



4 points for Luxembourg

"We must abide by the highest possible professional and ethical standards at all times. I want the European Commission to lead the way as a modern, efficient and transparent public administration". (Jean-Claude Juncker, EC Mission Letters, November 2014)

Scene-setter

Generation 2004 has emerged on the scene of EU staff representation several years ago as a grass-root reaction to the blatant incapacity of then existing trade unions to reconcile the interests of staff divided by the 2004 staff reform. Since then, the denial of the divide-problem has brought us further deterioration of working conditions in 2014 for new recruits but has also influenced the pre-2004 generation (even if they were confident it will not affect them!).

Based on our understanding of solidarity and justice as well as our accumulated experience in fighting for a fair treatment of post-2004 (and post-2014) staff, in 2015 we presented 9 points which we believe are ultimately in the interest of *all* staff and which we urge the Commission to take into consideration:

1. **Recognising formally the 2004 career-gap and assessing the impact of the 2004 reform after a decade**
2. **Revising the promotions system to close the career gap and discriminating positively in favour of post-2004 staff**
3. **Designing a career system which *actually* promotes merit, performance, qualifications and experience**
4. **Ending the waste of scarce budgetary resources on artificial senior advisor/assistant positions**
5. **Making transparency the default approach of the Commission's HR policy**
6. **Walking the talk' towards a fully-fledged equal opportunities policy**
7. **Securing our pensions and making the pension system more sustainable**
8. **Putting the "human" back into our human resources policy**
9. **Putting the "staff" dimension back into staff representation**

Generation 2004 is represented since 2013 in **Luxembourg with an autonomous section which fully** signed up to the values and demands expressed in these points.

We fully recognise the specifics of different Commission locations, whereby particular measures for implementation of these points may be required. Just as an example, our point 9 equally relates to all locations but especially in Luxembourg it comes with the necessity for specific implementation measure: **a revision of the electoral system**. (See more [here](#))

At the same time, additional issues of pertinent importance emerge for Luxembourg; therefore we present our 4 particular demands to be considered:

- 1) **Bringing "Luxembourg staff" back to living on Luxembourgish territory**
- 2) **Supporting equal treatment of EU officials by local medical service providers**
- 3) **Stop employing staff on precarious conditions along the poverty line**
- 4) **Reintroduce support for multilingualism**

1) Bringing “Luxembourg staff” back to living on Luxembourgish territory

- The problem of purchasing power parity in Luxembourg should be officially recognized by the Commission and corrective measures need to be taken.
- A correction coefficient for Luxembourg is one option but should not be considered as an exclusive one! A correction coefficient would require an amendment of the Staff Regulations and will be dependent on the agreement of all member states and the European Parliament. Furthermore, it is calculated as a percentage, so the highest benefit would go to the highest incomes, rather than to colleagues earning barely over the legal minimum and who need help the most. Since a correction coefficient is calculated yearly, it also bears the risk of obtaining lower salary levels compared to Brussels depending on price developments in both locations.
- A more pragmatic and fair way to rectify the situation could be a fixed amount housing allowance, adopted e.g. as a social measure under the existing Staff Regulations without the necessity of an amendment.
- Furthermore, we identify the expenditure on housing as a major reason for living cost increase in Luxembourg. So, any relocation of staff that would aggravate the pressing tension on housing market should be negotiated by the Commission with the Luxembourgish authorities to ensure that appropriate measures are taken by the member state's authorities (for enough affordable housing available).

(See more in our June Newsletter: [To be or not to be... a correction coefficient for Luxembourg](#))

2) Supporting equal treatment of EU officials by local medical service providers

- The practice of overcharging of EU institutions' staff by medical service providers in Luxembourg is a practice that should be put to an end. It represents an additional burden on staff situated in Luxembourg but also on the JSIS with a risk of budgetary problems and further reduction of services for all staff.
- Again we believe that the Commission as an employer should take the necessary steps to discuss with Luxembourgish authorities a legal solution for the overcharging of EU institutions' staff by the Luxembourgish medical service providers.
- This measure should be evenly a precondition to reallocation of staff from Brussels to Luxembourg.

3) Stop employing staff on precarious conditions along the poverty lines

- Many colleagues, who work under fixed-term or indeterminate contracts, carry out permanent tasks and undertake responsibilities that should be allocated to permanent officials. A large part of these colleagues do not have the chance to

participate in internal competitions, others are given a mess of pottage with very limited chances in sporadic competitions to become officials.

- The Commission is clearly abusing the possibility of recruiting contact agents for temporary tasks since their salaries are lower than those of officials at similar posts. Generation 2004 is denouncing this practice as we do with some planned provisions of the reformed General Implementing Provisions (GIP) for contract agents creating another injustice for future recruits.
- The situation in Luxembourg is even aggravated by the high costs of living. Many contract agents earn salaries at or below the Luxembourgish poverty line. As denounced repeatedly, several colleagues even receive gross salaries below the minimum gross salary required by Luxembourgish law. While the Commission has committed to take measures to improve the situation of those colleagues, after around 1.5 years, the list of measures has still not been fully implemented. Additionally some of the measures were implemented in the way that rather disadvantages the affected colleagues instead of helping them.

(See more [here](#) on our position concerning contract agents)

4) Reintroduce support for multilingualism

- Once upon a time the Commission had a dream: all civil servants speaking all the official languages. It looks like the dream is dead and buried.
- A recent decision by DG HR on rules on access to training (*see full text [here](#)*) seems to interpret multilingualism as personal interest, and the time spent in language training courses in the interest of multilingualism cannot anymore be credited in the balance of working hours.
- We should be definitively encouraged to learn the three working languages but without being *de facto* prevented from learning other official EU languages.

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