



**EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK**  
**EUROSYSTEM**

**ECB-PUBLIC**

Mario DRAGHI  
President

Mr Fabio De Masi  
Member of the European Parliament  
European Parliament  
60, rue Wiertz  
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Frankfurt, 16 November 2015

L/MD/15/633

**Re: Your letters (QZ-143 and 144)**

Honourable Member of the European Parliament, dear Mr De Masi,

Thank you for your letters, which were passed on to me by Mr Roberto Gualtieri, Chairman of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, accompanied by a cover letter dated 12 October 2015.

I had the opportunity to clarify in detail the ECB's policy regarding agency staff in a letter to your colleague Mr Jonás Fernández, MEP, dated 15 May 2015.<sup>1</sup> At present, there are approximately 300 agency staff at the ECB: of these, two-thirds are in supporting technical functions, mostly in IT but also in premises and logistics; the remaining workers mainly provide temporary secretarial support or perform administrative tasks.

The ECB's Executive Board has analysed the ECB's recourse to agency staff and concluded that efforts should be made to reduce the reliance on agency staff by reprioritising certain activities, streamlining processes, outsourcing (for non-core activities), or providing additional headcount. These initiatives are ongoing and tangible results are expected soon.

Moreover, in line with the German Coalition Government's proposal to establish a maximum limit for agency staff assignments within the same institution, the ECB's Executive Board has decided that agency staff assignments at the ECB for secretarial or administrative work should not exceed two years. This measure was taken in the context of the aforementioned analysis and aims at preparing the organisation for the expected changes in legislation. Transitional measures have been put in place for agency staff members who

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<sup>1</sup> The letter is accessible on the ECB's website at [http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/150522letter\\_fernandez.en.pdf](http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/150522letter_fernandez.en.pdf)

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were already working at the ECB, including initiatives to further increase agency staff's success rate when applying to ECB positions and a one-year contract extension for agency staff members who were already at the ECB. As a result, so far, no members of agency staff have had to leave the ECB because of the new two-year limit. In fact, over 50 agency staff members have successfully applied to ECB positions over the past 24 months.

Let me also clarify that all staff members carrying out IT operational tasks at the ECB undergo the same security clearance procedures and are subject to the same security policies and equivalent obligations, regardless of their contractual relationship with the ECB. For security-sensitive IT tasks, the ECB applies the "four-eyes principle", designed to ensure that said tasks are performed and/or controlled by more than one individual. Moreover, the ECB uses a range of technical and procedural controls in order to prevent, or detect in a timely manner, possible abuses of access rights to IT systems, and the information stored therein, by IT personnel with special privileges, regardless of their contractual relationship with the ECB. The ECB keeps up to speed with technical developments in this area via dedicated ongoing activities or projects that strengthen the controls by applying the most advanced technical tools available.

Finally, I already had the opportunity to discuss the findings of the ECB staff survey in a letter to you, dated 17 September 2015.<sup>2</sup> As could be expected for any institution, the survey revealed opportunities for improvement in certain areas, including professional and career development. As regards the "apparent impression of favouritism" relating to career progression in particular, I would like to stress that the ECB follows recruitment and promotion procedures in line with best practice, including checks and balances and diverse selection panels that comprise, among others, a human resources representative, a representative from a "third" ECB business area (i.e. a different one to the hiring business area), and a gender balanced representation. These mechanisms are designed to ensure transparency and consistency in the recruitment and promotion process, and that the most competent candidates are selected. Further analysis of the feedback received as part of the survey is being undertaken to allow, where needed, the necessary improvement measures to be developed, both by individual business areas and at the level of the ECB as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Mario Draghi

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<sup>2</sup> The letter is accessible on the ECB's website at [http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/150918letter\\_demasi\\_2.en.pdf](http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/150918letter_demasi_2.en.pdf)

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