



**RECTIFYING INJUSTICE
STANDING FOR OUR RIGHTS
RESTORING UNITY**



**For Brussels LSC
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Generation 2004

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TOP STORY

Generation 2004's position on pensions

First, **Generation 2004** welcomes the debate with U4U, which so far seems to be the only staff organisation in the ongoing electoral campaign in Brussels, besides **Generation 2004**, capable of coming up with clear and unambiguous positions on a range of topics. As far as pensions are concerned, we note the following interesting [points made by U4U](#):

- 1) U4U's position is to defend acquired rights at all costs
- 2) U4U argue that our pension scheme is fair to everyone
- 3) U4U argue that our pension scheme is sound
- 4) U4U recognises (end of their document) that "*The worsening outlook for pay changes and career prospects and consequently the foreseeable decrease in pensions following the revisions of the Staff Regulations in 2004 and 2014 has already resulted in a fall in the contribution of active workers to the pension scheme (from 11.6% to 9.8% for employee contributions...)*".

Continues on Pg2...

Fact checking

Outside Union Elections

You might be bothered by all the emails in last couple of weeks asking you to vote. With all the promises and all credits that everybody claims to have exclusive rights.

Well, we are bothered with the nonfactual parts of the messages as they really sometimes sound to good or bad to be true.

This is the latest of the Outside Union elections.

The candidates of so called only independent and free trade union for the staff employed outside European Union are saying (*continues on pg2*)



TOP STORY continues...

Our position on pensions

On the first point, fair enough. There is some logics to fight for acquired rights. But the counterpart of this logic is that those who have much reduced "acquired rights" are perfectly legitimate to ask for a modification of the *status quo*. Since the administrative budget that pays our pensions is not going to grow, those who have less should fight to rebalance the budget in their favour. As mentioned in our [manifesto](#), Generation 2004 demand a re-balancing in favour of "the many, not the few", even if that means that some acquired rights will have to be reduced.

On the second point, **Generation 2004** has to disagree: our pension scheme is not fair to everyone. Just think about the annual accrual rate of pension rights. Some people collect 2% per year, others 1.9% and the rest 1.8%. Is that fair? No! If you are still in doubt, think about the several thousand Contract Agents with 6-year contracts who do not have access to our pension scheme because they will not be able to stay in the Institutions for 10 years. That is not fair, is it?

Third point, our pension scheme is sound. Yes and no! From a legal point of view, it is sound, just read U4U's arguments to convince yourself. From a [political point of view](#), it is not sound. Firstly, the total pension liability, i.e. the amount of money that Member States are expected to pay us in the foreseeable future is gigantic, on the order of €70 billion. Unlike the UN institutions which have provisioned on the order of \$40 billion for the pensions of their staff, the EU institutions have not provisioned anything. Our pension scheme is a virtual one, all we have is a promise by the Member States that they will pay our pensions when we retire. What happens if the EU collapses or in the case of the UK, if one country leaves is unclear. Yes, the UK has accepted to pay its share of the liability, but this is subject to a positive vote of its parliament. Nobody knows at this stage if the UK parliament will accept to honour the UK share of the pension liability (close to €10 billion). Secondly, the annual disbursement from the EU budget to pay for the pensions of the colleagues who have already retired is going through the roof. We reckon that it will catch up with our salaries in the next decade or so. Why? Because the current pensioners have for most of them retired with very high pensions and their numbers are growing exponentially (pension expenditure goes up by 5-7% /year at the moment!).



Fort point, we fully agree with U4U! However, what U4U forgets to mention is that those who have the highest salaries have benefitted most from the decrease in the pension contribution.

Last point: one **does not need to open the Staff Regulations to change the tax rates applied to pensions**. The tax rates are set by the protocol of immunities which has been left untouched since 1968. **High pensions could be taxed by changing this protocol**; if a proper abatement is given to active staff, they will be unaffected by the change. The same method can be applied to spare the lower pensions. Why do we propose this change in the tax regime for pensions? Because the product of the taxation of high pensions can then be used **to fund the capital-based pension scheme** that Commissioner Oettinger wants to put in place. This capital-based scheme would be most useful for anyone who does not want to or cannot stay in the institutions until the end of their career, and thus in particular for the CA3bs who cannot stay for more than 6 years under the present Staff Regulations.

Fact checking continues...

(ON Generation 2004 list);

Quote "Because **List 2** represents only **2 continents** (by 65%), has only 1/3 of women candidates and is made by 1/3 of candidates coming from only 3 single Delegations"

Fact: Generation 2004 List number 2 candidates are currently placed on 4 continents, coming from 18 delegations around the world and there are 10 female candidates (out of 28), with Giuliana Torta as number 1. So the quoted statement is at quite misleading or we can only guess somebody did not pass a geography and mathematics class at the mentioned union. If this is true, then we could ask our self how can somebody like that represent delegations staff outside union at all.

Quote "We are the only trade union **FREE** from **Brussels-centric interests** we always pay for and **INDEPENDENT** from power games of **gigantic trade unions** no one is excused from"



Fact: Generation 2004 (as staff association and not a trade union) partly agree with the last part of the statement however the first part is very questionable. First of all you need to cooperate with all in the central staff committee in order to achieve results. Generation 2004 together with other so called gigantic trade unions did exactly that to help our colleagues in delegation all over the world. We strongly believe in equality no matter where you work. Last but not least, claiming to be free and independent its quite a big responsibility once you need to show results, but we guess copy paste the programme, presenting others as enemies but at the same time taking/claiming achievements of those is much easier.

You are probably annoyed by all the messages sent by the staff organisations asking you to vote for them. **Generation 2004** has been rather moderate with no more than a handful of targeted messages. The same cannot be said of U4U which seems to have taken a very significant lead in the *spamming competition*. Between mid-September and end of October, we have counted more than 40 messages sent by the official U4U functional mailbox (REP-PERS-



OSP-U4U) and their satellite mailboxes (Collectif des Contractuels, Union for Unity U4U, G. Vlandas the leader of U4U and GRASPE). That's about one message per day since the middle of September. As far as **Generation 2004** is concerned, just read our [manifesto](#), everything is there, no need for spamming!

In addition, our walls are covered with posters with essentially zero information content; at **Generation 2004**, we tried initially to limit ourselves to the boards dedicated to these campaign posters but because of the inflation in the number of posters, we have had to align ourselves on our competitors, although we are probably still the most conservative organisation. Unfortunately, the electoral "code de bonne conduite" allows staff organisations to put posters up in many places. Next time, maybe DG HR and OIB could come up with a more restrictive policy and even more importantly enforce the policy?

Spamming & walls covered with election posters!

The Parliament's Passerelle – the easy way in!



If you work for the Commission, you understand that becoming an EU official is hard. You need to survive a tough selection process in open competitions. Tens of thousands of hopeful applicants contend for a hundred spots on the reserve list with no guarantee of finally landing a job. As contractual or temporary agent, you can also try your luck in internal competitions. But they are few and far between, and have an opaque selection process with many spots going to contenders from outgoing Cabinets.

Or, you work for one of the political groups in the European Parliament:

While the Staff Regulations foresee the possibility of internal competitions for all institutions, wise politicians in 2004 understood the unique need of the Parliament to have a legal requirement of holding internal competitions for you at least each legislative period for AD9 or AST6-level or higher¹ - a process known as "**Passerelle**". In the Parliament, rules on internal competitions make clear that ten years of service are required². However the internal competition notice requires that you have been in the service for the Parliament for only three years while offering a number of places on the reserve list conveniently comparable to the number of "you and your eligible friends³". The Parliament's Human Resources is refreshingly clear in case you ever doubted if you should apply: "**the true purpose of the internal Passerelle competition is to enable Political Group Staff to obtain the security of Official status**"⁴.



¹ Article 29 (4) of the Staff Regulations.

² Article 2 of the General Implementing Provisions of 17 October 2014 of the European Parliament.

³ Notice of Parliament Internal Competition AD/1/17.

Nevertheless, they say that the competition test are hard and require proper preparation. But don't be afraid; the political groups' HR Units will come to your help! They organise different seminars and training sessions, or in case of need even individual coaching sessions, and happily advise you on all aspects of your application file⁴. No one is left behind, even if they need to carry you through the Passerelle.

After having managed the tricky process of having you and your application sufficiently prepared by HR, you finally pass the Passerelle and are on your way to become an EU official. Congratulations! But wait, you only made it on the reserve list with no guarantee for a job. What if no one wants to hire you?

Don't panic, your political friends are there for you. Parliament's BUDG committee decided that posts of reserve list candidates working for political groups are automatically transformed to official posts⁵. No publication necessary. No application and selection of candidates. No probationary period. You go straight to established official, together with your other 31 friends ranging from AD11 to AST6 in 2018. Easy. So what is everyone in the Commission complaining about? Becoming permanent official is easy!

Generation 2004 and actions for our colleagues with disability



The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities sets out the legal obligations on States to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The European Union signed the Convention in 2010. It is legally binding. In the **2016 staff survey**, about **6% of all Commission staff declared having long-standing health issues or a disability** that affects their daily activities.

The Commission's policy on disability was an essential concern for **Generation 2004** and we were active in this regard at different

levels. Especially, through the current Local Staff Committee (LSC) Brussels of which the President is a **Generation 2004** member.

Upon his initiative the Association of Staff with a Disability in the European Commission ([ASDEC](#)) was invited several times to the [plenary session of the LSC](#). Such approach provided a platform for staff with a disability to raise concerns related to accessibility of Commission buildings and workplaces, reasonable accommodation of staff with a disability, the discriminatory nature of the JSIS and the Commission's diversity and inclusion strategy.

Similarly, OIB representatives were invited to [report about their policy](#) to improve working conditions of colleagues with disabilities.

There is also a dedicated full-fledged chapter on disability policy in the [LSC Activity report](#) (p. 19-20).

Within the Joint Committee on Prevention and Safety at Work (CPPT) we have also raised the issue of colleagues with disability in the context of the revision of the MIT (Manuel de l'immeuble type) asking to fully take into consideration the suggestions and grievances expressed by ASDEC, to take a more ambitious approach to this policy.

Generation 2004 has put together for you all the information related to the assistance for colleagues with disabilities.



[Please read more on our website for more information!](#)

⁴ Notice on Passerelle V (2016), European Parliament intranet, Human Resources.

⁵ Passed on 24 January 2018 in BUDG committee (doc: 2018 Budget – Other Sections – EP – Establishment Plan – Annex 1)



Generation 2004 & support for colleagues with cancer

Did you know that new research finds that, from now 1 in 2⁶ people will be diagnosed with cancer? This new estimate replaces the previous 1 in 3 people figure. In the period 2014 to 2025, the yearly number of new invasive tumour diagnoses (excl. nonmelanoma skin cancer) in Belgium is projected to rise from 67,820 to 79,140, an increase of about 17%⁷. In 2015, 1.3 million people died from cancer in the EU, more than one quarter (25.4 %) of the total number of deaths.⁸

That being said it is also promising that e.g. in the UK's cancer survival has doubled over the last 40 years and around half of patients now survive the disease for more than 10 years. But, as more people benefit from improved healthcare and longer life expectancy, the number of cancer cases is expected to rise.⁹ However, there are always the side effects of any treatment that someone is exposed to: operation, chemo, radio, immunotherapy, pills....

Coming back to work is expected as the colleague is supposed to fully recover within 6 months of time since this is the longest period of the medical part time. There is no formal recognition of all the fatigue, psychological pressure of having already several cancers, side effects from any of the treatment. In fact the colleague at work is very soon treated as "any other" colleague. Moreover, the supporting services (Medical Service, PMO) do not have enough staff to dedicate any specific colleague to the cancer support administration. There is also an informal cancer support group but it cannot provide any support to the different administrative questions that can arise during the sickness and after returning to work.

As presented in our article on disabilities, there is a structural approach towards that group of colleagues. We would therefore suggest following the same logic for the cancer patients colleagues as their number is unfortunately growing. **Generation 2004** has prepared some ideas on how to improve today's situation and would like to work jointly with the Cancer Support Group and the future Staff Committee in order to achieve these goals.

[Please read more on our website for more information](#)

⁶ <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-us/cancer-news/press-release/2015-02-04-1-in-2-people-in-the-uk-will-get-cancer>

⁷ https://kankerregister.org/media/docs/publications/IncidenceProj2015-2025_finaal_171120.pdf

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Cancer_statistics

⁹ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/02/150203204348.htm>

Election time! - Let's cast an informed vote!

ABC of Staff Representation and Social Dialogue at the EC

This article and the link below is devoted to colleagues in Brussels or working in delegations Outside the Union now called to vote for their local sections of the Staff Committee. It recollects however essential information for all other colleagues who have already voted this year (Ispra and Seville), will vote next year (Luxembourg) or later on (Karlsruhe, Geel, Petten, France), unless a new structure of the Staff Committee is put in place through a reform of the staff representation in preparation. It sheds light on several aspects of staff representation and social dialogue at the EU, and offers some reality checks for your awareness.



Social dialogue rules governing how staff representatives interact with the administration are included in the Staff Regulations and several other documents (see links within items). Putting it into a nutshell is not easy at all – therefore **this document is an attempt to provide orientation within the maze** and make the best out of our active and passive right to vote. Items are in alphabetical, not in logical order!

A as **A**ccountability
B as **B**ureau
C as **C**ampaigning
D as **s**ocial Dialogue

[Continue reading the full guide here!](#)

...and finally

G2004 message song of the month (with kind permission) – lean back, turn up the volume click [here](#)

Got any ideas for the G2004 newsletter? [Send](#) them along (with "Newsletter" in subject), together with any letters, articles, poems, comics and any other assorted forms of expression.

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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