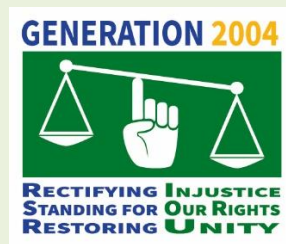


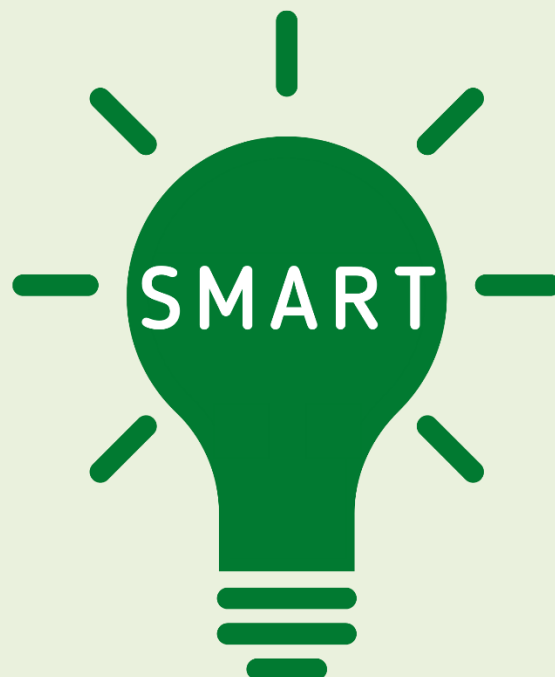
European Commission
Staff Representation Election 2021

Generation 2004

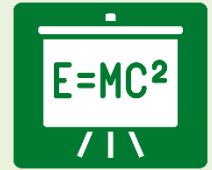


Presents

A **S.M.A.R.T.**[∞] Manifesto
For A **Smart** Commission



The **Covid-19 pandemic** has completely changed the way the Commission operates and has accelerated the **digitalisation** of our work. Unfortunately, it has also created an incentive and pretext for the Administration to push for large **human resources reforms** that risk further deteriorating our working conditions and increasing the gap between staff categories.



Generation 2004 remains convinced that the reforms in 2004 and 2014 are at the root of many of the current problems, whose adverse effects for the attractiveness of the service and staff motivation were well analysed in [a report by the European Court of Auditors](#) (ECA) in 2019.

We do not call for an opening of the staff regulations at this point. However, should this happen, it should be exclusively with a view to mitigate or even reverse the adverse effects of these reforms, which would be essential for restoring attractive and motivating working conditions for all EU staff and thereby ensure the functioning and sustainability of the European public service. Furthermore, the basic principles that the Commission ‘preaches’ to the Member States should also apply to its own human resources (HR) policies:

- equal pay for equal work across all staff categories,
- fair chances for all staff to advance in their careers and
- a proper job market to enable real mobility for EU staff.



In June 2020, at the height of the Covid pandemic, DG Human Resources and Security (DG HR) launched its new strategy. In November 2020 Generation 2004 was the first to provide DG HR with [a comprehensive position paper](#) on that strategy (with an update on the revised strategy in October 2021). While agreeing with the general stated aim of the strategy, we have identified serious drawbacks related to the lack of an analysis as a basis for it, the process used to develop it, its lack of detail about the concrete measures planned and the expected outcomes.

Furthermore, Generation 2004 strongly believes that the new HR Strategy should focus on the added value the European public administration brings to the European project and that this added value should be maintained and increased in light of the current and future challenges the European Union is bound to face. As the new HR Strategy is a vast plan to reform human resources management in the Commission, and thus covers most processes in this field, we refer to the Generation 2004 proposals for this strategy throughout this manifesto.





These Are **Generation 2004's** Top Demands:

The Commission must:

- do its utmost to reduce the gap created between staff hired before and after the last two reforms of 2004 and 2014,
- ensure fair promotion and reclassification procedures, with real (institution-wide) comparison of merit,
- put an end to the exploitation of staff in the vulnerable and non-permanently employed categories,
- uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work,
- step up its anti-harassment policies and make sure they always put the victim first,
- more generally, emphasise the human aspect in any human resources policy,
- instil an environment of transparency and accountability in all Commission administrative decisions to ensure equal treatment of all staff and an even application of the rules across its directorates-general (DGs) and services,
- among other things, when new office-space policies and working arrangements are being developed, consult the staff representation as per the rules in the [*Housing Conditions Manuel*](#),
- consider the staff representation as a respected social partner and not as a nuisance to be coped with.



Why Vote For Us?

Generation 2004 is the only staff association that consistently fights against the inequality in career progress and working conditions of staff, no matter when they join the service. We were founded in 2012 as a grassroots reaction to the 2004 staff reform, which severely cut the benefits, career prospects and working conditions of newly recruited EU staff.

We:

- Represent staff on all Commission sites.
- Promote fair play on HR matters in the EU institutions.
- Fight the collusion of the traditional trade unions, who are stuck in the past.
- Are the **biggest** of the 17 trade unions and staff associations of the Commission.



The 2004 And 2014 Reforms Of The Staff Regulations:

- Marked the most substantial changes ever to the employment conditions of EU staff.
- Locked in place (and sometimes even improved) conditions for staff recruited pre-reform, while significantly reducing the conditions for newcomers.
- Ensured that all the downsides of the worsened working conditions are borne by newly recruited staff.

Consequently:

- The current recruitment policy of the institutions is marked by the hiring of highly qualified professionals to perform artificially junior roles ("juniorisation").
- There is now also a lack of an equal career playing field in the institutions.
- Members of Staff in vulnerable categories particularly the Contract Agents (CAs) and the secretaries and clerks (AST/SCs) are consistently exploited and assigned tasks above their responsibility level.
- The divisions of the EU workforce created by the two past reforms are still very present.



The **Generation 2004** Manifesto

For A SMART European Commission

Sets Out Five S.M.A.R.T. Lines Of Action:

S^{SMART}afe And Human-oriented Workplace ∞



Office-Space Policy ☐ Home Office

M^{SMART}odern Work Culture ∞



From Digitalisation To Humanisation ☐ Teleworking From Anywhere ☐
Stop Harassment ☐ Improve “Mobility” For Management And High-grade Job Holders

A^{SMART}tractive Career And Fair Recruitment ∞



Ensure Fair Recruitment ☐ Recognise Prior Experience ☐ Better Career Opportunities And Progression ☐ Improve The Promotion And Reclassification Procedures ☐ Fairer Pension System ☐ Abolish The Senior Expert And Senior Assistant Schemes ☐ Stop The Exploitation Of Staff ☐ Review Contract Agent Careers ☐ Address The Future Of ASTs ☐ Give Career Opportunities To AST/SC ☐ Reform the European Schools



R^{SMART}eal Staff Representation ∞

Fix The Staff Representation Elections ☐ Ensure Local Representation ☐ Provide Independent Legal Support For Staff ☐ Stop “Career Unionism” And Enforce The 6-Year Rule

T^{SMART}ransparent And Accountable Administration ∞



Stop Ignoring The Staff Representation ☐ Strengthen Management Accountability



The so-called **new normal** is creating **hybrid ways of working** with increased teleworking and vast cuts in available **office space**. The Administration is already doing this by extensively using hot-desking (“dynamic”) and open (“collaborative”) workspaces, with some buildings already organised this way and many more in the pipeline. This type of office-space management will allow the Commission to save considerable amounts of money, while the costs of extensive teleworking will, largely, be transferred to staff. We denounce that these changes have been presented to staff as a ‘**fait accompli**’ and are already under way without proper consultation of the staff representation.

The recent Commission HR package, which includes the new HR Strategy, the Communication on the Greening of the Commission, and the new buildings policy, will effectively amount to a hidden reform of the staff regulations, with further degradation of Commission staff working conditions. Our proposal to address these concerns can be found in [the November 2020 Generation 2004 opinion note sent to DG HR](#).

Office-Space Policy



The new office-space policy of the Commission should not aim solely at dramatically reducing costs. Instead, it should keep a focus on ensuring appropriate working conditions for staff, protecting their mental and physical health and safety.

Work-life balance and health concerns should also be placed at the heart of the Commission’s buildings policy with:

- improved rules for teleworking with its implications on the right to disconnect, to avoid **digital overloading**,
- location of office buildings in relation to child education and care facilities,
- quick and easy access to canteens and
- most importantly, minimal use of **open spaces and hot-desking** to reduce the already well-researched problems of health issues.

Finally, we demand that when planning office-space changes, or even developing new buildings, existing procedures be followed. This means that the staff representation is consulted on any changes and that these changes are done transparently and not while a pandemic or other situations of force majeure are keeping staff from coming to the usual workplace.



Home Office

The massive use of teleworking pushed staff to use their personal resources to do their work (e.g. use of personal phone, internet connection, printer, space for home office and heating). The Commission must urgently investigate this situation and offer an appropriate solution to compensate staff for the costs incurred, for instance, by agreeing a lump sum payment. We recall that this particularly affects members of staff in the lower salary ranges and that other institutions such as [the European Parliament](#), have been contributing to staff home-working costs since the start of the pandemic.

With the increase of teleworking, we also witness the offsetting of carbon emissions from the Commission buildings to the private homes of staff. This should be considered when [calculating the real level](#) of emissions produced by the Commission. Generation 2004 demands that a proper scientific and independent assessment be conducted.

SMART **Modern Work Culture**



The currently dominating culture at the Commission – based on checks and hierarchy – should be replaced by one of trust. Building a culture of trust is essential to increase staff engagement, productivity, well-being and satisfaction, which will ultimately improve the performance of the whole organisation.

When management does not trust staff and vice versa, the institution suffers. Ruling through imposition is unacceptable and will surely not create incentives for staff to be more productive, more creative and make the Commission a more attractive employer.

The Administration should ensure equal treatment of all staff and evenly apply the rules across its DGs and services. This would ensure that an end is put to the different interpretation of rules that we witness every day at all management levels across the Commission.

Moreover, it is essential that any changes be designed in close cooperation with the staff representation and to the largest possible extent across all the EU institutions.

Professional mobility for management and high-grade jobholders should also be fostered, as this would help overcome “silo mentalities” that create “walls” between different services and institutions.

Without mutual respect and accountability, we risk an increase of the problems of harassment with all their negative consequences and outcomes. Generation 2004 will make sure these values are adhered to during the implementation of the new HR Strategy.

Generation 2004 also considers that more attention should be paid to the needs and the proper [integration in the workplace](#) of colleagues with disabilities and special needs (both visible and hidden). This group of colleagues should not be disproportionately impacted by the “new ways of working” advocated for by the infrastructure services of the Commission and DG HR: hot-desking, open space and the massive recourse to teleworking.

We call for human management instead of resources management. As the new ways of working will fundamentally change the way we work, the individual should be at the centre of this project.

From Digitalisation To Humanisation



Now that the digitalisation of our workflows has progressed, it is of the utmost importance that the focus turns to the human being.

As consistently indicated by the [Commission Staff Surveys](#), and pointed out in the ECA report on the [Implementation of the 2014 staff reform package at the Commission – Big savings but not without consequences for staff](#):

A range of questions relating to job satisfaction, the workplace and (staff's) professional future now consistently score lower than before.

The shift to the digital office has also accelerated this trend. The Commission must therefore find ways to keep its staff motivated and feeling appreciated. In short, it should nurture its main asset: its human capital.

Personalised HR support and follow-up must be made available. Generation 2004 asks that a phone-based helpdesk and contact persons be reintroduced in parallel to the current Staff Matters online form-based system of contacting HR. A live human contact would help reduce the number of back-and-forth exchanges generated by a poor understanding of the needs of colleagues. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then we could also say that a phone conversation is worth a thousand emails.

The Commission should also ensure [full access of staff to their personal and medical files](#) in a timely manner, so that the Commission complies with the EU data protection law and allows staff to better defend their rights (e.g. when that medical file is used

to make decisions about staff in cases of professional invalidity or cases of harassment).

Teleworking From Anywhere

Teleworking has been on the Commission HR work patterns menu for many, many years and is supposed to be a valuable tool to ensure a good work-life balance.



With the Covid 19 pandemic, we have witnessed an unprecedented use of this way of working. With its success, many members of staff asked the question: why not from anywhere? Indeed, colleagues find it difficult to see the logic of the rules that [teleworking from anywhere](#) (TWA) cannot be allowed because staff must be available to come into the office within a couple of hours when this is never relevant for most roles.

TWA is a recent development and has become a hotly debated topic during the pandemic. Generation 2004 is highly active in this dialogue. We agree that, in principle, TWA should be allowed and that under any crisis situations (e.g. pandemics or natural disasters) full flexibility should apply. However, for a long-term solution of TWA some potential issues must be considered. Generation 2004 asks that the Commission conduct an in-depth analysis of the impact of TWA. For the short-term however, [we propose three complementary and well-defined schemes](#) to frame the use of this way of working:

1. in cases of force majeure,
2. for up to 60 days a year, and
3. for ad hoc needs.

This will promote a better work-life balance, create a healthier working environment, and reduce psychosocial risks (see European agency on Health and Safety at Work). Our proposal considers the nature of the European Public Administration, whose staff are overwhelmingly expatriates and have family ties in countries other than the country of residence. In any case TWA should be a right.

Stop Harassment

Generation 2004 is against any form of [harassment](#) towards staff of the Commission. Harassment, bullying (“mobbing”) and the related mental-health issues resulting from it (e.g. “burn-out”) are however an endemic problem in our organisation.



Harassment must therefore be tackled through open and transparent dialogue, regular specific consultation, preventive measures (e.g. training) and a revamped anti-harassment policy, which must be fit for purpose, fit for the modern age: a system based on a full evaluation of the current system and of the two corresponding staff surveys undertaken in 2021 (one by HR and one by the Central Staff Committee). The ever-present and ominous unwritten policy of always pushing for staff to do more with less must also end and be replaced with a more sustainable solution.

Generation 2004 has witnessed cases where colleagues are pushed towards forced invalidity but are then refused access to their medical service records, which does not allow them to properly defend themselves (see also: [The human factor: from digitalisation to humanisation](#) and [The Harassment Watch Network](#)).

Improve “Mobility” For Management And High-grade Job Holders

Generation 2004 asks for appropriate implementation of the mobility rules for managers and staff in high grades so that they must move job and even DG after a certain period. Although mobility for positions of responsibility already exists within each DG, it should be extended across DGs to break silos, instil a global and shared management culture across Commission services and to increase exposure of managers to distinct types of leadership.



At the same time, Generation 2004 asks that more be done to ensure upwards mobility, i.e. to positions of responsibility, for a higher number of staff. Currently there is a stable but limited number of positions formally recognised as bearing management responsibilities (e.g. Heads of Unit and above), but the turnover in those positions is exceptionally low.

At the same time, a large and varied number of “[entry team leading functions](#)” also incur “middle” management responsibilities to varying degrees (e.g. heads of sector, deputy heads of unit). However, they are not recognised as such and are not evenly available across the Commission services – some DGs use these kinds of posts less often than others – if at all. Generation 2004 will advocate for better and formal recognition of such positions of responsibility.

Conflicts of interest for activities after leaving the service must be better managed and the rules applied consistently. Generation 2004 demands that the rules be modified to place tougher restrictions to higher graded staff (e.g. [senior management](#)) and make them realistic for lower grades (e.g. CAs) who really need jobs after leaving the Commission.

Recruitment to head of sector, deputy head of unit and head of unit positions must become more transparent. All open positions should be advertised in Sysper and the

candidates that have made it to the interview stage but are not selected have a right to get written feedback outlining why they have not been selected in order and where exactly other candidates have performed stronger. This should make “parachuting” and favouritism in recruitment more difficult. Also, selections should be based not only on the interview performance but on qualifications, experience and track record.

SMART Attractive Career And Fair Recruitment



Almost 18 years after the drastic 2004 Kinnoek Staff Regulation reform – further intensified by the 2014 reform – the division of staff and the inequalities created have not yet been addressed.

Generation 2004 believes it is particularly important that the administration finally recognise these problems and take the strongest possible measures to close the gap between staff hired under the pre- and the post-reform conditions. This is for us the only way forward to reunify the Commission’s staff.

Straightforward evidence of the damage done is provided in the ECA report on the implementation of the 2014 reform. The report confirmed that employment conditions have deteriorated to such an extent that the EU is struggling to attract certain nationalities.

Ensure Fair Recruitment

The Commission must ensure that its recruitment practices:

- follow international labour standards,
- are developed through social dialogue,
- ensure gender equality, geographical balance and
- include persons with disabilities.



This should be especially the case in recruitment of managerial staff, but also in the hiring of staff under the various temporary types of contracts. Recruitment should also be transparent and effectively regulated through the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) competitions, which should also happen more frequently.

Following the same international labour standards, the Commission should also monitor the hiring of temporary agents (TAs) and regularly analyse the need for this category of staff across its services. Similarly, instead of bypassing the flawed EPSO system, which is not meeting recruitment needs, via the Junior Professionals Programme (JPP), the Commission must address the selection process itself.

Generation 2004 is of the opinion that in order to reach fair recruitment conditions, EPSO must be completely reformed to provide fairer and faster recruitment. For example, no talent should be wasted by recruiting staff with high-level education into secretarial and clerical posts (AST/SC).

Furthermore, Internal Competitions should be extensively used to help reduce the gap and remedy the injustices created by the past two staff regulations reforms, and not be an instrument to offer permanent jobs to those working in the private office of Commissioner ('Cabinet') staff at the [end of the 5-year legislative cycle](#).



Recognise Prior Experience

Any relevant professional experience acquired before passing an EPSO competition – both in the public and private sectors – must be seriously considered and recognised. This should also be appropriately reflected when setting the grades for recruitment and EPSO competitions.

The Commission should also work with EPSO to ensure that any experience (even pre-diploma) is evaluated based on the actual work done.

The practice of publishing specialised competitions – requiring longer prior experience in the field of the competition – at the lowest possible entry grades must also stop.

Better Career Opportunities And Progression

Every Commission employee should have fair and equal opportunities to progress throughout their career. In this sense, Generation 2004 has already proposed several measures and will continue to push for:



- real career mobility for [AST/SCs](#), [CAs](#) and [TAs](#) based on professional experience and qualifications,
- development of true talent-management measures (see also: [Stop The Exploitation Of Staff](#)),
- Increase the speed of CA career progression through reclassification and Contract Agents Selection Tool (CAST) Permanent (see also: [Review Contract Agent Careers](#)),
- HR to address the underlying issues with EPSO instead of bypassing it completely via the [JPP](#) which it acknowledges is only a partial fix and which we believe provides preferential access and potentially opens the door to nepotism,

- effective career guidance services and possibilities for real career development,
- fair career opportunities with more [internal competitions](#) available to all staff that meet the experience and qualification criteria, to maintain business continuity and to retain talent,
- the creation of a workable job market platform for staff, which should include all EU institutions and bodies and should specially target CAs and TAs with non-permanent contracts, and
- reenergising the Commission workforce and create job opportunities for younger officials by only granting [career extensions](#) over retirement age in truly exceptional cases.

Improve The Promotion And Reclassification Procedures

The European Commission must develop a Commission-wide promotion and reclassification system based on objective and measurable criteria, instead of the current subjective analysis of career development review (CDR) reports.



A transparent, objective and accountable system must be set up as soon as possible. This would allow for a [Commission-wide comparison of merits](#), as opposed to the current siloed approach per DG, and would in turn contribute to more transparent and fair promotion and reclassification systems.

To ensure equal opportunities and treatment for all officials, TAs and CAs based on merits and responsibilities, the annual promotion and reclassification systems should rely on similar career speeds at similar grades across function groups and contract types. Especially for CAs, the discrimination related to the seniority (time spent in the grade- [art.6 C\(2013\) 2529](#)) between eligible CAs and officials (SR, [Annex I\(B\)](#)) is staggering. For example, the CA Function Group I, has just three grades (1–3) with an average total career length of 12 years. This means that after 12 years, staff in this category have no more career prospects (“perspectives”) with the side effect that from grade 2 to grade 3 the average reclassification time is 8 years. This is even so, when compared to the AST/SC Officials career, which is also far from good. (See also: [Review Contract Agent Careers](#)).

Generation 2004 proposes that by default all staff be promoted or reclassified at the average career speed in any given grade. In cases of fast promotion or reclassification, or delay in career progress, a substantial written contribution by management should be provided to explain (and, as far as possible, justify) the decision. This would drastically reduce the number of files to review, which, in practical terms would allow for an [institution-wide comparison](#).

Fairer Pension System

A pension system that discriminates financially and on the pensionable age based on the date of entering the service, was introduced by the 2004 reform, and further accentuated by the 2014 reform. At the next opportunity, the pension accrual rates must be raised to the pre-2004 staff rate: the same rate for all staff instead of giving privilege to some to the detriment of newcomers. Right now, there are three different yearly accrual rates, even though we all contribute with the same percentage of our salaries, depending on when the member of staff joined the service: 1.8% (for staff hired from 2014), 1.9% (for staff hired between May 2004 and 2013) or 2.0% (for staff hired before May 2004). Generation 2004 demands that the accrual rate be set at 2.0% for all staff to make it fair, equal and just.



Generation 2004 also calls for an immediate application of the 6% solidarity levy (which is just an increment to our taxes) to pensions, to align their taxation to that of an active staff salary by integrating the 6% solidarity levy in their income tax. This measure would be possible without opening the staff regulations.

Furthermore, Generation 2004 insists that a solution be found for those who do not wish to, or cannot (e.g. CAs with 6-year contracts), spend the rest of their professional life in the European institutions. Indeed, at present those who leave the institutions before having reached 10 years of seniority in the EU pension scheme have to transfer their rights out, most often to a limited range of private financial schemes that could be of dubious quality. Those with more than 10 years of seniority in the EU pension scheme could also benefit from a solution in this area. They face great difficulties in transferring out their pension rights, something that is a barrier to their professional mobility outside the European institutions.

The current EU pension scheme is particularly unfair to CAs. If they find a new job in the institutions or in one of the EU agencies, they are automatically recruited under the less favourable pension conditions of the 2014 reform. This can lead to the Kafkaesque situation where a CA 3a, that is close to retirement ends up having to work until the age of 66 instead of 63 just because (s)he has found a new job.

Abolish The Senior Expert And Senior Assistant Schemes

The career gap between pre and post 2004 was not only ignored but was further exacerbated by the 'senior expert' and 'senior assistants' schemes. These schemes allow people with no management responsibilities to continue to move up the grades. These schemes are still in high demand among the old-guard



staff that benefit from them to circumvent the grade caps imposed on EU officials careers by the legislator in 2014. These positions lead to hyper-costly promotions for those without leadership responsibility to grades above AD12 and AST9. To stop wasting the administrative budget, the very least the Commission should do is to put an immediate stop to these schemes so that the savings can be put to better use elsewhere (e.g. [improving conditions for CAs](#) and [AST/SCs](#).)

Stop The Exploitation Of Staff

Generation 2004 demands that an end is put to the exploitation of CAs, Local Agents, AST/SCs and ASTs and that the “equal pay for equal work” principle be applied. CAs are especially vulnerable to professional exploitation given their weak contractual link to the Commission. The Commission must also ensure that job descriptions and tasks performed are in line with the job holder’s function group and level of responsibilities.



Any members of staff in function groups AST/SC and AST find themselves doing administrator (AD) work while not being paid as an AD (AST5 and above can even be formally recognised as doing AD work through the [certification](#) section of their CDR reports). Specifically for CAs, a correction of their careers must be conducted through the organisation of regular screening processes (‘exercises’) (Art.13 [general implementing provisions \(GIPs\) 2017](#)), or through CAST Permanent into a more senior functional group.

We ask the Commission to ensure that jobholders carrying out tasks above the level of responsibilities of their function groups (see Annex III (page 50) of the ECA [Special report no 15/2019](#)) are allowed to enter cross-function group [internal competitions](#) (e.g. CAs to Officials Function groups) which should be organised more often and on a more regular basis. This measure would help retain and foster the use of internal talent instead of constantly recruiting inexperienced staff. It would also increase job security and stop the trend towards making the [AST function group disappear](#).

Finally, to ensure the independence of the European Civil service and the proper use of public money, the Commission should primarily rely on internal resources to carry out its work, and the recourse to outsourcing or external firms should therefore be limited to those cases where it is fully justified from the technical point of view.

Review Contract Agent Careers

The Commission has, since 2004 employed many CAs based on precarious contracts with limited career perspectives. To worsen the situation, [after 6 years](#), in a clear anti-business-continuity and anti-knowledge-retaining strategy, most of them are let go.



For the short-term, and to ensure a fair career prospect for CAs, Generation 2004 urges the Commission to increase the speed of reclassifications, and to stop the recruitment of CAs 3b (who may only work 6-years in the Commission) for jobs that are clearly permanent. We are aware of HR proposals to extend the 6-year limit on CA contracts. However, we consider that this does not reduce the loss of experience and knowledge. On the contrary, this is a short-term fix instead of a long-term solution as it increases the level of loss: those leaving do so with even more knowledge and experience than before, thus leaving a bigger gap to fill.

From a mid to long-term point of view, significant changes will have to be made at political level, to ensure that the principle of “equal pay for equal work” is respected, a principle the Commission frequently likes to Remind Member States about, and should therefore apply to its own administration:

- recruit TAs only for officials' posts that the Commission services cannot find qualified permanent staff for.
- apply EU workers' rights to all CAs (see also [Better Career Opportunities And Progression](#) and [Stop The Exploitation Of Staff](#)).
- remove the 5% ceiling of total appointments of CAs into the function groups AST and AD.
- organise internal competitions open for all CAs, based on their education level and professional experience.

Generation 2004 will continue its fight on behalf of all CAs: our colleagues are being discriminated against and treated unfairly since the 2004 and 2014 staff reforms. We aim to regularise and improve the employment of as many colleagues in this category as possible.

Address The Future Of ASTs

DG HR has repeatedly said that “**ASTs are in phase out and will disappear...**” This is further confirmed in the 2021 draft EU annual budget, where the Commission proposed to upgrade 91 AST posts into AD posts, and to convert 140 AST posts into AST/SC posts.



Against this backdrop, Generation 2004 considers that the way forward must be for the Commission to increase the number of AST colleagues allowed to become ADs via certification.

Meanwhile, the ill-explained and opaque decision that split the function group of the job from the jobholder must also be addressed. This resulted in many ASTs occupying AST/SC posts (assistant in transition), which is a mismatch with negative consequences for colleagues in this situation: they are deemed to be working at a level of responsibility which does not formally match their function group, or they must leave a job they enjoy finding a post which corresponds to their function group). The Commission must ensure that Article 7.1 of the Staff Regulations is respected (“The Appointing Authority shall [...] assign each official by appointment or transfer to a post in his function group which corresponds to his grade.”) and make sure that the function group of the jobholder and of the post are a match.

The Commission must also stop the practise of not opening internal competitions for ASTs with the argument that ASTs already have the certification procedure. The goal of the certification procedure is for long term career progression, while the internal competitions aim at short term advancement. These are two different goals that should not be confused and used against each other.

Give Career Opportunities To AST/SC

Whenever possible, the AST/SC career path and progress should be reviewed and adapted. The current average promotion speed in the function group is extremely slow which also causes [shortage of promotion quotas](#) for the category. Salary increase between grades is also exceptionally low and the inexistence of a “certification-like” procedure for AST/SCs to become ASTs means that there are no proper career prospects to the colleagues.

Furthermore, the Commission bars AST/SC colleagues from entering internal competitions to enter a different function group: this is not the case in other institutions and has [no legal basis in the staff regulations](#).

Therefore, Generation 2004 asks the Commission to seriously consider revising its AST/SC career prospects policies, to allow colleagues in this category to have meaningful career prospects, and to nurture the existing talent, skills and experience present among AST/SC staff.



Reform The European Schools

The European Schools are unarguably an important factor of attractiveness for the European civil service. The possibility to have



your children taught in the parents native language is something that has the potential to attract many professionals that would otherwise not consider it.

Unfortunately, some of the places served by the European Schools are facing important problems. Although in recent years the budget for the European Schools has nominally increased, this is not enough to maintain the quality of the schools, and to ensure the well-being of our children.

There are also problems related to the reduction in the number of seconded teachers from the Member State ministries of education, which in turn cause [problems in recruiting and retaining qualified staff](#) in certain areas. These problems have also created a situation of overpopulation in some European Schools, namely in Brussels where most schools are seriously overcrowded, understaffed, and lacking sufficient financial resources.

The European Schools have not fundamentally evolved since their inception. They are based on a very rigid system far away from the modern service they should be providing. For instance, the insistence on choosing a mother language from one of the parents when the household language may be a third language should stop and parents should have more weight in the choice of the language section of their children within the languages spoken by the child. Furthermore, in Brussels, the distance of the household to the school should also be a criterion for assigning a child to one of the six European School's sites when their language section is available in more than one school. Not only would short commutes be better for the children, but with shorter trips to school, it would also become more climate friendly.

Given the circumstances, the Commission must ensure that the European School system provides quality education and that it serves the needs of EU staff by becoming more flexible, while making sure the interests and well-being of children always come first. Generation 2004, therefore calls on the Commission to use its considerable influence in the Board of Governors to ensure our requests and ideas are considered.

SMART Real Staff Representation



The [Social Dialogue](#) is the process through which the staff and their representatives discuss any decisions that may affect staff working conditions with the authority making those decisions.

Generation 2004 has been at the forefront of demands for a reform of the social dialogue since it first elected members to the Brussels Local Staff Committee in 2012. We were also the only staff organisation to make a formal proposal for a reform of

the social dialogue when it was demanded by Commissioner OETTINGER in late 2017. The current system is pegged with archaic rules and ways of working that do not allow for the proper functioning of a strong social dialogue, where opinions and demands of the staff and their elected representatives are seriously considered.

Fix The Staff Representation Elections

Elections should be on the same date and following transparent and uniform electoral rules across all Commission sites: a single vote should have the same value regardless of how it is used.



The current system is a mixture of proportional and majority sub-systems: meaning that the number of elected representatives can vary wildly from place to place when getting the same percentage of votes. Within the limits imposed by electoral rules, [these same rules](#) should ensure that all staff organisations are represented in proportion to their electoral results at both local and central level. This would result in a more transparent, and accountable staff representation which would, in turn make it a more credible and stronger partner in the social dialogue.

Ensure Local Representation

The Commission Staff Committee is organised in a two-tier system [where there are eight local staff committees](#) (LSCs) (Brussels, Luxembourg, Ispra/Seville, Karlsruhe, Petten, Geel, France and "Outside the Union") which in turn delegate members to the Central Staff Committee.



We ask that any Commission site with more than 200 members of staff, and where staff want to have their own representation, should be allowed to elect an LSC. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) site of Seville is a case in point: it started with around 50 colleagues and today has nearly 400. Thus is more than the three other JRC sites of Karlsruhe, Petten and Geel and which, at most, count 300 members of staff.

Provide Independent Legal Support For Staff

Generation 2004 calls on the Commission to allocate to the Central Staff Committee an independent team of lawyers to assist and advise colleagues in administrative related matters they may face. Currently the only option available to colleagues are to either hire an expensive lawyer or draft any texts themselves; something they are most times not qualified to do. In this context, it is important to note that DG HR has an army of lawyers at their disposal to fight any complaints from staff.





Stop “Career Unionism” And Enforce The 6-Year Rule

Generation 2004 believes that the reform of the staff representation should be carried by a new generation of staff representatives. The rule stipulating that secondments to the staff representation should not exceed 6 years was consistently disregarded and was a hindering factor for this reform to follow through. After many years of our organisation’s demands and pressure, we are proud to say that the Administration has finally acted on this matter and has now stopped people from staying seconded to the staff representation well beyond the stipulated limit and blocking the entrance of fresh faces and a normal cycle of newer staff learning from the staff who have been there longer. This fight against “[career unionism](#)” has ended many secondments that had already passed their limit years ago. We hope the social dialogue reform discussions will now continue in a more positive direction and be implemented soon.

SMART Transparent And Accountable Administration



An assurance of a transparent and accountable administration is the first condition for staff to trust their employer. Being heard and involved in decision-making, while knowing that their hierarchy is accountable, are aspects that are not always considered by our Administration.



Stop Ignoring The Staff Representation

The Commission should stop the non-transparent practice of presenting reforms and policies without proper social dialogue. Generation 2004 calls on the Commission to consult the staff representation from the very beginning of the process, when principles and policies are still to be developed. In line with the Commission’s [Better Regulation](#) Guidelines, this must be preceded by a thorough impact assessment process and must also be based on lessons learned from the past. Too often, staff are only being informed when the decisions were already made as it is the case on the current development of the [new HR Strategy](#) and [buildings policy](#) of the Commission.

The management of the social dialogue and the organisation of its meetings must be conducted in a much more professional and transparent way. Timely and high-quality documents should be provided in advance of such meetings. Likewise, timely, relevant, and complete meeting minutes should be made available.

Generation 2004 also demands that a clear planning of social dialogue files and related meetings is provided twice a year.

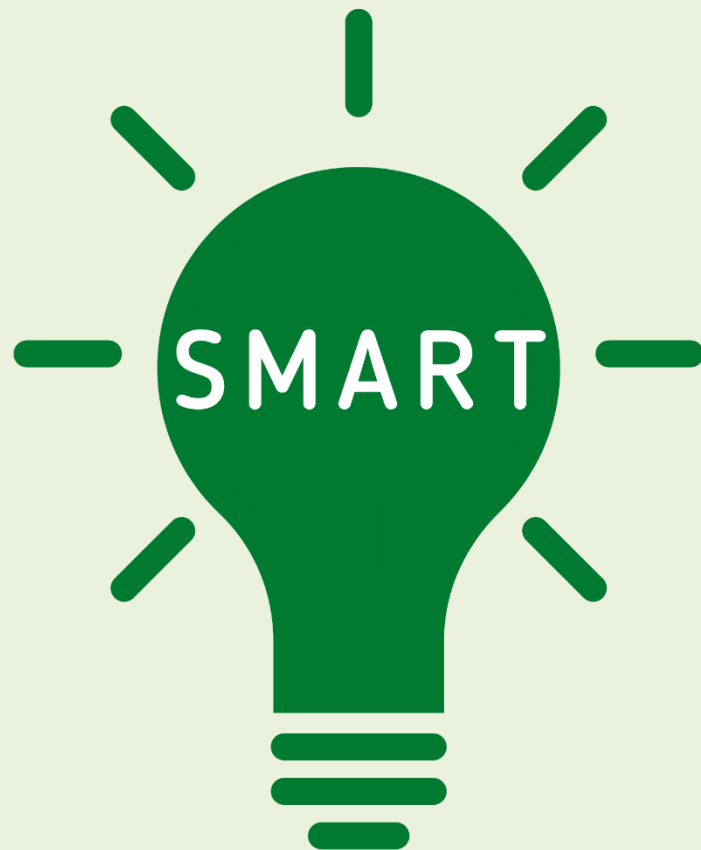


Strengthen Management Accountability

It is widely known that a ship without a captain will still sail. However, it is also true that a bad manager can potentially cause more damage than not having a manager at all (see also [Stop Harassment](#)). Therefore, Generation 2004 believes it is about time for the tides and winds to change. While we understand that a pilot evaluation process has already started in the Commission, we demand that all management be held accountable and evaluated by its staff through a 360-degree evaluation process. Those found unfit for managerial positions for a set number of years, or those who chose to step back from people-management, should be reintegrated into the ranks.

The [Harassment Watch Network](#) proposes that managers, who after a couple of years, find that people management is not for them, be allowed to step back to an operational role in a way that allows them to not lose face. In short, it asks for a solution to avoid managers being stuck in that role when they may not like it and are not good at it. Generation 2004 supports this proposal.

LET US BE YOUR VOICE
VOTE S.M.A.R.T.
VOTE GENERATION 2004



**With your support, we will continue to
fight on any areas of concern to staff!**