



Generation 2004

Newsletter no.26

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TOP STORY

The multiannual financial framework, MFF, 2021-2027

2018 is the year for the Commission to draft and negotiate the next multiannual financial framework starting on 1 January 2021 for a 7-year period.

Commissioner Oettinger is working with his team and with the involved Commission services to present the proposal officially to the Member States in May 2018. In the first working week in January a conference with the involvement of the Member States' highest political level took place in Brussels to set the scene.

In what political context will the MFF be drafted and discussed this time?

Contrary to the last MFF which was negotiated in the context of the economic and financial crisis now we are in a completely different situation. Europe's economy is growing and the unemployment rate is the lowest of the last 10 years. However, we are facing a different political context worldwide with the Brexit and US President Trump. Moreover new political challenges have appeared on the EU's political agenda which can only or better be solved at the European level such as migration, securing the external borders, fighting against terrorism and a common European defence policy. The Brexit vote and Trump have given a boost to the latter. French President Macron has indicated his will to launch necessary reforms and to reinforce pro-European forces together with Chancellor Merkel. In addition, 2019 will be a year when important elections and political changes are going to take place: the Brexit will happen on 29 March 2019, the European Parliament will be re-elected in May/June and a new Commission will take office in autumn. Thus, for the first time in the EU history an MFF has to be negotiated during the election campaign of the European Parliament.



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What is the financial context?

The Brexit will leave a net revenue gap of 12-14 billion Euros per year ([consistent with estimate made by the UK](#)). Commissioner Oettinger proposes to close this gap with 50% budget savings and 50% additional resources from the Member States.

Moreover, the above mentioned new political challenges need to be financed. Commissioner Oettinger stated that these should be born to 80% by additional money and to 20% by cuts.

Generation 2004 expects that the [Brexit will have an impact](#) on heading V of the budget which covers the administrative costs. Let us not forget, in the last 5 years the Commission reduced already the number of staff by 5%. If there will be pressure for further staff cuts because of the Brexit there should be moderate savings only in the second half of the budget period after 2023 – according to the Commissioner. The message to the Member States is thus: "Let us continue to work with the same number of staff for a couple of years. "



Nevertheless, the Commissioner has recently invited the staff representation to submit proposals with regard to heading V of the future Multiannual Financial Framework. Our (rather sad) experience after having gone through 2 reforms of the Staff Regulation in a decade is that we should not be naïve and think that heading V will increase while the rest of the budget is being cut. Generation 2004 is thus reflecting on what/whether concessions would be acceptable to the staff when it comes to budget saving proposals.

Colleagues who started in the Commission after 1 May 2004 paid already a high contribution to budget savings through lower entry grades which led to much lower salaries, through the unfavourable pension rights acquisition and the growing number of contract agents with lower salaries.

Whatever savings at the end might be proposed by the Commission Generation 2004 stands for proportionality, i.e. those colleagues with higher incomes must contribute to the savings to a higher extent than those with lower incomes. We are working now to specify this.

The new philosophy of the next budget

Commissioner Oettinger but also representatives of the European Parliament keep repeating that the added value of EU spending will be crucial when defining the areas of savings. There should be no cuts for research expenditures (Horizon post 2020) and the Erasmus+ programme. There will be most likely modest cuts in cohesion and agriculture policy. President Macron declared already that he will not maintain defending with all means the EU agriculture policy which was defended by all his predecessors so far.

Therefore, no Euro from the EU budget should be spent without a proven European added value and at the same time the EU budget must be more efficient and targeted to the new political challenges. Currently, the Member States contribute 1% of their GDP to the EU budget. Commissioner Oettinger asks for 1.1x % which is a slight increase for each Member State but a significant one at European level. His example is: from 100 Euros earned by an EU citizen 50 Euros go to the national budget, for taxes, social security and insurances. But only 1 Euro goes to the EU to Brussels.

Voting procedure for the MFF

The main difficulty in approving the next MFF is the unanimity in the Council of 27 Member States – Commissioner Oettinger said. While in the European Parliament a majority is sufficient the Member States must vote for it unanimously. "It will be difficult but not impossible" – Mr Oettinger pointed out. It will not only be about money but the Heads of State and Government must demonstrate good governance and flexibility. Even when the MFF negotiations go together with the EP's election campaign the MFF must be the priority. It is the responsibility of democrats to demonstrate the capacity to act and take decisions – the Commissioner highlighted. He promotes the idea that the MFF must be approved in May 2019 in Sibiu during the Romanian presidency in order not to delay the start of many EU co-funded programmes.

We will keep informing you in our newsletter about the discussions in the coming months and we will consult with our members as soon as we have a reasonably solid position.

Pascal Le Grand appointed new Chair of Generation 2004

The Management Board of G2004 has appointed Pascal Le Grand as the new Chair of the organization.

Born in France, Pascal has spent most of his professional life abroad, including working for the Commission in Brussels during the past 10 years. He is a scientist by training. Being one of the founding members of Generation 2004, he will ensure continuity of our action and use his experience of the institutions to make sure that the gap between privileged staff and staff recruited after 2004, including temporary staff, does not grow further. Pascal and the Board of Generation 2004 thank the former Chair, Lyubomira (Mira) Nesheva for her contribution to the organisation. Mira will remain on the Board of Generation 2004 and an active member.



By appointing a French AD as its chair, after a Bulgarian AST, Generation 2004 demonstrates the versatility of our organisation and that it defends all categories of staff, no matter their grade or nationality. We are currently increasing the involvement of contractual and temporary staff in the management of our organisation. If you are a TA or a CA and are interested in talking to us about your situation and/or in contributing, please get in contact with us. Emails us [here](#).

Dos & Don'ts of Self-appraisal & Appeals Conference!



Thanks for
your
participation!

A conference entitled "**Know more about DOs and DON'Ts of self-appraisal and appeals**" was organised by Generation 2004 on 11 January 2018. It consisted in a varied programme of presentations, interactive dialogues and one-to-one advice sessions. This lunch-time conference is the second large public event organised by Generation 2004 after the **Contract Agents Conference** organised in November 2017.

The lunch-time conference brought together a large number of attendees in Brussels and several hundred participants from Ispra, Seville and Luxembourg through webstreaming and videoconference.

The speakers from G2004 (Lorella Cattaruzza, Lyubomira Nesheva and Łukasz Wardyn) pointed out the importance of your self-appraisal and the annual report prepared by the reporting officer. During the lunch-time conference, they explained the promotion system in the EU Institutions and highlighted the importance of an appropriate language in your self-appraisal. The self-appraisal must positively mirror your performance rather than serve an excuse for your reporting officer to under-valuate your work because (s)he wants to promote someone else.

The presentation included instructions on the use of the Sysper template and on the key-words in your self-appraisal and any possible subsequent appeal. Speakers also presented some case studies.

As a follow-up to the conference, Generation 2004 has invited those interested in a one-to-one session by appointment to come and discuss in all confidentiality their individual self-appraisal and appeal with Generation2004's experts. We are glad to say that the response was massive! Networking with other officials was another important aspect of the conference.

If you have missed the conference, it's not too late as it was recorded and available [here](#). You can also access the presentation [here](#). Feel free to share it with your colleagues.

Please send an email to our colleague [here](#) to arrange a meeting.

We are visiting ISPRA staff on 1 & 2 February!!



G2004 aims to achieve a unified European Public Service that is based on fair, just and motivating employment conditions and that is respected for its efficiency, effectiveness and the equal opportunities it offers to all employees of the EU institutions. We denounce the systematic legal and practical discrimination of post-2004 staff and post-2014 staff vis-a-vis their pre-2004 peers.

Łukasz Wardyn, the President of the Brussels Local Staff Committee and Lorella Cattaruzza, Secretary General of the Central Staff Committee are coming to visit the staff in Ispra. Both are leading members of G2004. They will host two lunch-time meetings open to all staff.

The **first meeting** will take place on **Thursday 1 February at 12:30**, in **IPR-Room 03**.

We will inform you about:

- recent developments **of the promotion system**,
- **AST careers and certification and**,
- **the planned reform of the staff representation**.

Of course, any other topic that you might want to discuss can be raised during the meeting.

The **second meeting** on issues that are specific to **Contract Agents** will take place on **Friday 2 February at 12:30**, in **IPR-Room 01 Amphithea** also in collaboration with Katarzyna Radomska-T'Seyen.

We will:

- briefly explain recent changes to the Implementing rules and;
- highlight JRC-specific concerns for CAs and possible solutions.

Advice to Contract Agents will also be provided on a personal basis and in all confidentiality. Please contact us [here](#) to set-up an appointment.

As we will be **providing sandwiches and beverages for the 2 lunchtime events**, please confirm your participation [here](#) so we can plan ahead.

We are also visiting SEVILLE staff on 8 & 9 February!!

Łukasz Wardyn, Lorella Cattaruzza and Katarzyna Radomska-T'Seyen are also visiting the staff in Seville. They will also host two lunch-time meetings open to all staff with the same agenda as the meetings in Ispra. More information about the location of the meetings will be sent to Seville staff soon.

**Save the
date!**

Pensions Conference!

Keep your lunchtime free on
Tuesday 20 February for a
conference on Pensions!

Location: Grande Salle CCP (Rue de la Loi 80 Ground floor or
Rue Joseph II 79 2nd floor)

Time: 12:30 – 14:30



Contract Agents (*follow-up*)



Generation 2004 has participated actively together with other Staff Organisations in the recent Social Dialogues concerning Contract Agents (technical consultation on the new general implementing provisions = GIPs and administrative consultation on the unemployment benefit scheme).

In parallel, Generation 2004 has closely monitored the quantitative evolution of the [various staff categories](#). In particular, we don't agree with the increasing number of contractual staff members used for permanent tasks in the EU public service. According to our last CA conference and individual consultations with contract staff, this practice seems to be more and more common, it is even judged by most to have become an everyday practice in the EU Institutions.

The 2004 reform of the Staff Regulation in the European Union increased the number of CAs very significantly, from 1.500 CAs in 2004 to more than 7000 CAs in 2017. As result, the balances of the EU Unemployment Benefit Scheme for CAs, TAs and Assistants in the European Parliament is not evolving as initially planned and DG HR now claims that new complementary measures are needed to fill the funding gap.

According to HR's new proposal, an increase in the contribution rate for the unemployment fund is inevitable. Practically, it implies that CAs will have to pay more to the fund (+0,1 percentage point at this stage, but probably much more in the future) to ensure the sustainability of the fund.

During the discussions with DG HR, Generation 2004 has instead highlighted the importance of revising the EU Staff Policy and the importance of reflecting on the status of the future Public Service. Fiddling with the contribution rates of precarious staff members is not the way out of the trap that the current staff policy is leading us to.

If you are a precarious staff member and need to ask for advice or feedback, to express a complaint or a concern, to raise awareness for a problematic situation, to ask for resolution to an internal dispute or conflict or to make suggestions for change, please don't hesitate and contact us [here](#).

Threatening bankruptcy of MEP's pensions Fund

The German magazine Der Spiegel published recently an article about the upcoming collapse of the pensions Fund for the Members of the European Parliament. This Fund was created in 1990 in order to offer MEP's pension rights and closed finally in 2009 when the regulation for MEP's came into force which provided MEP's for uniform pension rights and pensions without prior contributions paid by the budget of the European Parliament.

The Fund has a value of € 146,4m but it has payment obligations for MEP's pensions of € 472,6m which makes a deficit of € 326,2m. The Funds shall go bankrupt 2024 or at the latest 2026. The deficit must be paid by the budget of the European Parliament, ergo by the European taxpayers. The estimations were slightly different from today's reality....

Generation 2004 - THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

By doing what is right! By doing what is needed!

Generation 2004 for the first time this year supported The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity <https://en.wosp.org.pl>. The Charity event took place in Brussels, on 12 January in the Aloft hotel where many of Polish EU staff members together with their families and friends participated in a charity auction.

Generation 2004 donated a romantic trip to Paris for 2 persons.



An experience on settling the individual entitlements with PMO

This nice story happened to one of our members. His experience demonstrates that one should not give up when facing difficulties with DG HR or PMO. There are plenty of excuses to cut the entitlements of newcomers. If you need advice we are there to help you!

The Original Story:

Shortly after my entry into service and before receiving the first salary, I did not know yet the allowances I was going to receive. To avoid surprises, I checked once again the Staff Regulations, and then I asked by email the PMO office to receive an allowance to which I believed to be entitled. This simple act started a process that took more than one year to complete.

Firstly, PMO refused to grant the requested allowance, as one document related to my work history seemed to contradict my request. However, the contradiction was only apparent, and I clarified it by providing an additional document, which removed any doubt about my status. PMO remained silent for some months and then, following my reminders, asked me to provide additional dedicated letters from all my previous employers.

Even though I considered that my status was already proven by the abundant documentation provided to Human Resources during the recruitment process, I contacted my previous employers and obtained the requested letters stating, unquestionably, my status and working conditions. When I forwarded to PMO these documents, I was certain to have fulfilled the requirements and completed the procedure. However, PMO spotted that, according to one document, for few weeks within a period of many years my status was not clearly in line with what is indicated in the Staff regulations, which at this regard uses a term that is not fully defined and remains open to interpretation. Hence, PMO quickly rejected my request and closed the case, regardless of my objections.

I felt that the decision was not fair as my request was denied for a peculiar interpretation of a generic term in the Staff regulations but, according to common sense, the request was indeed legitimate. I brought my case to the Mediation Service and the staff association 'Generation 2004', where I received professional support and learned more about my rights. I submitted an official complaint according to the Article 90 of the Staff Regulations, and I made PMO aware that my case was closely followed by representatives of Generation 2004. After these actions, PMO suddenly changed their decision and accepted my request, giving no further explanations.

This process cost a substantial amount of time and energy to the people involved, but moreover it confused me, as my request was eventually accepted only after I made an official complaint and involved the Mediation Service and Generation 2004, and not because I provided new information. Yet, I was pleased to find out that within the EC there are procedures and Institutions that can (try to) safeguard the rights of the employees – if they are aware of them and use them properly and timely!

G2004 member

..... *and finally*

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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