

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances (PSA – see Appendix 1 for participants) met virtually on 20 January 2023 and as a hybrid (in person and online) on 7–9 February to pursue its agenda, and elected Wadzanai Garwe (AP-in-FAO) as Rapporteur. PSA met in a joint session with the standing committees on Human Resources Management (HRM) and Staff–Management Relations (SMR) on 8 February 2023 for a broader discussion about staff overtime/compensation (see Appendix 2 for Recommendations); in addition, PSA’s Permanent Technical Committee (PTC/PSA) met on 5 February 2023.

Activities in 2022

2. PSA discussed the actions taken to implement [decisions of the 75th session of the FICSA Council](#) on professional salaries and allowances. It discussed the case of the Montréal education grant extensively, learning about both the Provincial Québec legislation that imposed a ceiling on the tuition fee amount and the amendment to section 3.1(b) of the UN Secretariat Administrative Instruction on the education grant and related benefits ([ST/AI/2018/1/REV.1/AMEND.1](#)). The latter had prevented the FICSA Secretariat from writing a letter to the heads of UN organizations in Montréal and their headquarters, requesting that all mandatory expenses required for a child’s full-time school attendance be fully considered and reimbursed, according to decision FICSA/C/75/D/22. The education grant therefore remained an issue affecting Professional staff in Montréal. Nevertheless, the new education grant scale reimbursement had been applied successfully across all organizations.
3. To implement decision FICSA/C/75/D/22, a tabular-format summary of the changes made to the compensation package in the previous review had been developed, to serve as reference for the upcoming review (see [FICSA/C/75/PSA/CRP.01](#)), including a summary of the changes that affected Professional staff. In addition, FICSA had used training to strengthen technical competence to face upcoming challenges that included training on the compensation-package methodologies and [training](#) to revitalize PSA/PTC (two “Ask the FICSA Expert” sessions). It also advocated for ICSC training to local survey committees (LSCs) in preparation for the cost-of living (COL) surveys. Training on ICSC COL survey methodology and operational rules training/webinar had been given in multiple duty stations (Geneva, Kuala Lumpur, Bonn, Brindisi, Montréal, etc.) prior to the rollout of surveys in 2022/2023 (decision FICSA/C/75/D/24).

4. To implement decision FICSA/C/75/D/25, the FICSA ExCom had supported the concept of work-life balance, for example, by commenting on Chief Executives Board (CEB) documents. In addition, PSA had developed a [survey](#) on the policies and practices regarding additional compensation for overtime working hours for P staff. When data collection was successfully concluded, PSA would analyse, evaluate and report on the findings.

Recommendations

- **PSA recommended that:**
 - a. **FICSA members based in Montréal (at ICAO, SCBD and UNESCO UIS) should inform any newly arriving International Professional (IP) staff about the specific challenges associated with the education grant reimbursement scheme in some Montréal institutions.**
 - b. **The FICSA Executive Committee should request the ICSC Secretariat to propose an amicable solution to the definition of admissibility of school expenses as per the [March 2022 judgement of the UN Administrative Tribunal \(2022-UNAT-1221\)](#) at ICSC's 2023 summer session to be held in Montréal, or at any time when that issue would be put on the agenda.**

COL surveys

5. PSA discussed COL surveys in both HQ and other duty stations, including the resolution of the problem of two different post-adjustment multipliers being used in Geneva.
6. All COL surveys of HQ duty stations based on the new P salary methodology had been performed successfully, with one exception (Bangkok). The discussion of the results by the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had resulted in a salary increase across all HQ duty stations implemented in August 2022.
7. The UPU staff association representatives informed the PSA of the UN General Assembly request to the ICSC to conduct a study on the feasibility and impact of establishing a separate post adjustment index for Bern ([A/RES/76/240](#)) and; requested support from other staff associations in the rollout of COL surveys, which would be the first for staff in Bern. PSA suggested that those participants consult with staff representatives working in Geneva, and continue to work closely with the FICSA ExCom and Secretariat on that matter.
8. Following the successful implementation of COL surveys in HQ duty stations, the surveys for non-HQ duty stations had started in 2023 and would continue in the coming years. PSA reviewed a scheduled timetable of surveys for 2023. PSA advised all staff representatives to raise awareness of COL surveys in field locations – by, for example, holding information sessions and highlighting the resources available on the FICSA and ICSC websites – and urge all staff to take part and fill out the form correctly.
9. To address the Geneva exception, the amendments to the ICSC Statute by [UNGA resolution 77/256 A–B](#) clarified ICSC's role in establishing the post adjustment multiplier. The new statute would need to be countersigned by all executive heads of UN organizations. PSA noted, however, that how the dual salary scale in Geneva would be fully reconciled, in view of the loss of take-home pay expected to be incurred by staff in some (mainly specialized) organizations, remained unclear.

Recommendations

- **PSA recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **continue to request that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) trains local survey committees (LSCs) in preparation for the cost-of-living (COL) surveys planned for 2023–2024.**
 - b. **continue to encourage ICSC to organize hybrid training sessions on the new COL methodology and operational rules for Professional staff prior to any COL survey round.**
 - c. **monitor the rollout of future COL surveys and continue to encourage staff association representation, including sharing of relevant information via the relevant FICSA regional representatives; and**
 - d. **request ICSC to share examples of the terms of reference for LSCs used in the previous COL surveys, revise them with the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances and post the result on the website as a baseline to ensure that minimum standards are applied at all duty stations.**

Comprehensive review of the compensation package

10. PSA discussed FICSA's role in ICSC's upcoming comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation system for UN staff, requested by the UN General Assembly in [resolution 77/256](#). To be completed by 2026, it would include a detailed analysis of cost-effectiveness, attractiveness and impact on the workforce, and proposals for updating parameters and comparators.
11. FICSA was monitoring developments closely and gearing up its activities, committees, and resources to participate actively in the review while continuing to reiterate its positions: FICSA advocated achieving cost-efficiency through comprehensive reviews of ways of working, to ensure that the international civil service remained independent and fit for purpose, and not through a continuous cycle of resource-intensive reviews of the compensation package. A FICSA Executive Committee member described the length of the review process and stressed the need for FICSA to allocate sufficient attention and budget resources to participate in the various ICSC working groups in various capacities.

Recommendations

- **PSA recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **continue closely to monitor the development of the ICSC review of the compensation package for UN staff, and promptly inform the FICSA membership of any important events; and**
 - b. **ensure that a FICSA representative and/or expert is physically present at the meetings of all UN bodies and/or ICSC working groups doing work related to that review.**

Latest updates

12. Staff members had welcomed the “Ask FICSA Expert” workshop originally planned to revitalize PSA/PTC. All the staff representatives who participated had benefitted and expressed interest in further such workshops.

Recommendations

- PSA recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee, in collaboration and coordination with the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances, should continue the successful “Ask the FICSA Expert” training sessions for staff representatives on all topics related to Professional salaries and allowances, with a particular focus on cost-of-living (COL) surveys, seeking the most effective way to fill out the survey form and to increase understanding of the operational rules. FICSA staff representatives attending those sessions should share their new knowledge with their colleagues, to develop staff capacity and to improve the understanding of COL surveys to increase effective participation.

Any other business

13. Following the capacity-building training on 5 February 2023, six PSA members agreed to join PTC/PSA. PSA would develop a mailing list of all staff who attended its meetings and brief them when necessary.

Nomination of SC Officers and core group members

14. PSA nominated:
 - Andrea Palazzi (UNAIDS) as Chair
 - Houcine Mhadhbi (IAEA) as 1st Vice-Chair
 - Tonia Rifaey (WHO/EMRO) as 2nd Vice-Chair
 - Leolinda Dieme (UPU) as 3rd Vice-Chair.

Appendix 1. Participants

Officers

Chair/Coordinator	Andrea Palazzi (UNAIDS)
Vice-Chairs	Houcine Mhadhbi (IAEA), Tonia Rifaey (WHO/EMRO), Leolinda Dieme (UPU)
Rapporteur	Wadzanai Garwe (AP-in-FAO)
FICSA General Secretary	Cosimo Melpignano
FICSA ExCom member	Line Kaspersen (AP-in-FAO), Véronique Allain (SCBD)

Staff association/union

AP-in-FAO	Florence de Tartanac
IAEA	Mariia Mikheieva
ICAO	Helena Debussy
IMO	Lionel Shen
PAHO/WHO	Pilar Ramon-Pardo
UNESCO	Lina Oweis, Denis Pitzalis, Vivian Zaccaria
UNFCCC	Tracy Tollmann, Marsha Cheddi
UPU	Birahim Fall, Magali Vifian
WHO/AFRO	Benito Koubemba
WHO/EMRO	Tonia Rifaey
WHO/EURO	Oleksandr Martynenko
WHO/HQ	Jérôme Zanga Foe
WHO/SEARO	Ritesh Singh

Members with associate status

CERN	Joel Lahaye
IOM	Ivona Todorovska

Associations with consultative status

EMBL	Dienty Hazenbrink
OAS	Maria-Isabel Rivero de los Campos

Appendix 2. Joint Committee PSA – HRM – SMR

Recommendation

The Joint Committee recommended that Staff Association Representatives should familiarize themselves with the ICSC guidelines on overtime for General Service Staff* and the terms of the Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) which is not designed to cover overtime for staff on missions or official travel.

*Note: As per Annex 1, point 2 of the ICSC guidelines “The GS staff required to work overtime may receive compensatory time off or additional non-pensionable payments according to conditions established by the organizations”:

https://ficsa.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ICSC_Appointment_Types_and_Staff_Categories.pdf
