



Comité de Liaison des Experts  
Nationaux Détachés

Liaison Committee of  
Seconded National Experts

Verbindungskomitee für  
Abgeordnete nationale  
Sachverständige

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# NEWSLETTER FOR SNEs

## AUTUMN 2016



### Foreword by CLENAD President, Sylvia Binger (DE, EP)

*Shortly before Christmas and at the end of another exciting year, the CLENAD newsletter will inform you about some new developments and our latest activities.*

*We currently had a change in the editorial team of this newsletter. Nicolas Sifakis (GR) to whom we are very grateful for creating this new layout and being a reliable editor for our newsletter is now replaced by **Amélie Cousin - de Broucker** from the French section. As you can see in this edition the change went smoothly thanks to the excellent handover between Nicolas and Amélie.*

*In autumn you were all invited to give your opinion on SNE matters in an **online survey** that should help CLENAD to have a clearer idea about your concerns and how we can improve our activities for you. An evaluation team is currently working on a detailed report about this survey and we hope to give you some more information in our next newsletter. I would like to thank our colleagues from the UK, Romanian, Spanish and German section for all their efforts that made this survey possible.*

*Some preliminary conclusions from the survey formed part of the discussion we had when meeting with **Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for the Budget and Human Resources/Vice-President of the European Commission**. With the support of our Bulgarian colleague Maria Todorova, CLENAD was able to organise a meeting with her and representatives of her team. We had a very fruitful meeting in a very positive atmosphere. CLENAD took the opportunity to raise some important SNE concerns such as career development matters and received interesting news. Please read for yourself about the new regulations that can also have an impact on SNEs. **Vice-President Georgieva** accepted our invitation to address all SNEs in our forthcoming general assembly. Unfortunately, she will not be in office anymore from the beginning of 2017, but CLENAD will put its efforts into keeping the dialogue with political decision-makers alive.*

*The **Spanish section** approved its statutes with the support of the Permanent Representation of Spain to the EU in Brussels, which means it is now officially recognised as CLENAD España. Based on the experience of previous Spanish SNE colleagues they created several fichas as they call them that also consider the post-secondment period.*

*Unfortunately Chryssa Tsikoura ended her SNE contract at the European Commission and we want to thank her for all her efforts in following the social dialogue between the trade unions and the institutions. In her article you can read about the latest developments.*

*On behalf of CLENAD International I wish you a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2017*

Sylvia Binger

## MEETING OF CLENAD WITH MS. KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR THE BUDGET AND HUMAN RESOURCES/VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- by Sylvia Binger, CLENAD President

CLENAD took the initiative to ask Vice-President Georgieva for a meeting and with the kind support of our Bulgarian colleague Maria Todorova a delegation of CLENAD International met her on 17 October at the Berlaymont. CLENAD was represented by four members: Sylvia Binger, President; Dejan Flasker, Secretary-General; Chryssa Tsikoura, CLENAD's contact to U4U (social dialogue); Maria Todorova, established the contact to the Vice-President; and Rafal Domisiewicz, representing SNEs at the EEAS. Vice-President (VP) Georgieva was accompanied by her HR advisor Sophie Alexandrova and representatives of HR DG Marie-Hélène Pradines (HoU) and Elisabeth Cavarero (Direction Générale Ressources Humaines et Sécurité; Unité HR.B.4 "Gestion de la carrière et des performances").

As CLENAD President I first introduced CLENAD, its organizational structure, membership/national sections, work, aims, and flagged the desire to have the Vice-President speak at the CLENAD General Assembly (GA), planned for early 2017.

From her side the Vice-President was interested in the "mood among SNEs". CLENAD, referring to survey results we had just received, noted the **high motivation of SNEs'**, their satisfaction with the positions held in the EU and their **job responsibilities** as well as a desire expressed by many to stay on in the EU. We also expressed that, at the same time, a lot of concerns were expressed by our colleagues about their **career development at home** (prospects for job promotion, re-integration, etc.).

Referring to her previous experience as Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, she said she has found SNEs very motivated, with "fantastic links to Member States", which at the time was important for her activities related to civil protection.



She noted that we all operate in a **more difficult environment**, featuring lasting effects of a financial crisis. As some national administrations are shrinking, seconding national experts to the EU places a burden on their capacities. The **impact of budgetary constraints on the EU** is also not negligible. The Vice-President will continue to respond to DG's will and capacity to take on SNEs. CLENAD's upcoming GA could be a platform to rally to SNEs.

The Vice-President was pleased to announce that **DG HR is addressing the cumulative rule**, i.e. excluding SNE time from the 7 year-period of Contractual Agent (CA)'s term of employment. In all likelihood, the appropriate change will be adopted by the end of this year.

Asked by CLENAD whether the Vice-President sees SNEs as staff, she responded “of course I **see you as staff**, you’re all our people.” Frankly, though as SNEs are “on the books of national governments,” everything is intermediated by Member States representations. However, “we trust you with confidentiality, you are integrated as our staff.”

Furthermore, CLENAD inquired about the **varying (from one DG to another & agency) interpretations of the term of secondment** (currently 4 years, and +2 “exceptionally”). The VP said she would follow up this issue with individual DGs to **remove an impression of arbitrariness**. However, she personally feels that if the European Commission (EC) were to move to a 6 year period [across the board], this might reduce opportunities for other SNEs to acquire this experience. Also, she and her HR colleagues were not sure whether Member States would share such a position on this matter.

CLENAD brought to the attention of the Vice-President some of the concerns aired by SNEs, including single parents, who face great burdens working and looking after the family lacking in access to the financial benefits enjoyed by officials. We were reminded that “SNEs are not statutory staff.” EC HR do provide for instance access for SNEs’ children to European schools [albeit, admittedly, SNEs must pay for the school bus out of their own pocket]. EC HR said they do their utmost to relay to Member States the message that SNEs should be treated fairly, indeed rewarded when going back home. The Permanent Representations are told, for instance, that they should have a “**welcome package**” for SNEs when they go back home.

Echoing the survey result, which revealed a **high level of interest of SNEs to find a permanent position in the EU**, CLENAD inquired about such possibilities for SNEs. The Commissioner said that **everybody has to pass a competition (EPSO)**. In addition, every 2 years there will be internal competitions, for which SNEs would be eligible 3 years after they’d moved into CA category. In addition, she reiterated, everybody retains the **right to take part in the external examination**. When CLENAD pointed out in response to the latter remark, that SNEs are already experts with - in many instances - a lot of years of accumulated experience, the Vice-President said that the recruitment procedure will be reviewed in the future and most probably move **towards a more experience based recruitment of staff**.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT:**

***Would you like to contribute to the next newsletter?  
Please send any suggested articles to A. Cousin (CoR):  
[amelie.cousin@cor.europa.eu](mailto:amelie.cousin@cor.europa.eu)***

***The deadline for your contributions to the next edition is the  
1st of February 2016***



## **SPAIN – THE SPANISH SECTION OF CLENAD approves its statutes**

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- by *Anna Armengol Torío, Spanish CLENAD representative*

**More than 150 experts are seconded from Spain to the EU institutions and agencies.**

On **20th April 2016**, with the support of the Permanent Representation of Spain to the EU in Brussels, the **Spanish section of CLENAD approved its statutes** that constituted it officially as CLENAD España. This moment represented the final step started long time ago to institutionalise Spanish section of CLENAD as an official channel in which all Seconded National Experts and National Experts in Professional Training are to be represented and brought together.

Early works before the official acceptance of CLENAD España statutes started long ago by a **group of Seconded National Experts** whose eagerness and good will gave them the strength to start this project. Contacts within CLENAD organisation were already strong and ongoing. However, the challenge to get new statutes got momentum with this newly created presidency. They looked for examples within similar national sections and after writing the proposal, it was discussed in a **Plenary meeting** (where all SNEs were invited) **last April** before its submission and vote for approval.

All in all, CLENAD Statutes became an example to follow so as to define our organisation and develop our rules of procedure and targets. Our framework is based on volunteering and proactive actions. Additionally, our main aim is **to provide** all Spanish Seconded National Experts and National Experts in Professional Training with **all needed support within their period** as such, starting from their first day until the end of their mandate. In particular, our organisation created a number of **documents** (also known as *fichas*) where detailed information about tax declaration system, schools, doctors and car registration, inter alia, were explained in detail. These *fichas* also include **practical examples and step by step explanations**.

Furthermore, our statutes also consider post-secondment period once this is finished thanks to the creation of a **former Seconded National Expert network based in Spain**.

Indeed, this process also was an impulse for **Spanish blue books trainees** to create their first **association** (BecUE) following CLENAD España initiative. Not only did BecUE count with our support since the very beginning but also we had several meetings to allow a common environment for networking and discussions.

This year, thanks to the support of Spanish Permanent Representation we aim at developing an **online dedicated space web** with their website to disseminate and make all CLENAD España materials available, and to take further steps to enhance our cooperation with the Permanent Representation through dedicated meetings/events.

Current representatives of CLENAD España want to thank our predecessors and all Spanish national experts who proudly worked long hours to get here and we look forward to collaborating with colleagues from different national sections in our common path as Seconded National Experts.



## PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES AND KEY ISSUES FOR EUROPE WERE AT THE HEART OF THE ANNUAL EVENT FOR FRENCH SECONDED NATIONAL EXPERTS

- by Amélie Cousin, French CLENAD representative

On Friday 2 December 2016, 90 French Seconded National Experts (SNEs) came together for the annual SNE event, held at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Paris. Organised by the French section of CLENAD, the Secretariat General for European Affairs and the Permanent Representation of France to the European Union, this annual event aims to gather French SNEs together to talk about the professional challenges facing those with SNE status, as well as key European topics and challenges. This year, issues surrounding SNEs' return to their administration of origin were at the heart of the debates. Annick Girardin, Minister of Public Administration, highlighted the importance of European and international mobility as well as of SNEs themselves.

The Minister also pointed out the need to open up administrations and make them more flexible. European and international mobility need to be recognised as a career option and valued as such. Preparing for mobility in administrations is crucial and will be achieved by: targeting the most qualified profiles; developing a double evaluation of competences; recognising knowledge and experience acquired; raising awareness among HR and recruiters.

When welcoming the participants, **Nathalie Loiseau**, ENA director, and **Philippe Leglise-Costa**, Secretary General for European Affairs, discussed the crisis in Europe. They also emphasized the need to transform, defend and concretely contribute to the European project, and stressed the importance of European mobility for developing skills in relation to European affairs, which currently constitute the basis for legislation and are at the heart of public policies. Aside from the significant number of French SNEs working in EU institutions, France is also testing a pilot mechanism of exchanges for officials.



Retrieved from [ena.fr](http://ena.fr)

**Carine SOULAY**, deputy director at the Directorate General of Administration and Public Service, described the main documents and activities needed in order to modernise HR policies, and explained how this would help to value participants' experience and develop their potential.

The testimonials of **Isabelle Benoliel**, Director at the European Commission (DG COMP) and **Ludovic Schultz**, former SNE, provided more insights for participants about the needs of SNEs working within the European institutions, as well as the added value of SNEs' experience when working at ministerial level and negotiating with EU institutions.

Following a networking lunch, the afternoon was dedicated to thematic panel discussions about key European topics, organised by the various French ministries. On 3 December, a forum about European careers was held in cooperation with the EU institutions. The commitment of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in organising this event was evident and very much appreciated. Next year's edition would take place in Brussels.



*Annick Girardin addressing the importance of SNE's involvement during the French SNE annual event on 2 December 2016 at Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Paris.*

Retrieved from twitter - <https://twitter.com/AnnickGirardin>

# ANTI-CUMULATION RULE AND SECONDED NATIONAL EXPERTS (SNEs)

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- by Chryssa Tsikoura, former SNE

It all started with the last internal competition for contract agents in December 2015. The question of whether time spent working under contract as an SNE should be included when assessing eligibility to participate in this procedure was raised, giving rise to questions and ambiguity.

Primarily, the ambiguity derived from the fact that SNEs are not EC staff and thus their period of employment was not considered eligible for internal competitions; but at the same time their employment period counted towards the 7-year anti-cumulation rule.

Contractual agents who were former SNEs, as well as those who were SNEs at the time, understood the need for the revision of the anti-cumulation rule regarding SNEs.

To promote our justified request, we established contacts with the collective of contract agents, an initiative of the U4U, through which the staff unions held discussions with DG HR in the framework of the social dialogue.

**Mr Vlandas**, President of U4U and leader of the initiative, shared our point of view and promised to work for a positive outcome.

After a successful round of negotiations, DG HR accepted that the existing situation was unjust and informed Vice President Georgieva, who is the Commissioner with the power to revise this rule in favour of SNEs.

As the CLENAD bureau, we managed to meet Vice President Georgieva on October 17 and obtain, among other things, her formal approval of our request.

The anti-cumulation decision will soon be officially published.

Finally, I would like to thank the President of the CLENAD bureau, **Sylvia Binger**, who recognised the essence of this rule and worked towards its revision. I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly thank **Mr Vlandas**, who devoted all his efforts to effectively supporting the cause. It was only natural for him though, since he started his career at the European institutions as an SNE!