

Ispra, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024

NOTE TO THE ATTENTION OF  
COMMISSIONER MS ILIANA IVANOVA

**Subject: Our vision for the future of the Ispra site**

Dear Ms Ivanova,

We would like to thank you for your visit to the Ispra site in December and for your recognition of our important work, which has been very much appreciated by the staff.

R&D, which is the most representative Trade Union at Ispra (and the leading one within the European Institutions), wishes to elaborate in more detail some proposals for the future of our site, which had been mentioned during your meeting with the Local Staff Committee.

As you could witness yourself, the Ispra site provides a welcoming and productive working environment, with excellent facilities and opportunities. In our opinion, **the Ispra site has a huge untapped potential that, if fully exploited, could make it even more important and strategic for the whole Commission.**

Ispra is the third largest Commission site, located at the geographical heart of the European Union, and close to major international airports (Milan Malpensa and Linate). The presence of a European School in Varese is also invaluable and is central to the attractiveness of the site.

Ispra is the principal site of the JRC and hosts services of DG HR, PMO and OIB (limited to the management of social services – crèche and garderie, the clubhouse and canteen).

The Ispra site also hosts a very **advanced crisis management infrastructure** and can provide increased resilience through decentralisation and geo-distribution of vital Commission services, thus guaranteeing business continuity in case of extreme events impeding their normal functioning at other locations.

As you know, the JRC mission is to provide scientific evidence to policy making. In doing so, we collaborate intensely with colleagues from policy DGs. We believe that this collaboration would be strengthened through direct interaction with our partners, by the **establishment of local proximity teams (“antennae”) of other DGs at Ispra.** This would furthermore strengthen the entire policy making process within the Commission. The fact that the Ispra site has its own

premises should facilitate the availability of the necessary space and support to colleagues coming to Ispra from other DGs for short – or even long – periods.

The presence of several Commission services at the Ispra site would also **facilitate voluntary mobility of staff between different DGs and entities**, making it possible to implement, also at Ispra, the recent HR strategy to increase mobility and diversity across the Commission and making it a natural part of career development. This is a shared goal for staff and the Institution, which we fully support.

An enabling factor for the success of our proposal could consist in the creation of a dedicated entity for the management of the conventional (non-nuclear related) infrastructure which is currently managed by the JRC itself. In other words, an office that could eventually take care of the infrastructure of all JRC sites (a possible acronym for this entity could be OIR, i.e., Office Infrastructure Recherche). A new Office would offer a standardised service to all entities present on the Ispra site, including the new DG proximity teams.

This new infrastructure management of the Ispra site would be aligned with the way it is managed in Luxembourg and Brussels. Indeed, recently DG COMM has transferred out the management of its infrastructure (to OIB) as it was a distraction from its core mission - similarly, the JRC would become fitter and stronger, purely focusing on its role to provide scientific, evidence-based support to EU policies. This could also offer, at no additional cost, more stable employment conditions to Contractual Agents working on infrastructure, whose current contracts with the JRC are limited to 6 years, whereas they could be indeterminate contracts if they were to be concluded with an Office.

We would be enthusiastic to see our site **rebranded as an EU Research and Policy Hub**, beyond simply being identified with the JRC, and we count on your support to make this vision possible. Of course, we are available to further elaborate our proposal and discuss with you our ideas in the best interest of the Ispra site and the Commission as a whole.

Yours Sincerely,

**Cristiano Sebastiani**  
President, R&D Brussels

**Gianfranco Selvagio**  
President, R&D Ispra

Cc: Secretary-General - Ms Ilze Juhansone, Director-General JRC - Mr Stephen Quest