



NEWSLETTER SPRING ISSUE MAY 2012

New board elected - **Matthew makes way for Lucie!**

As announced in the CLENAD Bureau meeting in November 2011, a new President and General Secretary have stepped forward as Matthew Snoding and Netty Bussink will not continue their CLENAD activities this year, at least not in these capacities.

According to the CLENAD constitution, the CLENAD Bureau is mandated to elect a President, Vice Presidents and General Secretary.

Lucie Lekešová was nominated to become President of CLENAD. Matthew Snoding was nominated to remain available as Vice President, and Finn Denstad was nominated to take on the position as Vice President. Herman van der Plas was nominated to take on the position as General Secretary.

No other SNEs expressed their interest for posts following the announcement in the last meeting or before or during this bureau meeting. In line with the CLENAD statutes, the bureau meeting of 22 March 2012 elected therefore Lucie Lekešová (CZ, EC/EAC) as new President, Matthew Snoding (UK, EC/TAXUD) and Finn Denstad (NO, EC/EAC) as Vice Presidents and Herman van der Plas (NL, EC/RTD) as new General Secretary.

As a first priority, the new board contacted the Cabinet of Commission Vice President [Maroš Šefčovič](#) and DG HR to build up the necessary contacts and also to prepare a General Assembly which has not taken place for 4 years (see hereafter).

A further important priority will be to encourage SNEs to become active to support the role of SNEs in the institutions, notably by supporting the setting-up of national sections for all Member States and associated countries, with good contacts with the representations of the countries at the European Union. We will make optimal use of the new CIRCABC information session to exchange information (see hereafter).

In the next summer edition of this Newsletter, to be released in July, you will read an interview with both the outgoing and the new President.

New Editor

After three and half years at the Commission, Domenico DeMartinis returned to Italy at the end of last year. Herman van der Plas has volunteered to take his tasks over from now on. Herman is the new General Secretary of CLENAD and is since 2009 seconded from the Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Science, to DG Research and Innovation, unit B1 (European Research Area policy). He is also a member of the board of the Dutch SNE section. We restart the tradition of the CLENAD newsletter with some articles which have stayed on the shelves for too long, for which we apologize!

Would you like to contribute to the newsletter?

Please contact us!! www.clenad.eu
Or directly Herman.van-der-plas@ec.europa.eu

**Deadline for contribution to the next Summer issue:
29 June.**

CLENAD General Assembly

In the first meeting of the bureau under the new President, on 24 April in a lovely loft apartment in Saint Gilles (see photo, Lucie third from the left, Finn second from the right) a discussion took place on the agenda and timing of the first General Assembly in 4 years.

In 2008, there was an urgent need to gather all SNE's working in the Commission, given the new SNE Statute in the pipeline. Now, SNE life seems quieter. However, issues lurk in the background: negotiations of severe budget cuts in many Member States and indeed in the EU institutions, and, related to this, the revision of the staff regulations and the need to implement a five percent reduction of staff in all EU institutions. What impact will this have on SNEs?





The General Assembly will take place in the fall. Except from the formal discussion points, we aim to make the whole SNE community more visible and to discuss their added value and evolving role in these times of economic crisis.



With the help of Matthew Snoding and the other bureau members the following agenda items are currently being explored:

- Adoption of the revised constitution of CLENAD
- One or two high level speaker(s) with Q&A
- Presentation of a Norwegian survey carried out in 2011 (see below)
- Contribution by the CLENAD bureau on new welcome brochure and renewed website
- Contribution by the CLENAD bureau on the added value and evolving role of SNEs, underpinned by relevant studies or reports on SNEs and SNE policies, by national sections and/or national governments
- Practical presentation by DG HR and/or Brussels liaison office and
- Closed by an informal drink...

Request to you to properly prepare the General Assembly

A request we want to make to you is to register in the CIRCABC system where you can find a lot of interesting information for all SNEs. This will help the current bureau to fill two gaps in information. Firstly, we need a good overview of the distribution of SNEs in different EU institutions and related agencies. Secondly, a considerable number of national sections do not have a contact-person or head/president. We want to change this - and you can do this by volunteering to be a contact person or section coordinator for your Member State! Simply email Herman van der Plas with your details, and we will advise you on what happens next.

Furthermore, please let us know in case you experience any issues related to your activities as SNEs or family issues, including any differences in treatments compared to other staff and officials, which have remained unsolved or have been solved unsatisfactorily. You can send such observations to Lucie Lekešová (EAC), Finn Denstad (EAC) and Herman van der Plas (RTD).

Good response on the SNE SURVEY, thank you!



As we announced in the last CLENAD newsletter, a survey questionnaire was developed jointly by a Norwegian research team of the University of Agder, Kristiansand, and CLENAD. This is the first time that such a systematic and fully-comprehensive evaluation of your views on your secondment has been carried out. All our members - 1089 at the time - received an e-mail link and were once reminded. We have understood from the research manager that 667 persons replied, more than 60%!

The study shows that most SNEs, despite their double allegiance and the fact that a majority expect a return to old or new positions in their home institutions, are largely integrated and committed to the concerns of the EU institutions under which they formally serve. Despite the formal restrictions of the new SNE statute, a very large majority of SNEs do not perceive their position in the Commission as secondary. More to follow!

We will invite the principal researcher to present more comprehensive results at the General Assembly.

French SNE Presence in the EU institutions

On 6 July, the French section of CLENAD, with support of the French Permanent Representation and the Secretariat General for European Affairs, will organise a seminar (9.00-14.30 hrs) for SNEs, officers responsible for SNEs from French ministries and other employers, as well as HR Staff from the institutions. The value of SNEs for the Commission within its overall HR policy and for the sending organisations, as well as French secondment and return experiences will be discussed, among other issues. For further information, you can contact the President of the French Section, Astrid Brandt-Grau (DG RTD).

INTERVIEW with: Gianluca Quaglio, Former President, Italian section of CLENAD

Gianluca Quaglio is a Seconded National Expert (SNE) at the Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) unit of the European Parliament. He is a medical doctor and worked previously as a scientific officer in the Directorate General for Research and Innovation in the European Commission. Since 2008 he was a board member of the Italian section of CLENAD, and in 2011 he was elected as President. This year Daniele Palladino has been elected president and Gianluca has been nominated vice-president.



We interviewed him because we were intrigued by both the Italian capability to publish an activity report each year, as well as the high level of attendance at the 2011 presentation of the yearly report. It was presented at the European Parliament with the two Italian Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament, Roberta Angelilli and Gianni Pittella, to the Italian Vice-President of the Commission Antonio Tajani and to the Ambassador Ferdinando Nelli Feroci of the Italian Permanent Representation.

We are intrigued by the Italian productivity over the years. How many Italian SNEs are there in fact, and can you tell us something more about your section?

Well, let me first mention the excellent and cooperative spirit on our board, which has averaged around 10-12 members over the years. Quite a number perhaps, but this is perhaps the key ingredient behind our productivity and continuity as well. We always tried to keep all Italian SNEs informed about our activities. In our work we have received continuous support from the Italian Permanent Representation. We represent a relatively high proportion of the SNEs within the European institutions. After France and Germany, Italy is third in relation to the number

of SNEs who now amount to around 150. We are also able to publish our annual report thanks to the willingness of sponsors who pay for the printing costs, usually the Italian Regional Authorities.

Unfortunately, not everyone will be able to read your report as it is in Italian, can you briefly summarise its content? In the first part you may find a description of our activities in 2011, and in the second part we publish an overview of each Italian SNE including a short description of their main tasks and CV.



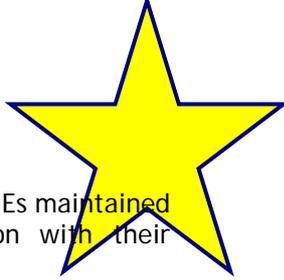
The cover of the Annual Report of the Italian section of CLENAD, 2011

Gianluca, what were the highlights of 2011?

Organise the so-called *Conferenze a mezzogiorno*, or midday conference. We have organised between 7 and 8 conferences per year since 2007 on several topics, such as cohesion policy, EU 2020 strategy, FP7, agricultural policy, H2020, etc. Such events are organised and presented by our members with high expertise in these topics. In addition to this, we had meetings with our Permanent Representation, contacts with different ministers in Rome (especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and also several meetings with representatives of different Italian institutions in Brussels. In 2011 we also organized a couple of workshops with the Italian Institute of Culture. The Italian Guide for SNEs has been completely revised and republished.

I want to also mention the research we carried out among the Italian SNEs, both those who had finished their experience, and those that were still in service. Some results were expected; more than 50% of former colleagues interviewed did not gain any practical advantage from their EU experience with regards to their career. Only 25% had a sort of improvement in position, and 35% did not go back to their administration at all.

Additionally, less than 50% of the SNEs maintained a regular exchange of information with their original administration.



Gianluca Quaglio (middle), Commissioner Antonio Tajani (right) and the Italian journalist Mariolina Sattanino (left) in the European Parliament, during the presentation of the Italian Annual report 2011

That does not seem a very promising prospect then. But what is the Italian SNEs experience of work like within the Commission?

In general, colleagues are very positive about the experience and the knowledge they gained. In fact 65% mentioned having had an excellent experience within the European institutions. Only 5% or so had a negative impression.

Do you also cover in the annual report relevant "policy" issues regarding secondment, the position of SNEs and their return to Italy? No, but we published several documents related to the SNEs. And let me say that we are active in this area: for example, during these years we "stimulated" the Italian authorities to formulate new legislations for the status of SNEs, especially regarding their return to Italy. We are trying to work on improving the conditions for the return, which might even need a change of legislation.

Do you have any suggestions for other sections? We should share our experiences more systematically, above all regarding the different phases during the life of an SNE: arrival, stay and going back. As you see, we have had active support from our Commissioner Antonio Tajani in recent years, but initially he was not fully aware and when we met him for the first time he was really surprised about the number of Italian SNEs and the activities carried out by the Italian section of Clenad. So, you should not assume too quickly that our presence and role is that widely known!

Finally, a comment on your new job as SNE in the European Parliament after the experience

in the DG Research of the European Commission.

The work here is less operative and more political, working more on supporting the legislative procedure than in the follow up of scientific projects (as I did in the EC). It's a different job, where I can use my previous experiences in the fields of health and research to greater effect.

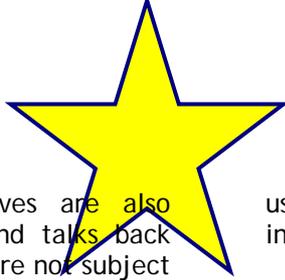
Dutch SNE return days

Last year, the Dutch SNE section and the Dutch Permanent Representation to the EU organised together the second edition of the so-called return days for SNEs in The Hague, the Netherlands. Around 50 Dutch SNEs participated, around half of the total, even a small number working in Commission representations in New York and Vienna, as well as the Joint Research Centre in Ispra, Italy, and they were joined by HR staff from different ministries and agencies. The SNEs went to The Hague for an informal dinner hosted by the PR, a plenary debate and programmes, meetings, and visits organised by the respective employers. The days were closed by a speech by the then Dutch minister for Interior, Piet-Hein Donner (see photo).

In the plenary part - chaired by a former Secretary-General of a ministry known for boosting the number of SNE's in recent years - recent **political developments** in the Netherlands and Brussels were discussed. Against the political background in 2011, which changed totally in April 2012, the strategic role of SNEs was highlighted and illustrated by a number of concrete areas in which Dutch SNEs are currently active. Some less positive developments were also discussed, such as budget cuts and the reduction of the size of the Dutch civil service, and some developments in Brussels which were considered less favourable for seconding national experts. Related to recent developments, recent targets set by the Dutch administration have not been realised, but overall, the Netherlands is still performing above average in the number of SNEs compared to other Member States.

A second part of the plenary session was a panel discussion on the **position of SNEs and matters of Human Resources policies**. The friction between being sent and paid by the Dutch administration, with high expectations about the added value for the home base, and on the other hand the necessity of being loyal and reliable towards the receiving EU institution was discussed.

Of course, the issue of **returning** after the period of secondment was an issue for debate as well. Although the Dutch administration guarantees a new job after the period of secondment, it was



emphasised that the SNEs themselves are also responsible for timely orientations and talks back home. It was noted that Dutch SNEs were not subject to systematic appraisal in Brussels or from The Hague, and that there was in this regard scope for improvement and more harmonisation with a view to better return conditions.

The plenary session was closed by the - then - Minister for Interior, Piet-Hein Donner. He praised the liaison role by Dutch SNEs and called on all not to forget to communicate frequently with their home base. He stressed that the Dutch government was aiming to take away all barriers for a smooth return after secondment. He could envisage that a broader perspective than returning to the original employer could be beneficial in this respect.



Minister Piet-Hein Donner, Former Dutch Minister for Interior, during Dutch SNE return days

CLENAD IN CIRCABC

The new CIRCABC system - short for Communication and Information Resource Centre for Administrations, Businesses and Citizens - has fully replaced CIRCA, where you could until now find all the relevant information on CLENAD. CIRCABC is an application used to create "collaborative workspaces" where widespread communities of users can share information and resources over the Internet. CIRCABC should offer to them a reliable, secure and efficient open source collaborative application, to enable them to work on the same subject and achieve common goals in a swift and cost-effective manner. In terms of security, with CIRCABC, what

users see is what they may access. The user interface is mapped onto users' access profiles.

We call on every SNE, within every institution, body or agency, to register him or herself in CIRCABC. How do you register into it?

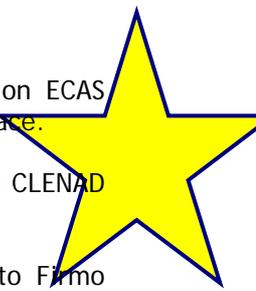
URL to access CLENAD on CIRCABC:
<https://circabc.europa.eu/>

First action is to choose **Login** on CIRCABC;

Second action is to access via **ECAS**:
If you do not have a username/password on ECAS then choose "Sign Up" option on ECAS interface.

Third action is to **apply for membership** to CLENAD on CIRCABC;

The leader of CLENAD on CIRCABC, Augusto Firmo (Taxud), will receive a notification and grant access to the requester by e-mail.



DID YOU KNOW?

There are approximately 1100 Seconded National Experts currently in the European Commission.

*There is a "small ads" intranet website:
www.cc.ce.c/hom/life/ads_en.html*

The Brussels Liaison Office gives advice to expats in Brussels and can inform you and help you with registering in the Commune, getting an ID card, checking lease contracts, family issues, offering general information on cultural offers, etc. Their website offers a lot of useful information. You may help them to improve your living and working conditions in Brussels by giving them your opinion on living in Brussels in a survey. See www.blbe.be.

*Did you miss the **monthly payslips** by internal mail recently? Since January these are not longer sent to SNEs. You are able to print them out via Sysper2, under "Staff", "Right and privileges", "My payslips".*