



# Generation 2004 Newsletter no.8

October 2014

## TOP STORY



You may remember that in our [June newsletter](#) we had expressed the hope that the Commission would make positive use of the new provisions in the staff regulations, which (justifiably) limit the career progression of AD12+ staff without any management responsibility. This should come as no surprise when at present; these two grades on their own consume a whopping chunk (see graphs below) of the Commission's global monthly/annual pay packet!

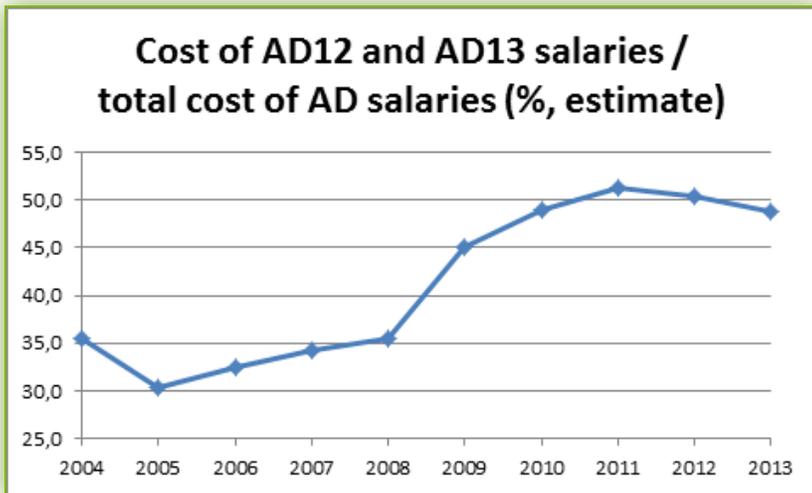
We had suggested, or rather dreamt naively, that the 'saved' promotions should be used to benefit the career-development of post-2004 staff whose careers have been systematically wrecked by the 2004 reform and existing promotion practices.

Alas, the dream lasted only a few weeks ... until reality rudely caught up with us. This time, our administration has devised a scheme to rescue an 'underprivileged' group of officials struck by the 2014 reform: those in the tragic position of being 'stuck' at AD12/13 with no management responsibility and a paltry monthly salary exceeding 10,000+ Euros. In a rare moment of lucidity therefore, our administration summoned its collective genius to come up with a **stratagem for circumventing the statutory provisions – and express intention - of the legislator.**

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How are they planning to commit this additional act of recklessness?

All DGs have in these days received a communication from DG HR assigning them a **quota of "Senior Expert" positions**, which (as these will be considered "equivalent" to advisors) will allow them to move all the way up to the AD14 'Nirvana' of EU aristocracy.

While assigning quotas to identify experts is of course as ludicrous and hypocritical as the entire exercise, half of this quota will be based on a formula that takes into account the eligible AD12/13 population in the DGs and the other half on requests from individual DGs. A definite number has unfortunately not yet

been provided, such that we do not yet know exactly what the budget implications for this will be. Nonetheless, it can be safely predicted that this will go into hundreds of new posts that will further squeeze the Commission's administration budget, further limiting the career opportunities for everybody else. In addition to the creation of these new "Senior Expert" posts, a process of 'labelling', reserved for officials currently in the AD13 grade will also be proposed (see box 1 below), which underscores the absolute madness of this scheme.

### Box 1: Labelling

The most outrageous measure that HR is cooking up is that of labelling. A maximum of about 650 AD13s, will go from their current status of "senior administrators in transition" to that of "Senior Experts" thanks to the (black?) "magic" of DG HR. This process is supposed to take place in one go before the end of 2015. The labelled AD13s will not even have to bother applying to a published vacancy to land upon a "Senior Expert" post. How this process will go down with the budgetary authority is going to be interesting ☺ Moreover, the labelled AD13s will take promotions away from the (necessarily limited number of) *true* experts and deserving Heads of Units, since they will become eligible again for promotion to AD14 ... which is director's level.

How is this going to work in practice, if nobody stops the madness?

First, those who currently have an advisor function will keep it and become "Senior Experts". Heads of Unit who have reached the AD12/13 grade but can no longer take the pressure (so-called "opt-out" Heads of Unit) will be allocated "Senior Expert" posts too.

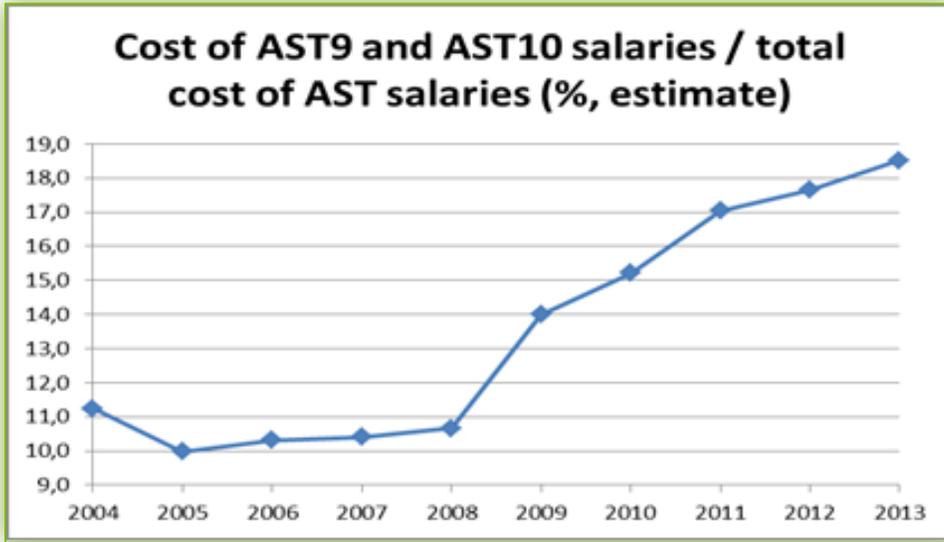
Finally, the "Senior" posts that have not been distributed as per above by DGs will be open via a publication process, but **of course** reserved only to AD12/13s whilst in parallel, a number of "Senior" posts will be handed out to "labelled" AD13s.

Let us be frank and constructive: subject to it being open, transparent and carried out on a limited scale, the process of creating "Senior Expert" posts could be acceptable. After all, there *are* many genuine experts in the Commission and there is no reason why they should not be rewarded by the institution. *However*, the problem with the approach being proposed by DG HR is that *many genuinely* senior experts - not simply 'seniority experts' - to be found in the Commission have not reached and may never reach AD12 to benefit from this selection process!

Last but not least, in the Commission there are **currently** about **1,700 AD12s** and an astounding **2,000 AD13s without any management/advisor responsibilities**.

- Are "Senior Expert" posts to be created eventually for all of them?
- Is there *really* a need for hundreds, potentially thousands, of new "Senior Experts" in the Commission? If so, we publicly challenge DG HR to present its supporting "needs-based analysis" which it must have conducted like all sensible and modern entities and administrations.
- Who is going to do all the 'donkey work' in the Commission if most AD12/13s become "Senior Experts"? The other lower-level ADs whose numbers are shrinking thanks to the 10% cut imposed by the outgoing Commission?

- A similar scheme is, by the way, being put in place by DG HR for “Senior Assistants”, so that hundreds of AST9s, many of whom have failed the certification process to become ADs, can nonetheless benefit from promotions to grade 10 and beyond.



The new Commissioner in charge of HR, who will also be Commissioner for Budget, would be very well-advised to commit to setting a stringent ceiling on the number of “Senior Expert” and “Senior Assistant” posts to be created, and to combine this with a thorough, transparent and independent review of what is *really* needed for enhancing the organisation’s efficiency and effectiveness or at least maintaining what’s left of it ... not to even mention justice and motivation.

One interesting outcome of the special treatment of future “Senior Experts” is that at least for this year, their promotion has been ring-fenced from the promotion of other officials. Indeed, their promotion exercise is only starting now, while the promotion exercise of Heads of Unit and other 'normal' administrators is basically over. It is no secret that in the past, the quota of promotions allocated to AD12/13s:

- was used to give fast promotions to Heads of Unit (not in itself wrong, provided that the said HoUs effectively have the necessary merit on top of their job designation)
- and
- was 'cascaded' down to lower grades (Generation 2004 wishes DG HR would have allowed it to take place on a significant scale, rather than the trickling down of a maximum of 4 cascades per DG – see box 2 for details).

As a result this year, many well-deserving Heads of Unit were not promoted and promotions in the lower grades, which have already been cannibalised by the last internal competitions, are even more miserable than in previous years because of the lack of cascades from AD12/13.

### Box 2: promotion cascades

There are **currently about 1,900 AD12s and 2,500 AD13s in the Commission**. The maximum rate for promotions to the AD12/13 grades is 15% per year, down from 25% and 20% respectively in the previous Staff Regulations. This gives about 285 annual promotions available for AD12s and about 375 available for AD13s. Out of these available promotions, roughly 100 promotions have been allocated during the 2014 promotion exercise to HoUs and advisors. This leaves on the order of 500/600 promotions available for AD12/AD13s *without* any management responsibilities. These promotions should be cascaded down to the low grades, rather than handed out to pseudo “Senior(ity) Experts” (see here our [June newsletter](#) for a more detailed analysis).



So once again, the Commission is cornering itself into a Kafkaesque situation that will simply delight the ever-growing number of Eurosceptics in the EU and add to the despair of all those who want the EU to succeed.

Granting posts of “Senior Experts” to potentially thousands of already lushly-rewarded officials and carrying out a labelling process of its already best-treated permanent officials – whilst increasingly resorting to precarious contract staff in the Commission, in the agencies and elsewhere, some of them paid less than the minimum wage as happens in Luxembourg - is simply mad and should be stopped immediately.

**Let us hope and pray that the new Commissioner will put some order in a house that has been reduced to complete chaos over the past decade – the last five years in particular! Let us hope that both she and the budgetary authority realise that this sheer waste of EU taxpayer's money is not only damaging the interests and reputation of the institution, but also going against the express wish of the Member States to curb monthly salaries in excess of 10,000 Euros, unless they are not justified by management responsibilities.**

### Generation Edith Cresson



Talking about privileged officials (some dare to call them "fat cats", one wonders why), a transitional measure of the 2014 reform of the staff regulations that has received little attention thus far, is the creation of 2 new steps for AD12 and AD13 grades. AD13s, for instance, will now be able to reach step 7, instead of the maximum of step 5 before 1 January 2014. In financial terms, this will translate into a monthly salary almost €500 higher than what was possible before. As a result, the beneficiaries will be able to reach the same salary as an AD14 step 1 with no need for a promotion. They will mostly be senior AD12/AD13, many of them having already reached the end of career grade of A4/8 before the 2004 reform, in case they are not able to land upon a “Senior Expert” (see above) position.

What is the rationale for granting a pay rise to already well-paid officials that are not necessarily performing in an outstanding way in the context of a reform that has massacred the rest of the staff, in particular the newcomers who are being recruited after 1 January 2014? This kind of measure is hard, if not impossible, to sell to the European tax payer. By allowing this kind of practice, the “Senior(ity)” management of the Commission becomes the prime culprit in fuelling euroscepticism. That the “Senior(ity)” management of DG HR wants to reward people just because they were colleagues in the good old days of Edith Cresson, the Commissioner that infamously rewarded her dentist with lucrative EU contracts, and other members of the Santer Commission, while putting under tremendous pressure the newcomers, is not acceptable! We might be post-2004, but we know *very* well, only *too* well, what we are talking about!

## Report on the 'equivalence' of careers

Those of you who were already working for the institutions at the time will probably remember the Commission report on the principle of equivalence published in 2011

(<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%208547%202011%20INIT>).

This report made a mockery of the impact of the 2004 reform by failing to compare the (still growing) gap between pre and post-2004 careers. Now that the 2004 staff regulations have come to an end, it would be worth doing a *final* assessment of the impact of this reform, in order to set the record straight. Moreover, the 2011 report made it clear that “*If purchasing power of officials proved to deteriorate regularly in the coming years, it is highly likely that the principle of equivalence would be breached for all staff categories.*”

The virtual freeze that was applied to our salaries between 2011-2013 certainly qualifies as a deterioration of our purchasing power and would fully justify a revision of the 2011 report. For these reasons, the Joint Monitoring Committee, in which Generation 2004 is represented, has requested an update of the 2011 report. So far, however, there was no reply from DG HR despite two reminders. A sign of embarrassment?

..... 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 3 minutes 58 second before you go home today).

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

..... **AAND last but definitely not least, a special travel offer which Generation 2004 has negotiated for YOU, our members**



Indeed we are pleased to inform you that we have reached an agreement with **Air Malta** to offer a **15% fare reduction** on all Air Malta routes. Air Malta flies daily from Brussels and many other European cities to Malta at very convenient timings.

Please book now via [www.airmalta.com](http://www.airmalta.com) and kindly insert promo code: **EEUWU2014K**.

*Travel dates validity from 01 November 2014 to 31 March 2015*

*Offer valid for bookings made by 30 November 2014 at the latest.*

*Wishing you all a great experience on the Maltese islands ☺*



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G2004 web page: [click here](#)