



Generation 2004 Newsletter no.22

May 2017

TOP STORY

CA Dossier: Is the current situation sustainable?

As mentioned in our [communication](#) sent at the beginning of April, Generation 2004 is disappointed by the outcome of the Conciliation meeting that took place on 6 April to discuss the General Implementing Rules of the Staff Regulations for Contract Agents. You might wonder why we give so much importance to these negotiations. After all, one could argue that they are only about implementing rules, not about the future of the EU civil service. However, we do see a direct link here, because we sense this is part of a **silent revolution that replaces more and more permanent officials with Contract Agents so that according to our estimates by 2030 non-permanent staff with precarious contracts will represent more than half of all the staff of the institutions.** The most striking data about this creeping change come from the annual reports of our sickness scheme (the latest one covering the year 2015 – available on [demand](#)).

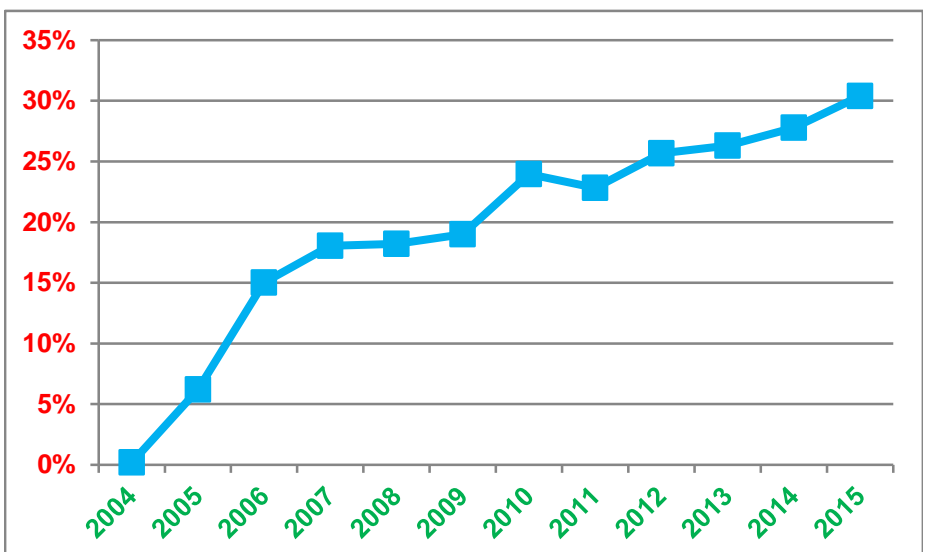


Figure: Proportion of CA and EP assistants among the staff of the EU institutions. In 2015, this ratio reached 30%. →

2 CA Dossier: Is the current situation sustainable? cont.

3 DG TRANSLATION: Kids of a lesser god or just the preview of the EC of the future

Brexit G2004 discussion

4 Post-reform Equal Pay Day

5 Workshops

6 Message song of the month

This constant rise in the number of CAs (EP assistants are lumped together with CAs as "non-establishment plan" staff in the sickness insurance reports, but their number is relatively small compared to the number of CAs so the curve above essentially reflects the rise in the number of CAs) is a direct consequence of the 2004 reform of the Staff Regulations that introduced the CA category of staff. The data from the health insurance scheme are confirmed by a qualitative analysis of recent recruitments: we reckon that about 80% of all new recruits in the recent past have been precarious CA3bs!

What will happen if the current trends continue? Not taking into account the first 2 years, 2004 and 2005, which obviously are transitional years, one sees that in 10 years, the proportion of non-establishment plan posts went up from 15% to 30%. Most of them are non-permanent staff since in agencies indefinite duration contracts can come to an end if the Agency is wound up or closed. Extrapolating this trend, one can anticipate that non-permanent staff will represent more than half of all the staff of the institutions sometime between 2025 and 2030. This is a conservative estimate since TAs, not shown in the graph above, often are non-permanent staff too (TAs in EU decentralised agencies do have some degree of permanency but in other institutions, they usually don't). **The direct consequence of this massive change in the staff distribution is that the "social contributions" to our health care system, but also arguably to our pension scheme, are going to radically change in the medium term: Well paid permanent officials will be replaced by more or less precarious staff paid a fraction of what permanent officials are currently paid. All this in a context of an ageing population of pensioners who will presumably draw more and more on the resources of our health insurance scheme.** You can thus expect some difficulties with the health insurance to kick-in soon.

Moreover, the shift towards more precarious staff **will imply a radical change in the culture of the institutions:** less continuity and long-term planning, more bureaucracy in the form of hand-over files and provisions to ensure business continuity despite the staffing discontinuities.

Generation 2004's position is that this silent revolution is a non-sense: **permanent tasks must be carried out by permanent staff.** This position is that of several Member States. Spain, for instance, is now releasing the pressure on precarious staff, the so-called "interinos". The government of Mariano Rajoy, not known for its high level of interest in social issues, is putting in place a plan to reduce the number of precarious staff in the Spanish public service to below 10% (see for instance [here](#)). To be compared with the figure of 30% of non-permanent staff in the EU institutions! In the Spanish plan, open competitions will be organised in order to hire 280.000 officials. It is worth mentioning that this will be a zero-sum exercise (in terms of unemployment and budget). How? The large majority of these new officials will be taken from the huge army of precarious staff, as their prior experience and knowledge will be taken into consideration in the notice of competition (Dear DG HR: does it ring a bell? Talent management?). The recruitments will largely be paid from the savings achieved through contained increase in salaries for the best-paid staff (Dear Unions, does it ring a huge bell? 2004 reform? Equal job for equal pay?). **What all Spanish unions have agreed upon is that whatever the cuts, they will have to be paid by everybody, without creating underpaid categories.** The European Commission is going in the exact opposite direction, continuing to create and expand different layers of underprivileged underclasses in its civil service.

This brings us back to the issue of the General Implementing Rules for Contract Agents. One way to stop the social dumping currently taking place in the institutions is to improve the conditions of Contract Agents. The institutions will have reduced incentives to replace permanent officials by CAs, if CAs' salaries and working conditions are brought up to a decent level. This is why Generation 2004 thinks that the negotiations on the General Implementing Rules for CA were important and why Generation 2004 is deeply disappointed that DG HR refused to change course during the negotiations.

We may have lost another fight for more sensible and equitable rules, but the battle is not over. It is highly probable that, using Brexit as an excuse, another "reform" of the Staff Regulations will take place soon. **Let's insist on concrete proposals to improve employment conditions for CAs in the next Staff Regulations. As a starting point, we propose that the next Staff Regulations should enshrine the principle of equal pay for equal work. In a recent survey of its members carried out by Generation 2004, the principle of equal pay for equal work came out as the top priority.** Moreover, the survey confirmed that our members still insist on reducing the salary gap between pre and post-2004 staff, in full agreement with the equal pay for equal work principle. Obviously, this principle covers the many CAs who carry out the same tasks as permanent officials and who are also victims of the discriminations introduced by the 2004 reform of the Staff Regulations.

Interestingly, the Commission has also recently put forward the principle of equal pay for equal work in its recent communication on a [social pillar](#) for the EU in the context of gender equality. **Generation 2004 believes that the Commission cannot preach one thing to the MS and do the opposite to its work force.** It must enshrine this principle in the Staff Regulations (see also the equal-pay day article at the end of this newsletter)!

DG TRANSLATION: Kids of a lesser god or just the preview of the EC of the future?

Since 2004 the European Union has massively increased in population, number of Member States and languages, and has further expanded its activities in various domains too. In order to cope with this new challenge, the Commission's administration has increased its staff albeit not in direct proportion to the population increase, thus striking a wise balance between new duties and the budgetary possibilities.

The budgetary effort, though, took a very heavy toll on all newcomers, those who now must sadly bear the labels Generation 2004 and Generation 2014 staff. Our salary conditions, pension perspectives, career structure, precariousness of working status and very reasonable fringe pre-2004 benefits were affected adversely by two subsequent reforms of the Staff Regulations in 2004 and 2014.



Against a backdrop of rising discontent with the EU all over Europe, the Institutions have the ambition to underline and promote our many positive achievements. For that purpose, what counts is the clarity and the celerity of the message. We are all expected to participate in this communication effort but are we ready and well equipped for this demanding task?

Let's take the example of DGT that together with SCIC ensures a big chunk of the EC communication work in the 24 official languages of the EU.

After the big bang staff increase that followed the enlargement, in recent years DGT has had to contribute to the 5% staff cuts decided by the Commission. However, the redeployment tax applied took there a much higher toll (like in several other DGs) and the cuts have reached over 12 % according to Commissioner Oettinger. Moreover, they have been applied in a chaotic way:

- ⇒ Gradual rise of outsourcing to 40 % entailing many quality issues and without properly taking into account the administrative and revision costs. These days many colleagues spend more time on revising and quoting Free Lance translations than on doing their own translation work.
- ⇒ To increase the gap between pre and post-2004 a number of senior experts were appointed on the basis of a "confidential" procedure and with doubtful added value for DGT, but at a heavy budgetary cost.
- ⇒ Staff was cut by 12 % but without any cuts in senior management. In parallel, units have been inflated from 50 to 60 people and mid-management tasks have been passed on to translators with unofficial titles such as "workflow manager", etc.

Relegating DGT to the category of barren services that don't produce policy is to ignore its continuous contribution 24/7 in all situations of political or financial emergencies as well as when major political ambitions do surface again. One should not ignore that an effective communication in all 24 languages is not limited to legislative acts and is essential to regain EU citizen's trust and support for the European project.

Recent declarations by both Mr Juncker, the first ever President of the Commission to intervene at the DGT General Assembly, and the new DGT Commissioner, Mr Oettinger, also responsible for human and budgetary resources, gave the impression that the message was well understood and that the downsizing of DGT resources was to end. However, feedback from staff contradict this optimistic impression and gives the impression that the Commission doesn't intend to practice what they preach: contract agents keep being hired for core translation tasks that should by definition be carried-out by officials, outsourcing of sometimes confidential documents keeps being common practice, staff initially recruited for secretarial tasks are still being asked to translate, not speaking of ever-lasting and recurring IT issues and questionable management decisions. This should be a worry for all EC staff. In the end, it is our work that is being penalised if translation is not done properly.

In this context, it is interesting to review the budgetary impact of imposing very high operational costs to DGT in order to maintain more than 50% of staff and other resources in costly Luxembourg. This would be the only domain where further savings could be achieved in a DG that has suffered unethical segregation practices at the expense of the 9 languages that joined back in 2004. Reviewing the heavy hierarchical structure of DGT would also be a good option.

On a larger scale, we wonder if – like DGT – the Commission of the future is really bound to become a working place with plethoric management, with reduced working staff, against a backdrop of endless social dumping and precariousness, with intermittingly functioning IT tools, and vast amounts of money being spent to cater for activities split over different geographical locations.

BREXIT

Join the G2004 discussion!

Some see Brexit as a sign to build the EU – and the EU civil service – stronger and better.

Others see it as yet another opportunity to cut pay and conditions for staff.

One thing is clear, Brexit affects everyone.

Generation 2004 is planning to organise a discussion session on **16 May** to take stock of the situation and to identify the most burning issues on which we need to intervene in the coming months. If you would like to be part of the G2004 Brexit discussion then send an email to: [REP PERS OSP GENERATION 2004](mailto:REP.PERS.OSP.GENERATION.2004). We will get back to you with details of how to take part.

Brexit and pensions.

For those of you interested in the impact of Brexit on our pension scheme, see the answer to a question asked by the Chairwoman of the CONT Committee of the EP.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2017-000243&language=EN>

A pathetic example of how some Commission bureaucrats deal with the European Parliament displaying masterly the art of what the French call "wooden tongue" ("langue de bois"), the art of speaking to say nothing!

Post-reform Equal Pay Day

Post-reform Equal Pay Day is a reminder of the unequal pay conditions affecting everyone who joined the European Institutions after the Kinnock Reform of 1 May 2004. The latest reform that took effect on 1 January 2014 has only made matters worse by introducing complications in the career structure, and by lowering the entry salary once again; more and more CA staff are employed at ever lower salaries (*see article page 1*); the new category of AST/SC, and the ensuing confusion generated by the automatic conversion of AST posts to AST/SC posts, puts new employees in a financially precarious situation while confusing and frustrating AST staff who suddenly find themselves sitting on AST/SC posts.

Post-reform colleagues end-up with a salary that is on average one third lower than that of colleagues who joined the institutions before the Kinnock reform. As a consequence, post-reform colleagues perform the same jobs but are being asked to work for free for one third of the year. **To mark this inequality of treatment and salary, Generation 2004 “celebrates” each year the Post-reform Equal Pay Day on 1st May**, and will do so as long as the institutions refuse to address the problem.



The Commission's proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights was adopted at the end of April. In this pillar, you will find 20 principles upheld by the Commission. Among them, the second principle recalls the fact that Women and men have the right to equal pay for work of equal value. (Link [here](#))

Considering that there is a majority of women among those recruited after the 2004 reform, this principle directly applies to the staff of the EU Institutions. **Can the Commission and the other institutions fail to apply their principles to their own staff?**

But cheer up. If you were recruited after the 2004 reform, you have worked for free since the beginning of the year. As from this week until the end of the year, you will finally be earning the same wage as your pre-2004 colleagues in the other offices for your work! ☺☺



Workshops

COMING UP...

Workshop on how to release stress, anxiety or any undesired emotion

By Lazaros Bountouroglou

16 May 2017 12:30 – 14:00

(Location: Rue Froissart 36. Room name: AB/4.A)

Flyer [link](#).

No registration needed – everybody is welcome! Come along and bring a colleague or a friend.

Review of last workshop on 5th April on Healthy Life

1. Do we know what we grow with our thoughts and words, what we invite into our lives?

*Mother Theresa has said, "I will never attend an **anti-war** rally; if you have a **peace** rally, invite me." She knew very well that like attracts like.*

If you keep thinking (transmitting) about things that you do not want, you will certainly attract them into your life. When we concentrate on what we want we give the energy to the positive result like peace and health.

Examples:

Thought: "I don't want to have a stressful day."

Transmitted (and received): "I really want to have a stressful day."

Thought: "I don't want to lose my promotion."

Transmitted (and received): "I want to lose my promotion."

Practical tip. *For five minutes write down your thoughts. Then read the text through and note what you are really attracting to your life.*

During our last Healthy Life workshop on 5th April we discussed the importance of supporting one's health with different means. Due to the interest in health topics I look forward to organising another session soon on Stress management with Thought Field therapy (TFT). Thank you for your participation & will make sure to have streaming as well. My PowerPoint available [here](#). You are welcome to express interest in topics of your possible interest [here](#).

Regards,

Sirje Sepp

..... 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.

G2004 message song of the month (*with kind permission*) – now click [here](#) sit back, turn up the volume and listen well...

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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