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STAFF ASSOCIATION

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FLEXITIME

We have recently received the preliminary results of our survey on Flexitime from Professor Rousson of the University of Neuchâtel. Below we give his summary and comments on how representative the replies are.

The final results will be published in a Proton.

SUMMARY

What do people know and what do they think about flexitime in general? What advantages does it hold for us? What sort of flexitime do people prefer? What are the risks for individual staff and for the Organization? It is from these questions that certain trends have emerged which we summarize below.

The analysis first shows that Flexitime is very often understood to mean not so much a reduction of working time in the strict sense but rather as an opportunity for variety and flexibility. There is widespread acceptance of the idea that if there is a higher workload in a given period, then it could be made up by time off.

Generally speaking there is a positive attitude towards flexitime and a majority think that the Staff Association should open negotiations with the Management.

However, some difficulties are foreseen and there is a feeling that it would not be as easy to implement for some jobs (physicists, engineers, technicians) as for others (staff with a trade and administrative staff).

Moreover, there are minimum manning requirements in most services and it is felt that there should be no reduction in human resources. Everyone and more particularly supervisors are aware of this problem.

For the Organization the most important advantage seems to be the potential to adjust to variable (especially seasonal) workloads. The individual is seen to have most advantage in his or her family life.

It should be noted that the survey gave some people the opportunity of thinking about flexitime and they were more favourable to it as a result.

QUESTIONNAIRES SENT OUT/QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED

Comparison with previous surveys

	1982	1985	1986
Questionnaires sent out	3500	3500	3500
Questionnaires returned	1867	1740	1299
Usable questionnaires	1772	1730	1282
Void/incomplete questionnaires	95	10	17
Percentage	53%	50%	37%
.....usable replies	51%	49%	36%

The table shows that of the approximately 3500 questionnaires distributed, 1299 were returned, of which 1282 could be used in the analysis. As in previous surveys, some people did not reply or only very sketchily, the majority of those pleading lack of time. Others substituted replies to the questionnaire with an explanation of their views of flexitime.

Of the questionnaires returned, **the reply rate was 37% (36% analysed)**. In comparison with the surveys conducted at CERN so far, this is a low figure (down 16%). That is not really surprising since it has also emerged from other surveys or in other organizations. In this case it might be attributable to a number of reasons : **thickness of the questionnaire** (several people said that it seemed too big), **repetition, possible doubts about the effects** of such an investigation, etc... All these factors play a role when taken together.

POPULATION AND REPRESENTATIVITY

1282 questionnaires were analysed.

We shall consider the replies in respect to the questionnaire's criteria, in comparison, where possible, with the real CERN population.

The proportion of men and women in the sample is equivalent to the CERN population in 1985, i.e. 86% men and 14% women. The majority is married (82%) with children (76%).

Age : the majority of replies (74%) are between 36 and 55 and only 17% between 18 and 35 (the breakdown is as follows: 2% between 18 and 25, 15% between 26 and 35). 7% are 56 and over.

As for years of service, there is a predominance of people with long service, 62% have been at CERN for more than 16 years, 22% between 11 and 15 years, or 84% of replies have been working at CERN for more than 11 years. Of the remaining 16%, 6% joined within 5 years and 7% have been here for 6-10 years.

The level of qualifications is quite high. 80% of replies have special training: 27% technical qualifications; 25% higher technical qualifications and 28% are university graduates. 4% stopped after their compulsory schooling while 15% have completed an apprenticeship or have secondary school qualifications.

In the professional categories, technical activities are overrepresented while manual workers are underrepresented. This occurred in previous surveys too. For the other categories, the proportion is about the same as for CERN. There are also some differences as regards grades: grades 3-5 are underrepresented to an extent while grades 8-10 are overrepresented.

Given the changes at CERN (in connection with LEP in particular) we cannot make comparisons between the Divisions. We have not enough information **about supervised staff** to interpret results on those lines.

What can we say about the representative nature of our sample ?

Based on the data which allowed us to make comparisons, this survey seems similar to previous ones. However, there is **overrepresentation of some grades (8-10), and technical, professional categories and underrepresentation of grades (3-5) and lower professional categories** (manual workers). That means that, in the results, the opinions of the higher levels will have relatively more weight than those of others.