



European Economic and Social Committee

DECISION NO 115/14 A
holding provisions regarding traineeships at the
European Economic and Social Committee

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Having regard to Rules 71 and 72 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee (henceforth "the EESC");

Having regard to EESC Decision No 266/12 A of 13 June 2012;

Having regard to the budget of the EESC, and in particular Chapter 14 thereof, which makes provision for funds for traineeships in administrative units at the EESC;

Whereas it is in the interests of European integration, and more particularly of the EESC, to make the latter's activities - especially the scope of its consultative role - better known to young university graduates and students through a traineeship programme;

HAS DECIDED:

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Definition and organisation of traineeships

1.1.1 Subject to the availability of budgetary resources and space, the present provisions shall apply to traineeships organised by the EESC for nationals of European Union Member States upon a reasoned request and, where warranted by the EESC's requirements, for nationals of non-Member States.

1.1.2 Objectives

In offering traineeships, the EESC's main objectives are to give trainees the opportunity to:

- learn about the EESC's role and activities at interinstitutional level, as well as its relations with EU Member States and with non-Member States;
 - acquire practical knowledge about how the EESC's various departments operate;
 - supplement and apply knowledge and skills acquired during their studies and/or work;
- and

- gain experience in a multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic professional environment, helping people develop understanding, confidence and mutual tolerance.

1.1.3 Trainee status

Admission to traineeships shall not confer upon trainees the status of official or other servant of the European Union, nor shall it entail any right or priority with regard to an appointment in any department of the EESC. Trainees may be recruited at the end of their traineeship, provided that the conditions and rules on recruitment to the staff category for which they are applying are strictly complied with and applied. The same holds true for any former trainee selected after a competitive procedure in a call for tenders or call for expressions of interest launched by the EESC or one of its departments, as an individual or as an employee of a company winning the tender.

Only the signed contract between the trainee and the EESC shall apply. The EESC shall not enter into any traineeship agreement proposed by the educational establishment at which the trainee is studying. The Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union are not applicable to trainees.

1.1.4 Trainee supervision

The unit responsible for the traineeship programme shall supervise the whole programme (both administrative and educational aspects). A trainee's activities within the department to which he or she has been assigned shall be guided by a traineeship adviser ("conseiller de stage") (see Article 2.2.6). The latter shall be responsible for the trainee's job description, his or her training and providing advice as to how to approach the work they are allocated.

1.1.5 Trainee participation

In the departments to which they are assigned, under the supervision of their traineeship advisers, trainees shall carry out the tasks allocated to them and participate in the departments' activities at a level in keeping with their studies and/or qualifications. Trainees shall receive all the documentation and information needed for carrying out their tasks and shall participate in meetings on subjects of interest to them, as long as these meetings are not confidential.

1.1.6 Study visits and trips in connection with the EESC's activities may be organised for trainees, subject to availability of budgetary resources. Long-term trainees shall participate in these visits and trips, unless reasons are given for the contrary. The stipulated hours and programmes need to be respected.

1.2 **General conditions**

1.2.1 **Languages**

Applicants must have a thorough command of one EU language and a satisfactory command of another EU language, one of which must be one of the EESC's working languages (English or French).

Applicants from non-Member States shall be required to have a good command of one of the EESC's working languages.

1.2.2 **Medical certificate**

Trainees must provide proof of their medical fitness for undertaking a traineeship.

1.2.3 **Police record**

Trainees must provide an extract from police records to provide proof they have the moral standards necessary for carrying out the tasks assigned to them.

1.2.4 **Exclusion criteria**

To give as many people as possible a chance to familiarise themselves with the EU institutions, applications shall not be accepted from people who have already completed a period of paid traineeship of six weeks or longer with an EU institution, agency or representation office. The same applies to applications from people who *a)* are serving or have served as an assistant to a member of the European Parliament or *b)* are working or have worked as a consultant on a research assignment, or as a temporary, contract or agency staff member at an EU institution, agency or representation office.

1.3 **Trainees' rights and obligations**

1.3.1 **Service requirements**

During their traineeship, trainees must comply with the instructions given by their traineeship adviser and with internal instructions and decisions, so as to avoid any conflicts of interest and/or anything detrimental to the EESC's image.

1.3.2 Trainees shall participate in the activities of the department to which they are assigned and in the activities organised for their benefit, and shall in so doing keep to the hours and programmes stipulated in that connection.

- 1.3.3 During their traineeship, trainees shall be obliged to consult with their traineeship adviser on any action they propose taking with regard to the EESC's activities.

1.3.4 Hours

Trainees shall be required to keep to the official hours stipulated for EESC staff. Flexitime or teleworking arrangements do not apply to trainees.

1.3.5 Authorised absence

Traineeship advisers may authorise limited periods of absence of up to two days per month of traineeship.

1.3.6 Absence due to sickness

Should they fall sick, trainees must notify their traineeship adviser at once. As of the fourth day of absence, they must submit a medical certificate indicating the probable duration of the absence. If so required in the interests of the department, the trainee concerned may be required to undergo a medical examination.

1.3.7 Absence without leave

Should a trainee be absent without prior authorisation and without providing a medical certificate, the head of the Recruitment, Careers and Training Unit (hereinafter referred to as the PER unit) may request a written explanation for such absence.

Should the explanation provided not be satisfactory, or in the absence of any grounds being provided for such absence, the head of the PER unit may initiate termination of the traineeship contract under Article 3.6. Any monies from the traineeship grant that have been overpaid must be reimbursed.

1.3.8 Confidentiality and publications

Trainees shall be required to show the utmost discretion with regard to all facts and information coming to their knowledge in the course of their traineeship.

They may not, in any manner whatsoever, disclose to any unauthorised person any document or information not already in the public domain. They shall continue to be bound by this obligation after their traineeship has finished.

Trainees may not, whether alone or together with others, publish or cause to be published any subject matter relating to the work of the EESC, without authorisation from the Director for Human Resources and Internal Services. Any such authorisation shall be subject to the

conditions laid down by the afore-mentioned director. The EESC shall retain all rights relating to any work carried out for it during the traineeship.

1.3.9 Traineeship report

At the end of their traineeship, long-term trainees shall provide their traineeship adviser with a report on their activities and experience during the traineeship; this report is also to be submitted to the training and career guidance department.

2. **TYPES OF TRAINEESHIP: SHORT AND LONG TRAINEESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS FOR HOLDERS OF SCHOLARSHIPS GRANTED BY OUTSIDE PUBLIC BODIES**

2.1 **The EESC offers different types of traineeship**

- Long (5 months) traineeships with a monthly grant provided by the EESC;
- Traineeships for holders of grants awarded by outside public bodies; and
- Short traineeships (maximum 3 months) with no grant for young university students or graduates obliged to undertake a traineeship for their degree.

2.2 **Long traineeships**

2.2.1 General

Long traineeships are intended for young university graduates who, in the course of their studies or in some other connection, have already acquired either a qualification in the areas where the EESC is active, or good knowledge of the socio-occupational organisations operating in the European Union.

These traineeships are organised twice a year, from 16 February to 15 July (spring traineeship) and from 16 September to 15 February the following year (autumn traineeship).

2.2.2 Conditions

Long traineeships may be offered to applicants fulfilling the following conditions:

- holding a recognised university-level degree, demonstrating completion of at least three years of study, or a certificate attesting that the applicant has attained a level of education corresponding to a three-year university course;

- submitting an application in accordance with the procedures laid down by the EESC. Instructions are published on the EESC's website.

2.2.3 Selection of preferred applicant and compilation of reserve list

Heads of unit who might be interested in taking on a trainee in their department shall draw up an initial list of applicants in order of preference and then forward this to the PER unit. Candidates will be selected on the basis of this list of preferences.

2.2.4 Number of trainees

The number of trainees for each traineeship period is set by the PER unit according to the availability of both budgetary resources and office space available in departments which might be interested in taking on a trainee.

2.2.5 Units to which trainees are assigned

Trainees shall be assigned according to the priorities indicated in the requests by the EESC departments as well as availability, subject to any limit imposed on the number of trainees by the provisions of Article 2.2.4.

2.2.6 Traineeship advisers

Traineeship advisers ("conseillers de stage") shall be appointed by the heads of the units taking on the trainees; the PER unit shall be informed of this appointment.

2.2.7 Traineeship contracts

The PER unit is responsible for contacting the applicants and for drawing up traineeship contracts on the basis of the arrangements set out in this Decision.

2.2.8 Traineeship grants

Trainees granted a long traineeship shall be entitled to a monthly grant.

The grant shall be set at 25% of the basic salary of an official at grade AD5, step 1, as on the day the traineeship starts; it shall remain unchanged throughout the traineeship.

Trainees who continue to receive remuneration from their employers, or who receive a grant from another body or any other maintenance allowance, may not receive any financial contribution from the EESC.

2.2.9 Reimbursement of travel expenses at the beginning and end of traineeships

Long-term trainees receiving a grant from the EESC shall be entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses incurred at the beginning and end of their traineeship under certain conditions. These conditions are laid down in a separate decision adopted by the Director of Human Resources and Internal services and published on the EESC website.

Long-term trainees shall be entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses as long as they complete at least three months of traineeship.

2.2.10 Tax arrangements

Traineeship grants are not subject to the special tax regulations applying to officials and servants of the European Union.

Trainees shall be solely responsible for paying any taxes due on EESC grants under the legal regulations applying in the State concerned.

2.2.11 Traineeship coordinator

One traineeship coordinator shall be selected by the PER unit from amongst the trainees on long traineeships.

He or she shall be responsible for relations between EESC trainees and the administration, and with trainees in other institutions. The same person shall help organise the activities planned for trainees.

2.2.12 Traineeship duration

Traineeships cannot be extended and are strictly limited to a total duration of maximum five months.

2.3 **Traineeships for holders of grants awarded by outside public bodies**

2.3.1 Conditions

Long traineeships may be granted to applicants meeting the conditions set out in Article 2.2.2, 1st indent, who receive a grant from an outside body, provided that office space is available.

Under no circumstance may the EESC provide any financial contribution in such cases.

2.3.2 Selection

The head of the PER unit shall be responsible for selecting trainees meeting the criteria set out in the previous paragraph.

2.3.3 Traineeship periods

This type of traineeship runs for the same periods in the year as long traineeships financed by the EESC. By way of exception, traineeships covered by the present Article may take place on different dates.

2.3.4 Provisions applying

The provisions set out in Articles 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 shall apply.

2.4 **Short traineeships**

2.4.1 Conditions

Short traineeships of one to three months shall be awarded to applicants fulfilling the following conditions:

- holding a recognised university-level degree, demonstrating completion of at least three years of study, or a certificate attesting that the applicant has attained a level of education corresponding to a three-year university course;

or

- being required to do a traineeship in an international institution in order to complete their studies.

In all cases, priority shall be given to applicants for whom such a traineeship is compulsory for completion of their studies.

2.4.2 Selection

Trainees on a short traineeship may be taken on at any moment of the year.

Once the eligibility conditions set out in Article 2.4.1 have been checked, applications shall be sent to heads of unit having expressed their interest on request.

2.4.3 Application processing time

There shall be a minimum of four weeks between the submission of an application and the start of a short traineeship.

2.4.4 Applicable provisions

The provisions set out in Articles 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 shall apply.

2.4.5 Number of traineeships granted

There is no set number of short traineeships. The number of trainees on short traineeships at the EESC may not be higher than the number on long traineeships. Every trainee must have suitable office space.

2.4.6 Grants, travelling expenses and extensions

Short traineeships shall not entitle trainees to any grant, or to the reimbursement of travel expenses. The initial length of such traineeships may be extended, but may not exceed a total of three months.

2.4.7 Participation in activities

As far as is possible, trainees on short traineeships shall be allowed to participate in activities organised for long-term trainees, but without any financial support from the EESC.

2.5 **Traineeships for the disabled**

Public or university organisations or organisations representing the disabled may be invited to submit applications for traineeships.

3. **PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS**

3.1 **Missions**

Authorisation for sending trainees on missions (work trips) shall only be granted by the Director for Human Resources and Internal Services in exceptional cases, on the basis of a reasoned request by the traineeship adviser concerned. Such authorisation shall mean the trainee concerned shall be entitled to the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses under the "Missions" budget, under the same conditions as those stipulated for officials.

3.2 **Sickness insurance**

Health insurance shall be compulsory.

Trainees not covered by any other sickness insurance scheme shall be covered by sickness insurance under the conditions set out in the EESC'S insurance contract.

Trainees shall contribute one third of the relevant premium.

Trainees who do not take out the sickness insurance proposed by the EESC must prove that they are covered by another equivalent insurance for the full duration of the traineeship.

3.3 **Accident insurance**

Trainees must take out the accident insurance proposed by the EESC.

The premium must be paid for entirely by the trainees themselves, except trainees who are not entitled to EESC grants.

3.4 **Interruption in traineeship**

The head of the PER unit may authorise a trainee to interrupt his or her traineeship for a limited period on a written and motivated request by the trainee concerned, who needs to obtain the go-ahead from the traineeship adviser. In this case, payment of any grant awarded by the EESC shall be suspended and any overpaid monies reimbursed.

If a trainee has completed less than three months of a long-term EESC-funded traineeship before the interruption, the trainee shall lose entitlement to the reimbursement of the outward and return travel expenses. If a period of between three and five months of the traineeship, but not the full period, has been completed before the interruption, the trainee shall lose entitlement to the reimbursement of the return travel expenses.

For all types of traineeship, trainees may only restart their traineeship within the period initially scheduled in their contract and may only continue their traineeship for the time between that moment and the end date stipulated in their contract with the EESC.

3.5 **Termination of a traineeship contract at the request of a trainee**

Should a trainee wish to terminate his or her traineeship before the end date stipulated in the contract, he or she may submit a reasoned request in writing, through the traineeship adviser, to the head of the PER unit, giving at least three weeks' notice. Trainees may only leave the EESC on the 1st or 16th of the month.

Any monies from the traineeship grant that have been overpaid must be reimbursed.

For long traineeships, if the trainee concerned has completed less than three months of the traineeship before the contract is terminated, the trainee shall lose entitlement to reimbursement of the outward and return travel expenses. If a period of between three and five months of the traineeship, but not the full period, has been completed before the contract is terminated, the trainee shall lose entitlement to the reimbursement of the return travel expenses.

3.6 **Decision to terminate a traineeship contract at the request of the EESC**

The EESC Director for Human Resources and Internal Services may, at any time, decide to terminate a traineeship on the grounds of a trainee's inappropriate behaviour, lack of involvement and/or failure to fulfil his or her obligations, and after hearing the trainee concerned and the traineeship adviser.

Any monies from the traineeship grant that have been overpaid must be reimbursed.

For long traineeships, if the trainee concerned has completed less than three months of the traineeship before the contract is terminated, the trainee shall lose entitlement to reimbursement of the outward and return travel expenses. If a period of between three and five months of the traineeship, but not the full period, has been completed before the contract is terminated, the trainee shall lose entitlement to the reimbursement of the return travel expenses.

4. **MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

4.1 **Data protection**

The trainees' and applicants' personal data shall be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

Only information on the trainees' age, gender, nationality, studies and languages shall be passed on to traineeship advisers participating in the selection procedure.

The traineeship applicants' and pre-selected applicants' personal data shall be retained for two months as of the official starting date of the traineeship. Data on those having completed a traineeship shall be kept for one year after the end of the traineeship.

Applicants and those accepted for a traineeship shall have the right of access to their personal data and the right to rectify any such data that are inaccurate or incomplete.

Requests for information regarding the processing of personal data must be addressed to the head of the PER unit.

4.2 **Equal opportunities**

When selecting trainees, the EESC applies a policy of equal opportunities between women and men, and accepts applications without any discrimination or distinction on any grounds such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

4.3 **Entry into force**

This Decision supersedes EESC Decision No 266/12 A.

This Decision shall apply to the 2014 autumn traineeship session as well as to all traineeships starting at that or a later date.

The Director for Human Resources and Internal Services shall be responsible for implementation of the above provisions.

Done at Brussels, 27/05/2014

The Secretary-General

[signed]

Luis Planas
