



Statement regarding the transition from MAS to service contracts

It has come to our attention that ESA is working on a transformation from MAS to service contracts. Many of the affected employees are deeply concerned and feel great uncertainty regarding this transition. Their apprehensions extend beyond merely their positions, including broader issues such as job satisfaction and the perception of their status within ESA. Such sentiments were previously highlighted in a survey conducted throughout 2022, and it appears that these concerns have only intensified since then.

In various presentations outlining this transition, it has been stressed that "nothing will change".

Indeed, certain aspects will not change, since the nature of the work remains the same: contractors will fulfil in most cases the same function as ESA staff colleagues (as established by the SZW report of 2022), interfacing with industry on behalf of ESA, and working hand with hand with ESA staff as peers, not as a commodity. Contractors will also have the same limitations they suffer today for a fair professional advancement, left on the hands of contracting companies. They will have the same lack of reward for a job well done, they will suffer the same subtle discriminations when it comes to merit recognition.

However, there are aspects that will change: contractors will perceive a diminished sense of being "part of ESA", team spirit and togetherness with ESA colleagues will weaken. Moreover, their "job security" will be "compromised", as they are increasingly regarded as anonymous service providers rather than valuable individuals with unique skills and experience. Additionally, the introduction of an additional layer of bureaucratic procedures, of questionable added value, will reduce efficiency in day-to-day operations.

So what is the rationale behind this new policy?

It appears this is driven by the urgent need to adapt to changes in Dutch legislation concerning the MAS framework, as enacted in 2020 by the Waadi Act. However, rather than adhering to the principle of equal compensation for equal work, ESA and the contracting companies seem to have opted for the implementation of a formal legal scaffolding that does not align with the spirit of the law, disregarding the interests of those affected.

In light of these developments, we wish to emphasize our commitment to vigilance in ensuring compliance with the law and advocating for the rights of contractor employees to equitable working conditions, as delineated by the Act's provisions. We intend to investigate and if feasible to pursue all available union means that the Dutch law provides for this claim.

We therefore urge ESA to reconsider and stop this transition, listen to the grievances expressed by contractors, ensure that any new contractual arrangements take into account the well-being of contractors, honour the ESA principles of fairness and transparency, and embrace both Dutch legislation and European Union Directives in this respect.

CNV members working as contractors at ESA