



NEWSLETTER FOR SNEs AUTUMN EDITION OCTOBER 2012

Foreword by the President of CLENAD, Lucie Lekešová (CZ, EC/EAC)

Dear colleagues,

In the last Newsletter you were informed about the changes in the CLENAD bureau, following the bureau meeting of 22 March 2012. Since then, I have taken on the post of the new CLENAD President, being supported by 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.

*We started the necessary preparations for a **General Assembly** to take place this autumn - we have not had one since 2008! I am happy to inform you that the preparations are well underway.*

*In particular, I am pleased to confirm the participation of two high level speakers: firstly **Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič** responsible for Human Resources including SNEs, and secondly the Director-General of one of the largest DGs in the European Commission, **Robert-Jan Smits**, who started to work in the Commission as an SNE himself.*

We also have a presentation from an academic who gives her view on the role of SNEs in the institutions and how they experience it themselves. Apart from the formal discussion points, we aim to make the whole SNE community more visible and to highlight its

added value and evolving role in these times of economic crisis.

I would like to thank other active members of the bureau, in particular Gilda Carbone of the Italian section, who volunteered to finish the review and update of CLENAD's constitution, and Herman van Der Plas for work on the Welcome brochure and the Newsletter.

You can also still contribute. Let us know when you see any opportunities to improve the role and added value of SNEs in the institutions, or if you experience any issues related to your activities as SNEs or family issues, including any differences in the treatment of SNEs compared to other staff and officials which have remained unsolved or have been solved unsatisfactorily. At a more practical level, I encourage you to assist the bureau of CLENAD in organising the General Assembly.

*A further important and continuing priority for the CLENAD bureau is to strengthen the links between SNEs, the EU institutions, and the Permanent Representations by supporting the **setting-up of national sections** for all Member States and associated countries, with good contacts with the Permanent Representations of the countries to the European Union. I am happy that the Greek, Spanish and Slovak sections have recently (re-)joined the bureau meetings, and have actively contributed.*

There are approximately 1100 SNEs in the Commission. We will not forget however, that SNEs are also working in the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and an increasing number of Executive Agencies. And let us also not forget, CLENAD is not only about SNEs in Brussels, as you can read in this edition.

I hope to see many of you at our General Assembly in December!

Lucie Lekešová

CLENAD General Assembly finally to take place on 6th December!

As agreed at the first meeting of the bureau under the new President on 24 April, we have been working to organise a General Assembly of CLENAD to take place in the (late) autumn.

We aim to bring together a large part of the SNE community, so reserve the afternoon of 6th December in your diaries! The meeting will take place in the auditorium of the Madou Tower. Invitation will follow!

The bureau discussed the preparations in its meeting on 25 October (see photo).



(Photo: Astrid Brandt-Grau)

The programme will be the following:

- Introduction by the President of CLENAD
- Opening speech by Commissioner **Maroš Šefčovič**, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of inter-institutional relations and administration
- Introduction by **Robert-Jan Smits**, Director-General for Research and Innovation
- Presentation of the 2011 study “Contracted Government Unveiling the European Commission’s contracted staff”: **Ms. Zuzana Murdoch**, University of Agder, Norway
- Presentation by the CLENAD bureau on the added value and evolving role of SNEs, recent CLENAD activities and activities by national sections.
- Practical presentation by Brussels liaison office and DG HR

INTERVIEW with: **Outgoing President of the French Section, Astrid Brandt-Grau (DG RTD) on the French presence in the EU institutions: “Prepare your return when arriving!”**

On 6 July 2012, the French section of CLENAD, with support of the French Permanent Representation and the French Secretariat General for European Affairs, organised a seminar 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 were discussed. We spoke with the President of the French Section, Astrid Brandt-Grau (DG RTD), about her experience as an SNE and about the outcomes of the seminar.

Astrid, can you first describe your professional background experience, and future as an SNE?

“I am of German origin, but I have French Citizenship and I am a French civil servant working for the French ministry of Culture since 1990 in the field of research and higher education related to cultural heritage preservation. I have been working as a SNE at DG “Research and Innovation” since December 2008, dealing with research for protecting cultural heritage. After a very exciting period of four years inside the Commission, I will return to France in November to take over a new position in the ministry of Culture as Head of higher education, research and technology. While research and education are under the direct responsibility of another ministry, one of my main tasks will be to better integrate research and innovation in the *curricula* of higher education institutions depending on the ministry of Culture.”



Can you tell us something about the French population of SNEs and the developments therein?

“Currently there are around 187 French SNEs, of which 68% are men and 32% women. For several years the trend has been towards a slightly lower number. Budgetary constraints certainly play a role. Following the new SNE statute of 2008, the number of French SNEs has dropped dramatically within some DGs of the Commission. In particular, working in DG RTD is not always easy for SNEs, as they are not allowed to be directly involved in calls for tender and project management. This is one of the reasons why the work of SNEs in this Directorate was more and more dedicated to policy issues. I personally would not complain about this evolution. In other DGs, especially where additional resources and expertise are needed, such as, for example, financial and internal market expertise, SNEs are highly appreciated and involved in core processes. We should not forget by the way that some SNEs are working within executive agencies, as well as in cities other than Brussels or Luxembourg. They should be better involved in the activities of CLENAD”.

How do you assess for yourself the experience you have gained within the Commission, taking into account the limitations of a position as SNE?

“It has given me a clear inside experience which will be very valuable for the continuation of my professional career, both in policy and programme development as well as project management. In particular, the design of new policies and programmes, including *ex ante* and *ex post* impact analysis, I considered as being very important. I have also been dealing with the Joint Programming Initiative for “Cultural Heritage and Global Change: a new challenge for Europe”, an initiative lead by the Italian Ministry of Culture (MIBAC) in which 18 Member States, including France, are already involved. Of course, in the research programme management I was not directly responsible for the evaluation and negotiation of research projects, but nevertheless I was closely associated to have a good understanding of the process. Communication and dissemination activities - the uptake of research results -also took my interest. All in all, my experience was positive and I did not experience big differences compared with my colleagues who are EC officials”.

Can you tell more now about the event you organised in July?

“Our idea was to focus on issues related to the return of SNEs. More particularly, how SNEs can best take back to their home administrations the expertise and knowledge gained by working in the European institutions. So we wanted to highlight the importance of this resource for national governments and organisations that employ them. We also involved the technical and administrative services responsible for secondment. And of course, we invited two directors from DG HR and DG MARKT to contribute to our seminar. They clearly stated that SNEs contribute to making the EU institutions more sensitive to national policies, needs and solutions, and add valuable skills and knowledge (*see text box*). Commission officials often have a more general profile and change their positions inside the organisation relatively often. More specialised national civil servants add specific knowledge and are therefore highly needed in the European administration”.



From the outside, it seems France is one of the countries which make use of SNEs in the most strategic way, embedded in well-developed HR policies aiming for French influence. Is that a right image?

“Well, I am happy to accept the compliment, but I think this may differ in practice. It depends on the field of expertise, and notably also on the size of the administration sending SNEs as well as on their internal dynamics. My own employer, the ministry of Culture, seconded only a few SNEs but in strategic positions. The “circulaire Villepin” issue on 26 September 2006, suggested also a more strategic approach regarding the secondment of SNEs for the great benefit of the sending administrations and organisations.”

The seminar focused also on valorizing the experience gained in the EU institutions. Does this work in practice in France?

“Let me be clear, it is often quite difficult to look for a new position, and even more to find the right position. But there are many good examples. In 2008/2009, the *French Secretariat General for European Affairs* did a survey among French SNEs, and around 50% indicated they had found a new job which related well to their experience gained inside the European institutions. Apart from returning to a good job, the transfer of the new knowledge on best practices to the national administration is also crucial”.

Finally, what would be your advice, taking into account the seminar, to the SNE community?

“That is clear: Prepare your return when arriving! “



France, or the French Authority for financial markets and the Finance Ministry. They are very well appreciated for their knowledge and also their ability to improve relations between the European Commission and Member States.

Marc Estournet, head of the bureau of senior staff in the French Ministry for Economy and Finance, presented a “common pot” for ministries with a lack of budget for secondment. According to him, experience in the European institutions is always beneficial, even if not valorized in a job related to European Affairs, because the SNEs will bring back other working methods and practices.

Update on Staff regulations

You may have received many emails expressing worries by the trade unions about the jobs, salaries and pension of the EU staff. This may not directly influence us as SNEs, but of course we should be aware of the developments. We publish hereunder an information note published by DG HR and Security on My IntraComm in October.

“The revision of the Staff Regulations is linked to the overall negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework and the issue of staff and administrative expenditure under Heading V of the MFF. The proposed changes to the Staff Regulations are subject to co-decision (or ordinary legislative procedure) between Parliament and Council, and the ball is currently in the Council's court. So far, Member States in Council have not agreed on a mandate to negotiate with the EP and the Commission (trilogues).

On 18 September, the Cyprus Presidency tabled a new version of the so-called 'Negotiation Box' on the MFF. But it does not yet include any figures. A new version with ranges of figures is expected for the last week of October. In early November, European Council President Van Rompuy will launch bilateral consultations with Member States, so as to make a proposal to be discussed at the special European Council on 22-23 November. On Heading V, the draft "negotiation box" foresees savings by reducing staff and further savings through reforms of the Staff Regulations and non-staff related expenses.

The European Parliament remains committed to reaching an agreement on the MFF before the SNE of the year. This does depend, however, on whether Parliament can accept the agreement that the European Council manages to reach. EP

Some highlights of the speakers

Philippe Etienne, Ambassador, and Permanent Representative of France to the EU, opened the event. He emphasised the contribution by SNEs in influencing the European Institutions and presented the total number and distribution of French SNEs.

Serge Guillon, Secretary General for European Affairs and Counselor for European Affairs of the French Prime Minister emphasised the importance of making available French experts by ministries and other organisations in a time of fundamental European restructuring. He also expressed the hope of an increased interaction between national administrations and European institutions, as well as a reciprocal exchange and mobility.

Fernando Frutuso de Melo, European Commission, Deputy Director General, DG HR, emphasised the importance which SNEs have for the Commission given their specific but also diverse expertise, and their knowledge of the realities the Member States are confronted with. He considered this extremely important for the quality of legislation, especially Directives which need to be transposed into national legislation. In this respect, he also welcomed mobility of EU officials, to gain experience in national administrations.

Emmanuel Puisais-Jauvin, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Head for Internal Policies and Institutional affairs praised the knowledge of SNEs of European policies after their return, for example knowledge of international negotiations about climate change.

Pamela Brumtet-Coret, European Commission, Director for Resources and Communication, DG Internal Market and Services, also emphasised the specific expertise SNEs often have, which is not always present under officials, as they have a more general profile. In her DG, French national experts are often recruited from the national bank of

has to give consent to the MFF approved by the European Council.

Within the Council, some so called 'net payers' are calling for a 10% cut in payments across the board, while the 'net beneficiaries' consider the Commission's proposal the strict minimum. This is also the position of the EP.

It is likely that the revision of the Staff Regulations will only be concluded after agreement on the MFF. On the Staff Regulations, the Council's Legal Service has confirmed that any reform has to respect acquired rights, namely with regard to pensions. The Commission continues to follow discussions in Council, explaining and standing by its proposals while commenting on Member States' ideas, and will continue to keep staff informed of further developments, as we do with staff representatives."

See the dedicated web site on My IntraComm, where you will find all related documents":

<http://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/net/Reform/en/Pages/index.aspx>

Working in Luxembourg: not as quiet as one would think!

*Following our last Newsletter, we received the request not to forget to mention that there are also quite a few SNEs in Luxembourg. We should not only report about developments in Brussels... We fully agree with this of course, and we happily agreed to the offer by Luxembourg based SNE **Andreas Wild**, working in DG ENER, to describe his experiences of working and living in Luxembourg.*

First some facts: Luxembourg is the seat of the European Court of Justice, Court of First Instance and Court of Auditors, as well as the European Investment Bank. In addition, the General Secretariat of the European Parliament and a few Directorate Generals and departments of the European Commission have their seats here. If we are well informed these are SANCO, ESTAT, INFSO, ENER and MOVE, EUSA, OIL, PMO, HR and OP. As an indication, there were around 80 SNEs in Lux in 2011, out of around 1100 SNE. In all, more than 9,000 civil servants of the European Union work in Luxembourg. In the months of April, June and

October, the Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers) also meets here.



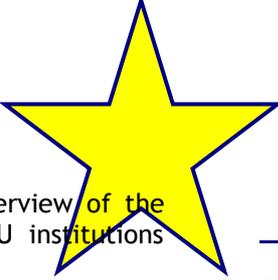
Andreas Wild wrote to us: "I had the opportunity to work 2 years in Brussels before, so I can compare the situation. It is indeed the case that almost all decision-making procedures are made in Brussels, and therefore it is quite common to travel to Brussels for meetings in the Council and in the European Parliament, sometimes even twice a week. Therefore it would be useful if the train connection between Brussels and Luxembourg would be accelerated - a project which has been in the planning stage for more than 10 years."

Andreas continues: "The normal working day of an official/SNE is not different in Luxembourg from the one in Brussels. Thanks to modern technology, we are in everyday contact with our colleagues in Brussels through e-mail, telephone or video-conferences. My field of responsibility is nuclear energy and its international coordination. A very interesting and challenging topic, especially after Fukushima. I also participate in videoconferences with our counterparts in Australia, Canada and South Africa as well.

All in all life in Luxembourg is of a very high standard, the city is cleaner and safer than Brussels (LUX was even named as the safest capital in Europe recently). The multicultural character of the city is also a given (the majority of the population of this country are foreigners living and working here!). What is a bit lacking is the possibility of networking and lobbying, as happens in Brussels every day. So, everything has its advantages and disadvantages. But I am happy to have had the opportunity to explore both European capitals!"

CLENAD IN CIRCABC

We want to repeat the request we have made to you 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 a



gap in our information: a good overview of the distribution of SNEs in different EU institutions and related agencies.

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 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.

*The **Brussels Liaison Office** gives advice to expats in Brussels and can inform 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 no longer sent to SNEs. You are able to print them out via Sysper2, under "Staff", "Right and privileges", "My payslips".*

*Liaison Committee of Seconded National Experts
Verbindungskomitee für Nationale Experten
Comité de Liaison des Experts Nationaux Détachés*

*Would you like to contribute to the newsletter? Please contact us!! www.clenad.eu
Or directly Herman.van-der-plas@ec.europa.eu
The deadline for your contribution to the winter issue is: 1 January 2013.*