



Seniors of the European Public Service

Seniors de la Fonction Publique Européenne

Bulletin

Information Bulletin

Addressed to the members of the association

June 2021

SEPS is at the disposal of all its members.

The secretariat can be reached

by telephone: +32 475 472 470

Please leave a message in case of no answer

or by internet: info@sfpe-seps.be www.sfpe-seps.be

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SEPS Administrative Board 2020 – 2022*

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* Elected on 13.02.2020 but to be confirmed by the General Meeting in early June

Bulletin editorial team (FR & EN) October 2020

Nicole Caby; Serge Crutzen; Anna D'Amico;
Helen James; Hendrik Smets; Yasmin Sözen; Milvia van Rij Brizzi

Membership fee: 30 €

It is requested in January and no longer on the anniversary date of SEPS / SFPE membership
However, new members who register after 30 June 2020 by paying the membership fee, will not need to pay for the 2021 fee. The next payment will only be needed in January 2022.

Bank account: IBAN: BE 37 3630 5079 7728
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Changes of e-mail address

Many members forget to inform us of their change of e-mail address.

During the COVID period : SEPS-SFPE postal mail address

2A, rue Emile PIRSON, 5140 SOMBREFFE Belgium

Let us have your views

Some of the subjects dealt with in this Bulletin
are important for many pensioners.
Readers may make comments, suggest amendments.

Regardless of the subjects evoked,
members are invited to make comments and suggestions
or ask questions

Comments, suggestions, questions and requests Should be sent to the secretariat of SEPS-SFPE:

- Either by email: info@sfpe-seps.be
- Or by mail: Address during the Covid pandemic
SEPS-SFPE
2A rue Emile Pirson
5140 Sombreffe
Belgium
- Or by telephone¹: +32 475 472 470 (7/7 days, 24h/24h)

The March 2021 Bulletin article on simplifying procedures for reimbursement of medical expenses gave rise to several comments. They are taken into account by the group which is dedicated to this subject. A summary is given in chapter V page 11

Discussion will continue on this topic.

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¹ Call and leave a message in order to be called back

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Dear Member

We take the protection of personal data very seriously and we are committed to respect the General Regulation on the Protection of Data (GRPD).

Our contact information is used exclusively to ensure our responsibility towards you, as a member, for frank and transparent information on the activities of the Association and the decisions taken by the Administrative Board.

The information you have trusted us with is used entirely for internal purposes. It is not made available to third parties (PMO, DG HR,) without your express permission.

The Association commits itself to protect this information against any form of dissemination and not to make it available to anyone, except where obliged to under the law or when undertaking an act at your request, within the limits of the social objectives of the Association.

Of course, you can access, rectify or delete this information at any time. You may object to the use of your information and have the right to withdraw your consent at any time by sending us an e-mail or a request by post.

Serge Crutzen for the SEPS/SFPE
Management

Information Meeting

Au Repos des Chasseurs

Avenue Charles-Albert, 11 1170 Bruxelles (Boitsfort) +32(0)26604672*

Probably October, 2021

On the basis of the traditional programme, from 10h30 to 16h30

- News of SEPS/SFPE
- Administration Board actions
- Discussion subject
- Lunch
- MFF (2021-27) and Pensions
- Evolution of JSIS
- Problems encountered by members
- Questions

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I. Letter from the Editor

In view of the ever improving epidemiological situation in the countries hosting the EU Institutions, and with the lifting of confinement on the horizon, our Commissioner, Johannes Hahn, is thinking of allowing our colleagues to return to the office buildings on a more regular and systematic basis. This return will occur in three phases so as to ensure a maximum of safety.

- From 8 June the current limit is increased to 20% of staff returning to the office.
- In as much as the situation continues to improve, this limit is increase to 30% from July onwards (still on a voluntary basis and respecting the hygiene protocols).
- DG HR will get back with plans for September before or during the summer break. These will obviously depend on the epidemiological situation, but it is hoped all Staff members will be able to come back to the office on a regular basis.

We therefore hope to be able to reinvest our offices at the Avenue des Nerviens in Brussels, even if only on a one or two day per week basis, in order to re-establish a regular presence.

Some of the working groups could resume a few physical meetings and volunteers can re-establish their direct link with the daily management group.

As has already been stated in the last few Bulletins, the activities of SEPS/SFPE have not ceased during the period of this pandemic.

SEPS has participated in a few meetings organised by DG HR (WGR, CASS, CGAM).

The Bulletin has been issued on the habitual basis: March, June, October, December/January, March... However the inevitably greatly limited availability of OIB has resulted in serious delays in their publication and distribution by the post. The March 2021 Bulletin was sent out to members who have given us an E-mail address on 3 April, but the postal distribution occurred early June 2021.

The Bulletin and the information supplied by DG HR D and by PMO are sent by e-mail to those who have given us an E-mail address. All the information is however contained in the Bulletins.

Despite the COVID 19 crisis, the SEPS telephone (+32 475 472 470) is open and has responded² to calls 7/7days, 24/24hrs. Numerous members ask for our assistance by internet: info@sfpe-seps.be

II. Certificate of Vaccination against COVID

The European Covid certificate, a document in paper or digital form, which should facilitate travel throughout the European Union and the Schengen area, is available from 1 July.

The certificate consists essentially of a QR code, which provides evidence that the holder has been duly vaccinated against COVID-19, has undergone a recent screening test or having been infected earlier by the virus is now well. Officially called “Digital COVID certificate of the EU” after having been called “the green certificate”, it is delivered by one Member State and must be accepted as valid proof of vaccination by all the others. It must be available free of charge, whether requested by the citizen or granted in either paper or digital form. In reality, it covers three different certificates which could be cumulated by one and the same person: a ‘vaccination’ certificate, a ‘screening test’ certificate or a ‘recovery’ certificate.

Vaccinations accepted by the EU

The regulations define the data, limited, which needs to appear: this includes the identity of the holder and details of the vaccination administered (which vaccine, how many doses) or the type of screening test (PCR, rapid antigen test), their results and the date of the screening. The regulations insist, this is not exactly a travel document. It is a method to enable inter-operational and homogeneous proof of vaccination or screening to be delivered by the various Member States. They should avoid creating further obstacles to free

² In the absence of a response, or if you wish to be called, please leave a message and SEPS/SFPE will call you back.

movement (quarantine, additional tests) for those persons coming from abroad with a valid EU certificate, even if this possibility is not entirely excluded. Proof of vaccination with a vaccine authorised at the EU level should be accepted throughout.

However, the Member States can decide whether they accept a vaccination with another product, authorised locally and inscribed in the WHO list for urgent use. As far as recovery from infection is concerned the text specifies it can only be 'proven' after 11 days from the first positive test, which must be a PCR type test. The Commission will be able, as a function of new developments in scientific proof, to later include tests to detect antibodies or the rapid antigen tests within the scope of the 'recovery' certificate.

III. A new strategy for the Commission Staff

DG HR new strategy

A new HR strategy aims at the continuation of the modernisation of the Commission. As in any organisation, the HR strategy sets out how to attract, retain and develop the staff in line with the organisation's objectives, and how to create the right conditions for staff to grow, thrive and deliver.

Main Pillars of the Strategy

- Talent
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Leadership and Management
- Workplace and Wellbeing
- Technology
- Culture and Organisation

However, the current disruptive effect of COVID-19 also provides a unique opportunity to re-set the organisation and the HR function.

Everyone has the opportunity to be involved. Commissioner Hahn has called for an extensive consultation process, which provides the opportunity for all staff to put forward their views.

As such, a series of workshops, presentations, were organized as well as group and individual interviews with all levels of staff.,

Work organization - Definition and basic principles of hybrid work

Hybrid working is a combination of teleworking and working from the office.

Telework is a method of carrying out work by staff outside the office with the help of information and communication technologies. It applies only to tasks which, by their nature, can be fully performed remotely.

Working from the office and teleworking are considered equivalent ways of working.

DG HR shall adopt a guide on teleworking indicating criteria, procedures and good practices to achieve the objectives of this decision and set up monitoring tools.

DGs will develop working arrangement plans, monitoring the use of the new hybrid way of working, their productivity, and will report to DG HR on a regular basis.

Any week shall in principle include 40% presence at the office and 20% telework, the rest being decided in agreement with the line manager. Managers shall ensure that the presence of staff in the office is evenly spread during the whole week, from Monday to Friday. This provision shall not be an obstacle to 100% presence at the office where the staff member so requests or where exceptionally required by the needs of the service. It shall neither exclude the possibility under exceptional circumstances of 100% teleworking if there is a clear interest of the service defined by the line manager in agreement with the staff member.

“Next HR” - New organization chart

Comments of Gertrud Ingestad, Director general

Building a sustainable and appropriate model for DG HR that matches our Strategy goals will take time and we want to get it right. We are looking to present a new draft chart before the summer break with the aim of finalising “Next HR”, in principle, before the end of the year. Of course, finalising “Next HR” is not the end of the story – getting people settled in new roles in this new structure will take longer, but it will be worth it.

The draft organisation chart circulated to focus groups and added to our website is a **working draft**. It has been broadly endorsed by Commissioner Hahn, but it is far from the final version. If you consider what it will take to repurpose our new DG, with its complex layers of circuits, services and expertise, it is clear that we cannot, and will not, rush the exercise. We do, however, have to start somewhere! This is the purpose of the draft chart. It’s a starting point, around which we will build, with your help, a DG to deliver 21st Century HR.

The next phase will involve using the results of a process mapping exercise, in addition to what the focus groups tell us, to produce the next draft of our organisation chart.

This underpins the draft chart now and will remain the cornerstone of the final version of “Next HR”. One of the main changes – clearly linked to improving our service to our clients – will be the grouping of processes and services with teams having ownership from start to finish

Social dialogue

DG HR has agreed to organize a round of consultations with the trade unions on the draft decision on working time and on hybrid work to begin on 30 June.

This decision will be also submitted to the Joint Committees concerned.

These negotiations will have a major impact on all staff and unions wish to involve everyone in this process from the outset and in the greatest possible transparency.

IV. Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities - 2021-2030

Summary of a presentation made by Lucie Davoine,
Deputy Head of Unit EMPL.D.3 – Handicap and inclusion

Declaration of the President of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen

“Persons with disabilities have the right to work in good conditions, to live autonomously, to benefit from equal opportunities and to participate fully in the life of society. We all have the right to a life without barriers. And it is our duty, as a society, to ensure the full participation of all, on the basis of equality for all.” (Original FR)

Declaration of the Commissioner for equal opportunities, Helena Dalli

“People with disabilities should be able to participate equally in all areas of life. Living independently, learning in an inclusive environment and working under appropriate standards are the conditions that we need to ensure to all citizens to enable them to flourish and live life to the fullest.” (Original FR)

Eight priority areas:

- Accessibility – a catalyst for rights, to autonomy and to equality
- Benefitting from the rights linked to the European Union
- Decent quality of life and autonomy
- Equality of access and non-discrimination
- Strengthening the rights of disabled persons at the world level
- Put the Strategy in place effectively
- Set the example
- Sensitisation, governance and measures of progress

In 2022, the Commission will launch a **European resource centre** “Accessible EU” in order to increase the coherence between the policies governing accessibility and to facilitate access to appropriate skill (...) The Commission will begin preparations for launching “Accessible EU” in the context of the new platform for disabled persons.

Between now and end 2023 the Commission proposes to create a **European disability card** which should be recognised by all Member States. It will base itself on the experiences made with a pilot project currently on-going in 8 Member States for a European disability card and on a European parking permit for disabled persons.

Between now and 2023 the Commission will provide the Member States with guidance to improve the independent lives and the inclusion of disabled persons in society.

Between now and 2024 the Commission will develop guidance and launch an initiative to improve social services for persons with disabilities.

In 2022, the Commission will present a series of measures intended to improve the outlook for disabled persons in the labour market through cooperation with a European network of social services for employment, social partners and other organisations which represent disabled persons.

In 2021 the Commission will put in place a platform on disability. It will replace the current high level group on disability and will support the establishment of the present strategy, as well as the national strategies on disability. It will enable the national contact centres established under the CNUDPH to collaborate with organisations for disabled persons and the Commission.

The Commission will adopt a renewed strategy relative to Human Resources which will include measures to promote diversity and inclusion of disabled persons and invites EPSO to continue efforts to collaborate with those other services of the EU which are concerned with recruitment.

V. What pensioners would like:

Simplification of procedures

The March 2021 Bulletin offered a discussion about simplifying the procedures for requesting reimbursement from JSIS.

Several messages reached the SEPS -SFPE secretariat . Five topics are recurrent.

A European health insurance card

Why don't we have a European health insurance card?

The question has been asked for years, but one should know that the JSIS is not recognized as European health insurance by the Member states, even if in some cases this recognition could be considered as implicit.

We have seen that the agreement with CZ in the Netherlands looks good. It focuses first on JSIS affiliates who reside in the Netherlands to give them an insurance card for access to health care at the national rate.

CGAM³ recommends conducting the same negotiations in EU countries that have similar social security systems. The PMO reportedly intends to negotiate an agreement with the Belgian CAAMI on the model of the agreement with CZ. Such an agreement would allow automated control of invoices. Having an insurance card in both Belgium and the Netherlands will make life easier for members, which they have been asking for a long time.

However, for many of us, this search for the insurance card, the economy (probably necessary), the better control, ... may lead to the incentive to use national health systems.

³ JSIS Management Committee

Who has worked in different countries of the Union, has noticed that the level of quality of care that one might want is not always ensured by all national systems.

The assurance of the quality of care has been considered a priority by those who forged our Staff Regulations : by the freedom of choice of medical care providers and by the criterion of the same level of quality of health care for all Staff members.

The sticker for refunds

Like Belgian “mutuelles”, why not create a "sticker" (with name, first name and pension number and / or bar code) for pensioners who are no longer able to use IT or even complete reimbursement requests. The pensioner would only have to affix this label to the back of the invoice before depositing these charges in a specific box or sending them by post.

Human contact request

In Brussels, why not expand the role of “MERO” to allow processing / supplementing / correcting the documents submitted or sent by retirees, as was the case a few years ago with Mr. Piana, rue de la Science.

Preventive medicine

For those who carry out annual checks on their own initiative, it would be good to be able to benefit from a 100% refund without going through the entire application procedure.

Retirees could carry out these tests with their family doctor or in approved centers, without having to follow the PMO preventive medicine procedure.

Desire for complete computerization

Why can the system not be linked to the system used by national authorities? In Belgium, general practitioners and dentists use a computer system where the medical certificate is automatically sent to health insurance and to the pharmacy (no need to print on paper anymore). If a standard export / import file can be transmitted, links could be established with the JSIS system to allow automatic refunds. It would also help people who are no longer able to use information technology to enter their claims.

Unnecessary renewal requests

If a person has a disability and this is accepted by the national authorities for the rest of the person's life, why can the Commission not accept it and stop renewal requests for family allowances, severe illness requests, ... Why not grant the decision without an expiry date, and ask for renewals only if the disability worsens and more help is needed. This would save time for the administration, but also for the pensioners.

SEPS-SFPE action

An action led mainly⁴ by the General Secretary aims to bring together proposals for simplifying or improving procedures in favour of retirees and discussing them with certain trade unions and the vice-president of CGAM, member of the Board of SEPS-SFPE.

⁴ A group of Board members: Giuseppina Corda, Evelyne De Houwer, Luigia Dricot-Daniele; Helen James, Milvia van Rij-brizzi

VI. Redundant accident coverage ?

The active statutory staff of the European Institutions and Agencies benefit from Article 73 of the Staff Regulations which covers 100% of medical care costs following an accident. A lump sum is given in the event of permanent disability and in the event of death.

After retirement there is no more contribution for accidents up to 100%, nor indemnity in case of invalidity or death: Article 73 does not apply to retirees. JSIS usual coverage at 85 % is applied.

It is possible to recover full accident coverage once retired (and for the spouse) by subscribing to the specific accident insurance proposed by AIACE which covers death, disability and medical care in addition to JSIS, following an accident

For those who have taken out hospitalization insurance as well, there may be redundant coverage of medical care following an accident, in fact: among others, “Hospi Safe Sickness and Accidents”, offered by Afiliatys and “Hospitalization - BCVR 8673” offered by AIACE, reimburse hospital costs in addition to JSIS.

To the double coverage, these two hospitalization insurances offer the “sickness only” option. Switching from the global formula to the sickness-only option is done on request.

VII. A SEPS « antenna » in Italy ?

Colleagues from Ispra have created a SEPS antenna in Italy. Several retired colleagues and colleagues aged 55 or more met in Ispra on 9 June 2021 for a constituent meeting. During the constituent meeting, the “Coordination group SEPS ITALIA antenna” was elected as follows:

- Principal coordinator: Gianfranco Selvagio
- Vice-coordinator: Georg Peter
- Treasurer: Yves Crutzen
- Secretary: Salvatore Tirendi
- Stefan Nonneman has been elected to act as liaison officer with SEPS/SFPE Brussels

The SEPS ITALIA antenna will begin to use the telephonic helpdesk from 1 July 2021 and from 7 September 2021 the Helpdesk at the Club House-Ispra.

The summary of the constitutive meeting is given in appendix 1.

VIII. Results of the General Assembly (GA) of 24 June 2021

Luigia Dricot-Daniele, General Secretary

On the basis of the results of the GA of 30 June 2020, all the necessary administrative formalities were completed: submission of the personal data concerning the members of the new 2020-2022 Administrative Board to the Ministry of Finance (UBO register), declaration and accounts to the Clerk of the Business Tribunal and to the “Moniteur Belge”.

The GA of 10 December 2020 could not take place.

A new government ruling at the end of December 2020 should however make it possible for procedures to be undertaken by mail and video-conferencing until 30 June 2021. A GA was therefore organised on 24 June 2021 in accordance with the legal procedures. This meeting considered subjects which could be the subject of a general discussion and it also approved the modifications to the SEPS statutes⁵.

1. Organisation of the meeting and approval of the agenda

The GA of 24 June concerned only the effective members and took place incorporating 4 different procedures:

- By correspondence
- By video-conference (ZOOM) on 24 June 2021 from 14h00 to 17h00
- Physical meeting of the Management committee of the GA (5 persons)
- By power of attorney

2. Approval of the minutes of the GA of 30 June 2020 (Doc AG/LDD.SC/20.20)

3. Activity Report for 2020 (Doc AG/LDD/21.14) Approved by the participants

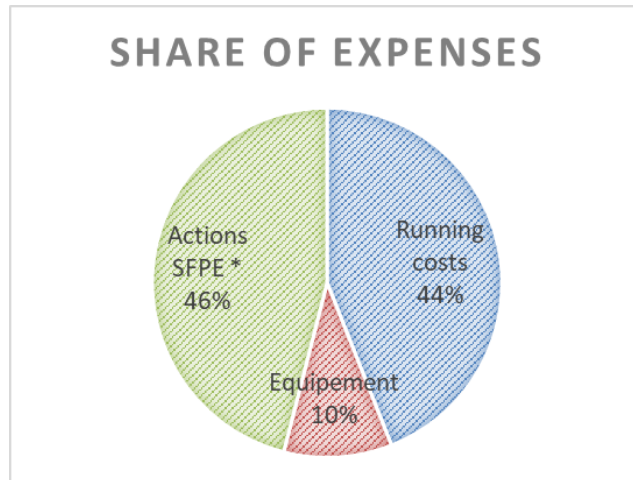
4. Accounts for the 2020 exercise (Doc AG/MM.SC/21.08)

Summary of the accounts as at 31.12.2020 (in €) :

Total receipts 2020	36,951.67
Total expenditures - 2020	22,660.18
Balance 2020	14,291,49
Balance 2019	57.172,18
Available in the accounts on 31.12.2020	71.463,67

⁵ Statutes available at <https://sfpe-seps.be/>

The report is illustrated by the following pie chart:



*All activities including postage for requested documentation.

The effect of COVID is evident: the running costs have dominated, contrary to preceding years where the running costs do not exceed 25% of total expenditure. The report has been approved.

5. Discharge of the administrators

The administrators have been unanimously discharged.

6. Approval of the modifications to the Statutes (DOC AG/HS.CS.LDD/20.39)

The modifications to the statutes have been approved. More than 2/3rds of the effective members took part in the vote.

Since 1 May 2019 the Belgian Business and Associations Code is applicable to new charities. Since 1 January 2020 it is also applicable to existing charities.

This new code replaces and abrogates the 1921 law on charities. Charities are now assimilated with businesses. (We must report to the Business Tribunal and no longer that of Commercial Enterprise)

This is the reason why, for example, the electoral rules for the Administrative Board have now to be an integral part of the Statutes. Another example is the responsibility of the administrators in the event of misdeed resulting from patently bad administration or of fraud or even the creation of a group for financial management.

The responsibility of the GA has also been enlarged and the law obliges us now to indicate in the Statutes whether we wish to organise GAs by video-conference.

7. Approval of the electoral regulations (Doc AG/HS/20.37)

The vote of 2/3rds of the effective members made the approval of this regulation possible.

8. Presentation of the internal house rules of the Administrative Board (Doc CA/HS.SC.LDD/20.38)

The internal house rules are the responsibility of the Administrative Board. They were formally approved with the modifications induced by the new business law of 4 June 2021.

9. Presentation of the financial regulations (Doc CA/HS/20.36)

The financial regulations introduced by the Administrative Board have been communicated to the GA.

10. Presentation of the Editorial committee of the Bulletin (CA/HS/20.41)

This was given to the GA for information.

11. Confirmation of 3 administrators (Doc AG/LDD/21.10)

Evelyne de Houwer, Cristiano Sebastiani and Barbara Felix have been co-opted to the Administrative Board by written procedure. The GA approved their nomination.

12. Programme of activities for 2021 (Doc AG/SC.LDD/21.15)

The programme of activities has been approved by the GA

13. Budget for 2021 (Letter of 1 December 2020) (Doc AG/SG/20.46)

The budget proposed for 2021, tentative with regard to expenditure due to the COVID crisis, was approved.

14. Nomination of the verifying agents for the accounts

The GA approved the tacit renewal of Filomena Paolone and of Nadine Froment

15. Call for applicants to become additional effective members

There are currently 48 effective members. These are members who vote during GAs. They follow the evolution of the association and participate at least at the GA meetings. A few effective members have not taken part in any GA since June 2019. After verification with the individuals concerned a proposal for their withdrawal as effective members will be made. However, new candidates are needed and this GA will officially launch the appeal. We should ensure that there are at least 50 effective members.

16. SEPS ITALIA (cf also hereafter)

The GA approved the creation of the SEPS-ITALIA antenna and gives its support to its development.

The modalities for collaboration and the management of the two entities will be defined during the course of this summer.

17. Relations with AIACE

Dominique Deshayes has been elected president of AIACE International. Given the good relations we have with her since a long time we organised a ZOOM meeting with her early May this year. Milvia van Rij-Brizzi had developed an amicable relationship with the

outgoing president, Joaquin Diaz Pardo, who she knew from her past activities in the Institutions.

The purpose of the contacts was to ensure a minimum level of contact to explore the possibility to coordinate our positions on issues of importance to retirees, such as the pension scheme.

Future contacts should permit constructive cooperation and avoid the discrepancies of the past.

18. Membership card (Doc CA/LDD?21.04)

A proposal was made by the General Secretary in response to the request from several members.

A membership card, its contents (photo, pension number), need to be specifically requested by those members who are interested.

The various documents can be requested from the Secretariat.

IX. Influence of variations in GDP on salary adjustments in 2021, 2022, 2023

The December Bulletin explained what the prospects for salary and pension adjustments are in the next 3 years: 2021, 22, 23.

Following questions from several members, here is a summary of the probable evolution of our pensions. A more detailed illustrative presentation is available on request from the secretariat.

The salary adjustment is made up of two parts:

1. inflation
2. wage parallelism (salaries evolution of national civil servants in 10 EU MS)

At the end of 2020, the salary adjustment should have been 3.2%: 0.7% inflation and 2.5% wage parallelism.

Inflation (JBLI):

Inflation of 0.7% was effectively granted in 2020.

It's hard to say what this inflation will be in 2021, 2022,... probably higher if the recovery is real after COVID. It will be the subject of an adaptation which will be evaluated at the end of October 2021 and made official on December 15, 2021.

Evolution of national wages (GIS), application of the exception clause:

Given the fall in GDP (-7%) in 2020 and the exception clause in our method of adapting salaries, the part of the 2020 adjustment induced by the comparison with the salaries of nationals in the EU (2.5%) is blocked until the GDP recovers its initial value of 2019: probably only in 2022!

This adaptation, blocked at the end of 2020, will be added to the increase in the GIS of 2021, which will be blocked again at the end of 2021 because the GDP will not have yet recovered its value of 2019. It will probably be recovered in two steps given the moderation clause. This moderation clause is applied if the increase in GIS (cumulative) is greater than 2%. This will be the case if we add up in 2022 the increases for 2020, 2021 and 2022. Progressivity breaks down the adaptation: 2% in July 2022 and the rest in April 2023, if nothing changes by then!

To be clear, let us repeat that the exception and moderation clauses only concern the comparison with the evolution of salaries in Member States (GIS). Inflation (JBLI) is not affected by the change in GDP. Likewise, the correction coefficients continue to be modified according to inflation.

X. Information and reminders

Much of the information which is offered in this chapter of the Bulletin does not concern all members but may be of interest to many of them. They are being sent to you on the basis of experiences made by members of SEPS who man the permanent phone line or at the request of PMO.

Some of this information may also duplicate information provided in the information bulletin of DG HR D1 "Info Senior" and earlier SEPS-SFPE Bulletins. However, it is essential to insist on certain rules and to repeat them: the PMO services ask us to do so.

1. Closure of offices and of certain services –

From 9 June, DG HR invited those of you who wanted to, to return to the office, up to a ceiling of 20%, in line with the applicable rules in our host countries. As of 1 July, this presence ceiling is increased to 30%. All safety measures remain in place, including temperature screening, social distancing, hybrid meeting rules and mandatory mask wearing.

DG HR will get back with plans for September before or during the summer break – these will obviously depend on the epidemiological situation, but it is hoped all of you will be able to come back to the office on a regular basis.

In Brussels, since June 9, the Berlaymont canteen is open, offering a selection of hot and cold dishes (to eat in or take away). The reopening of additional canteens and / or cafeterias takes place as soon as a sufficient number of colleagues return to the office.

In Luxembourg, all canteens of the Commission are open to take out or eat outdoors.

The rules governing presence in our SEPS offices are restrictive and they do not make access to mail easy. The offices of the associations are officially closed (AIACE; Afiliatys; SEPS; Espace Senior).

The address hereunder allows us to function during this period when our office space is inaccessible: It is valid for sending things by post and also for meetings, should the real need arise.

This is the address to give to whoever wants to send us documents or requests by post (which works quite well at present).

2A rue Emile Pirson

5140 Sombrefe

Belgium

Telephone: SEPS +32 475 472 470 – 7/7, 24/24⁶

However, the majority of contacts, SEPS meetings, meetings with the Commission services occur through video-conference.

2. Information from PMO

Summer timetables for the PMO 3 - JSIS sickness insurance services

From 1 July to 31 August 2021 included, the following phone lines will be available from 10.00 to 12.00.

JSIS CONTACT

Brussels +32 2 29 97777

Ispra +39 0332 78 57 57

Luxembourg +352 4301 36100

DIRECT BILLING

Brussels +32 2 29 59856

Ispra + 39 0332 78 99 66

Luxembourg +352 4301 36103

PMO-RCAM-BRU-PRISE-EN-CHARGE@ec.europa.eu

⁶ If no response, leave a message to be called back.

PMO-ISPRA-PRISE-EN-CHARGE@ec.europa.eu

HEALTH-SCREENING

Brussels – Ispra – Luxembourg +32 2 29 53866

JSIS ON LINE - Access & EU LOGIN

Brussels +32 2 29 76888

Ispra +39 0332 783030

Luxembourg +352 4301 36100

Summer timetables for the PMO 4 – Pensions Helpdesk services

In July and August, PMO4 services can be reached on **+32 (0) 2 297 88 00** from Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Except for the Unemployment, Transfer Out and Family Allowances cells only accessible on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Depending on the subject of your call, to join the right department, after dialling 32 (0) 2 297 88 00, add the extension that corresponds:

- + 0 => for the mail unit (*for beneficiaries of a school allowance*)
- + 1 => for retirement or disability pensions, (**only** for pensioners)
- + 2 => Unemployment, (*for recipients of unemployment benefit*)
- + 3 => Survival, (*for colleagues who have a Survivor / orphan's pension*)
- + 4 => End of service rights (removals, travel expenses, relocation allowance, change of place of origin), (*for active colleagues who are at the end of their service*)
- + 5 => Transfers In, (*for active colleagues*)
- + 6 => Transfers Out, (*for active colleagues*)
- + 7 => Family allowances: education allowances, marriage, divorce, spouse's income (*for the unemployed and for pensioners*)
- + 8 => Holders of high-level public office in the European Union (*ex-Commissioners*)
- + 9 => / Secretariat of the Unit (*for everyone*)

For old age/invalidity pensions: by email to: PMO-PENSIONS@ec.europa.eu:

For beneficiaries of a survivor's/orphan's pension: by email to: PMO-SURVIE@ec.europa.eu

The Social Support and Relations with Pensioners team is available at +32 (0)2 295 90 98. You can also send them an email to: HR-BXL-AIDE-PENSIONNES@ec.europa.eu

3. Cumulation of pensions

The situation in Belgium

A. Belgian retirement pension and EU pension

A Belgian workers retirement pension can be cumulated with a pension from the EU

- a. A Belgian pension will be equivalent to 75% of the average salary of an entire career, but limited to 60% if the spouse benefits from paid employment. The number of years considered for the Belgium pension could be limited as the number of years worked for the EU and for Belgium cannot exceeds 45 years in total.
(Application of the A. WOJCIECHOWSKI ruling of 10 September 2015 and subsequent modification of the Royal Belgian Ruling (A R) n°50 of 24 October 1967 (article 10))

Since this ruling, Belgian law has however authorised working beyond 45 years, work for which supplementary pension rights could be due.

- b. A pension for civil servants of the Belgian public service could not, in principle, exceed the absolute maximum amount of €81 622.85 gross per year (Index 1.7410 of 01.03.2020) or €6 801.90 gross per month.

However, foreign pensions or supranational pensions (EU, NATO, UN...) are not taken into account in the calculation of the absolute maximum pension.

Conclusion : The maximum of 45 years and the ceiling of €81 622.85 are not applied for civil servants if the cumulation of pensions concerns an EU pension and a Belgian pension.

B. Belgian survivor's pension and EU pension

- a. **The Survivor's pension of the spouse of a *Belgian salaried worker* : A R of 24.10.1967**

- i. **Conditions for obtaining a survivor's pension**

- In 2021 – being aged 48. This age is increased each year by 6 months to attain 55 years.
- To be married or have legally co-habited during at least one year before the death, except if a child is born from the union or if a child was a dependent of the deceased.

Payment of the survivor's pension is subject to two cumulative conditions :

- ✓ Maximum of professional earnings per year:

	A G E			
	Less than 65 years		65 years or more	
	With child(ren)	without	With child(ren)	without
Salaried	24.728 €	19.782 €	29.850 €	24.540 €
Self-employed	19.782 €	15.826 €	23.880 €	19.632 €

An initial deduction is made if the professional income is higher than the authorised income, the survivor's pension is reduced by the difference between the two.

- ✓ The survivor's pension can be cumulated up to a maximum of 110% of the survivor's pension of the surviving spouse after a full career, with one or several Belgian or foreign retirement pensions or a pension granted by an international organisation such as the EU, UN, NATO.

ii. The value of a survivor's pension

The survivor's pension consists of 80% of the retirement pension (art.7§1 of the A.R of 23.12.1996).

b. The survivor's pension of the survivor of a self-employed person

The rules governing survivors' pensions for the self-employed are the same as for salaried employees.

c. The survivor's pension of the spouse of a worker qui was both salaried and self-employed

The periods of work as a salaried employee and as self-employed are not cumulated for the calculation of the pension of the deceased. The limit of 110% will therefore be applied twice, and this could result in both the survivor's pensions being denied.

d. Survivor's pension of the spouse of a Belgian civil servant

The survivor's pensions, to be paid by the State, can only be cumulated with retirement pensions up to a maximum of 55% of the maximum earnings on the salary scale governing the last grade obtained by the deceased spouse.

For the application of §1, consideration is taken of the old age or invalidity pensions or any other advantages that may have been granted by Belgian or foreign legislation or by virtue of the salary schedule of an organisation governed by international public law.

Observations

1. Our association, SEPS/SFPE, has already asked two lawyers whether the ruling that limits the cumulation of survivor's pensions to 110% is in line with European labour law. One of the lawyers has responded positively, because she sees no discrimination. The second has not yet responded.

2. Given that Belgian pensions are relatively low compared to pensions granted to civil servants of the European Institutions, the cumulation of survivors' pensions with the survivor's or retirement pension granted by the EU, results in the majority of cases in the denial of a Belgian pension.
3. Some shrewd advice : As European civil servants, we are not obliged to declare the amount of our pensions to the authorities. According to the jurisprudence of the EUCJ, the Member States may however demand to know what this amount is in the event that the agent asks to benefit from fiscal advantages offered by that Member State. When the amount of the income is unknown, the Federal Service of Belgian Pensions considers that the annual revenue is equal to the basic amount of €8 866.27 (index 109.72 in January 2021), multiplied by 2.5 to reach €22 165.68.
4. The Court of Auditors has however written that « it had noticed that the Service of Pensions of the Public Sector only ensures the respect of the legislation concerning cumulation of pensions when the pensioner him/herself declares the amount of his/her income accruing from a professional activity or another source of income »

« In the absence of any spontaneous declaration, no administrative control or subsequent verification is usually undertaken » (...) « The non respect of the obligation to declare rarely, if ever, results in the application of the penalties foreseen under this legislation either against the pensioner or against the employer. »

Hendrik Smets
Vice-President SEPS/SFPE
In charge of legal issues

4. Legal advice – assistance of a lawyer - reminder

If you need legal advice for a problem relating to your relationship with the services of the Commission (application of the Staff Regulations) or relating to your private life (inheritance or fiscal problems), Hendrik Smets, Doctor in Law and licensed notary, Vice-President of SEPS/SFPE in charge of legal matters, is at your disposal, to provide you with advice in all discretion and respect of his probity as a former European civil servant.

You can contact Hendrik Smets by email: hendriksmets@yahoo.fr or by telephone: +33.563.67.88.83.

Hendrik Smets will make an initial analysis of your question and will either propose a solution or suggest a free consultation (for members up-to-date with their membership dues) with a lawyer.

5. Non transfer of pension rights - reminder

Accumulation of a Community pension with a national pension – REMINDER

Hendrik Smets would like to draw the attention of readers to his article on this subject, which appeared in earlier Bulletins.

The European civil servants who have not transferred their pension rights to the Community system and who benefit from a Community pension may introduce a request to obtain a pension for the years worked for a national employer.

This is also true for those who have already introduced such a request but have had it refused.

Hendrik Smets remains at their disposal to guide them in their (new) proceedings.

XI. Annexes

Annexe 1

Constitutive meeting : SEPS-ITALIA antenna

Gianfranco Selvagio – Main coordinator SEPS-Italia

On 9th of June 2021 **SEPS-Italia** was established in Ispra as an **antenna** of SEPS/SFPE Brussels. SEPS/SFPE is an association of Seniors of the European Public Service (SEPS/SFPE) and an "ASBL" (Non-profit association under Belgian law – n°806 839 565). SEPS is pluralist and apolitical in nature and independent of political parties, authorities, European Institutions and professional associations working within and outside those institutions. SEPS is not subsidised but receives logistic support from European Institutions.

The aim of SEPS is to defend the interests of former European civil servants and other agents as well as colleagues in invalidity and, as a priority, to defend their social rights.

The SEPS ITALIA antenna will provide to its members the following services:

Assistance for Members :

- Phone contact point: +39 351 6471722 (Tuesday 12.30 – 14.00 / Thursday 12.30 – 14.00)
- Help Desk at Club House Ispra: (Tuesday 12.30 – 14.00 / Thursday 12.30 – 14.00) previous appointment (room details will be available soon) SERVICE ACTIVE FROM 7th SEPTEMBER 2021.
- In addition a mobile telephone number is available as the call centre, 7/7 days a week for almost 24hrs a day for the emergencies, in the evening, at week-ends : SEPS-SFPE Brussels: +32 (0) 475 472 470.

Communication:

- SEPS-Italia will communicate with the members via the e-mail (seps.italia@gmail.com) or telephone for any kind of information or request.
- In addition, all members will receive an information bulletin, issued by SEPS/SFPE Brussels four times a year by e-mail.
- Information meetings are held during the year to allow for discussion and understanding of the major problems to be resolved. These meetings, in which each member of the association has the floor, highlight the issues to be addressed.

Legal assistance:

- SEPS-Italia offers in collaboration with SEPS-SFPE Brussels to its members a legal adviser for questions and requests (Statutory rights, inheritance and fiscal law).

Training in informatics:

- SEPS-Italia will organise training sessions to learn how to use simple informatics tools. One particular objective: to encourage retired colleagues to use My IntraComm and JSIS on-line.

During the constitutive meeting, the SEPS ITALIA Antenna coordination group was elected as follows:

Main coordinator: Gianfranco Selvagio

Vice-coordinator: Georg Peter

Treasurer: Yves Crutzen

Secretary: Salvatore Tirendi

Stefan Nonneman was elected to fill the role of liaison with SEPS/SFPE Brussels..

Serge Crutzen was present during the meeting representing SEPS/SFPE Brussels.

The SEPS ITALIA antenna will start to operate the telephone helpdesk on 1st July 2021 and on 7th September 2021 the Helpdesk at the Club House- Ispra.

The meeting participants approved all the above points.

Ispra, 9th June 2021

Main Coordinator: Gianfranco Selvagio

Participants : Gianfranco Selvagio, Georg Peter, Yves Crutzen, Salvatore Tirendi, Ana Paya Perez, Trudie Van Os, Paolo Pizziol, Veronica Margaret Holland, Helga Geiss, Christel Leyendecker, Juan Martin Riego Sintes, Stefan Scheer, Ivano Fumagalli, Andreas Skouloudis, Serge Crutzen.

Proposal for a Membership card

Several members of our association have requested membership cards.

In order to satisfy this request we have elaborated a card which was approved by our Administrative Board by a majority of votes obtained by the deadline of 23 April 2021.

We are now in a position to offer this membership card and would like to insist that **this is not in any fashion an insurance card**. Its usefulness resides above all in the useful information it contains in case of need. It can be drawn up in EN, FR or DE according to request.

As you can see it will take the format of a credit card and will contain:

√ On the face:

Other than the information relative to SEPS/SFPE, your name and surname, **the personal details that you like or not to communicate to us:**

- Your photo, to be sent to us if you wish
- Your pension number, if you wish

√ On the reverse:

Some essential information concerning JSIS, PMO 4 and Assistance to pensioners (Unit D1)

√ Procedure to be followed to receive this card:

To receive this membership card with the requested options, just place a X in the appropriate box and send us the document:

- Preferably to our e-mail address: info@sfpe-seps.be
- Or by letter to our current address (given the current impossibility to access our offices): SEPS/SFPE, 2A rue Emile Pirson – 5140 Sombreffe, BE

Photo

I would like to have my photo, annexed hereto or which I will send you by post, on the card

YES NO

Pensioner number

I would like to see my pension number indicated on the card, which I give you herewith or will send it to you

YES NO

Copy of a membership card:

 ASBL (BE) N°806 839 565	Association de Seniors de la Fonction Publique Européenne Association of Seniors of the European Public Service 175 rue de la Loi, Bur. JL 02 40 CG39, BE-1048 Bruxelles 105, avenue des Nerviens, Bureau 00.010, BE-1049 Bruxelles Tél. +32 475 472470 Email info@sfpe-seps.be Web www.sfpe-seps.be
<p>Luigia DRICOT-DANIELE</p> <p>MEMBRE N°</p> <p>N° Pension :</p>	

REGIME COMMUN D'ASSURANCE MALADIE *Ceci n'est pas une carte d'assurance santé.	
Bureau liquidateur Bruxelles Prise en charge	+32 2 29 97777 +32 2 29.59856
Bureau liquidateur Ispra Prise en charge	+39 0332.785245 +39 0332.789966
Bureau liquidateur Luxembourg Prise en charge	+352 4301.36100 +352 4301 36103
Aide pensionnés HR-BXL-AIDE-PENSIONNES@ec.europa.eu	+32 2 29.59098
PMO – Pensions: PMO- PENSIONS@ec.europa.eu	+32 2 29.78800

Annexe 3

In memoriam 04.2021 → 06.2021

Based on the rules on the protection of personal data (GDPR), PMO 4 is checking the recipients who receive this list of deaths and **therefore the publication is suspended.**

Files and documents available. Order form

Please send this reply slip to the secretariat

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

By Post/Email

SEPS Vade-mecum

Part 2 (forms /pers. data) O / O

Part 3 (addresses PMO – ADMIN. ...) Ed. October 2020 O / O

Part 4 (reimbursement forms – RCAM/JSIS) (April 2020) O

Supplementary health insurances Edition March 2021 O / O

Invalidity allowance and survival pension (Hendrik Smets) O / O

Orphan survivor's pensions (Hendrik Smets) O / O

EU Officials and taxation (Me. J Buekenhoudt) O / O

Inheritance (Me. J Buekenhoudt) (May 2020) O / O

JSIS Guide (was sent by post to all pensioners) O / O

Please send these documents (by Post or by Email) to:

Surname.....

First name

Address:

.....///.....

Email address:

Date: Signature:

To be sent to

SFPE – SEPS

105, Avenue des Nerviens
Bureau N105 00 010
BE-1049 Bruxelles

Or

By Email:

info@sfpe-seps.be

Application form

I, THE UNDERSIGNED (1)

Maiden name for married women (1)

PERSONNEL / PENSION N°:DATE OF BIRTH (dd/mm/yy):

NATIONALITY: Language desired for documents (2): **FR/EN**

HOME ADDRESS (1)

.....

.....

HOME Tel: GSM*:

E-mail:

FORMER STAFF MEMBER OF (Institution + DG or Dept.):

DONE AT:.....

DATE: SIGNATURE:

The annual subscription of **€30** is payable on 1 January. New members joining after 30 June will not be required to pay their second subscription until the second of January following their enrolment.

SEPS ING Bank account: **IBAN BE37 3630 5079 7728 BIC: BBRUBEBB**

Communication: **Annual subscription + names and pension Nr.**

Please return this application form to:

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

Or info@sfpe-seps.be

(1) *Capital letters please* (2) *Please cross out where appropriate* (*) *optional*

To be sent to

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

Or

Email: info@sfpe-seps.be

STANDING ORDER

(Please send direct to your bank)

I, the undersigned,
HEREBY INSTRUCT (Name of bank)
to pay the sum of € 30 and on 15 January each year, until further notice, the
same sum of € 30
by debit of account N°

to: **SEPS - SFPE**
JL Office 02 40 CG39
175 rue de la Loi 175
B 1048 Brussels

Account N° **IBAN BE37 3630 5079 7728** **BIC BBRUBEBB**
ING Bank Brussels

Reference: Annual subscription + Names and personnel/pension number

DATE: SIGNATURE:

To be sent to your bank