

# Generation 2004

## Newsletter no.18

July 2016

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***We sincerely extend our profound sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the many bereaved families for their great and irreplaceable loss from the recent horrific tragedies and terrorist attacks.***



## Revolving doors & revolting morals

As you have probably heard in the media, our dear ex-President Jose-Manuel B. is going to join Goldman Sachs International to advise them, in particular on the Brexit. It will happen with respect of the 18 months cooling-period currently in place. However, we do consider that Mr B. appointment at a bank involved in the subprime and Greek crises risks to cause serious damage to the EU's reputation and the European Project and that it is a blatant example of failure to 'behave with integrity and discretion', which according to Article 245 TEU is the moral imperative for members of the Commission with regard to the acceptance, after they have ceased to hold office, of certain appointments or benefits. In the case of greedy Mr. B. it would therefore be imperative to make his transfer to the gilded office of Goldman-Sachs slightly less beneficial by acting on the basis of Article 245 TFEU and cut his pension benefits.

Therefore the following short satiric lines are more than convenient to show you the difference between being on the right position or being just regular employee of EC: As not so far ago people have been asked to declare outside activities to the appointing authorities, in this case to the Commission, which was illustrated with a 'baking cake' example. Please be therefore careful when baking cakes for the kids' end-of-year party at school. You may be breaching some ethics rules. Don't forget to ask the appointing authority if that is ok for them, otherwise you may risk breaking some eggs. Luckily, you can do it directly in Sysper



**Too all our colleagues, the Generation 2004 is closely monitoring the unclear situations appearing after the UK referendum. At this moment we can only say we will carry on with this and come with the appropriate action when necessary to protect all the staff affected. Therefore we appointed one of our British colleagues to help us on this issue.**



We are now a couple of weeks after the UK Brexit referendum. We have all lived through the first wave of shock caused by the unexpected outcome (was it unexpected?), the emotional outburst, the apocalyptic prophesies and the hectic political activity of the first days.

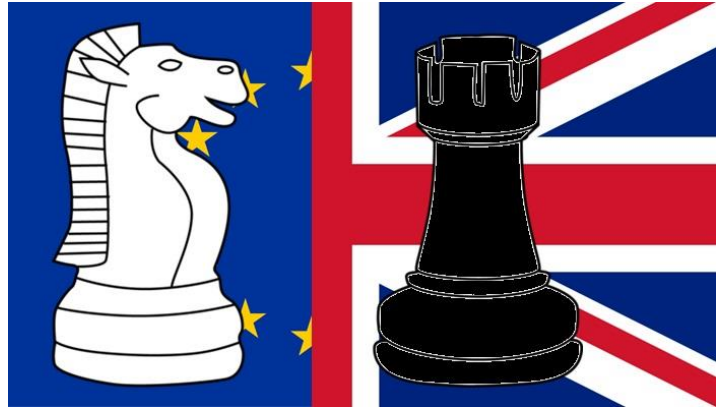
As the dusts settles down, it becomes evident that nothing will change overnight. The famous Article 50 TEU allows two years for the negotiation of the withdrawal agreement between the EU and the UK. And there is an extension clause, as you could expect from a decent piece of EU legislation. It looks like there would be plenty of time for twisted political bargaining considering that the clock shall only start ticking after an official UK withdrawal notification is presented to the European Council. *(read more about it in our next newsletter)*

## Let's play chess (with a little bit of Poker)

According to Wikipedia: "Chess is a two-player strategy board game played on a chessboard, a checkered gameboard with 64 squares arranged in an eight-by-eight grid. Chess is played by millions of people worldwide, both amateurs and professionals."

Chess, originated in India in the 3rd century and ever since evolved into the game we know today. For some it looks boring, for some it is brilliant but for the vast majority it is simply not very well known or too complicated for today's arguably little brain involvement brought about by the (so called) "smart phone". Endless possibilities of combinations, different strategies, turn ups, attacks, defends, loosing or sacrificing pieces (btw – Queen is the most powerful piece), all for one goal, WINNING.

Now, let's try to transfer a game of chess in a real life, just to make it more clear and understandable. Let's try to compare this game with what is known as BREXIT.



To do so, we need to know that Brexit started as a poker game but magically transformed into a chess game (and no, it was not done by Harry Potter). Why do we say so? Well, bluffing might be better known in poker however it can also be present in chess. And this was undoubtedly a bluff from the beginning.

However let's go back to the real life. In BREXIT for instance, bluff just went wrong and the game of chess just started with the worse possible opening. Suddenly, new strategies must be adopted and new moves invented in order to continue the game. Lucky it is still an early stage of the game and both of the players bluffed. So the game is still on and might finally get the "beautiful" one. The public is interested although its great expectations might not be fulfilled at all. Everybody is cheering passionately, almost like in a football stadium in a match between England and Scotland, forgetting it will not last only 90 minutes. Yes, the chess game can sometimes last days, months or even years. And Brexit definitely looks like the last option. Anyway, prepare your drinks and sofa, buy pop corns and try to enjoy in this battle of chess. It is a long way to the end and victory might also turn to a draw as this is possible in this game.

## Our answer to Mr. Juncker's message sent to all staff on 24<sup>th</sup> June: (a copy of Junker's message included below)

Dear President Juncker,

*We thank you for your comforting words in the name of all hard-working EU staff members but in particular in the name of the post 2004 generation of EU civil servants.*

*You want us, understandably, to be calm and carry on. Carry on we will because we are firm believers in the European project based on solidarity, justice and opportunity for all.*

*But to stay calm we need to finally get a clear sign that HR takes our legitimate concern about a growing staff divide serious and that it will do something about it.*

*The Brexit has been a public relations disaster of the first order for the EU and was partly caused by a serious image problem of the European Institutions and of its civil service.*

*In 2013 when Cameron complained publicly that one third of EU civil servants earn more than 10.000 Euros a month, we pointed out in widely ignored pamphlet that the EU institutions are internally divided with an elite group of civil servants hired before 2004 monopolising power, revenue and prestige, while the rest of staff gets up to a third or less benefits for often doing the same type of work and very often, even working harder.*



*In our election manifesto we highlighted that the career paths in the institutions are not based on merit but on seniority, which can easily be proved by DG HR's cunning move to open up a new career track for 'senior advisors'/'senior assistants' allowing these hand-picked individuals to get around the cap on career progression for non-management-related posts.*

*So remember, we are not all in the same boat. We are in a flotilla of boats, some of them ramshackle and not seaworthy, caused by a break-up of solidarity and a divide and rule policy which goes back to the Kinnock reform in 2004, the same Kinnock, whose EU luxury pension may now be in danger due to the Brexit.*

*While Mr. Kinnock will certainly find his protectors, we are seriously concerned about a deteriorating situation for the post 2004 generation and call upon the EU institutions to finally take the equality in the EU institutions serious and to resist any possible calls to further cuts in the pension plans and benefits of the post 2004 generation.*

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*Dear colleagues,*

*Yesterday, the citizens of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. This result makes me personally very sad – but I respect their choice.*

*I know that many of you are concerned about your future after this vote. I fully understand that. So I want to send a clear message to you, colleagues, and especially to colleagues of British nationality.*

*According to our Staff Regulations, you are "Union officials". You work for Europe. You left your national 'hats' at the door when you joined this institution and that door is not closing on you now. As European civil servants you have always been loyal to our Union, contributing tremendously to our common European project. And so it will be in this spirit of reciprocal loyalty that I will work together with the Presidents of the other European institutions to ensure that we can all continue counting on your outstanding talent, experience and commitment. I know you all have legitimate expectations about your rights and duties, your families who might have followed you to Brussels and your children who might be enrolled in schools here.*

*Let me assure you that I will do everything in my power as President of the Commission, to support and help you in this difficult process. Our Staff Regulations will be read and applied in a European spirit.*

*In the coming days and weeks, you will all have the opportunity to show the European Commission at its best. The eyes of the world will be upon us, expecting us to provide stability, act decisively and uphold Europe's values. I have every confidence in you. Together we will rise to that task.*



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## Results of GA in Luxembourg

Last Thursday 14/07, a **General Assembly** took place in Luxembourg as announced. The main point was a proposed change of the electoral system to the Luxembourg Local Staff Committee – for details about the GA and the presented proposals, see our [special edition newsletter](#).

In the end, none of the four proposals gained **the required two thirds of votes** to be adopted. This means that the issue remains open and should be dealt with by the new Local Staff Committee to be elected later this year.

We sincerely thank everyone who came to the GA despite the summer period and supported the G2004 proposal.

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## Internal Competition

### *A very personal view over the EPSO testing experience*

We all know what an EPSO exam is or at least what it should be. A series of wisely designed tests which should precisely measure necessary abilities and skills of candidates in order to select the very best from the very many who would like to get the Job of All Jobs.

So let's take the first phase of this year's internal competition for an illustration and see how this joyful and enriching experience went for me.

First and foremost, resistance to dullness and repetition was tested: despite all the information obtainable already in Sysper, EPSO asked me to introduce it once again for the purpose of application.

No problem, copy pasting is actually quite useful in the job, so who would mind this slight waste of time.

Then, the strength of motivation was checked: until quite late in the process the exact calendar of the competition was not revealed so those who had previously planned some holidays for May had it more difficult to book a suitable date. Fair enough, when you apply for a job, the last thing you should think of, are the holidays.

As to problem solving and resilience: apparently I booked the test slot together with a few hundred people so in the exam centre I needed to first cleverly jump a queue not to wait for another hour, then figure out what to do with my stuff which had to be put in a locker, when there were no more free lockers left and finally correctly answer a slightly disturbing question on a possible pregnancy when being scanned for metal objects. Well, understandingly some organisation flaws always happen and they rarely negatively impact the employers' image. Right?

Afterwards it got slightly more difficult.

A bit of flexibility capacity testing to begin with: erasers were not provided this time. They are usually quite handy to get rid of notes possibly to be taken with markers on plastic sheets during the exam. We all understand the need for savings in the difficult times and eventually if I need to take notes, I can always clean this marker with my bare hands.

On the core business: the verbal reasoning proved to be quite pleasant and I even learnt something about the crossbreeding of lions with jaguars from one of the texts.

My native language was this time reasonably comprehensible to me; or at least it seemed so. Yes, some grammatical particles were at times missing and yes, some sentences sounded slightly awkward but there were few instances where all the four answers to a question seemed completely incorrect. I rejoiced.

Numerical part followed, being for a change, pleasantly precise. Not that I managed to easily grasp the result without counting my way through the exercise or that I am relaxed in doing it in 2 minutes per question... By the way, why EPSO is so fond of checking repetitively whether I can count percentages and figure out ratios in high speed motion remains a mystery. Probably it is important for an official to master the basics, in case the Excel sheet fails ...

My ever favourite part on abstract reasoning left me clueless. The arrows suddenly did not follow usual patterns set by figures in previous boxes' corners, relationships between stars and triangles were blurry, sequences too long to establish and the alterations in shadings seemed to be random. As we well know, 'random' is bad, in a test as well as in any selection procedure.

Situational judgment was even more thought-provoking with minutely sophisticated problems to decide on in little time. For those not acquainted with the system: here you have to choose the best and the worse behavioural option in a given situation.

I have been working in the Commission for more than 4 years now and I am still wondering which option is the worse out of two bad ones.

What is more unacceptable here: procrastination or pure laziness, open avoidance of change or acting as it never happened, simply not completing a task or first announcing an intention of not doing it?



Having participated in all the internal trainings on core competences which EPSO is supposed to test, I still do not know the exact answers. But apparently EPSO does.

No need to be bitter, eventually we all have as much of cognitive abilities as we were given at the start. Surely the brain capacity can be developed to some extent through practice but let's face it: even if IQ tests have become already my beloved hobby in the last months, I probably managed until now to boost myself onto around 140 points in Stanford–Binet Fifth Edition classification but most likely, not to much more.

Obviously, this does not have to be enough to get the Job of All Jobs. I can only enviously wonder whether the level needed to easily pass this exam corresponds to sophistication of everyday tasks in the average post. Somehow I doubt it ... But maybe we could test it? Naa, just kidding ...

*The Contract Agent*

## Storytelling Corner

### *"The world according to a Contract Agent FGIV"*

*"In 2011 I was hired by DG CNECT as a policy officer (CA b FG IV grade 15) to fulfil a newly created position in an expanding unit, after 7 years of professional experience as a lawyer in the private sector. In DG CNECT I have been in charge of important policy papers: 2 staff working papers of the EC clarifying the legal framework of the field, and coordinated the drafting of a green paper. In this role, I was also supervising the work of a newly recruited contract agent (also FG IV) with less professional experience than mine.*

*After 4 years, I moved to a more legal oriented unit to perform legal support to the whole DG on the topic of specific expertise. For instance, I provided DG CNECT views on a recently adopted regulation. I am now in charge with other colleagues of reviewing a crucial Directive in the portfolio of DG CNECT, which is within the DSM strategy. All along my experience I have never been told I was replacing an official, but of course I have never had the chance to take part to work appraisal as my permanent colleagues.*



## WHAT EPSO DOESN'T TELL YOU

**NO**

The screenshot shows the EU Careers website header with the logo and the text "CAREERS WITH T by the European Personnel". Below the header is a navigation bar with "Europa > EPSO". The main banner features a woman and a man with the text "Meet our people." and a cursor pointing at it. Below the banner are three columns: "Discover" with links "Why EU Careers?", "Job Profiles", and "EU Institutions and Agencies"; "Apply" with links "Current job opportunities" and "How to apply"; and "Already Applied" with the text "Check candidate section for news and information.".

eu careers CAREERS WITH T by the European Personnel

Europa > EPSO

Meet our people.

1 2 3 4

**Discover**  
[Why EU Careers?](#)  
[Job Profiles](#)  
[EU Institutions and Agencies](#)

**Apply**  
[Current job opportunities](#)  
[How to apply](#)

**Already Applied**  
Check candidate section for news and information.

I still smile but I have already understood that the career system is not based on merit

Well that depends where you come from. I was in the cab and just passed the internal concours – easy peasy

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eu careers CAREERS WITH T by the European Personnel

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and agencies. Find out more.

1 2 3 4

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I don't feel I have the same opportunities as the pre-2004s. I joined too late and my outside experience does not count.

Well, I joined earlier but had slow promotions while all my pre 2004 colleagues are AD 12 and higher doing the same job

There is no professional human capital management in place

Because they recruit the best?

No, because there is no vision what to do with all the brains

At least it's not a golden cage anymore

Work at the EU and have an impact on the lives of millions.  
Want to know how?

1 2 3 4

eu careers CAREERS WITH THE by the European Personnel

login/create account

eu careers f t in You Tube

Europa > EP50

I work like crazy, same job as my AST colleagues but I have just been made an SC, so I am blocked from going anywhere. This is crazy!

Want to work in languages?  
Find out more.

1 2 3 4

**FED UP WITH UNFAIR TREATMENT?**

**VOTE FOR MANAGEMENT CHANGE!**

**JOIN GENERATION 2004!**



*..... and finally*

Got any ideas for the G2004 newsletter? [Send](#) them along (with "Newsletter" in subject), together with any letters, articles, poems .... and other assorted forms of expression.

If you identify with what you have read, and share our objectives, **please give us your support TANGIBLY by becoming a member.** [Click here](#)

Whilst **Generation 2004** is the home of **EVERYONE** who believes in equality, justice and solidarity, it is

✓ *the natural home of ALL staff recruited after 01 May 2004*

*and de facto,*

✓ *the natural home of ALL staff recruited from the "new" (2004+) Member States*

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