBC, is also detrimental to quality.

### Learning from history

Our proposed solution is found in the past, and therefore does not require inventive skills.

CQI imposes collaboration as was ubiquitous between examiners before the Office turned its full attention to increasing efficiency.

Years ago there was enough time for the Examining Divisions to discuss applications. Recording deliberations was also not necessary as line managers were aware of deficiencies, and took appropriate measures in case of problems, e.g. by providing training courses.

### Conclusion

While we share a common objective with VP 1 to improve quality by fostering collaboration, we fail to see, currently, that the Office provides appropriate incentives.

CQI, as practised in the pilot, lacks the essential features needed to remedy the quality issue, such as rewarding collaboration in a measurable manner, respecting confidentiality within the Examining Division, abolishing a competition-based environment, providing secure jobs, and distributing application files to staff having the required technical expertise.

We are afraid that once CQI, if maintained in its current form, is rolled-out office-wide it will most likely result in ingenious attempts by examiners to circumvent the additional effort needed by them to implement it properly.

Based on VP 1's responses to our concerns, we are cautiously optimistic that VP 1 takes our proposals into account. We look forward to a detailed discussion with him on our "Good enough?" publication.

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Other notable improvements in KDE Plasma 5.17 include: 'Presentation' mode in notification centre. Improved captive portal detection. Improved Plasma widget resizing.

Plasma 5.16 was released in June with many feature refinements and new ... improvements to the AirPlane mode, improvements to the notification system ... Until then, if you're using the KDE Plasma 5.16 desktop environment on your ... Meanwhile, the KDE Project works hard on the next major release, KDE Plasma 5.17, .... KDE Plasma 5.17.4 Desktop Environment Released with Nearly 50 Fixes, Update Now ... 5.17 desktop environment, which brings more fixes and improvements for ... Plasma 5.17 was released in October 2019 with many feature refinements .... Type · Desktop environment · License · LGPLv2.1+. Website, www.kde.org/plasma-desktop. KDE Plasma 5 is the fifth and current generation of the graphical workspaces environment ... KDE Plasma 5 is on its own release schedule, with feature releases every ... "Wayland improvements since Plasma 5.8 release". ^ "KDE .... LXer: The Many Features of the KDE Plasma 5.19 Desktop Environment ... new features and improvements coming to the next major version, KDE Plasma 5.19.

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