

Ispra, 11 September 2014

TO THE ATTENTION OF
MR J.C. JUNCKER – PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Subject: Role and positioning of the Joint Research Centre within the Commission

Dear Mr Juncker,

As a Trade Union of the Directorate General Joint Research Centre, we have been very surprised to learn that the JRC has been placed under the responsibility of the Commissioner for “Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship”.

We note the JRC is also cited in the mandate of the Commissioner for “Research, Science & Innovation”. However, the rationale behind the re-positioning of a Directorate General strictly related to “Research” – up to the point that the word “Research” is present in its name – out of the “Research, Science & Innovation” portfolio is far from being easily understandable and is causing concern to JRC staff.

Additionally, the apparent overlap between the role of the Chief Scientific Advisor and the role of the JRC is also a major source of confusion. In fact, if it is true that the creation of a Chief Scientific Advisor position has contributed to bring science closer to the decision making process, it is also true that the in-house Science service of the Commission is the JRC, as clearly defined in its mission statement: *“As the Commission's in-house science service, the Joint Research Centre's mission is to provide EU policies with independent, evidence-based scientific and technical support throughout the whole policy cycle. Working in close cooperation with policy Directorates-General, the JRC addresses key societal challenges while stimulating innovation through developing new methods, tools and standards, and sharing its know-how with the Member States, the scientific community and international partners.”*

The JRC has up until now successfully supported the Commission policy making process and its staff is very keen to further develop its engagement with our fellow DGs. Despite this, the only indication that has so far been made available regarding our future is that the JRC *“should progressively develop its role as a service supporting all Commission services with its knowledge and its expertise”*.

Therefore we wish to bring to your attention the following questions raised by JRC staff:

- What is the political rationale behind the choice of portfolio?
- Will the mission of the JRC change and, if so, how?
- Can you confirm that the JRC will continue to be a Directorate General of the Commission?
- What are the differences and the relationship between the role of the Chief Scientific Advisor and that of the JRC?

For the reasons above, we believe further communication is owed to all JRC staff in order to clearly explain your strategy and to answer the questions that have been raised.

Waiting for your kind reply, please accept our best regards.

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