



Seniors of the European Public Service

Seniors de la Fonction Publique Européenne

# Bulletin

**Information bulletin for members of the Association**

**June 2015**

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### **SEPS Administrative Board**

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Vice-president	Rainer Dumont du Voitel (relations Council)
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Nicole Caby; Serge Crutzen; Rainer Dumont du Voitel; Mitsou Entringer; Brigitte Pretzenbacher; Hendrik Smets; Yasmin Soezen; Rosalyn Tanguy

### **Important notices**

**Bank account** for the annual subscriptions:

IBAN: **BE 37 3630 5079 7728**

BIC: **BBRUBEBB**

**Please don't use the Post bank account any more**

#### **Changes of address**

Many members forget to inform us of their change of postal address. A telephone call to +32 (0)2 475 472 470, or e-mail or note to our secretariat would avoid several weeks' gap in receiving news.

#### **Your Internet address**

Please don't forget to let us know your e-mail address.

Many SEPS messages are sent by e-mail.

The address used is [info@sfpe-seps.be](mailto:info@sfpe-seps.be)

**The annual subscription has been increased to  
minimum €30**

Decided at the AGM of 13 December 2013

## **Forthcoming Information Meeting**

Room VM2 – 2, rue Van Maerlant, 1040 Brussels  
Maelbeek metro stop – take exit Chaussée d'Etterbeek.

**Thursday 15 October 2015**

Following the usual agenda of the meetings : from 11.00 to 16.30

- Information (SFPE – Pensions)
- Lunch (buffet) at the Brasserie Van Maerlant
- Information : JSIS – Relations with PMO
- Aid to pensioners
- Problems encountered by members
- Questions

**Don't forget to contact the secretariat to reserve your lunch (€25)**

Secretariat: e-mail [info@sfpe-seps.be](mailto:info@sfpe-seps.be) ; fax : +32(0)2 2818378

Tel : +32 (0) 475 472 470

Payment for the lunch can be made in situ or to the SEPS ING account (See page 2)

There are no parking spaces available any-more (security reasons)

In case of necessity , please contact the secretariat

***Most of the articles of the Bulletin were written in French. Translation are from  
Rosalyn Tanguy and Yasmin Sözen***

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### **I. Letter from the editor**

The main issue during the first six months of 2015 has been the continuing difficulties experienced by numerous colleagues in connection with their reimbursements of medical expenses. Information from the PMO has, however, improved in the last months and has even been redundant sometimes. Our secretariat does its best to play the role of relay station for the pensioners and their settlement offices, either via direct contact with the office heads or, in the case of those persons who can come to Brussels, via the office's representative who is available every weekday at the special place for seniors, rue de la Science.

SEPS – SFPE is available to answer questions (+32 (0) 475 472 470), send forms, act as go-between or facilitator where necessary.

The Commission's HR&S DG and R&D union have sent out a questionnaire on officials' and other servants' (in active employment) satisfaction concerning the PMO's and JSIS' services.

SEPS-SFPE reproduces, in this newsletter, some of the questions asked by DG HR&S to active staff members. It is important to obtain a sample of responses on the part of retirees. We hope to receive a lot of answers.

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<sup>1</sup> Newsletter n° 14 of PMO – May 2015

## **II. JSIS – Hospital stays from A to Z**

The PMO has asked us to re-issue the special newsletter dating from May 2015 on hospital stays. This document is being sent by internet to colleagues in active employment. We are informing you of all the points included in the newsletter plus some additional paragraphs taken from the JSIS practical guide (June 2014) so that you may have a complete document concerning hospital stays as at 1 June 2015<sup>2</sup>.

### **Reminder of some general rules**

#### **Supporting documents**

Treatment can only be reimbursed if it is prescribed or carried out by a legally authorised medical or paramedical practitioner or in an establishment duly approved by the competent authorities.

Receipts and invoices must conform to local legislation in the country of issue, and must include the following information:

- the patient's full name
- the nature of the treatment
- the dates and fees paid for each medical treatment
- the name and official references of the healthcare provider.

In Belgium, the certificate of treatment ('attestation de soins') showing the amount paid, or a receipt which is valid for tax purposes, is always compulsory. From 1 January 2015, if you do not have the official document you will not be reimbursed.

#### **Prior authorisation**

Some medical treatments, operations, equipment purchases, transport costs, etc. are subject to prior authorisation from the Medical Officer at the Settlements Office. Prior authorisation allows you to find out whether the JSIS will reimburse the treatment and, if so, how much it will pay.

The request for prior authorisation must be submitted before the start of treatment. The request must have been approved for you to be able to submit a claim for reimbursement. However, there is no need to wait for the decision of the Head of the Settlements Office before you start the treatment. The decision will cover a certain period and either a given number of treatment sessions or a maximum amount to be reimbursed. Reimbursement will be made in accordance with the limits imposed by the decision.

A request for prior authorisation is made up of several documents:

- the prior authorisation application form or request via JSIS Online,
- a detailed medical prescription,

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<sup>2</sup> PMO. Practical Guide to the reimbursement of medical expenses. June 2014 .  
SEPS-SFPE

- a full medical report or estimate (depending on the nature of the treatment – e.g. for dental care). Send everything to your Settlements Office either by post or via JSIS Online.

A decision will be taken on the request after consulting the Medical Officer, who will assess the medical case for the treatment.

### **Direct billing**

Direct billing allows you to ask a hospital or other health care institution to send its invoice for straight to the sickness insurance scheme for direct payment. Members must apply in advance. Permission is granted in the following cases: hospitalisation (covers the main invoices and the surgeon's and anaesthetist's fees), intensive out-patient care in connection with a recognised serious illness, expensive medicines that must be bought repeatedly, repeated use of a standard or light ambulance, certain expensive tests.

### **Advances**

Under certain conditions, advances on reimbursement may also be granted to cover major items of expenditure (fill in the form "Request for an advance on high medical costs" and send it to your Settlements Office).

### **Reimbursements**

You can submit your claim for reimbursement electronically via JSIS Online. You will then be required to keep your original documents for 18 months from the date on which you receive your statement. Alternatively, members may submit their claims for reimbursement to their Settlements Office using a form and enclosing the original supporting documents.

In the case of claims for top-up reimbursement, you must attach a copy of the original invoice, with proof of payment, accompanied by a detailed statement of reimbursements received from another scheme.

If you were covered by direct billing: your Settlements Office will send you a statement of expenses. The proportion of the costs to be met by you (approximately 15%) will in theory be deducted from your future reimbursements or from your salary, pension or other sums owed to you by the institution.

### **Ceiling for reimbursement (Art 20§1)**

The ceiling is defined as the maximum amount that may be reimbursed for a given treatment. Consequently, when the ceiling is applied the rate of reimbursement no longer corresponds to 80%, 85% or 100%, since the ceiling limits the amount reimbursed. For example, the ceiling for consulting a general practitioner is €35. Reimbursement is made at the rate of 85% up to €35.

### **Excessive costs (Article 20§2)**

If no reimbursement ceiling has been set (including in the case of a recognised serious illness), any part of the costs which exceeds the normal price charged in the country where the treatment was provided may not be reimbursed. The portion of the costs deemed

excessive will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Settlements Office after consulting the Medical Officer.

### **Prior authorisation for hospitalization**

Unless it is an emergency, you need to request prior authorization **BEFORE a hospital stay** :

- of more than 6 months, for the treatment of medical conditions or surgical operations
- of more than 12 months in a psychiatric hospital
- for rehabilitation or re-education, if it does not follow hospitalization for a medical condition or a surgical operation (for example orthopaedic, neurological or rheumatological), or, if it does follow such hospitalization, for a stay of more than 2 months
- for plastic surgery
- in clinics specializing in health screening and diagnosis (general check-up).
- of an accompanying family member

### **Direct billing for hospitalization**

In the event of admission to hospital, to avoid having to face high costs the JSIS can pay the bills issued (by the hospital, convalescent or nursing home, etc.) on your behalf.

Once the request has been processed, the direct billing letter is sent by the PMO to the hospital (you can receive a reference copy via JSIS online).

Direct billing allows you to ask a hospital to send its invoice for hospitalisation straight to the sickness insurance scheme for direct payment. The hospital is not obliged to accept direct billing.

If there is no agreement between the hospital and the PMO (see here-under), don't forget to specify in your request the date you expect to go into hospital, the daily rate for the room and/or an estimate of the overall cost.

In case of emergency, make your request for direct billing as soon as possible. In exceptional circumstances, you (or someone acting on your behalf) can apply for direct billing by leaving your name, personnel number and the name of the hospital concerned on the answering machine of the person responsible for direct billing at your Settlements Office; in the absence of an answering machine this can be done by e-mail. You can also call SEPS-SFPE.

In that case, the PMO will contact the hospital where you are staying and send it the necessary letter of direct billing.

### **Direct billing for hospitalization or advance ?**

In some countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, it is very much in your interests to present yourself as a "self payer"<sup>3</sup>, as this will allow you to request and obtain reduced rates (of up to 50% in some cases) on hospital bills. This is why, instead of

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<sup>3</sup> Without indicating which insurance cover you have.

requesting direct billing, you are advised in this case to request an advance, and to settle the bill yourself.

### Important remarks

- If you are covered by direct billing, the hospital cannot ask you to pay an advance.
- If you have top-up cover under the JSIS (“complémentarité”), you cannot obtain direct billing; you must ask your primary insurer in that case.
- If the Medical Officer has turned down a request for prior authorisation, you will not be granted direct billing and you will not be reimbursed
- The proportion of the costs to be met by you, which can be substantial is normally deducted from later reimbursements or from your salary, pension or other sums owed to you by the institution. A supplementary insurance cover could be of importance.<sup>4</sup>
- If you are travelling to countries in which medical care is expensive such as the USA, Canada, Switzerland and Norway you are advised to take out insurance (travel assistance<sup>5</sup>) cover against this risk.
- If you opt for direct billing, the invoices in question will be paid by your Settlements Office once they have been received and initial checks have been carried out. If you would like copies of your invoices you can always contact the hospital. It is advisable to provide your Settlements Office – direct billing section – with all useful information regarding your stay/ invoice.

### Rates of reimbursement after hospital stay

If you were covered by direct billing: your Settlements Office will send you a statement of expenses (see her-above).

If you paid your hospital bill yourself: fill in a claim for reimbursement, enclosing: the invoice setting out in detail the medical services provided (using the official national classification), the proof of payment of any advance payment you had to make on admission. Send everything to your Settlements Office.

The rate of reimbursement is 85% including the fees of the surgeon, the surgeon's assistants and the anaesthetist. It is 100%: in the case of a recognised serious illness; for stays of three or more consecutive days in intensive care; for stays in a palliative care unit; for accommodation costs beyond 30 consecutive days (with the approval of the Medical Officer).

Where reimbursement is at the rate of 85%, **the ceilings** can range from €535 to €10 000 depending on the category of operation. For the full list of surgical operations by category, please see Annex I to the general implementing provisions (GIP).

The possibility of **excessive costs** should not be forgotten!

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<sup>4</sup> Insurance such as « Hospi-Safe (Cigna-Affiliatys), Gros risques (Gigna – AIACE), EUROSANTE (WWCare – Union Syndicale), DKV EU Plus (DKV Lux – FFPE), EUCARE (Santalia – FFPE), EUROSANTE Plus (Santalia-R&D), Gold EU (Expat & Co – FFPE).

<sup>5</sup> For example, Europe Assistance



Plastic surgery which is considered to be purely cosmetic is not reimbursable.

### **Accommodation costs at the hospital**

Reimbursement is limited to the price of the least expensive single room in the hospital and the length of the stay according to need. It will be made on the basis of a duly established invoice.

**Costs of diagnosis and treatment:** the reimbursement rate is 85% or 100% (recognised serious illness) for the costs of the operating theatre and other costs of treatment relating to the surgical operation, as well as for medical fees, analyses, laboratory tests and other instruments directly related to the operation or hospitalisation.

**Cost of stay for person accompanying the patient:** in exceptional circumstances, the accommodation costs of an accompanying family member may be reimbursed at the rate of 85% (up to a ceiling of €40 per day) if the patient is under the age of 14 or requires special assistance from a family member on medical grounds, subject to a prescription from the patient's doctor and prior authorisation. This also applies to accommodation costs for a child who is being breastfed and has to accompany its mother.

### **More hospitals sign up to limit additional fees for JSIS members**

Good news for JSIS members receiving treatment in Brussels! The list of hospitals with which the PMO has signed an agreement is getting longer:

- Following in the footsteps of the Cliniques Universitaires Saint-Luc and Hôpital Erasme, the Institut Bordet, UZ Brussel and Cliniques de l'Europe (Cliniques Saint-Michel and Sainte-Elisabeth) have now agreed to cap the additional fees they can charge patients occupying a single room.
- Other hospitals will follow soon: Clinique St Jean, IRIS Sud (4 sites), Hospital Brugmann, Clinique St Pierre.
- The CIREC refused the agreement proposed by PMO! (Edith Cavell, Parc Léopold, Braine-L'Alleud). There will be a risk of excessive costs!

This will save you money, as the amount left for you to pay after you have been reimbursed by the JSIS will be less, as will the share paid by the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme. To take advantage of these agreements, all you have to do is prove that you are a JSIS member with primary or top-up cover by producing a certificate of cover, your staff card, a special residence permit or the direct billing agreement. For information about the agreements with hospitals, please contact :

Settlement office in  
Bruxelles  
Direct Billing  
Office SC 27 03/04  
Tel. : (+32) 2 295 98 56

Settlement office in  
Luxembourg  
Mrs. Palgen et Mr. Friederes  
Office DRB B1/073  
Tel. : (+352) 4301 36103  
(or 36406)

Settlement office in  
Ispra  
PMO/06  
Ufficio liquidatore B. 48c  
TP843  
Tel. (+39) 0332 78 57 57

In Germany, a convention (in French) was signed with:

- Gesundheits-Zentrum Saarschleife (Mettlach-Orschholz, Saarland)
- Fachklinik Johannesbad (Bad-Füssing, Bayern)
- Rehaklinik Raupennest (Altenberg, Sachsen)

In Italy, a convention (in French) was signed with (ref. My Intracomm-Ext):

- Several dentists in Varese and the surrounding region (maximum fees)
- Several Clinics and medical centres
- Physiotherapy centres

In Luxemburg, a convention (in French) was signed with:

- l'Entente des Hôpitaux luxembourgeois
- le Centre Hospitalier
- the Association des Médecins et Médecins Dentistes du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg (AAMD), la Fondation François Elisabeth (Hôpital du Kirchberg) and several medical doctors.

N.B. These agreements do not modify the procedures to be followed (prior authorisation, letter of direct billing in case of hospitalisation) nor the conditions or rate of reimbursement laid down in the Rules. Therefore they do not always guarantee a reimbursement of 80 or 85%. You have the free choice of hospital or clinic and practitioner.

## Estimates

PMO would like to take this opportunity to advise its members to pay careful attention to the estimates which they are asked to attach to their requests for direct billing for hospitals in the Brussels region that have not signed any agreement with PMO. In some cases the amount which remains at the charge of the member, taking into account the reimbursement ceilings and the potential application of a factor for excessive costs, can be substantial.



No quote is now necessary for hospitals with which the JSIS has concluded an agreement

On admission to hospital, you should ask for the price of the room and, if possible, request a quote for the cost of surgery. This means that the hospital will have to be more open about its prices and allow you to compare rates between hospitals

If you choose to stay in a "double" room, you cannot be asked to pay any additional fees (except one day clinic).

## **III. Are you satisfied with the level of services provided by the PMO ?**

HR&S DG has issued a questionnaire to all staff in active employment aimed at assessing the level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Commission's administrative

offices (OIB, OIL, PMO). Answers are intended to enable the said offices to improve the quality of their services.

We think that the section of this survey dealing with the PMO should be sent to the pensioners. It goes without saying that pensioners make frequent use of PMO and JSIS services.

Hence, the part of the survey concerning pensioners is set out in Annex 4 of the French version on two detached pages and we should appreciate it if you could answer all the questions. If you have no opinion on a question, please tick the box “no answer”.

We thank you in advance for taking five minutes of your time to fill out this short, anonymous questionnaire and to send it to the SEPS secretariat.

**SFPE – SEPS**, 175 rue de la Loi, office JL 02 40 CG39, BE-1048 Brussels

Email : [info@sfpe-seps.be](mailto:info@sfpe-seps.be)

We shall publish the results in the September Bulletin, having sent them as well to the evaluation team of HR D.3 DG, which is responsible for the entire survey.

The answers will not be linked in any way to information enabling their origin to be established. Each answer will receive a number and the statistics will be published in aggregated form so that individuals cannot be identified.

It should be noted that R&D union has also sent out a much more detailed survey concerning satisfaction with the PMO and JSIS.

## **IV. PMO-JSIS and deficit.**

There was no deficit in 2014, unlike in the seven preceding years: in fact there was a surplus.

Although the PMO/JSIS annual report for 2014 is not yet available, the economic outcome presented at the administrative committee (CGAM) meeting shows a distinct improvement, from a loss of €6.3 million in 2013 to a profit of €7.6 million in 2014.

This increase is the result of an improvement in operational budget combined with the positive result of non-operational activities. The operational budget results showed a saving of €2.3 million in 2014 as compared with 2013 following the “vigilant” measures taken by the PMO to reduce these operational costs.

## **V. Minutes of the statutory annual General Meeting on 11 June 2015**

Venue: Van Maerlant 2, room VM02 – 11.00 to 17:00

**Quorum** : 22 effective members presents or represented pout of 25

- Effective members presents (13) :

Serge Crutzen ; Aliny Bruyendonck ; Georges Distexhe ; Anna Giovanelli ; Giustina Canu ; Patrizia De Palma ; Mitsou Entringer ; Annie Lovinfosse ; Marc Maes ; Yasmin Sözen ; Marina Ijdenberg ; Filomena Paolone ; Ingrid Nardone ;

- Proxies (9):

Antonio Pinto Ferreira ; Rosalyn Tanguy ; Gina Dricot ; Hendrik Smets ; Rainer Dumont du Voitel ; Myriam Toson ; Pierre Philippe Bacri ; Brigitte Pretzenbacher ; Fabio Bolognese

## **Conclusions and decisions**

### **Report on activities in 2014**

In his presentation of the 2014 activity report the President drew attention to the usefulness of the telephone number +32 475 472 470, which is open 7 days a week: several members have expressed their appreciation of the help given, especially outside business hours.

The report was approved unanimously and can be obtained upon request from our secretariat.

### **Auditors' report**

The conclusions of those present at the meeting when presented with the auditors' report were positive, stating that *"the documents in the 2014 auditors' report and the archives give a true image of the Association's financial situation in that the cumulative balance is positive at €48 659.59"*.

### **Treasurer's report for 2014**

Georges Distexhe, the treasurer, summarized the accounts, which did not entail any particular remarks. As mentioned above, the balance was positive.

The report was approved unanimously and can be obtained upon request from our secretariat.

### **Discharge given to the administrators by members at the meeting.**

Given unanimously.

### **Programme for 2015**

The subject of the 2015 programme of activities led to a discussion on aid provided for our members in that more could be done for the elderly or those in difficulty if once they were identified and if a group of volunteers could be formed to help them more directly, at least in the communes forming Brussels and in Brabant wallon.

A proposal along these lines was suggested during the information meeting that followed the General Meeting in order that the Administrative Board could examine and possibly expand it.

The document describing the programme for 2015 is available upon request from the secretariat.

### **2015 budget**

The treasurer reminded the members that the 2015 budget had been approved at the General Meeting on 11 December 2014.

### **Approval of changes to the Constitution**

The changes made to the constitution of the SEPS amount to clarifications and adherence to the rules on associations such as ours. They do not affect the operation of SEPS in any way.

A clearer definition of the types of member has been set out: effective members (with legal voting rights at meetings), non effective members, founding members, honorary members (also effective members – the title of honorary member can be decided upon by the Administrative Board); simple members (any third party with a link to the Association).

Effective members are in fact the founder members, honorary members, members of the Administrative Board and members designated as “effective” at General Meetings upon proposal by the Administrative Board.

The quorum needed for decisions at the General Meeting is based on effective members. However, SEPS has the habit of calling upon all members (effective and otherwise) to give answers to questions posed in meetings or by written procedure.

The amended constitution, which was distributed in advance to effective members and those available on the spot, was approved unanimously. It can be obtained from the secretariat and is available on the website [www.sfpe-seps.be](http://www.sfpe-seps.be).

### **Nomination of effective members**

Following a request from the Administrative Board, an invitation was issued to 40 members of the Association who were either assiduous and active participants in SEPS meetings during 2014 and 2015, or who stated that they would like to become effective members, or who are considered apt to make an important contribution to the development and operation of the Association.

As at 11 June 2015, 11 members had accepted the invitation and were voted in as effective members during the General Meeting.

Therefore, the total number of effective members appointed in accordance with the constitution as at 11 June 2015 is 37. In accordance with Belgian law on non-profit associations (ASBL) the complete list of names and addresses is available at the secretariat.

The President issued an invitation to any member who wished to become an effective member to propose him/herself on condition he/she is prepared to fulfill the task, to wit:

*“Effective members promise to attend General Meetings and take part in written procedures (or by proxy) . They declare that they are willing to take an active interest in the running of the Association.”*

Actual nomination of effective members is performed at General Meetings.

### **Miscellaneous**

The Internal Rules of the Board, also partly revised, were distributed to participants for information. These rules should not be approved by the General Assembly.

Serge Crutzen (President)      Patrizia de Palma (Secretary of the meeting)

## **VI. Elections for the Staff Committees of the EESC, the Council and the Commission**

### **European Economic and Social Committee**

At the elections of the Staff Committee of the EESC, which took place at the beginning of the year, the FFPE obtained the 11 available seats. Attila Kutasi was elected President of the Staff Committee of the EESC for the period 2015-2018.

### **General Secretariat of the EU Council**

The new Staff Committee of the Council is made up as follows: R&D 23 seats, US 3 seats, G2004 0 seats, independent 1 seat.

The list “United for change - FFPE & G2004 Council” was put together on the assumption that it would be more diversified in terms of the origins of the candidates and more representative of the distribution of staff of the GSC services. This did not, however, result in obtaining many seats in the Staff Committee. But this list obtained 31% of the votes! The electoral rules did not allow it to benefit from this score. G2004 at the GSC will not be in a strong position during the near future.

The Staff Committee will continue to be governed mainly by R&D with Massimo Mauro at the helm.

### **Commission Brussels**

The elections of the Commission in Brussels were noteworthy for the competition between 12 lists of candidates with the possibility of selecting individual candidates. It is therefore by

analysing the results of these lists transversally that one can gain an understanding of the evolution of the staff committee in Brussels.

The quorum was not reached until the end of the 12th working day of voting. This negative result demonstrates the disinterest of active staff for staff representation.

The global results demonstrate the success of Generation 204, who obtained more than 20% of the votes, whereas no other staff union obtained a similar result. Several traditional unions have lost seats at the Staff Committee. The following is the distribution of the 27 available seats as published by DG HR: G2004: 7, R&D: 5, U4U: 4, FFPE: 2, SFE: 2, Safe Europe: 2, TAO-AFI: 1, SFIE: 0

It is evident that the physiognomy of the Staff Committee (and of the Central Staff Committee) will change over the next few months. Pensioners will have to find a way of being much more active and present during staff representation fora, despite the absence of such a representation possibility in the Staff Regulations.

## **VII. Evolution of the European Civil Service**

During the electoral campaign “Generation 2004” issued an analysis on the problem of contractual agents (CAs) and temporary agents (TAs) at the Commission and in the agencies.

The number of contractual and temporary agents (CAs/TAs) has increased significantly despite the 5% reduction of permanent staff as stipulated by the 2014 reform.

According to G2004, the number of CAs/Tas is not far short of 20,000:

- 6,400 CAs at the Commission
- 1,100 TAs at the Commission
- 2,000 CAs/TAs in the executive agencies (research)
- 6,000 TAs in the decentralised agencies
- 2,900 CAs in the decentralised agencies (an exaggerated calculation, knowing that there are also detached national experts)

Conscious that one speaks of 22,500 permanent staff at the Commission<sup>6</sup>, which would make more or less 23,000 civil servants by adding the agencies, if the current trend continues, the number of TAS/CAs will soon exceed the number of permanent staff members. A radical alteration in the physiognomy of the European Civil Service is probably taking place, in silence...

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<sup>6</sup> 2015 Report from DG HR&S  
SEPS-SFPE

The hope expressed by the traditional staff unions is that there may be a large number of internal competitions which will allow the recruitment of a good number of TAs/CAs as civil servants. Is this realistic?

## **VIII. “Generation 2004” / Post “2004”**

As a result of the articles in the February and April 2015 Bulletins, several colleagues at the Commission and at the Council reproached us for confusing “Generation 2004” (the staff union) and Post-2004 (staff recruited after 2004).

The colleagues recruited after 1 May 2004 do not all agree with the sentiments expressed in the newsletters of G2004.

Additionally, according to their declarations, it was wrong to write what we said in the previous Bulletin “the G2004 were *“perfectly aware of the new Staff Regulations before their recruitment competition and before their appointment to a permanent post. They therefore accepted these conditions.”*

Hereafter is what was published (among others) in the notification in the OJ of September 2002 as additional information to the call for candidates:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX.C2002/22A/02&from=FR:](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX.C2002/22A/02&from=FR)

*“The Commission has formally transmitted to the Council a proposal to amend the present Staff Regulations. This proposal contains, amongst other things, a new career structure. The successful candidates in this competition, could, therefore be offered a post on the basis of the new Staff Regulations, if such regulations are adopted by the Council.”*

Several of our Post-2004 colleagues were not informed of the nature of the “proposals” transmitted by the Commission to the Council concerning the new career structure. They only received this information when they were sent the first offer of recruitment, well after 1 May 2004. They knew before 1 May 2004 that they were successful candidates, but the publication of the list of successful candidates was deliberately delayed until after 1 May 2004, all recruitment by the Commission having been blocked until then.

When these colleagues realised what changes had occurred, for many, it was impossible to step away: they had already given notice to their previous employer.

The legal action (C-443/07P) (<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=67626&pageIndex=0&doclang=FR&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=701226>

resulted in December 2009 in a negative conclusion, which swept aside the arguments of the plaintiffs (irrelevant).



In its article, SFPE-SEPS only responded to the declarations of G2004 and did not therefore take account of the (relatively numerous) cases of colleagues recruited after 1 May, who according to their affirmations, were not really aware, at the moment of their competition, of the true conditions concerning their recruitment.

## **IX. 2015 Report of DG HR&S and pensioners**

(DG HR&S – Original EN)

The 2015 annual report of DG HR&S was published and distributed.

**A few paragraphs of this copious report concern pensioners. Hereafter some of the important passages:**

### **« Termination of service In 2014**

Most officials terminated their service in the Commission by retirement (more than 500). In line with the trend of increasing pension age in several EU Member States, the normal retirement age for Commission staff recruited as from 2014 has been elevated to 66. Alongside, staff are offered flexibility around the normal retirement age and can retire later, up to the age of 70. Around 100 requests for carrying on working beyond the age of 65 were introduced in 2014, the majority of which was considered to be justified in the interest of the service.

Next to retiring, around 150 officials were transferred to another EU institution and terminated their service in the Commission.

### **Communication**

The focus on communication with retired staff continued during 2014. New measures introduced included improvements to the news reports posted on the dedicated pensioners' portal within My IntraComm, dissemination of information on the online JSIS service and the creation of the "Yammer after EC" forum. A bimonthly magazine, Info Senior, was launched in May. The opening times of the PMO help desk in the "Espace Senior" in Brussels were extended.

### **Social assistance and financial aid**

A range of complementary social services are provided to support active staff and pensioners. Individual assistance is available for the Commission's retired staff, numbering around 15 000 at the end of 2014. This support is provided by social assistants based in Brussels, Luxembourg, Ispra, Karlsruhe, Geel, Petten and Seville.

Retired members of staff have requested assistance with issues such as: information about health insurance, organising home help and palliative care in the home, organising the move from their own home to a retirement home, psychosocial support in difficult family situations

related, for example, to a divorce or the death of a close family member, and psychosocial support in cases of severe psychiatric illness and drug addiction.

An exercise to identify retired staff in severe difficulties is carried out twice a year. Each request is carefully assessed and followed up by either a trained volunteer retired member of staff or a social worker. In 2014, the Commission's social workers offered intensive support to the next-of-kin of 22 active members of staff who died while in service. They were also involved, in a number of cases, in ensuring the wellbeing of orphans and pensioners under guardianship.

Staff (both active and retired) and their family members who face unexpected events and difficult circumstances can request financial aid. Financial aid is always intended as a last resort means of assistance. Financial social assistance, € 2.3 million in 2014, may be granted to cover the non-medical costs of caring for dependents with a disability or learning difficulty.

The Commission covered certain expenses relating to non-medical help in the home for active and retired staff and their families, and to the care of sick children of active staff (€ 1.6 million in 2014). School fees for the children of active and retired staff of all EU institutions were reimbursed (€ 77 300 in 2014) in a very limited range of situations for exceptional pedagogical reasons. Financial social assistance (€ 16 178 in 2014) can be granted to retired EU officials who are in an exceptionally difficult situation.

### **Salaries / Pensions annual adaptation**

In order to implement the 2015 full-scale update of all salaries and pensions, DG HR intends to build on the successful experience of the automatic update of correction coefficients in 2014. DG HR cooperates actively with all appropriate stakeholders, staff representatives, relevant DGs and services and other institutions affected by the update.

### **PMO response**

The Commission is constantly working to improve communication with active and retired staff on matters relating to pay and benefits. The PMO contact portal handled some 100 000 queries in 2014

In 2015, the focus remains improving the quality and timeliness of its service. Significant changes in terms of the allocation of staff, efficient and reliable IT systems, modern and user-friendly applications and improved monitoring systems will be essential for achieving this goal. The main challenge is to markedly improve its accessibility and response rate by significantly reducing the call centre waiting time and the number of online PMO Contact queries not answered within 15 working days, while offering more services to more institutions, and taking advantage of economies of scale and lower unit costs."

## **X. Information – Questions from members**

# **1. Reminder and additional information from PMO<sup>7</sup>**

## **a. Declaring your spouse's 2014 income.**

If you receive the **household allowance** on the basis of your spouse or recognised partner's income, do not forget to send PMO a declaration of your spouse or partner's professional activity or income. You should do this even if your spouse has no income.

The same applies if your spouse or partner is covered by the **Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme**. This cover expires on **30 June each year**.

You should declare your spouse's income to avoid being refused a reimbursement of his/her medical expenses.

If you do not have access to SYSPER, you can submit your declaration via PMO Contact online. Select the domain 'Sickness Insur/Accidents/Occup disease' and then select the sub-category 'Membership/Certificates'. Then click on 'Contact PMO' at the bottom of the screen.

You can also send your declaration by post to:

PMO RCAM, Service du Droit, SC27 03/22, rue de la Science, 27, BE-1049 Bruxelles.

## **b. Removal and resettlement allowance up to three years after retiring. Don't forget!**

### **Removal**

Expenses, including risk insurance (breakages, theft, fire), relating to the removal of furniture and personal effects from your place of employment to your place of origin, or any other place the same distance away or closer, are reimbursed up to the ceiling fixed by the moving index.

### **Reimbursement of travel expenses on termination of service**

You are entitled to the reimbursement of travel expenses from your place of employment to your place of origin for yourself, your spouse and your dependants actually living in your household on the date you leave the service - provided that the travel expenses have actually been incurred - in connection with the transfer of residence.

The flat-rate payment is based on an allowance per kilometre of geographical distance between your place of employment and your place of origin. If this distance is less than 200 km you will not be reimbursed.

### **Resettlement allowance**

If you transfer your residence and 'resettle' at least 70 km from your place of employment, you will be entitled to a resettlement allowance. The distance of 70 km is a 'geographical' distance, calculated as the crow flies.

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<sup>7</sup> Newslettr n° 14 of PMO – May 2015

## Is there a time limit?

Three years from the date of leaving the service.

### **c. Orthodontic treatment for adults**

The treatment must begin before the patient's 18th birthday. After this date, the costs for consultation, study models and X-rays and/or other costs linked to orthodontic treatment will not be reimbursed.

### **d. What is meant by 'serious illness'?**

Serious illnesses include in particular tuberculosis, polio, cancer, mental illness and other illnesses recognised as being of comparable seriousness.

To be recognised as a serious illness, an illness must involve, to varying degrees, the following **four criteria**:

1. a shortened life expectancy;
2. an illness which is likely to be drawn-out;
3. the need for aggressive diagnostic and/or therapeutic procedures;
4. the presence or risk of a serious handicap.

An application for recognition must be made through your Settlements Office for the medical expenses linked to this type of illness to be reimbursed at a rate of 100% by JSIS. This application must be accompanied by a detailed medical report in a sealed envelope addressed to the Medical Officer.

For an initial application, the report must include: the date of the diagnosis; the exact diagnosis; what stage the illness is at, and any complications; the treatment required. The 100% cover for expenses related to a serious illness is granted from a **start date** (the date of the medical certificate) to a **date in the future** which must be no more than five years later.

The medical expenses incurred in connection with a serious illness are reimbursed at a rate of 100% without a ceiling, except in a few cases that are duly specified in the general provisions for implementing Article 72 of the Staff Regulations, such as home nursing care or dental expenses.

A limit may also be placed on the reimbursement of these expenses if the prices charged are excessive.

The renewal of the certificate for serious illness needs to be requested before the end of the period for which it was last granted. This renewal examines the latest medical report against the various existing criteria and its granting is in no way guaranteed.

### **d. New form for reimbursement requests**<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> PMO Newsletter N°13 – March 2015

There is a new form for requesting the reimbursement of medical expenses. As previously announced, there is now space for only five items. Lately the column for expenses has been enlarged. The old forms are no longer accepted.

## **2. Inheritance problems: Help offered by SEPS-SFPE**

(Hendrik Smets)

As an extension to the legal assistance already offered to members<sup>9</sup>, SEPS-SFPE intends to develop a cell for responding to questions relating to inheritance law. Hendrik Smets will be responsible for this, but we will also receive the support from the Belgian Tax Authorities, without forgetting the three lawyers offered by the Bureau d'Accueil, who are Belgian lawyers recognised by the Bar of Brussels, who can provide free legal advice.

A reminder of the main principles:

- 1) Active civil servants who benefit from exception to the tax domicile foreseen under Article 13 of the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Union (PPI) do not have their fiscal domicile in Belgium, but in one of the other Member States (place of origin). In this case:
  - The movable assets situated in Belgium are exonerated from Belgian inheritance taxes. For the establishment of inheritance taxes the assets are considered to be situated in the tax domicile<sup>10</sup>. The law applicable to the inheritance of movable assets is therefore that of the last tax domicile of the defunct, even if he/she dies abroad.
  - Immovable assets (property) are subject to the laws of the State on whose territory the building is situated. The tax domicile State does however retain the right to impose inheritance tax on such buildings, but by virtue of the "non bis in idem" agreements the taxes paid in the state where the immovable assets are located will be retracted from the taxes paid for the same assets in the tax domicile state.
- 2) For active civil servants whose tax domicile is Belgium, inheritance is handled in Belgium<sup>11</sup> and they must conform to Belgian legislation in this matter.
- 3) The exception to the tax domicile is only valid for civil servants and other agents in service. If they remain in Belgium after their last day of employment, they are considered to be resident in Belgium. This would be the case of all pensioners who remain in Brussels, whatever their nationality may be.

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<sup>9</sup> By appointment at the Bureau d'Accueil, rue Montoyer 34, +32(0)2 296 6600

<sup>10</sup> Subject to the rights of third party States and to the possible application of arrangements contained in international conventions on double-taxation relative to successions.

<sup>11</sup> Belgian civil servants but also for example an Italian whose fiscal domicile is Belgium at the time of his recruitment. His place of origin will be Belgium.

Nonetheless a distinction needs to be made between the law applicable to the succession and the fiscal law applicable to the same succession

Article 13 of the PPI only deals with tax domicile.

The procedure for the succession, for example, of a Frenchman living in Belgium, even if he retains France as his tax domicile, will be that foreseen in the Belgian Civil Code. For example acceptance, acceptance subject to inventory, refusal of the estate, sharing, income, reduction of attributions, donations or bequests. The fiscal law will be that of French law, notwithstanding what has just been said about fixed assets.

The European regulation 650/2012 concerning international succession, definitively adopted on 4 July 2012, will enter into force as from 16 August 2015. A single law will govern the entirety of an inheritance estate, both movable and immovable assets, even property held overseas.

The regulation allows a European citizen to determine in his/her will that the laws of his/her nationality govern his/her succession without however changing the tax law which would apply to such a succession.

Otherwise the laws of the state wherein the deceased resided habitually at the moment of his/her death will be applied, even if this means applying the laws of a non-Member State of the EU.

In exceptional circumstances, if it can be determined from the overall circumstances of the cause that the deceased, at the moment of his/her death, enjoyed much closer links with another state, the laws of that state will prevail.

Hendrik Smets will be providing an article entirely dedicated to regulation 650/2012 mentioned above in a forthcoming edition of the Bulletin.

### **3. Reminder: Complementary insurances to JSIS**

On 2 February 2015 Vanbreda International became Cigna Eurprivileges.

Cigna offers its affiliates access to an extensive network of doctors and hospitals in more than 205 countries and jurisdictions. This network consists of more than 185,000 health professionals in the whole world. Cigna insures 870,000 individuals [www.cignaglobalhealth.com](http://www.cignaglobalhealth.com)

Cigna Eurprivileges (ex-Vanbreda Int) remains our broker for complementary insurances to JSIS (Hospi Safe/Plus Afiliatys and Gros Risques and Accidents AIACE) as well as for death, mortgage repayment insurances, complementary pension insurance and travel insurance: contacts and persons remain the same. The complementary insurances remain policies with Allianz BE.

**The offices of Van Breda at the rue Steven no longer handle complementary health insurances. Contact with Cigna (former Vanbreda International) needs to be made by any of the following:**

By phone: +32 (0)3 217 65 76.

By email: [info@eurprivileges.com](mailto:info@eurprivileges.com)

By post: Cigna Eurprivileges c/o Cigna International Health Services BVBA  
Platin en Moretuslei 299  
BE-2140 Antwerpen

By appointment (to be arranged by contact through the above addresses) for a meeting with a Cigna representative in Brussels at the offices of Afiliatys, SC29 0/26.

#### **4. Afilitys dedicated insurance broker**

##### **For insurance policies linked to your residence in Belgium and Luxembourg**

To study which insurance policies are likely to correspond best to your personal, family and financial situation. **(Residence in Belgium and Luxembourg)**

The strategy adopted by Afiliatys and seconded by both Vanbreda Risk and Benefits (Brussels) and Vanbreda & Lang (Luxembourg) is based on the following essential principles:

- *The value of an insurance policy is its capacity to cover a risk, which has been assessed methodically and reliably. The cost of the insurance policy is of course also a consideration, but not the main one.*
- *The party concerned is not always well informed about the risks to be considered nor about the possible insurance policies and their limits*
- *The party concerned should be able to rely on a reliable broker to guide him/her in his/her choices*
- *In the event of a disaster, this broker should follow a repair claim through to the end. This task confers greater responsibility on the broker for the advice he gives relative to the choice of insurance.*

The main insurance policies which are considered are for your property, your various responsibilities, your legal protection, your car ...

#### **5. PMO: Useful contact information** (Reminder – My Intracomm)

**General questions on any subject dealt with by PMO** ... should be addressed to <https://ec.europa.eu/pmo/contact/> . This service is accessible by phone (+32 2 299 77 77) Monday to Friday, from 9h30 to 12h30.

Pensioners from the Parliament ([pensions@ep.europa.eu](mailto:pensions@ep.europa.eu)) from the Court of Justice or from the Council are invited to contact their former institution for any questions not related to JSIS.

### **Questions relating to pensions...**

Unit PMO.4 'Pensions' Fax: (+32 2 29)6 53 73

You will find the contact details of your pension manager in the upper left corner of your pension slip.

In the event of a change of address or any other change to your personal situation, please inform your pension manager.

### **Questions relating to JSIS...**

All your questions relating to the activities of JSIS can be sent via the portal <https://ec.europa.eu/pmo/contact/>, by yourself or through SEPS-SFPE, if you ask for this preferably by internet ( [info@sfpe-seps.be](mailto:info@sfpe-seps.be) ) or by phone (at the usual number +32(0)475 472 470).

**Don't forget :** Vade-mecum part 3, available on request, gives many addresses.

## **XI. Annexes**

### **Annexe 1**

## **In memoriam**



<i>Nom, Prénom</i>	<i>Date de naissance</i>	<i>Date de décès</i>	<i>Instit</i>	<i>Nom, Prénom</i>	<i>Date de naissance</i>	<i>Date de décès</i>	<i>Instit</i>
HOPKINSON Shirley	27/01/1940	30/01/2015	COM	GAST Eva	05/07/1937	29/09/2014	PE
MARTINEZ PALOU Ana Maria	19/05/1952	22/02/2015	COM	KINDERMANS Henri	06/03/1937	24/01/2015	COM
OPPENHEJM Erik	30/10/1925	07/03/2015	CM	ZOLYOMI Alexandra	27/06/1969	06/04/2015	CJ
KNEIP Monique	24/12/1949	25/03/2015	COM	KIRCHEN Carlo	29/04/1950	07/04/2015	COM
DALSCHAERT Xavier	23/02/1933	27/03/2015	COM	LONCIN Joseph	21/10/1921	18/04/2015	PE
VILLEDIEU Ingrid	27/02/1947	27/03/2015	CM	WOERNER Wilhelm	15/12/1935	20/04/2015	COM
BRUNOTTI Andrea	09/03/1930	28/03/2015	COM	GELLARD Melville	14/06/1922	25/04/2015	COM
SEVINATE PINTO Armando	01/01/1946	29/03/2015	COM	SERRE Arlette	23/11/1936	26/04/2015	COM
SCHNITZLER Roland	23/10/1931	30/03/2015	COM	CAILLARD Francine	03/12/1919	01/05/2015	COM
BARBONI Daniel	27/03/1942	02/04/2015	PE	CUMPS-DE KNIBBER Josiane	30/03/1944	01/05/2015	COM
HEUSBOURGH Eugene	17/05/1935	06/04/2015	CM	GAZZANO Adriano	23/07/1928	02/05/2015	COM
DEWEPPE-LEURIS Colette	16/01/1940	08/04/2015	COM	FISCHER Pia	22/04/1956	02/05/2015	CJ
PIDRE Silveira	01/08/1952	08/04/2015	COM	THIELE Ursula	20/03/1932	05/05/2015	COM
AELAERTS Jozef	13/05/1935	10/04/2015	COM	MAFFINI Giacomo	29/09/1921	05/05/2015	COM
BERG André	04/12/1929	11/04/2015	COM	PALAZZO Armida	12/11/1947	07/05/2015	COM
BENZLER Hartwig	11/02/1928	12/04/2015	COM	FONTANA Hubert	06/02/1940	08/05/2015	COM
VAN RENTERGHEM Jeanne	24/02/1933	13/04/2015	COM	NAGEL Wilhelmus	25/03/1931	09/05/2015	COM
MIENER-THOSS Carla	14/12/1944	13/04/2015	COM	LEGRAND-LANE Raymond	15/11/1919	09/05/2015	PE
REICHLING Alain	30/06/1950	13/04/2015	COM	DELL'ORO Paolo	23/11/1935	09/05/2015	COM
ANGELETTI Livio	12/04/1930	14/04/2015	COM	DUCARME Florence	07/05/1968	09/05/2015	COM
DE JONGE Laurus	08/12/1926	15/04/2015	COM	KLERSY Raymond	04/09/1928	11/05/2015	COM
SCHREIBER Wilhelm	05/09/1926	16/04/2015	COM	CARON Jacques	04/07/1935	12/05/2015	COM
GRYNBERG Arlette	21/12/1927	17/04/2015	COM	DE BAUW Robert	29/10/1931	12/05/2015	COM
KUESTER Berthold	22/04/1926	18/04/2015	PE	VAN HEYNINGEN Antonia	16/03/1918	14/05/2015	COM
HOJABRI-VERHOEVEN Petronella	28/09/1933	22/04/2015	COM	STOLL Jean-Aime	15/02/1924	18/05/2015	CC
MATHIJSEN Petrus	07/03/1924	23/04/2015	COM	GLENSTRUP Ib	27/09/1943	19/05/2015	COM
GIUBILEO Massimo	12/04/1927	24/04/2015	COM	BOUREL DE LA RONCIERE Philippe	08/07/1936	20/05/2015	COM
LAGACHE Denise	18/06/1923	25/04/2015	PE	CANESTRI Wanda	09/09/1946	20/05/2015	PE
CHANTEUX Eliane	10/03/1928	27/04/2015	COM	BENNINK Roelof	02/11/1939	21/05/2015	COM
LEANG Mariette	03/08/1935	27/04/2015	CM	DE PASCALE Alberto	15/04/1933	23/05/2015	COM
JABON Eliane	05/04/1946	27/04/2015	COM	GUEMBE CASI Luis Antonio	11/07/1944	27/05/2015	COM

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Order form**

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I should like to receive the English edition of the following documents

**SEPS Vade-mecum**

Part 1 (Procedures – to be revised in august 2015)

Part 2 (forms /pers. data)

**Part 3 (addresses PMO – ADMIN. ...)** Edition June 2015

Part 4 (reimbursement forms – RCAM/JSIS) (April 2015)

**Summary of the SR reform (DG HR - 12 pages)**

**Supplementary health insurances** Edition April 2015

**Invlidity allowance and survival pension (Hendrik Smets)**

**Orphan survivor’s pensions (Hendrik Smets)**

**EU Officials and taxation (Me. J Buekenhoudt)**

**Inheritance (Me. J Buekenhoudt)**

**JSIS Guide (was sent by poste to all pensioners)**

Please send these documents to :

Surname.....

First name .....

Address :  
.....

.....

Date : ..... Signature : .....

To be sent to

**SFPE – SEPS**  
175 rue de la Loi,  
Bureau JL 02 40 CG39,  
**BE-1048 Bruxelles**

**Fax: +32(0)2 2818378**

GSM: +32 (0)475 472470

Email:

[info@sfpe-seps.be](mailto:info@sfpe-seps.be)

**APPLICATION FORM**

I, THE UNDERSIGNED: .....

HOME ADDRESS: .....

HOME Tel: ..... GSM: ..... Email: .....

FORMER OFFICIAL OF (Institution + DG or Dep.): .....

IF still active: date of birth and number of years of service: .....

HEREBY APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE "ASSOCIATION OF SENIORS OF THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC SERVICE " (S.E.P.S).

NATIONALITY: ..... DATE: ..... SIGNATURE: .....

*The annual subscription is €30, payable every year on the date of joining.*

Bank account No. of SEPS: **363-0507977-28** **ING bank** Brussels  
**IBAN BE37 3630 5079 7728** **BIC BBRUBEBB**  
 Communication: **Annual subscription + 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> names**

*Please return this application form to:*

SEPS - SFPE  
 Office 02 40 CG39  
 175, rue de la Loi,  
 B-1048 BRUSSELS

*If you choose to pay by standing order (see below), please send the slip YOURSELF direct to your bank.***STANDING ORDER**

(Please send direct to your bank)

I, the undersigned, .....

HEREBY INSTRUCT .....(Name of bank)

to pay on .....(date) and on the same date each year, until further notice, by

debit of account N° ..... the sum of : € **30** to:

**SEPS - SFPE JL Office 0240CG39,**  
**rue de la Loi 175**  
**B 1048 Brussels**

Account N° **363-0507977-28** **ING Bank** Brussels  
**IBAN BE37 3630 5079 7728** **BIC BBRUBEBB**  
**Reference : Annual subscription (+ first name and surname)**

DATE : ..... SIGNATURE : .....

To be sent to

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175 rue de la Loi,  
Bureau JL 02 40 CG39,  
**BE-1048 Bruxelles**

**Fax: +32(0)2 2818378**

GSM: +32 (0)475 472470

Email: [info@sfpe-seps.be](mailto:info@sfpe-seps.be)

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