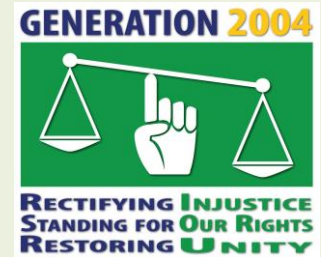


**The life of an AST: is there  
light at the end of the tunnel?**

**Fabrício Santos  
Domen Osovnikar**

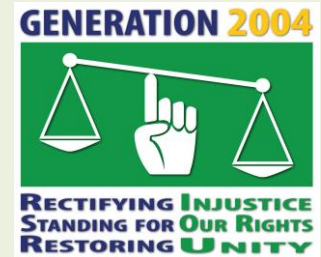
[REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu](mailto:REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu)

# AST history: The 2004 reform



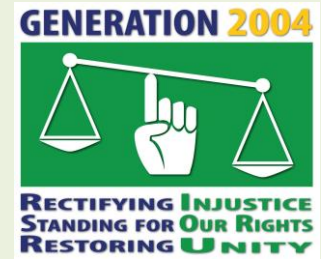
- AST function group introduced with the 2004 reform
- The general logic: modernising and simplifying the career structure; lowering entry-level salaries; eliminating career bottlenecks; but also preparing for mass scale enlargement recruitment (expected 3500+)
- The Kinnock White paper:
  - Transformation of the career structure:  
Pre May 2004: four categories  
4 to 8 grades respectively  
Post 2004: two function groups (AD – AST spread over 16 grades)

# AST history: The 2004 reform



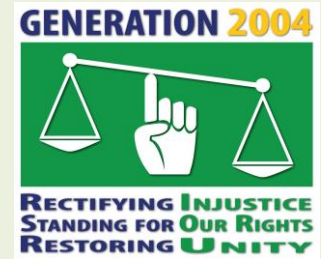
- The consequences:
  - AST recruitments 2005-2010: around 50% of yearly recruitments.
  - Some examples: EPSO AST 3 2005/2006 competitions for finance assistants and proof-readers with 450 laureates; one single EPSO 2009 AST 1 competition for 10 new MSs with 2200 laureates!
- Benefits:
  - Transition winners: ex-C and ex-D who were able to progress further than they could have ever dream before May 2004
  - Certification: to facilitate transition between FGs (AST > AD) and compensate for lower entry grades
  - Career progression without restriction from AST 1 to final grade in the category

# AST history: The 2004 reform



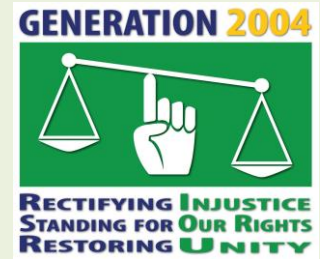
- Assumed benefits - continued:
  - Access to internal competitions
  - Series of internal competitions organised in 2008 and 2010 for AST 1, AST 3, AD 5, AD 9 and AD 12 (number of laureates for AD 5: 230)
  - Only for new member states; required at least 6 months' service in the Commission
  - Internal competitions 2013: only allowed advancement in grade not in category

# AST history: The 2014 reform



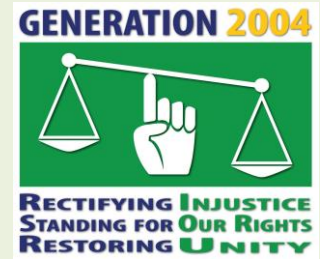
- The overall logic: need to make efficiency gains and savings in administrative expenditure during difficult economic times (Com MEMO/11/907)
- Introduced AST/SC category
- Brought fragmentation of the category contradicting one of the goals of 2004 reform

# AST history: The 2014 reform



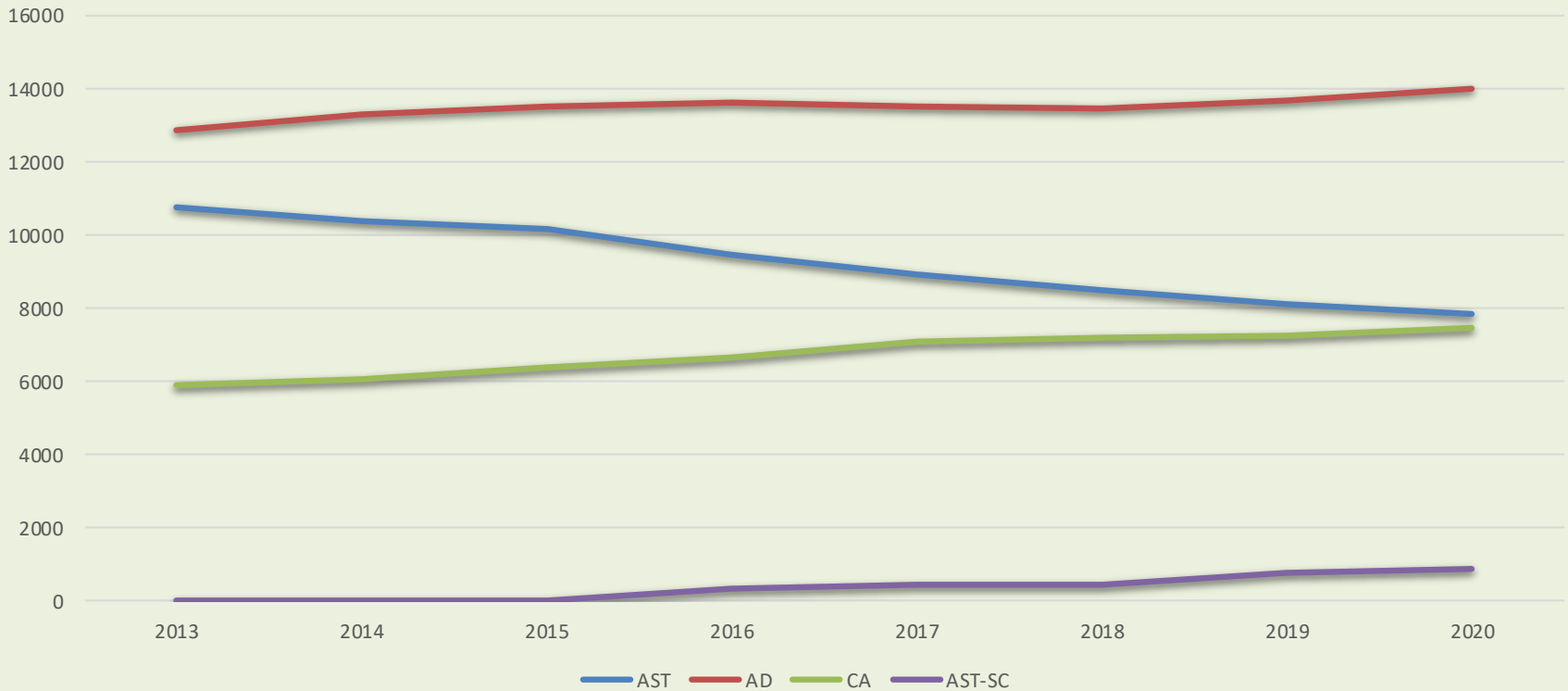
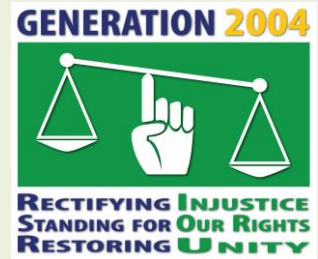
- Transformation of posts: the facts
  - Transforming AST posts into AST/SC on a massive scale: no individual assessment of duties, only based on competition passed!
  - Article 7.1 of the SR provides that “The appointing authority shall [...] assign each official by appointment or transfer to **a post in his function group which corresponds to his grade.**”
  - The official position:
    - There is "nothing to worry about" and "your situation de facto has not changed" (Note HR published on Intracomm)

# AST history: The 2014 reform



- The consequences
  - The public information about FG attribution of the posts disappeared from Sysper
  - 5% cuts of posts (AST posts affected disproportionately)
  - AST (forever) in transition: a practice never followed by EP or Council!

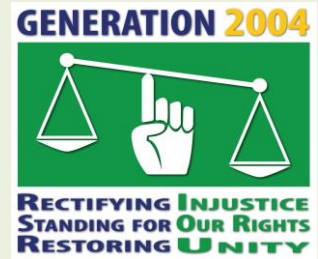
# Current state of affairs



- In January 2020, DG HR Director Christian LEVASSEUR said “ASTs are in phase out and will disappear...”

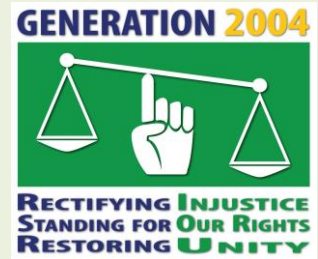


# What now?



- Certification
  - application phase (Sep- Oct)
  - Publication of draft list of candidates selected to be interviewed by the Joint Certification Panel (Jan)
  - appeal phase to the Joint Certification Committee
  - interview phase with the Joint Certification Panel;
  - training at the European School of Administration (EUSA) and examination; (Jun and Sep-Oct)
  - Publication of list of certified colleagues (Dec)
  - appointment to a post in function group AD.

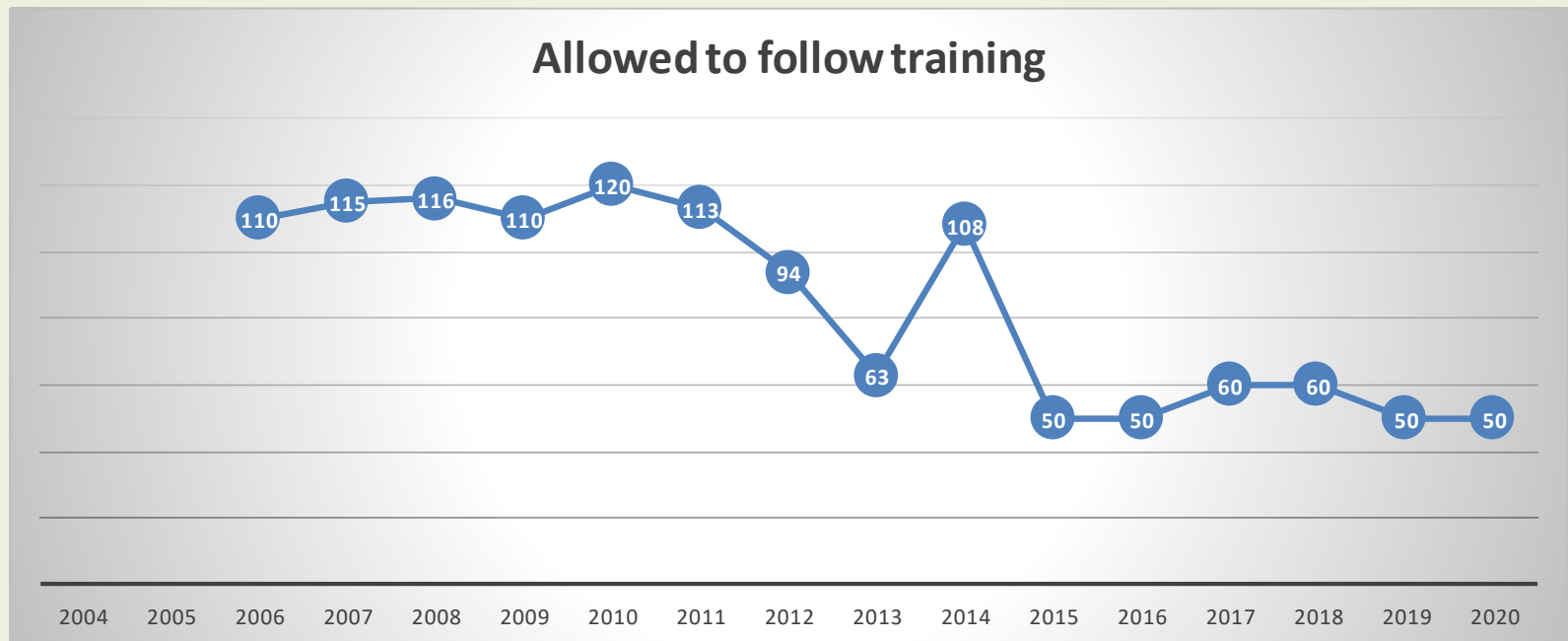
# Certification and the JRC



- Certification
  - Certification training targeted at Administrative work
  - Discriminates JRC colleagues who mostly have scientific background
  - Please read our analysis in our article on this specific matter:  
<https://generation2004.eu/certification-in-the-jrc-one-size-does-not-fit-all/>

# What now?

- Evolution of number of colleagues allowed to follow certification



AST1

AST2

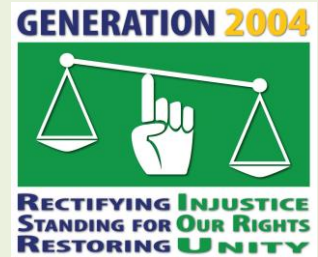
AST3

AST4

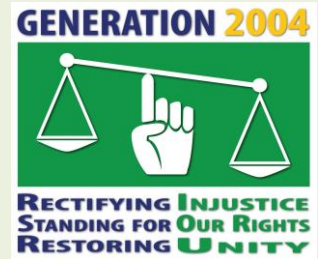
AST5

- Pressure for FG change in internal competitions

# Further reading



- The European Commission Career structure:  
<https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/staff/EN/talent-management/career/career-structure/Pages/index.aspx>
- AST Mobility chart:  
<https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/staff/Documents/talent-management/career/ast-mobility.pdf>
- AST to AD Certification procedure:  
<https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/staff/EN/talent-management/career/certification/Pages/index.aspx>



Thank you for your participation!

Kindly send your questions to:

[REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu](mailto:REP-PERS-OSP-GENERATION-2004@ec.europa.eu)