

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 university degree.

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

Traineeships for students of member states' national schools of administration.

Positive action programme for students or graduates with a recognised disability (paid traineeship). Candidates must be graduates or at least third year students (or equivalent) of a higher education establishment.

You can apply to several of the programmes as long as you meet the eligibility criteria for each one.

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 1220,78 €/month, a restaurant card, accident insurance coverage and a contribution towards the travel expenses from the place of recruitment to Brussels.

Upon presentation of proper justification, trainees with disabilities may receive a supplementary amount up to half of the traineeship grant.

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 restaurant card.

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

Phone: +32(0)2 281 36 77

E-mail: traineeships@consilium.europa.eu

Web: www.consilium.europa.eu/trainee

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

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

[Decision 1/20](#) establishing a positive action programme for trainees with a disability is also available via de [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 will 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 various conferences and visits to other EU institutions in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

6. What is the deadline for applying?

Information regarding the application deadline can be found on our [website](#).

7. How many traineeship places are on offer?

Depending on the budget available there are around 50 paid traineeship places, 10-12 compulsory unpaid traineeship places and up to 3 places for the positive action programme for trainees with a disability, offered in each traineeship period.

8. How many applications does the Council receive?

This can vary, but generally there are 4500-6500 applications per period for paid traineeships.

For compulsory unpaid traineeships there are around 150-200 applications for each traineeship period.

The positive action programme for trainees with a disability was launched in 2020. We have received 70 applications for the September 2020 - January 2021 traineeship period.

9. What is the duration of the different traineeships?

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

10. 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)

11. Can I do a traineeship outside the normal traineeship periods?

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

12. Can I do a traineeship during the summer?

No. Traineeships are not offered during July and August.

13. How can I get in touch with current 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. [2019 second period](#) and [2020 first period](#)).

14. What is the Blue Book?

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

15. Which countries do trainees come from?

Trainees come from all member states of the European Union.

16. 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's student who already has a bachelor's degree and you are required to do a traineeship as part of your master's studies).

17. Can I apply for both the positive action programme and another traineeship programme?

Yes. You can apply to several of the programmes as long as you meet the eligibility criteria for each one.

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. Where are trainees based?

All trainees are based in Brussels.

21. Does the Council offer reasonable accommodation to trainees with a disability?

Yes. Reasonable accommodation enables people with disabilities to perform a job on an equal basis with others. People with disabilities have a right to reasonable accommodation, unless such measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the employer.

In the Council, reasonable accommodation can include provision or modification of equipment or technical devices, adjustment of policies or practices, etc. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. To provide the appropriate accommodation, a case-by-case examination is therefore needed.

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

The traineeship itself does not give you the status of an official or other employee of the European 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 a European Personnel Selection Office (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 Contract Agents Selection Tool (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 member states' national schools of administration?

Applications must be sent to the Traineeships Office by the candidate's 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 another European institution?

If you have already 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 a list of EU institutions/agencies/bodies/offices?

A list is available on the following websites: [Institutions and bodies](#) and [Agencies and other EU bodies](#).

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

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

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

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

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

If you have worked in either of these roles for 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 targeted mainly at 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 a UK national. Can I still apply?

UK nationals are no longer eligible for a traineeship.

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 have already signed an accession treaty can apply.

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

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

35. I'm a doctoral candidate and don't fall into either of the categories, since I don't 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's degree. Can I apply for a paid traineeship?

Applicants should have completed all academic requirements to earn a bachelor's 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 latest when the traineeship agreement is signed.

37. In most countries, law is a 5 year course, and the degree acquired is a master's, so there is no bachelor's degree in law. However, I have finished all the 10 semesters and I only have my state' exams in September/October (which means I still do not have a diploma). Does this exclude me from the eligibility criteria for a paid traineeship?

Yes, to do a paid traineeship, you must have obtained a full university degree by the time of the traineeship agreement is signed 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 to one of the diplomas listed in Annex I to [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 bachelor's degree.

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

40. I have a bachelor's degree, but I am studying for my master's degree. Can I apply?

Yes. You can apply for a paid traineeship. You can also apply for a compulsory traineeship if a traineeship is required for your master's degree.

41. Could I be offered an unpaid traineeship at the Council under the Erasmus+ placement programme?

We do not accept Erasmus+ trainees. You are most welcome to apply for an unpaid/compulsory traineeship, but we cannot sign any agreement (convention) with your university. There will, however, be a traineeship agreement binding the Council and the trainee.

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

43. How do I apply for a 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 from previous years to apply again?

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

46. Should I also list qualifications from primary and secondary school under "Education"?

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

47. Do I need to send supporting documents when applying for a 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. 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.

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

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

50. What makes a good statement of motivation?

Given that the selection process is very competitive and that most of the candidates have similar backgrounds and skills, your motivation plays a key role in deciding if you are selected or not.

Keep it simple and informative. Tell us why you are applying for this traineeship and explain why this position appeals to you. Give a brief summary of the main characteristics that set you apart from other applicants and make you a perfect candidate.

Don't repeat your resume. Use this space to tell us something that will make a difference and will show that you are competitive and have something valuable to contribute to the institution.

51. After validation of my application do I have to send any documents?

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.

52. Is there a quota for 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 for 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 submitted successfully?

Once you have pushed the "Submit application" and "Submit" buttons you will receive an email confirming that your application was submitted successfully. You will also be given a candidate number. Your traineeship account should now show "Application successfully submitted". If you do not receive the confirmation message and the status of your application has not changed, your application has not submitted and you should 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 in the selection procedure. What should I do?

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. Application - Paid traineeship

57. What are the eligibility criteria for paid traineeships?

- ✓ you must be a national of a member state of the European Union,
- ✓ you must have very good knowledge of at least two EU official languages. Given that English and French are used extensively for internal communication within the Council, a good knowledge of **English or French (C level** according to the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)) is required,
- ✓ you must be a university graduate.

E. Application – Compulsory unpaid traineeship

58. What are the eligibility criteria for compulsory unpaid traineeships?

- ✓ you must be a national of a member state of the European Union,
- ✓ you must have very good knowledge of at least two EU official languages. Given that English and French are used extensively for internal communication within the Council, a good knowledge of **English or French (C level** according to the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)) is required,
- ✓ you must be a third, fourth or fifth year student of a university/college, and
- ✓ the traineeship must be required by the university as part of the course/studies (or for access to a profession or as research for a thesis or a doctorate).

59. What exactly is meant by "third, fourth or fifth year university students"?

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

For second cycle degree programmes (master's degree, 1-3 years - after the bachelor's 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 single cycle degrees of 5 or more years (combined bachelor's and master's degree, e.g. law), we accept students as from their 3rd year of studies.

60. Do I need to upload any document 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, and it should mention your name and the fact that you are enrolled for studies and that the traineeship is compulsory.

61. 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 agreements" with a third party (e.g. your university). A traineeship agreement is signed by the General Secretariat of the Council and the trainee.

F. Application - Positive action programme for paid trainees with a disability

62. What are the eligibility criteria for the positive action programme?

- ✓ you must be a national of a member state of the European Union,
- ✓ you must have a very good knowledge of at least two EU official languages. Given that English and French are used extensively for internal communication within the Council, a good knowledge of **English or French (C level** according to the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)) is required,
- ✓ you must be a graduate or at least a third year student of a university/college, and
- ✓ you must have a disability recognised by a national authority or an accredited body (you will need to upload an official document from a national authority or an accredited body confirming the disability as part of the application form).

63. Do I need to upload any document when applying for a positive action programme?

Yes, during registration you will be asked to upload an official document from a national authority or any accredited body confirming your disability.

64. Does the Council offer reasonable accommodation to trainees with a disability?

Yes. Reasonable accommodation enables people with disabilities to perform a job on an equal basis with others. People with disabilities have a right to reasonable accommodation, unless such measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the employer.

In the Council, reasonable accommodation can include provision or modification of equipment or technical devices, adjustment of policies or practices, etc. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. To provide the appropriate accommodation, a case-by-case examination is therefore needed.

65. How can I request reasonable accommodation?

In order to request reasonable accommodation, please send a message to reasonable.accommodation@consilium.europa.eu once you have submitted your application. The request should describe the reasonable accommodation arrangements that you would need during the traineeship and should be accompanied by documentary justification of the reasonable accommodation arrangements. Please indicate your full name and the candidate number received

when submitting your application. Your request for reasonable accommodation will be handled by the Equal Opportunities Office and will not be visible to the Traineeships Office.

66. I intend to request reasonable accommodation - when should I submit the request?

Please submit your request for reasonable accommodation arrangements as soon as possible after you have submitted your application. Organising reasonable accommodation takes time, the earlier you send the request, the better.

67. I have a disability. Can I apply for a paid and/or compulsory traineeship as well?

Yes, candidates with a disability can also apply for a paid and/or compulsory traineeship as long as they fulfil the eligibility criteria.

G. Selection procedure

68. When will the selection procedure take place?

Validated online applications for the first traineeship period, February to 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 to 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 to ensure that e-mails have not gone there by mistake.

69. 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 balance (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.

70. 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 large number 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 to you.

71. 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.

72. 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.

73. 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.

74. 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.

75. My place of residence has changed since I applied. Should I inform you?

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

76. 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 for that application period.

77. Is 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 balance (i.e. as many nationalities represented as possible) and gender balance (aiming for 40% of the underrepresented gender) of selected trainees.

78. 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, the 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.

H. After selection - recruitment as a trainee

79. 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.

80. 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.

81. I would like to know more about the tasks involved in my traineeship.

During the selection procedure candidates may be interviewed by phone. 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 the description of domains 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.

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

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

83. 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.

84. 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.

85. 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 at this stage. Upon arrival trainees are requested to present the originals or certified copies of supporting documents.

86. 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 due to having done a course, it being your second mother-tongue, or any other explanation, justifying the lack of supporting documents.

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

Yes. E-mail confirmation will be sent.

I. During the traineeship

88. 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 (e.g. plenary session of the European Parliament, Council of Europe, Court of Human Rights) and Luxembourg (e.g. European Court of Justice, European Investment Bank, European Court of Auditors) are also planned. Trainees also organise various professional events themselves.

89. Can I terminate my traineeship early?

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

90. Can I interrupt my traineeship?

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

91. 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.

92. Who can help with administrative questions about 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 how to register with your municipality, questions about lease contracts or any other matter regarding settling down in Brussels.

Web: [Brussels Commissioner for Europe and International Organisations](#)

E-mail: info@commissioner.brussels

Phone : +32 (0) 2430 66 14

93. 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 needs of the service.

94. Am I entitled to annual leave?

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

95. 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.

96. Is there a dress code at the Council?

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

97. Is it possible to work part time during the traineeship?

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

98. Who will be responsible for me during my traineeship?

Each trainee is assigned a traineeship adviser who is responsible for providing guidance during the traineeship.

99. 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.

100. Can I extend the duration of my traineeship?

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

101. Can I have the names and addresses of other trainees who have been selected for the same period as me?

We cannot provide this information. You could try to join the Facebook page.

102. Will I have to travel on mission during my traineeship?

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

J. Financial aspects

103. How much is the grant?

In 2020, the grant for paid trainees is 1220,78 € net/month.

Upon presentation of proper justification, trainees with disabilities may receive a supplementary amount up to half of the traineeship grant.

104. When are traineeship grants paid?

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

105. 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.

106. 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 and Positive Action Programme 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 cost of the entire insurance premium.

107. 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](#).

108. 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 opting for the Council's health insurance. For compulsory trainees the Council bears the cost of entire insurance premium.

109. Are trainees entitled to allowances ?

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

110. How is the travel allowance calculated?

Trainees who are recruited from a place further than 50 km from Brussels, are entitled to a contribution towards the travel expenses incurred at the beginning and at the end of the

traineeship. The allowance is calculated using a method based on the geographical distance between Brussels and the address indicated on the application form (0-500 km: 0,30€/km, 501-1500 km: 0,20€/km, over 1500 km: 0,10 €/km). This is multiplied by 2, with a ceiling of 800 €. There is 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 eligible.

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

111. 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.

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

No, there is no reduction provided. Trainees will receive a restaurant card to be used only in the Council's restaurants and cafeterias (paid trainees and positive action programme trainees: 38 €/month, compulsory trainees: 125 €/month).

113. Will the Council cover the costs of my daily commute to and from work?

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

114. 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.

115. I do not have a bank account. Can I give the information of a relative's bank account instead, or do I have to 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.

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

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

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

Upon arrival, paid trainees are asked 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. For trainees in the positive action programme, this does not apply to income received in relation to a disability.

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

The Council does not pay a traineeship grant or any other financial aid to compulsory trainees. They do receive the travel allowance and a restaurant card to be used in Council's restaurants and cafeterias.

Compulsory trainees can try to find a grant elsewhere to cover some or all of their costs.

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

A traineeship is not considered as employment. As for social security payments, each country has its own 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.

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

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

121. 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 transport ticket, travel insurance, rent deposit (usually 2 months of rent, approx. 700 - 1000 €) etc. You will need to cover those expenses yourself.

122. 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 incurred during the first month in Brussels. These are likely to amount approximately: 450-600€, accommodation and utilities, 200€ for food, 55€ for public transportation, 50-100€ for essentials (toiletries, cleaning products etc), 100-150€ for other expenses (eating out, travelling etc). These amounts are indicative. They reflect the experiences of former trainees and may change depending on the type of accommodation rented, your life style, etc.

123. Traineeships during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 outbreak and the discontinuity in the normal performance of their duties, the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU has offered the trainees from the February-June 2020 traineeship period the possibility to restart their traineeship in September 2020. Should normal working conditions still not be possible at that moment the Traineeships Office is aiming for a "blended system" of physical presence in the office and teleworking.

The selection for September 2020-January 2021 was run only for departments in which the trainees from February-June were not interested in restarting the traineeship in September 2020. Due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation and the increase in the number of new cases in Belgium the new selected trainees for the September 2020 - January 2021 traineeship period were postponed to February 2021.

You can find the latest information regarding the COVID -19 in Belgium on the website [Coronavirus COVID-19](#) and also on [Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs](#) (for information regarding travelling to and from Belgium).