

EPO **FLIER** No. 26

The EPO-FLIER wants to provide staff with uncensored, independent information at times of social conflict

Moral compass and management's loss of it

The loss of moral compass of the higher management is nothing short of stomach-churning.

Unbridled craving for media exposure, unashamed cronyism in the pursuit of power concentration at the expense of checks and balance, abuse of our common assets for personal and exclusive benefit, vengeful oppression of dissenting opinions and immunity-bragging are now the norm. Coupled to a questionable taste for 1990s pseudo-corporate glamour, such trends have brought the mood in the organisation on par with that of Zamyatin's dystopia¹.

Some leaders are inspirational, some are not. Inspirational leaders always lead by example. Inspirational leaders place all their emphasis on the duties they have, not the privileges they could claim, and certainly not on any immunity they may have. Immunity is the trump card of the irresponsible.

Current higher management's taste for behind-the-scenes dealings, secrecy and information control is more than a warning sign; it presages the disintegration of the organisation. The collapse of moral values is always a prelude to disintegration.

'Science flourishes where art and free speech flourish' once wrote N. Stephenson. Given the current atmosphere, our organisation is not on course to flourish.

German/American political theorist Hannah Arendt has taught us that blindly obeying 'end-justifies-the-means' policies is a sure path to moral ruin. This has happened to us in a mere four years. The oligarchic drift of the higher management has now gone too far.

And what of the Administrative Council, who's members come to Munich and endorse policies which would be illegal – and immoral – in their home country? Policies should first and foremost be judged on their moral implications.

The idea that anything that can be made legal is always morally acceptable has been discredited in Europe for decades.

Maybe tough decisions on the course of action of our organisation are necessary, but no one – and certainly not the EPO's higher management – has shown that yet. If change were necessary, it would surely be possible to put the arguments convincingly to staff, which is an intelligent body of people, and they, in turn, would surely understand the need, and be ready to make sacrifices.

¹ Yevgeny Zamyatin's book "We", published in English in 1924, is a novel about life in a future world which has become a single state in which all citizens are permanently under surveillance, and potential dissenters are forcibly subjected to surgery to "correct" their psyche.

However the policies embodying this course of action can only be accepted from a leader who has moral authority, deriving from his core personal values and transparency.

It is our observation that scientists and engineers are always more efficiently led by scientists and engineers, as do and did Charles Bolden (head of NASA) and Anne Lauvergeon (on the board of companies such as Total and Vodaphone).

Austrian thinker Karl Polanyi warned us more than 60 years ago that there is great danger in deciding economic and industrial policies without having defined first the values of the society one wants to live in.

'We used to have the spirit of the M.I.T, now we have that of Lehman Brothers'
summarised a former member of our organisation.

The above text was proposed for publication by one of our colleagues two years ago. We publish it now since we think that it is even more valid than ever before.

EPO staff, national members of parliament, interested circles and the European public must publicly deplore the current system where

- **president and Council are morally corrupt, and**
- **are actively engaging in destroying the Organisation which the member states have entrusted in their care**

in order to provide an incentive to reinstate a moral authority in the supervisory body and at the higher management levels of the European Patent Office.