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## European Patent Office employees take action against Director's 'tyranny'

THE HAGUE - Employees of the European Patent Office (EPO) in Rijswijk will be taking action against their director Benoît Battistelli on Thursday. This is according to the FNV. The demonstration will be held at 12.00 on Square 1813 (Plein 1813) in The Hague.

The reason for this action is the poor relationship between the staff and Director Battistelli. The situation at the EPO has been unsettled for years. Hundreds of employees also made their dissatisfaction with the [working atmosphere known in April and January](#). The direct reason behind one of those demonstrations was the [dismissal of two colleagues](#) and demotion of a third.

The staff are now speaking again of the director's 'tyranny'. 'Battistelli rules with an iron fist and does not tolerate input or contradiction. He dismisses people as he pleases, demotes them, makes unilateral changes to the working conditions and is therefore demotivating the whole organisation,' according to the FNV trade union.

### Dutch Government

FNV union official Marieke Manschot does not understand why the [Dutch Government is not intervening](#). 'Surely the Dutch Government cannot allow these kinds of abuses to take place on their own soil? If this had happened at a Dutch employer, there would have been outrage.'

'Battistelli must not be allowed to hide behind immunity,' says Manschot. 'It's high time that State Secretary Van Dam acted and stood up for the employees of the EPO. The FNV is right behind these employees.'

### Restructuring and dialogue

A spokesperson for the EPO said in January that Battistelli was working on a major restructuring to modernise the organisation. 'Of course this results in a reaction from the staff. Everyone finds changes difficult.' He also disputed the fact that a [culture of fear](#) reigned.

The demonstrators want State Secretary Van Dam for Economic Affairs to take action against Battistelli. The minister previously stated in April that, at the insistence of the member states of the European Patent Organisation (EPOrg), 'a dialogue had been entered into' between the management of the EPO and the trade unions. Van Dam had to admit at the time that the dialogue was not going smoothly.

By: Editorial