



**STAFF UNION BULLETIN**  
**BULLETIN DU SYNDICAT**  
**BOLETIN DEL SINDICATO**

5 January 2015

## **Last results from the UN General Assembly related to conditions of work and employment of the Staff**

### **Retirement age**

The General Assembly has for the first time decided in principle that staff who joined before 2014 will be able to choose to retire at 65. It has asked the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to consult with the organizations and recommend an implementation date.

This is a major step forward as it recognizes 65 for the first time, after many years of postponement and despite complete opposition by many of the organizations. A lot of preparatory work went into this (see [CCISUA brief](#) and [CCISUA speech to the General Assembly from 25:30](#)). We will now work on the issue of the implementation date.

### **Professional salaries**

The General Assembly decided not to cut professional salaries. Instead it has left it to the ICSC to manage the margin (the difference between US salaries and ours), so that it returns to a spread of 15 percent.

The US had wanted the average margin of the last five years to be 15 percent. However, because the calendar margin has been above 15 percent for some years, this would have meant an immediate 8 percent pay cut and would have set a precedent where today's compensation is set by the labour market of five years ago. This [CCISUA brief](#) and [CCISUA speech to the General Assembly from 25:30](#) explained these consequences.

### **UN Holidays**

The General Assembly decided not to make Yom Kippur, Vesak, Diwali, Gurpurb, and Orthodox Christmas UN holidays to the detriment of our local holidays. Instead, the Secretary-General is asked to look at ways of not having major meetings on those days.

This is a successful result for our campaign, which included [a joint letter to the General Assembly](#), a Huffington Post piece ([The UN General Assembly Is Stuck in Negotiations... Over When to Take Its](#)

[Holidays](#)) and direct contact with certain delegations. Our local holidays are preserved, while the concerns of delegates who do not want to miss out on their religious festivals because of major meetings is taken into account.

### **Benefits for same-sex married partners**

Earlier this year the Secretary-General [revised an administrative bulletin](#), thereby providing benefits such as medical insurance for same sex married partners of UN staff. Russia proposed a vote to reverse that decision. The vote has now been postponed to April.

Our understanding is that the supporters of this vote no longer felt confident they had the numbers to have the vote passed. This follows an intensive lobbying campaign in the days leading up to and just after Christmas, by staff unions, UN-GLOBE (the UN LGBT association), certain countries and the Secretary-General's office, [including a joint letter from the federations](#).

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