

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## TRAINEESHIPS AT THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

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## A. General questions

### 1. What kind of traineeships does the Council of the European Union offer?

**Paid traineeships** for graduates who already have a first university degree.

**Compulsory traineeships** for third, fourth or fifth year students (and also for students working toward a doctorate) who are required to complete a traineeship as part of their studies.

**Traineeship for students of national schools of administration of Member states.**

### 2. Are traineeships at the Council of the European Union paid?

Most of the traineeships offered are paid. Paid trainees receive a traineeship grant of 1196,84 €/month, a canteen card, accident insurance coverage and a contribution towards the travel expenses from the place of recruitment to Brussels.

Compulsory trainees and students of national schools of administration do not receive a traineeship grant. Compulsory trainees receive the travel allowance, the accident insurance coverage and a canteen card.

### 3. What are the contact details of the Traineeships Office?

Phone: +32(0)2 281 36 77

E-mail: [traineeships@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:traineeships@consilium.europa.eu)

Web: [www.consilium.europa.eu/trainee](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/trainee)

### 4. Where can I find the rules of the traineeships at the Council of the European Union?

[Decision 40/17](#) with the rules governing traineeships is available via the [website](#) of the Traineeships Office.

### 5. What is expected of a trainee?

As a trainee – depending on the needs of the service – your daily work would generally be equivalent to that of junior administrator officials at the beginning of their career e.g.: preparing meetings, drafting minutes, attending meetings of COREPER and Council preparatory bodies, translating documents, researching on a particular project, compiling documentation, writing reports etc. You will be placed under the responsibility of a traineeship adviser who will guide and supervise your work. You will also be invited to take part in a training programme which includes different conferences and visits to other EU institutions in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

### 6. What are the deadlines for applying?

Information regarding the deadlines for applying can be found on our [website](#).

### 7. How many traineeship places are offered?

Depending on the budget available there are around 50 paid traineeship places and 10-12 compulsory traineeship places offered in each traineeship period.

## **8. How many applications does the Council receive?**

This can vary, but generally there are 4000-6500 applications per period for paid traineeships. For compulsory unpaid traineeships there are usually 75-200 applications in each traineeship period.

## **9. What is the difference between paid and compulsory traineeships?**

Paid traineeships are for candidates who already have a BA degree.

For a compulsory traineeship, candidates do not need a degree, but the traineeship has to be a compulsory part of their higher education studies (or required for a thesis or doctorate) as requested by the university. Compulsory traineeships are unpaid.

## **10. What is the duration of the different traineeships?**

Paid traineeships run for 5 months. Compulsory traineeships and traineeships for students of national schools of administration shall be of minimum of 2 months and maximum 5 months. Traineeships shall not be extended beyond 5 months.

## **11. What are the traineeship periods?**

There are two 5 months traineeship periods every year:

- February to June (first traineeship period)
- September to January (second traineeship period)

## **12. Can I do a traineeship outside the normal traineeship periods?**

No. Traineeships run only in the normal traineeship periods (February-June or September-January).

## **13. Can I do a traineeship during the summer?**

No. Traineeships are not offered during July and August.

## **14. How can I get in touch with present trainees of the Council?**

The Traineeships Office cannot give you the contact details of trainees, but you can contact them via their Facebook group (e.g. [2018 second period](#) and [2019 first period](#))

## **15. What is the Blue Book?**

The Blue Book refers to the traineeship programme of the European Commission.

## **16. Which countries do trainees come from?**

Trainees come from all member states of the European Union.

## **17. Can I apply for both the paid and the compulsory traineeship?**

Yes. You can apply for both paid and compulsory traineeships if you fulfil both eligibility criteria (e.g. if you are a Master student who has already a BA degree and you are required to do a traineeship as part of your Master studies).

### **18. Can I apply for a traineeship in different EU institutions at the same time?**

You can apply for a traineeship at different EU institutions at the same time if you fulfil the eligibility criteria.

### **19. Are spontaneous applications considered?**

No. All applications for a traineeship place must follow the application procedure described on the [website](#).

### **20. I have a disability. How will my disability be taken into account?**

We encourage persons with a disability to apply for a traineeship by a positive reference to the equal opportunities policy in place. Recruitment and selection procedures are adapted to ensure that they do not disadvantage candidates with a disability. Candidates with a disability who need any form of measures which would constitute reasonable accommodation should tick the relevant field in the application form.

### **21. Where are trainees based?**

All trainees are based in Brussels.

### **22. What are my chances of being recruited after the traineeship?**

The traineeship itself does not confer the status of official or other employee of the Union, nor does it give any entitlement to recruitment with the Institutions of the European Union. To be recruited as an official you have to pass an EPSO competition. Occasionally there are vacancy opportunities for temporary assignments and in those cases there is a possibility of contracts as temporary or contract agents. In order to be considered for these vacancies, potential candidates should be registered in an EPSO CAST database or in the Commission EU CV Online database.

### **23. Is it easier to get a traineeship in some domains than in others?**

The selection procedure is the same for each domain, but certain domains (e.g. Foreign Affairs, Law etc.) are very popular among candidates, thus selection is more competitive in these domains.

### **24. How do I apply for a traineeship reserved for students of national schools of administration of member states?**

Applications must be sent to the Traineeships Office by the candidates' national administration school. Please send an [e-mail](#) in order to receive more information.

## **B. Eligibility**

### **25. Can I apply for a traineeship at the Council of the EU if I have already completed a traineeship at a European institution?**

If you have done a traineeship – paid or otherwise – at any another EU institution/body/agency/office for longer than 6 weeks, you are not eligible for a traineeship at the Council.

## **26. Where can I find the list of EU institutions/agencies/bodies/offices?**

The list is available on the following websites: [http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/index_en.htm) and [http://europa.eu/about-eu/agencies/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/agencies/index_en.htm)

## **27. Can I apply for a traineeship if I have worked as an assistant/trainee of a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) or for a political group?**

If you have worked longer than 6 weeks for a MEP or a political group in the European Parliament, you are not eligible for a traineeship at the Council.

## **28. Can I apply for a traineeship if I have worked as trainee at a member state's Permanent Representation to the EU for more than 6 weeks?**

Yes. Permanent Representations are not EU institutions, thus you can apply.

## **29. Can I apply for a traineeship, if I have worked as interim/temporary/contract agent at a European institution?**

If you have worked longer than 6 weeks, you are not eligible for a traineeship at the Council.

## **30. Is there a maximum age limit for applicants?**

No, there is no age limit for applicants, nonetheless the traineeship is addressed mainly to young university graduates, without excluding those who – in the framework of lifelong learning – have recently obtained a diploma and/or are at the beginning of a new professional career.

## **31. I am an UK national. Can I still apply?**

Candidates must meet the eligibility requirements, including those on nationality, at the time of selection. Therefore, UK nationals remain eligible and can be selected for the traineeship period **beginning 1 February and ending 30 June 2020** if, at the time of selection (October 2019), the UK is a member state of the EU.

## **32. I am a non-EU citizen. Can I apply?**

No. Traineeships at the Council are only open to nationals of EU member states.

## **33. I am a national of a country which has applied for EU membership. Can I apply for a traineeship?**

Nationals of candidate countries which already signed an accession treaty can apply.

## **34. I am a PhD student. Can I apply?**

Yes. You can apply for paid and also for compulsory traineeships, if research is requested by the University.

**35. I'm a doctoral candidate. I don't fall in either of the categories, since I don't want or need a paid internship, but I'm not a student in need of a mandatory internship either. Can I still apply?**

You can apply for the compulsory traineeship as it is also open to candidates who are required to do research for a thesis or doctorate.

**36. I have not yet received my Bachelor degree. Can I apply for a paid traineeship?**

Applicants should have completed all academic requirements to earn Bachelor degree at the closing date of on-line application at the latest (proof needs to be provided if selected) and should be in possession of the diploma at the signature of the traineeship agreement at the latest.

**37. In most countries, Law is a 5 year course, and the degree acquired is Master so there is no Bachelor degree in Law. Yet, I have finished all the 10 semesters and I only have my State's exams in September/October (which means I still do not have diploma). Does it exclude me from the eligibility criteria?**

Yes, you must have obtained a full university degree by the signing of the traineeship agreement at the latest.

**38. I have a non-EU diploma. Can I still apply for a paid traineeship?**

Yes, you can apply. Applicants whose diplomas are not issued in one of the EU official languages must provide a translation of these documents into English or French. If recruited for a traineeship, certified copies of all diplomas declared and, if applicable, official certified translations will be required. The non-EU diplomas must be equivalent with one of the diplomas listed in the Annex I of the [Decision 40/17](#).

**39. If a traineeship is not a compulsory part of my studies, can I apply?**

Yes. You can apply for a paid traineeship if you already have a BA degree.

For a compulsory traineeship you need to prove that it is a compulsory part of your studies.

**40. I have a BA degree, but I am studying for my Master degree. Can I apply?**

Yes. You can apply for a paid traineeship. You can also apply for a compulsory traineeship in case a traineeship is required for your Master degree.

**41. Could I be offered an unpaid traineeship in your offices in terms of the program Erasmus Placement?**

We do not accept Erasmus+ trainees. You are most welcome to apply for an unpaid/compulsory traineeship, but we cannot sign any convention. There will, however, be a traineeship agreement binding both parties.

**42. I participated in the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci or Grundtvig). Can I still apply for the traineeship?**

Yes, you can still apply for the traineeship, unless the programme (or traineeship) took place in one of the European Institutions and lasted for more than six weeks.

## C. Application - paid traineeships

### **43. How do I apply for a paid traineeship?**

You have to apply online via the link provided on the [website](#) of the Traineeships Office.

### **44. Is the application form available in all EU languages?**

No, the application form is only available in English and French.

### **45. Can I use my application of previous years to apply again?**

You have to apply for each traineeship period separately, but you can use the data from a previous application when applying again.

### **46. Should I also list qualifications from elementary and high school in Education?**

You should only list qualifications relevant to the traineeship and domains selected. Generally, elementary/high school qualifications are not considered relevant, unless it is the only way you can prove your knowledge of certain languages.

### **47. Do I need to send supporting documents when applying for a paid traineeship?**

No. There is no need to send anything when applying. Selected candidates will be contacted by the Traineeships Office and requested to send supporting documents by e-mail in pdf format.

### **48. If some documents are in other EU languages (such as German and Spanish, for instance), do I have to provide a translation into English?**

You do not need to translate any documents issued in one of the official EU languages, but it is always helpful to provide the English or French version of diplomas, if available.

Supporting documents only need to be sent at the request of the Traineeships Office.

### **49. Can I apply for a traineeship without any working experience?**

Yes. You are not required to have professional experience in order to apply for a traineeship.

### **50. After validation of my application do I have to send you the signed application form in paper version, diplomas, language knowledge etc.?**

No. Once the selection procedure is over, we will contact the selected candidates with an offer, and only then we will request candidates to supply a complete file.

### **51. What is exactly meant by "knowledge of languages should be supported by the appropriate justification"? Is there a template to be used?**

You need to prove all language skills that you mention in your application form. If you do not have a specific document (diploma from language studies, copy of evaluation reports including the language or other proof) you will need to write, date and sign a short declaration explaining that you know the language having done a course, being your second mother-tongue, or whatever other explanation justifying the lack of supporting documents.

**52. Is there a quota of English or French-speaking successful candidates, or is every candidate equal in the "main language" matter?**

There is no quota regarding the main language. The main language should be interpreted as your mother tongue.

**53. Can I change my validated application if I realise I have made a mistake?**

You can recall and modify your validated application within the deadline of applications. After the deadline it is not possible to modify the validated application, but you can still delete it.

**54. How do I know that my application was successfully submitted?**

Once you have pushed the "Submit application" and "Submit" buttons you will receive an email confirming that your application was successfully submitted. You will also be given a candidate number. Your traineeship account should now show "Application successfully submitted". If you did not receive the confirmation message and the status of your application did not change, your application was not submitted and you have to try again.

**55. I would like to upload my CV but I read that I should do this only if I am a successful candidate of your selection procedure.**

You do not need to upload a CV at any stage when applying for a traineeship at the Council. The Traineeships Office will contact selected candidates and ask for supporting documents to be sent by e-mail in pdf format.

**56. Should I contact the Traineeships Office to check the status of my application?**

No, the results of the selection procedure will be communicated to you by e-mail.

## **D.Applications – compulsory traineeship**

**57. What are the eligibility criteria for compulsory traineeships?**

Eligibility criteria for compulsory traineeships:

- ✓ be a national of a member state of the European Union,
- ✓ be a third, fourth or fifth year student of a university/college, and
- ✓ the traineeship must be required by the school as part of the course/studies (or for access to a profession or to be required to do research for a thesis or a doctorate).

**58. What is meant by "third, fourth or fifth year university students"?**

For the first cycle degree programmes (BA degree, 3-4 years), we accept students in their 3rd and 4th year.

For the second cycle degree programmes (MA degree, 1-3 years - after the BA degree) and for PhD students we accept all candidates if the traineeship is compulsory/required for thesis. They are considered to be in 4th and 5th year of studies.

For the single cycle degrees of 5 or more years (combined BA and MA degree, e.g. law), we accept students as from their 3rd year of studies.

### **59. How do I apply for a compulsory traineeship?**

You have to apply online via the link provided on the [website](#) of the Traineeships Office.

### **60. Do I need to upload any documents when applying for a compulsory traineeship?**

Yes, during registration you will be asked to upload an official certificate from your education establishment certifying either that you are required to complete a traineeship as part of your studies or for access to a profession, or that you are required to do research for a thesis or a doctorate. The certificate should be signed and dated, it should mention your name and the fact that you are enrolled for studies and that the traineeship is compulsory.

### **61. Do I have to apply for each traineeship period separately?**

Yes, you have to apply for each traineeship period separately.

### **62. Can I submit more than one application in order to increase my chances of being selected?**

No. If we receive more than one compulsory application for a candidate for the same traineeship period, we will keep the most recent one and delete the previous ones.

### **63. Do I need to send supporting documents when applying for a compulsory traineeship?**

No, supporting documents only need to be sent at the request of the Traineeships Office.

### **64. How do I know that my application was successfully submitted?**

Once you have pushed the "Submit application" and "Submit" buttons you will receive an email confirming that your application was successfully submitted. You will also be given a candidate number. Your traineeship account should now show "Application successfully submitted". If you did not receive the confirmation message and the status of your application did not change, your application was not submitted and you have to try again.

### **65. My university asked to have a traineeship/placement agreement (convention de stage) signed.**

The General Secretariat of the Council does not sign any "Convention de stage" or "Placement agreement" with a third party (e.g. your university). A traineeship agreement is signed by the General Secretariat of the Council and the trainee.

## **E. Selection procedure**

### **66. When will the selection procedure take place for paid traineeships?**

Validated online applications for the first traineeship period, February - June will be examined as of October. Selected candidates will be contacted in December at the latest.

Validated online applications for the second traineeship period, September - January will be examined as of April. Selected candidates will be contacted in June at the latest.

Successful applicants will receive an offer by e-mail stating the period of their traineeship and the department to which they will be assigned. Once the offer has been accepted, the Traineeships Office will send the traineeship agreement. Please check your SPAM folder regularly, since it has been noted that our e-mails are often considered as SPAM.

#### **67. When will the selection procedure take place for compulsory traineeships?**

Selection takes place during October-December for traineeships starting in the first traineeship period (February - June) and during April-June for the second traineeship period (September - January).

#### **68. How are trainees selected?**

Trainees are selected based on merit taking into consideration the information provided in the application form. Candidates might be interviewed on the phone or via video conference; in this case the Traineeships Office will contact candidates beforehand to arrange a suitable time.

In case of equal merit of candidates, the Traineeships Office endeavours to secure a healthy geographic (i.e. as many nationalities represented as possible) and gender balance (aiming for 40% of the underrepresented gender) of selected trainees.

Applications are scrutinised and compared against the profile sought by the different departments of the General Secretariat of the Council.

#### **69. Will I receive feedback if my application is rejected?**

Unsuccessful candidates will be notified by e-mail. Feedback will not be provided automatically. We cannot supply this service given the great amount of applications that we receive. If you were not selected, it is most probably because we were not in need of anyone with your qualifications, or there were too many applicants with similar qualifications as you.

#### **70. When should I provide supporting documents?**

Selected candidates will receive a traineeship offer by e-mail. At this stage you will be requested to send supporting documents by e-mail in pdf format.

#### **71. Will the Traineeships Office publish the results of the selection procedure?**

No, the results are not published. Selected candidates will receive a traineeship offer and unsuccessful candidates will also be informed by e-mail.

#### **72. Could my application be considered for domains other than the two for which I expressed a preference?**

This happens only exceptionally if your profile (educational and professional background) is considered relevant for other domains as well.

#### **73. Is my application automatically valid for the next traineeship period?**

Your application is only valid for one traineeship period. If you are not selected you have to apply again for the next traineeship period.

#### **74. My place of residence has changed since I applied. Should I inform you?**

Yes, if you are selected and contacted, you should notify the Traineeships Office of any change of address.

#### **75. If I decline the traineeship offer, can I apply for the next traineeship period?**

Yes, you can apply again if you continue to fulfil the eligibility criteria, but you must fill in a new application form during the application period.

#### **76. Is there a national quota applied during the selection procedure?**

No. Trainees are selected based on merit. In case of equal merit the Traineeships Office endeavours to secure a healthy geographic (i.e. as many nationalities represented as possible) and gender balance (aiming for 40% of the underrepresented gender) of selected trainees.

#### **77. My application was placed on a waiting list. What are my chances of being selected?**

If the selected candidate accepts our offer, there is very little chance that you will be offered a traineeship. If, on the contrary, a selected candidate does not go through with the traineeship, the candidates on the waiting list will be contacted, by order of merit. This could happen anytime, even at the last minute, just before the beginning of the traineeship.

## **F. After selection - recruitment as a trainee**

#### **78. Can I delay the start date of the traineeship?**

In exceptional and duly justified cases it is possible to delay the start date of the traineeship, up to a maximum of 1 month.

#### **79. Can I cancel my traineeship and postpone it to the next period?**

No. If you cancel your traineeship you would need to apply again for the next period and there is no guarantee that you will be selected.

#### **80. I would like to know more about the tasks involved in my traineeship.**

During the selection procedure candidates may be phone interviewed. You should clarify the tasks at this stage. A list of tasks will also be sent as part of the traineeship offer.

If you want to learn more about the tasks involved and the domain in which you may find yourself working should you be successful please check [First-hand description of traineeship tasks from the trainees](#) and also the [Description of the various domains available for a traineeship](#) on our website.

If you need more information please contact the [Traineeships Office](#).

Upon arrival, traineeship advisers complete an individual work programme together with the trainee. This document lists tasks and expected results.

**81. Health insurance is mandatory. Is the European health insurance card for my country enough?**

Yes. We accept the copy of your European health insurance card as proof. It is your responsibility to check the coverage it offers.

**82. Will I receive a traineeship agreement?**

Yes. Each selected trainee signs a traineeship agreement which will be sent by e-mail. No other agreement with a third party (e.g. with your university) will be signed.

**83. Should I provide translations of supporting documents?**

Supporting documents are accepted in all official languages of the EU. It is also helpful to provide the English or French version of diplomas, if available.

Applicants whose diplomas are not issued in one of the EU official languages must provide a translation of these documents into English or French.

**84. Do the copies of supporting documents need to be certified as authentic copies of the originals?**

No. Supporting documents need to be sent by e-mail. There is no need to provide certified copies. Upon arrival trainees are requested to present the originals or certified copies of supporting documents.

**85. Do I have to send copies of certificates concerning my language skills?**

You need to prove all language skills that you mention in your application form. If you do not have a specific document (diploma from language studies, copy of evaluation reports including the language or other proof) you will need to write, date and sign a short declaration explaining that you know the language having done a course, being your second mother-tongue, or whatever other explanation, justifying the lack of supporting documents.

**86. Will I receive confirmation that the Traineeships Office has received my supporting documents?**

Yes. E-mail confirmation will be sent.

## **G. During the traineeship**

**87. Does the Council provide training during the traineeship?**

Yes. Depending on the budget available, the Traineeships Office organises a series of conferences on different topics and visits to other EU institutions in Brussels. Study trips to Strasbourg (plenary session of the European Parliament, Council of Europe, Court of Human Rights) and Luxembourg (European Court of Justice, European Investment Bank, European Court of Auditors) are also planned.

Trainees also organise various professional events themselves.

### **88. Can I terminate my traineeship earlier?**

In exceptional cases and on a substantiated request by the trainee, the traineeship can be terminated earlier.

### **89. Can I interrupt my traineeship?**

In exceptional cases and on a substantiated request by the trainee, the traineeship can be interrupted.

### **90. Does the Council provide a place to stay?**

No. Trainees are responsible for finding and paying for their accommodation during the traineeship. The Traineeship Office provides a list with rooms/flats available for trainees.

### **91. Who can help with administrative questions in respect to living in Brussels?**

The Expat Welcome Desk of the Brussels Commissioner for Europe and International Organisations will help you, free of charge, with any practical or legal problem that may arise during your stay such as registration with your municipality, questions about lease contracts or any other matter regarding settling down in Brussels.

Web: <http://www.commissioner.brussels/>

E-mail: [info@commissioner.brussels](mailto:info@commissioner.brussels)

Phone : +32 (0) 2430 66 14

### **92. What are the working hours of the Council?**

Normal working hours are between 8h30 and 17h30 (40-hours week) with a 1-hour lunch break. The exact working hours will be decided with your traineeship adviser, based on the interests of the service.

### **93. Am I entitled to annual leave?**

You are entitled to 2 days leave per worked month, in addition to public holidays and days when Council offices are closed.

### **94. Am I entitled to 'special leave'?**

When the entitlement for annual leave is exhausted special leave can be granted only for exceptional, duly substantiated reasons.

### **95. Is there a dress code at the Council?**

No, there is no formal dress code. Trainees are asked to dress "smart casual" and more formal if they are supposed to attend a meeting. Trainees are expected to dress appropriately to their functions and tasks (very short skirts and shorts are not considered appropriate).

### **96. Is it possible to work part time during the traineeship?**

No. All trainees have to work full time, namely 40 hours/week.

### **97. Who will be responsible for me during my traineeship?**

Each trainee is assigned to a traineeship adviser whose responsibility is to provide guidance during the traineeship.

### **98. What should I do if I fall ill during my traineeship?**

You should immediately inform your traineeship adviser and the Traineeships Office. As from the fourth day of absence, a medical certificate is required indicating how long you will be absent.

### **99. Can I extend the duration of my traineeship?**

No. Traineeships run for 5 months and shall not be extended.

### **100. Can I have names and addresses of other trainees that have been selected for the same period as I?**

We cannot provide this information. You should try to join their Facebook page.

### **101. Will I have to travel on mission during my traineeship?**

It is not a common practice. Occasionally some trainees may be requested to go to Luxembourg or Strasbourg with their service. The Traineeships Office also organises study trips to Strasbourg and Luxembourg.

## **H. Financial aspects**

### **102. How much is the grant?**

The grant is 1196,84 € net/month in 2019.

### **103. When are traineeship grants paid?**

The traineeship grant is always paid on the last working day of the month.

### **104. Do trainees pay taxes on the grant?**

No taxes are deducted from your grant. At the end of the traineeship you will be given a tax certificate with the total amount received during the traineeship and it is up to you to declare it in your home country.

### **105. Are trainees insured?**

All trainees are insured against accidents.

Health insurance is mandatory. In the absence of another coverage (e.g. European Health Insurance Card), trainees can opt for health insurance through the Council. In this case, paid trainees pay circa 15 €/month, which corresponds to one third of the premium, and the Council pays the remaining two thirds. For compulsory trainees the Council bears the entire insurance premium.

**106. Where can I find more information on the health insurance provided by the Council?**

Health insurance is provided by Allianz Worldwide Care. Detailed information can be found on their [website](#).

**107. How much does the health insurance provided by the Council cost?**

Circa 15 €/month (one third of the monthly premium of the insurance) will be deducted from the traineeship grant of paid trainees. For compulsory trainees the Council bears the entire insurance premium.

**108. Are trainees entitled to allowances ?**

Trainees are only entitled to a travel allowance, which is a contribution towards the return travel expenses between the home address of the trainee and Brussels. In order to be entitled trainees need to complete at least half of their traineeship period.

**109. How is the travel allowance calculated?**

Trainees who are recruited from a place further away than 50 km from Brussels, are entitled to a contribution towards travel expenses at the beginning and at the end of the traineeship. The allowance is calculated with a method based on geographic distance between Brussels and the address indicated in the application form (0-500 km: 0,30€/km, 501-1500 km: 0,20€/km, over 1500 km: 0,10 €/km and multiplied by 2, with a ceiling of 800 €. No allowance for distances under 50 km of Brussels). You must complete at least half of the period of your traineeship in order to be entitled.

No requests for change of address will be accepted after the signature of the traineeship agreement by the Council.

**110. When is the travel allowance paid?**

The travel allowance is usually paid during April in the first traineeship period and during November in the second traineeship period.

**111. Am I entitled to a reduction at the restaurant of the Council of the European Union?**

No, there is no reduction foreseen. Trainees will receive a canteen card to be used only in the Council's restaurants (paid trainees: 38 €/month, compulsory trainees: 125 €/month).

**112. Will the Council cover the costs of my daily commuting to and from work?**

No, the Council will not reimburse or contribute to the costs of daily commuting.

**113. Do I need to have a bank account in Belgium?**

No, you can use a bank account in another country, provided it is in your name and that it accepts transfers in euros. You will have to bear any costs which may arise from transfers.

**114. I do not have a bank account. Can I give the information of my father's bank account instead, or must I open a bank account in my name?**

You must open a bank account in your name. The bank account does not need to be in Belgium, provided it can receive transfers in euros. You will have to bear any costs which may arise from transfers.

**115. Is it possible to obtain an advance payment of the traineeship grant on arrival?**

No. It is not possible to receive an advance payment.

**116. In order to qualify for the grant, trainees cannot receive financial support from any other source during the period of the traineeship. E.g.: I am currently working as a freelance translator: is my activity considered as "financial support"? I have the status of "auto-entrepreneur" and cannot suspend my activity.**

Upon arrival, paid trainees are requested to sign a declaration stating that they will not receive any external remuneration during their traineeship. Either you sign this and commit to it, or you inform us of any remuneration received for translations you might do outside working hours, during the five months of your traineeship. In this case, that amount will be deducted from your grant.

**117. Am I allowed to benefit from a financial aid as a compulsory (unpaid) trainee?**

The Council does not pay a traineeship grant or any other financial aid to compulsory trainees. Compulsory trainees also receive the travel allowance and a canteen card to be used in the restaurant of the Council.

Compulsory trainees can try to find a grant elsewhere to cover their costs or part of them.

**118. Can the traineeship be considered as an employment? Will I be exempt from social security payments in my country?**

A traineeship is not considered as an employment. As for social security payments, each country has its laws, so you should find out how to proceed in your country. Nothing is deducted from your grant (neither social security, nor taxes). At the end of the traineeship you receive a tax declaration with the total amount received during the traineeship and it is up to you to declare it in your home country.

**119. In addition to the grant, are there other "perks" like the reimbursement of public transport expenses in Brussels, or luncheon vouchers?**

Trainees are not entitled to reimbursement of public transport expenses. Trainees receive a canteen card for the restaurant of the Council of the EU. They also receive a travel allowance and also have special rates at the fitness centre situated at the Council's premises.

**120. Estimated expenses before the beginning of your traineeship.**

Please take into consideration that some expenses are expected before your arrival in Brussels, such as the cost of your flight ticket, travel insurance, rent deposit (usually 2 months of rent, approx. 700 - 1000 €) etc. You will need to cover those expenses yourself.

**121. Estimated expenses during the first month of your traineeship.**

The traineeship grant is always paid on the last working day of the month, so please be prepared to cover the expenses occurring the first month in Brussels: accommodation and utilities 450 - 600 €, food 200 €, public transportation 55 €, essentials (toiletries, cleaning products etc) 50 - 100 €, other expenses (eating out, travelling etc) 100 - 150 €. These amounts are indicative and they reflect experiences of former trainees and can change depending on the type of apartment rented, your life style etc.