

Generation2004 Newsletter December 2013



Outcome of the staff regulations reform: much ado about (almost) nothing

- Since its (official) foundation last year, Generation2004 has been heavily involved in the staff regulation reform on all levels and on all fronts. Unlike others, our activities mainly focused on Member States. During several meetings with a number of permanent representations, we demonstrated clearly how the burden of the 2004 reform had been largely carried by post-2004 staff, who therefore should be spared this time round. For obvious reasons, Generation2004 was virtually the only staff association to do so and encountered an astounding level of unawareness. If anything, this has helped to convince Member States that their initial demands were unreasonable and counterproductive.
- By now, the reform of the staff regulations has finally been adopted by the Council and European Parliament. The result is mixed: it mirrors what could have been expected from an unholy alliance between DG HR and unions largely made up of officials in high grades, whose natural interest is to maintain *their* privileged *status quo*. In fact, there are so-called "transitional measures" in the form of extra steps and derogations, benefiting (nearly all) affected pre-2004 (and almost no post-2004 staff), and protecting them from the effect of capping non-managerial careers at AD12. Post-2004 staff continues to pay that bill, while post-2014 newcomers get treated even worse. Welcome to a three-class society within the institutions!
- Whilst the so-called *Front Commun* (of old unions), were entertaining you with their demagogic theatrics at the Berlaymont foyer and spamming you with their crocodile tear communications announcing gloom and doom, we could witness directly a lot of 'hugging and tears of joy' amongst these fellows when the fateful deal was formally sealed ... much to their delight! Since this was obvious when the last strike was (irresponsibly) called for by the established unions, it would have been ridiculous to participate. Thus Generation2004 did not break the strike. Generation2004 simply took it for what it actually was: A MERE COMEDY by the unions to justify their very *raison d'etre* as "unions"!

Internal competitions (ICs) and promotions: bad habits never die

- Participation rates of up to 28 colleagues per post (a mere 3% probability of success...) in the internal competitions demonstrate the **urgent** need for a **comprehensive and holistic** remedy to the injustice brought about by the 2004 reform and its aftermath. Moreover, figures also show that the probability of success varies widely between grades and fields. Generally speaking, the higher your starting grade, the higher your chances. Also, choosing HR and budget management as your field was apparently a good idea. Another inexplicable feature of these ICs is the imposed minimum grades, comparable only with introducing minimum income as eligibility criteria in open competitions. Generation2004 is working on an in-depth assessment of the ICs which will give more details and also highlight the major shortcoming of the IC in comparison to the Generation2004 proposal tabled earlier this year.

- Generation2004 has been most active in this year's promotion exercise. Our representatives attended virtually all working group meetings including those concerning mostly pre-2004 staff. We were successful in achieving a significant amount of down-cascading. Nevertheless, with the new promotion rules in place and the abolishment of the point system, seniority in the grade has again become the unwritten rule of the game. As this impairs disproportionately colleagues with a lot of experience outside the Institutions as well as those who hold demanding posts, it is a major shortcoming of the current promotion system. IT MUST BE ADDRESSED. NOW.

Implementing rules for the Staff Regulations: progress is a snail

- Drafts for some of the implementing rules for the new Staff Regulations have been published by DG HR. Generation2004 has commented extensively and made a number of suggestions for real improvements. So far the administration is blocking any real changes and wants an in-depth discussion to be postponed to next year. WE ARE MAINTAINING THE PRESSURE.

Future work: we need a reform that deserves its name

- 'After the Reform' is also 'Before the Reform': Since the 2014 reform misses to address any of the 2004 failures, Generation2004 will continue to work towards a *true* reform of the Staff Regulations, one that will make the European Public Service a model for others rather than a subject of scorn and ridicule. To be sure, this will take a lot of patience and hard work, but the extent of the damage done in 2004 and now 2014 demands an in-depth re-working of the whole affair. This cannot be left to the administration and the Council! We as staff have to act, to strengthen our own reform agenda, and to take a leading and not a defensive position on the battle field. To achieve this, we need to be active, creative, determined and numerous. JOIN GENERATION2004!
- One of the provisions that has conspicuously disappeared from the Staff Regulations is **Art. 6 on the equivalence of careers**. Remember: it took HR several years to publish the first and so far only report on the so-called career equivalence, or is it inequivalence? And it was a smokescreen - not even alluding to the sad reality: that career equivalence was neither properly defined, nor achieved following the 2004 reform. Far from it! This is because although the actual age and seniority of recruits have increased sharply, pre-institution professional experience was entirely disregarded in terms of entry grade as well as promotion speed. Predictably, almost all suffer, and the more experienced post-2004 recruit you are, the more you suffer. Did the administration take any corrective action in the design of the promotion and recruitment systems? Of course not! Simply acknowledging that there is a 2004 issue is already too much for the now legendary courage of HR and still today, juniorising senior recruits is the norm! This practice continues to create huge frustration and to destroy the very fabric of our institutions. This demands correction both for past and for future juniorised recruits. IT MUST BE ADDRESSED. URGENTLY.

Brussels Local Staff Committee: Generation2004's Pascal Le Grand has been elected President

- Our member Pascal Le Grand (DG ENV) has been elected President of the Local Staff Committee in Brussels. He replaces Daniela Mormile who resigned from the post according to a rotation agreement among the leading lists. Pascal's main objective for the coming months is to make the work of the LSC more efficient and transparent. WE WISH HIM ALL THE BEST!

LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST! Elections in Lux and the EP: Generation2004 is expanding

- Generation2004 has been participating in the Local Staff Committee elections in the COMMISSION IN LUXEMBOURG and in the European Parliament. In Luxembourg, Generation2004 scored **19.96% of the votes** which is a remarkable result for a group that entered the election campaign only three weeks ago. However, due to the design of the voting system, which in our view rewards excessively the formation of majorities, this figure translates only into 2 seats out of 20 (i.e. 10%), while proportionality would have justified 4. We firmly believe that this electoral system with its incomprehensible vote counting, gerrymandered (or tailor-made) for one single big union – who got (only) 36% of votes, but took 65% of the seats (13 all together) – should be radically changed.
- Still, thanks to the remarkable success of our Luxembourg Group, **G2004 has now achieved 16.24% overall representativeness Commission-wide**. We are now the third strongest group, after USF and Alliance, and the **SECOND STRONGEST INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL STAFF ORGANISATION** in the Commission.
- In the **European Parliament**, staff committee elections do not use a proportional system either. Had this been the case – given that more than 10% of the colleagues who voted ticked the G 2004 box – there would have been a couple of voices from our list elected. Taken individually our result represents the third highest number of voters, all lists considered. However, another very peculiar electoral system, tailor-made to maintain the status quo by raising the barriers to entry for newcomers, translates those (roughly) 10.5% of expressed votes into an alleged “3.4%” score. We feel that we owe this explanation to all our voters who may be disappointed to see that they will not be represented in the upcoming Staff Committee – and there is certainly something wrong with a system that allows roughly 10.5% of the expressed votes not to be represented at all.
- **SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS** to both groups and **MANY THANKS** to the **VOTERS** for supporting us and to **ALL CANDIDATES** for their contributions and positive energy overflowing all over the campaigns.

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