



Generation 2004

Newsletter no.6

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TOP STORY

Cucumbers and grapes – how to use the promotion system to strengthen fairness, reward performance and reduce inequality in the EU institutions

Come spring and summer it is again promotion time in the EU institutions. This year's promotion exercise is the first one under the new Staff Regulations. **From 2014 staff with high grades (AD12-AD13 and AST9) can benefit from promotions only through nominations.** However, somewhat paradoxically, the **promotion rates** specified in **Annex IB** of the staff regulation **still apply**, also to these high grades. This means that on the basis of these fixed percentages applied to the reference population of staff, specific promotion quotas are allocated to these grades (really it is "a bit" complicated than that, but we're sure you get the picture...).

Promotions are a scarce resource and efficient use thereof is extremely important for the sustainability of the EU institutions. As regards the above, this will be determined by one important choice DG HR has to make this year: DG HR can **either grant the status of advisors/senior assistants to several hundred colleagues during the summer on a totally artificial basis** just because these colleagues happen to be in the right grade at the right time; **OR** it can **decide to cascade these quotas to benefit the career-development of low grade colleagues**, ostensibly those penalised by the 2004 reform.

To illustrate this, we have calculated what this means in practice for the higher AD and AST grades:

AD

- Promotion quotas according to Annex IB of the Staff Regulations (SR) are 15% for AD12 and AD13
- Based on a reference population of 4,387 officials in these 2 grades on 01 January 2013 (method to compute reference population is specified in SR) gives about 660 promotions foreseen in the 2014 budget for these grades.
- AD12 and AD13 can be promoted only if they are nominated to an advisor/head of unit post.
- During the first round of the 2014 promotions exercise, about 130 promotions will be allocated to officials in these grades who are currently already advisors/heads of unit. This leaves a **quota of 530 that will not be used in the first round.**

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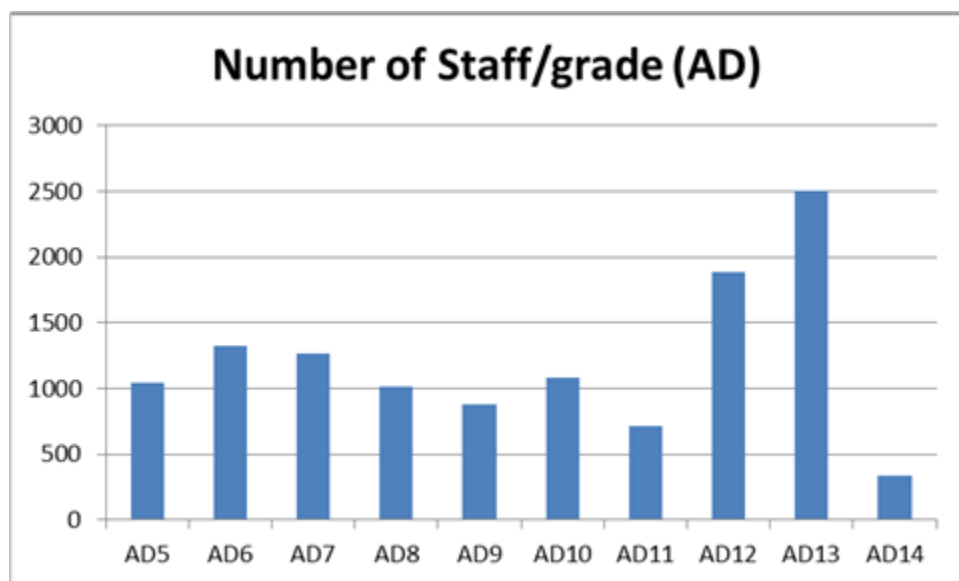
... some lighter moments ;-)

AST

- Promotion quotas according to Annex IB of the staff regulations are 20% for AST10.
- Based on a reference population of 395 officials in this grade, gives around 80 promotions foreseen in the 2014 budget.
- AST10 are considered to have already reached a senior assistant level.
- During the first round of the 2014 promotions exercise, about 75 promotions will be allocated to AST10, therefore using almost entirely the allotted quota (some promotions have to be kept in reserve for the appeals phase).
- Promotion quotas according to Annex IB of the SR are 8% for AST9. Based on a reference population of 768, this gives around 60 promotions foreseen in the 2014 budget.
- During the first round of the 2014 promotions exercise, no promotions will be allocated to AST9, thereby leaving the quota of 60 intact. This leaves a quota of 60 promotions that will not be used in the first round.

Based on our calculation, **530 promotions would be available for ADs** and **60 promotions would be available for ASTs**. Here is a real, tangible opportunity to reduce the divisions among staff rather than continue to increase this divide even further by artificially creating new advisor/senior assistant positions which nobody really needs for a lucky few and which are totally disconnected from any considerations of merit and fairness. **NO “needs-based” analysis has been conducted by DG HR in this sense as far as we know; if it has – let us see it!**

In other words and to use our favorite animal allegory: DG HR should ‘squeeze the Camel’ rather than pulling the poor animal to pieces.



(the career pattern in the EU institutions is strikingly comparable to a two-hump camel, when ideally it should look like a dromedary).

In practice, **this process could be carried out during the appeals phase of the promotion exercise by increasing the quotas of promotions available to the Joint Promotion Committee** (foreseen to be 4% of the total number of promotions this year). A more elaborate exercise could be proposed for subsequent years.

When taking the decision on which avenue to go down, DG HR should consider that it **would be extremely unwise in the current climate to create artificial advisor/senior assistant posts to help non-management staff with end of career grades into even higher grades, signaling to the legislator and the public that it has immediately found a creative loophole to get around the recently-concluded staff regulation reform** and continue to promote people in non-management positions into AD13 and beyond. It would be equally important to **seek an inter-institutional agreement to prevent the institutions from competing with each other in creating an inflationary number of artificial advisory posts**; and it should also keep in mind that:

1. **promotions to very high grades are costly promotions** not only in terms of salaries but particularly in terms of creating huge(r) future pension liabilities which are effectively paid out of the EU's administration budget;
2. that the **average recruitment age to the Commission is now 35** (even higher for ADs) **with prior relevant professional experience not recognised** at all;
3. that it is **necessary to catalyse talent in the AD5-AD8 segment to move into higher grades in order to enable them to take over management positions in the next 5 to 10 years** when many of these positions will be vacated; it is also **necessary to enable deserving ASTs to reach grades where they can apply for certification**;
4. that the **ongoing internal competition exercise, that really appears to have been organised mainly to allow for a continuation of the unsavoury parachute practice**, will cannibalise promotions in the receiving grades;
5. that last but not least, **the EU civil service should be based on a reward system that promotes fairness and cooperation rather than inequality and discord** as the former is positively correlated to staff motivation at individual level and performance and productivity at the system level.

To illustrate this point in an entertaining but scientifically sound way, we would suggest looking at this [TED presentation](#) by Dutch primatologist Frans de Waal on fairness. We suggest making this compulsory for management training seminars :-).



To sum up: DG HR should **use the current promotion exercise as a window of golden opportunity** to start tackling a problem that has been consistently pointed out by Generation 2004 and the increasing democratic endorsement by colleagues thereof, and by now also recognised to some measure by the Commission itself as well as most of the existing staff unions.

Generation 2004 calls upon DG HR to **give priority to the cascade mechanism thereby compensating for persistent and widening career inequalities created by the 2004 reform** and its botched implementation. Promotions are an essential key to do this legally within the framework of the new staff regulation. This before it is too late and the system becomes so lopsided that it cannot be fixed anymore with all the short- and long-term consequences which that would entail...

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Promotions exercise 2014 – Appeals: Tips and tricks

The 2014 promotions exercise is in full swing as we speak. Between 19 May and 13 June the DGs are meeting staff representatives where Directors General are discussing the promotion proposals for their respective DGs with staff representatives nominated by the Central Staff Committee. **G2004 is being represented in all relevant meetings.**

On 24 June, promotion proposals will be published via Sysper2. All the DGs should publish a note to all officials in their respective DGs on the promotion proposals.

When the above list is out, and you are not on the proposed list you have an option to appeal if you believe that you have unjustly not been proposed for promotion. The jobholder (you) has 5 working days to lodge an appeal against non-promotion starting from the date of communication of the promotion proposals (justified absences are excluded) => **1st July is the deadline!!!**

Between **8-17 September** the Appeals Committee will review all appeals, one by one. The ("appeals") Promotions Committee is a Joint Committee which includes Staff Representatives together with Admin (HR) representatives. The Appeals Committee has **+/- 5% of all promotions to distribute.**

Appeals can be justified for a variety of reasons, inter alia:

- Your **seniority** in your grade is equal or above the statutory average (for example AD5 or AST1 not promoted after 3 years in the grade). You have to have the average seniority in grade on the **1st of January 2014**;
- Your merit: the annual appraisal report has to be **good** and factual. The report is the only thing we have to compare within the grade. If it has negative or doubtful elements we need to know what they mean in order to be able to defend the merit.
- Your **responsibilities/achievements** have not been given due recognition (for example you are AD5 and supervised staff or coordinated the supervision of a directive or you are AST1 coordinating a big budget or a project).
- You have been penalised by **parental leave** or **mobility** (when on parental leave, you are still considered to be "employed", even if not physically present in the office).
- **3rd language** abilities must be formally validated (level 6, EPSO attestation, or by private organization, to be verified with DG HR) by the end of 2014 (for example, you have legitimate chances of passing language course level 6 in summer or by the end of the year if private courses).

Do not be afraid to file an appeal!!!

We are here to help and will give you an honest advise.

EU CV Online – Not a meritocratic way to recruit staff

Generation 2004 would like to make clear that it is opposed to the Commission's use of an open database to recruit staff.

Created last autumn, "[EU CV online](#)", now contains **over 40,000 CVs of those hopeful of working as a contract agent within the EU institutions**. According to the website, "Once you have registered, you do not need to take any further action. If we are interested in your profile, we will contact you by email or telephone."

It sounds so simple, but Generation 2004 considers that the use of this database represents a **return to the un-meritocratic ways of the past, where the "well-connected" could lobby their way into paid employment in the EU institutions** without ever passing any kind of competition.

Generation 2004 would like to know why the Commission and EPSO together have not managed to organise a new CAST competition if the current reserve list of CAST laureates has been exhausted?

This apparent lack of planning for a new CAST competition, and the resulting open database, sends out a bad message, and indicates that EU jobs are only for those who know the right people. (e.g. recruitment of cabinet trainees).

Furthermore, Generation 2004 questions the need to retain this open database given that the new Staff Regulations have come into force and that these effectively increase the maximum length of service for contract agents from 3 years to 6 years. Therefore, there should be a large pool of existing contract agents whose service would normally have been approaching its end, but instead are now able to remain in the institutions. In addition the ongoing reduction in headcount by 5% should reduce the need for new staff.

Even without a new competition, Generation 2004 would regard re-recruiting contract agents whose contracts expired before the new Staff Regulations came into force as a preferable option to the continuing use of this open database. Such a re-recruitment would at least be based on merit insofar as those recruited would have passed CAST competitions.

Finally, the often-discussed possibility of internal competitions to give a chance for some contract agents to become permanent, now opens up the rather distasteful scenario of those who have never passed any kind of open competition being awarded permanent status through the back window. Generation 2004 considers that contract agents who have been recruited via CAST competitions have a much stronger case in arguing for a chance at permanent recruitment.

Generation 2004 calls on EPSO and the Commission to organise a new generalist CAST competition as soon as possible and in parallel, to consider closing the open database.

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

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

Contacts:

Stefan.GRECH@ec.europa.eu

Leja.SPILJAK@ec.europa.eu

Pascal.LE-GRAND@ec.europa.eu

Stefan.NISTOR@ec.europa.eu

Daniela.SIMIONESCU@ec.europa.eu

Wiki Page: click [here](#)

..... and finally some lighter moments ☺☺☺

G2004 message song of the month (with kind permission) – click [here](#)



, sit back, turn up the volume and listen well (P.S. don't forget to work for an extra 2 minutes 29 seconds before you go home today). This one by special request from GG in Luxi Land ☺

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