



# Generation 2004

## Newsletter no.3

February 2014

### 2004-2014: a Decade of "Disunity within Diversity"

We were taught that the EU is built on the lofty principles of equality, solidarity and unity within diversity - or so we preferred to believe. In this respect, those of us joining the European civil service after 01 May 2004 were in for a rude reality check and dismayed to discover that the image which the Union purports to present to the outside world is very far from the inside truth.

Whilst since its inception, Generation 2004 has explained at length and in great detail how the 2004 reform created 2 distinct generations/classes of officials (pre/post - 2004) doing the same work but under very different conditions as regards remuneration, status and career prospects, little attention has hitherto been given to the serious geo-political implications of the 2004 reform, at least as far as the (supposed) equality between ALL Member States is concerned.

With the exception of some higher positions sprinkled across the organogram for aesthetic political correctness, almost all officials from the newer Member States (EU12) were, *de facto*, recruited as second class officials under the post-2004 staff regulations.

Indeed, paranoid schizophrenics and/or conspiracy theorists might argue that a prime (and sinister) objective of the 2004 reform was explicitly that of keeping the vast majority of officials from EU12 States in the lower career echelons for a number of decades following their country's accession. The other post-2004 colleagues from the older Member States (EU15) who were **equally, badly hit** by the 2004 reform, could then be considered as the expendable, collateral damage who happened to be 'at the wrong place and at the wrong time'!

If this was indeed the case, the sinister mission has been accomplished - at least for a first decade after the 2004 enlargement; the illustration below speaks for itself:

2 Forking out

3 The annual salary adjustment saga

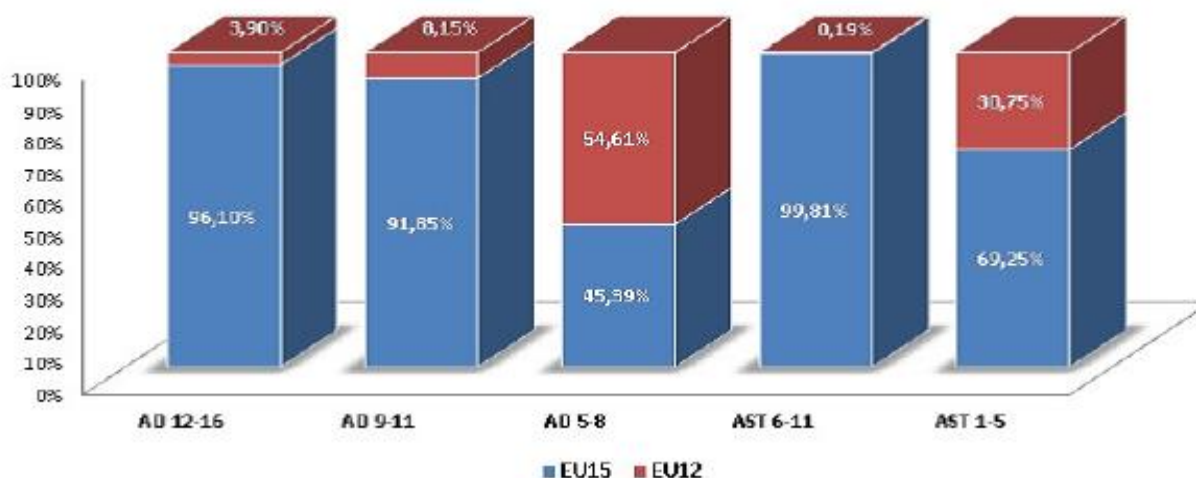
3 Initiative for Unified Legal Actions Against the Statute

4 Internal Competitions

6 G2004 event on personal development assisted by horses (Anne Thiebault)

7 Membership/ we MUST grow

## Posts in EC per grade groups in % (2012)



Within this scenario, we are then sure that you are bright enough to calculate where the heftiest part of the global Commission pay packet goes every month!!!

Although this data gives a picture of the last quarter of 2012, we have all reasons to believe that it doesn't differ much from the current situation; **in any case we would love to be proved wrong**. Let us understand well what we are saying here: not one, not two, not five ..... but nearly A DECADE after the much-trumpeted 2004 enlargement which was supposed to unite us all in one, big, happy family as equal European 'brothers and sisters'!!!

Maybe it would be a good idea for all of you reading this, particularly those from the newer Member States, to print this picture and send it to the candidates in your local constituency for the upcoming European Parliament elections who will be shortly asking for your vote, asking them to tell you:

- whether they are 'happy' with this situation?
- what they intend to do about it if elected?

We will be coming back to you with much, much more on this in the coming weeks and months.

## Forking Out

Many staff representatives are complaining about the withdrawal, from the start of January, of the discount granted to low-income staff in the Commission's restaurants. This discount was available to those staff who carried the knife and fork symbol on their badges. While Generation 2004 shares the sentiments of other staff organisations that this was an appreciated benefit for many low-paid staff, we would **rather** like to focus on the bigger picture and remind colleagues that the fundamental problem is that so many post-2004 staff have been systematically recruited on much lower salaries than their pre-2004 colleagues ..... doing the same job; heard of "equal pay for equal work" anyone???

Generation 2004 would prefer to see a motivated body of staff at the Commission where the salary package available is such that nobody needs a discounted meal. Indeed, this is preferable in terms of the dignity of hard-working staff who do not wish to ask for special treatment every lunchtime and who ideally would not wish to display a badge marking them out as low-paid, second class officials!

Furthermore, many staff eligible for the previous discount scheme complained that there was very little choice associated with the discount, which was only applicable to the so-called plat du jour. This was particularly frustrating for vegetarians since this was invariably a meat dish. Really a take-it-or-leave-it soup kitchen Europa-style!

# The Annual Salary Adjustment Saga

We all know that over the past years, our annual salary adjustment has become a distant memory, or better - a mirage.

Consistent attacks by a number of Member States in the Council have been exacerbated by a weak Commission which rather than staunchly defending its staff, has preferred to try and reach some, or rather, any sort of deal at all costs by accommodating those attacking the European civil service.

Council: "JUMP!!!"

Commission: "how high Sir?"

The Commission proposal following the European Court of Justice's (ECJ) judgments of 19 November 2013 was the last in a series of such steps which were anything but in the interest of staff – a senseless proposal for a 0.9% increase for both 2011 and 2012 substantiated by no legal or economic argumentation whatsoever .... but (admittedly) purely based on arbitrary, political (mis)calculations whose primary objective was (again) to try and appease those who are hell bent on eroding the EU civil service. Please do keep in mind that the Commission's original proposal based on concrete Eurostat figures and calculations was of a 1.7% increase for both years.

Incidentally, at the time Generation 2004 was (and hitherto remains) the only staff organisation to submit a reasoned, structured proposal to the Commission, which **we continue to stand by** and which you can read [here](#), together with the Commission's reply [here](#).

In the face of such a weak and sloppy adversary – i.e. the Commission - the Member States in question have upped the ante and now decided to 'go for the jugular' and not only refuse to consider the (already) measly +0.9% concocted on a whim by the Commission, but insist on more drastic action by adopting a negotiating mandate (in COREPER) for 0% for both 2011 and 2012! 'To be fair', some speak of some Member States "kindly" willing to concede some 0.1% by the way.

Needless to say that should these Member States get their way, this would translate into a **5-year salary freeze for all of us in the EU civil service – nothing more and nothing less!**

At this point, we strongly believe that the **Commission** should **rise up to the challenge**, be bold and stop humiliating itself ..... and all of us with it in the process.

**To this end, we call on the Commission to withdraw its proposal and present our case for both 2011 and 2012 before the European Court of Justice. It is the only honourable way forward ... unless from now on we must indeed resign ourselves to consider this a 'lame duck' Commission.**

## Initiative for Unified Legal Actions Against the Statute

Generation 2004 welcomes the recent communication by a substantial 'grouping' of unions – namely the Alliance (R&D, CONF-SFE, CISL-FIR, Solidarité Européenne), RS (U4U, USHU, SFIE) and FFPE – on their decision to "join forces for a strong common strategy" for questioning the "legality of several new provisions which impact negatively on officials' and other agents' careers".

Indeed we wish to remind that **it was actually Generation 2004 who publicly proposed this idea for the first time during a meeting of staff representatives some time ago.**

Generation 2004 will be ready to cooperate in this initiative on a case-by case-basis and will be following closely further developments in this regard in order to decide on what issues it will be ready to join forces in the interest of all staff in general and post-2004 staff in particular.

In this sense, in addition to other dossiers being considered, **Generation 2004 immediately proposes to this 'grouping' to consider the possibility of common legal actions targeting the non-equivalence between pre and post – 2004 careers.**

Generation 2004 augurs that this initiative might be successful and possibly be a step towards a TRUE reform of what is otherwise a fragmented and largely ineffective staff representation.

# Internal Competitions

In view of numerous reports from candidates sitting for the ongoing internal competitions who experienced difficulties in accessing the details of their evaluations on their EPSO accounts, Generation 2004 had called upon DG HR to extend the deadline such that everybody could be guaranteed the same, full 10 calendar days to consider and prepare a request for review based on his individual, detailed results.

As a consequence, the final deadline was extended to 24 January 2014 as mentioned on [MyIntracomm](#).

But what looks at first sight like an attempt to correct the consequences of a technical hiccup, would in reality do injustice to any decent fig-leaf:

1. The note on MyIntracomm is dated 21 January, thus one day **after** the original deadline had expired (date of notification letter - 10 January 2014 - plus 10 calendar days: 20 January), although difficulties had been reported in the staff forums several days before already.
2. No candidate was informed via his/her EPSO account about the extended deadline.

All this is more than curious: since when is MyIntracomm the official channel for informing candidates in competitions about relevant changes to procedures? Had candidates not been asked to check their EPSO account regularly? And what's the point of extending a deadline if those affected by that decision are not informed about it?

## Contacts:

[Stefan.GRECH@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Stefan.GRECH@ec.europa.eu)

[Leja.SPILJAK@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Leja.SPILJAK@ec.europa.eu)

[Pascal.LE-GRAND@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Pascal.LE-GRAND@ec.europa.eu)

[Stefan.NISTOR@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Stefan.NISTOR@ec.europa.eu)

[Daniela.SIMIONESCU@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Daniela.SIMIONESCU@ec.europa.eu)

## Wiki page:

<http://intracomm.ec.testa.eu/wikis/display/generation2004/Home>

## G2004 event on personal development assisted by horses (Anne Thiebauld)

Generation 2004 invites you to a conference/workshop on personal development assisted by horses (sometimes called equus coaching) given by a practitioner with long years of experience in both equus coaching and equus therapy in Belgium, Anne Thiebauld. You will find out how the presence of this noble animal can help work with one's fears, sense of limits and emotional turmoil. After a presentation of about 40 minutes on the theme, the floor will be open to your questions (more about Anne's work on [www.equireliance.be](http://www.equireliance.be)).

The presentation will be given in French and further questions and answer can be in both English and French.

The event will take place on Monday, 31 March, between 12h30-14h30 in the Big CSC Room (Loi 80 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor) in Brussels. If you are interested in joining from other sites or for more information, please contact Daniela Simionescu ([daniela.simionescu@ec.europa.eu](mailto:daniela.simionescu@ec.europa.eu) ext. 97826) or the Generation 2004 functional email - [REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu](mailto:REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu) )

## Membership: we MUST grow

We must continue to show that Generation 2004 is increasingly alive, kicking and **growing**, **and** that post-2004 ... and (now also) post-2014 staff understand the issues at stake for their future and are ready to fight for more equality within the EU civil service. **It is only (a strong) membership that we can present as our most significant calling card when lobbying our cause with anyone that matters.**

Make no mistake, a few hundred members is only a drop amongst the thousands of post-2004 officials who now nearly exceed 50% of the Commission's total workforce; **Generation 2004 should be the natural home of ALL those recruited after 01 May 2004 and which by default, includes ALL colleagues from the newer Member States.**

**Join Generation 2004 simply by completing** and sending us the membership form which you can find [here](#) + transferring the yearly fee.

If you are already a member, we appeal to you to undertake **two** actions:

1) please reconfirm your **membership for the year 2014** by transferring your yearly fee onto our bank account at your earliest convenience: **IBAN BE55363108320344, Swift BBRUBEBB**

Please do not forget to write the following in the comment box: **your name and "G2004 membership fee - 2014"**.

The membership fee has remained unchanged compared to last year:

- 20 € (full membership) for AD/AST grade 7 or above, or Contract Agents GFIII/GFIV
- 10 € (full membership) for AD/AST grade 6 and lower, or Contract Agents GFI/GFII
- 10 € (adherent membership, all other cases)

If you prefer to pay in cash, please contact us at [REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu](mailto:REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu) and we will send you our nearest 'contact point' colleague; s/he will collect the payment from you, delivering a formal receipt.

2) **PLEASE bring in at least just 1 new member** (new membership link [here](#))

Should you have any additional comments or questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at: [REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu](mailto:REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu)

In advance, thank you for your support :)