

# UNITED, WE ARE BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE

*FICSA explained*



**FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS**  
**FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS DE FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX**

## FICSA explained

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### GOVERNANCE

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FICSA organizes yearly councils with seven Standing Committees<sup>1</sup> and two Ad Hoc Committees<sup>2</sup> that develop member-driven decisions and resolutions on topics ranging from legal questions to staff-management relations

FICSA is based on a solid democratic structure that ensures alignment of its member staff associations/unions with FICSA positions and majority decisions

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### SECRETARIAT

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FICSA has a democratically elected President and General Secretary who are fully released from their organizations for a 2-year term. A proposed cost-sharing methodology ensures that supported candidates from any member staff association/union can apply to these positions without the parent organization bearing the full cost of the releases

FICSA has a staffed secretariat with institutional memory including an Information/Research Officer

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### REPRESENTATION

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FICSA reaches out to representatives of Member States in promoting staff interests

FICSA actively represents the interests of international civil servants in inter-agency bodies and legislative organs of the common system

FICSA is the only Staff Federation which represents the interests of staff of the specialized agencies

FICSA represents staff at the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) which periodically reviews all conditions of service, including

- the post adjustment methodology for staff in the Professional and higher categories
- the salary survey methodologies used for purposes of establishing salaries of local staff, including those of the General Service category

FICSA acts as independent observer in cost-of-living surveys that determine post adjustment

FICSA has observer status in several inter-agency bodies including the Pension Fund Board, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN)

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### INTERVENTION

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FICSA intervenes with management of an organization upon request of the respective member association/union

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<sup>1</sup> Standing Committees on Legal Questions, HR Management, Social Security/Occupational Health & Safety, Conditions in the Field, General Service Questions, Professional Salaries and Allowances, Staff-Management Relations

<sup>2</sup> Ad Hoc Committees on Strategic Development and Administrative and Budgetary Questions

FICSA formulates strategies, both locally and globally, to prevent violations of staff rights

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#### *COORDINATION*

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FICSA coordinates the exchange of information between its members

FICSA coordinates support for individual member associations/unions

FICSA coordinates industrial action

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#### *INFORMATION*

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FICSA issues regular communications and circulars to its members

FICSA informs all staff on issues affecting their conditions of service

FICSA informs staff about their rights, and works with its members to ensure that the organizations respect those rights

FICSA produces position papers on the technical aspects of conditions of service

FICSA provides guidelines on how staff associations should deal with organizational reform

FICSA leadership meets with the members throughout the year

FICSA has its own [FICSA magazine](#)

FICSA regularly updates its library of documents on its website with the most recent documentation from high-level meetings, representative statements, reports and news

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#### *LEGAL PROTECTION*

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FICSA offers its member an attractive legal protection insurance package

FICSA maintains a legal defense fund for its members

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#### *EXPERTISE*

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FICSA maintains a list of experienced international lawyers who have been vetted by FICSA

FICSA provides expert advice to its member associations/unions in relation to their rights

FICSA has a large network of experts with various expertise on which it can draw

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#### *TRAINING*

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FICSA has a carefully chosen pool of expert trainers who train staff representatives on a variety of topics relevant to them

FICSA frequently sends one or more of its experts to train local salary survey committees well in advance of the conduct of their salary surveys

FICSA training is freely accessible to FICSA members and special conditions apply to members from the other Federations through a joint-cooperation agreement

FICSA updates its training catalogue on a regular basis

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#### *OVERSIGHT*

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FICSA closely follows the biannual sessions of the ILO Administrative Tribunal to ensure consistency in the application of ILOAT jurisprudence

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#### *RESOURCE*

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FICSA is a valuable resource to your staff association/union in that it

- ✓ shares important information which can be used in preparing for high level discussions
  - ✓ provides prevailing arguments supported by evidence readily for use in staff-management discussions
  - ✓ collects good practices from across the membership
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#### *COLLABORATION*

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FICSA has established joint-cooperation agreements with both of its sister federations

FICSA collaborates with CCISUA and UNISERV in the development of joint studies and the joint hiring of experts

FICSA and UNISERV deliver statements on each other's behalf in high-level meetings

FICSA prepares joint communications for review by the other Federations

FICSA shares their statements and arguments with the other Federations in preparation for high level meetings

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#### *HISTORY*

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Founded in Paris in 1952, FICSA fosters the development of the international civil service in accordance with the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and the constitutions of the specialized agencies:

- Defending staff rights
- Ensuring that equitable conditions of service for all common system staff are maintained at a level which will ensure the recruitment and retention of the most qualified people
- Contributing to a positive image of the international civil service

The organizations for which international civil servants work are sovereign and national labour laws do not apply to them. Staff conditions of service are governed by rules and regulations defined by the organizations and are approved by their Member States. Salaries and benefits are governed by the International Civil Service Commission. Grievances are handled by the organizations' internal justice systems and by the UN or ILO Administrative Tribunals.

### **Does FICSA really have the power to change things?**

Yes, FICSA is mandated to participate in the inter-agency bodies where decisions are taken about conditions of service and can influence those decisions. FICSA participates in discussions and presents technical papers to defend staff positions.

### **What are the Federation's greatest achievements over the years?**

FICSA's actions have:

- Coordinated the preparation of legal briefs which resulted in staff winning their appeals at the ILOAT, such as the recent judgments on the pay cut
- Successfully challenged proposed cuts in pensions and secure a more equitable adjustment for pension beneficiaries
- Obtained increases in allowances and benefits, e.g., children's allowance, installation grant, hazard pay
- Obtained a dependent spouse allowance for the first dependent child in the case of single parents
- Obtained the creation of an ICSC Contact Group to review the consultative process and working arrangements of the ICSC
- Obtained a total review of the current post adjustment methodology and its operational rules
- Obtained an increase in pensionable remuneration rates
- Enabled staff representatives to address and resolve challenging staff-management matters
- Prevented the misuse of national professional officer contract modalities
- Drawn attention of the ICSC and the Pension Board to the consequences of the increased use of non-staff contracts
- Secured an equitable education grant scheme
- Enhanced reviews of the internal system of justice and the appeals process
- Protected the staff-management consultative process
- Preserved staff rights when organizations reform and re-profile
- Enhanced the voice of staff in inter-agency bodies
- Influenced contractual modalities
- Ensured access to personal files
- Improved the content of cost-of-living questionnaires
- Obtained leave for parents in cases of child adoption
- Improved security in all duty stations, especially for all staff at high-risk duty stations
- Improved the hardship and mobility scheme