

National Experts in Professional Training (NEPT)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

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Who are National Experts in Professional Training (“NEPT”)?

Also known as ENFP (from the French "Experts nationaux en formation professionnelle"), NEPTs are civil servants of national, regional, or local administrations temporarily seconded to the Commission and European External Action Service for a professional training scheme. The in-service training sessions are organised twice a year (March and October) with a duration of 3 to 5 months, and we receive around 250 staff each year. Subject to the availability of places, staff from public administration of third countries or from international organisations can also participate in the programme. The NEPTs remain employed and paid by their administration of origin. That means that the stay of NEPTs is financed by the sending authorities in a similar mode as cost-free seconded national experts (SNEs).

1. What is the goal of this Professional Training?

The training offers civil servants a unique opportunity to gain practical experience and understanding of the Commission's working methods and policies as well as the day-to-day work in a Commission department in a multicultural, multilingual environment. In exchange, the Commission staff can benefit from the NEPTs specific skills, knowledge, and experience.

2. What is the status of a NEPT?

NEPTs are trainees who remain employed by their employer who has an obligation to continue to pay their salary, to maintain social rights (social security and pension) and the administrative status of professional training. The NEPTs work under the supervision of an administrator.

3. What is the duration of the traineeship and when are the indicated starting days?

There are two training sessions per year (March and October) with a duration of 3 to 5 months. The start is fixed on the 1st and 16th of March for the first session and the 1st and 16th of October for the second session. When indicating the duration of the professional training, there are different possibilities (three, four or five months). Once you have chosen and submitted your application, the duration can no longer be modified.

4. What is the Commission regulation of the NEPT Programme?

The Commission decision on the national experts N° C(2008)6866 of 12/11/2008, modified by the Commission decision C(2010)544 (*for the part concerning National Experts in Professional Training*) is the legal basis for the NEPT Programme. The Decision is available in all EU languages and sets out the rules under which the Commission selects and manages the seconded national experts. NEPTs are equivalent to cost-free national experts. They do not receive any allowances from the Commission, except the refund of expenses for work-related travel.

5. Who is eligible for the NEPT Programme?

To be eligible, the candidate must:

- be employed as an official or contract staff member by a public administration;
- have a thorough knowledge of one of the EU languages and a satisfactory knowledge of another EU language to the extent necessary for the performance of duties;
- not have been seconded as a national expert (SNEs) or benefited from any kind of contract or employment within a European institution. Since an internship is not an employment contract, a former trainee is eligible for the NEPT programme (e.g.,

ERASMUS programme for public administration or having been a trainee within the EU institutions; Blue Book, Schumann, or short traineeship in the office of an MEP).

6. Can the location of a NEPT traineeship be somewhere else than in Brussels where are the main Commission offices?

The main locations are Brussels, Luxembourg or Ispra, depending on the Directorate-General.

7. Can candidates also apply for EU agencies such as Frontex, Europol, EMA, EACEA, etc.?

Please note that we manage the NEPT programme for the Commission and EEAS. EU agencies do not fall under the scope of this programme, we recommend contacting them directly.

8. Is there a minimum length of work experience?

No. The aim of the NEPT programme is to raise awareness of European Affairs among young national civil servants and to provide them with an initial insight into the working methods within EU institutions.

9. What type of employment relationship will be considered as eligible for a NEPT?

The candidate must be employed by the current employer on a permanent or contract basis before the start of the secondment.

10. What level of knowledge of languages is necessary?

The linguistic requirements are specified in the vacancy notices. In general, NEPTs must produce evidence of a thorough knowledge of one of the EU languages and a satisfactory knowledge of another EU language to the extent necessary for the performance of his/her duties. Candidates from non-EU Member States must have thorough knowledge of one EU language necessary for the performance of the duties.

11. How can the candidate express the interest in participating in the NEPT Programme?

First check if there is a contact point to manage the NEPT Programme in the country of origin. NEPTs are chosen at national level through the internal procedures in place in each Member State. Once the selection procedure on national level is closed, the successful candidates are proposed by their Permanent Representation / Diplomatic Mission to the Commission. Information shall be available through the contact point, your employer, or the Permanent Representation / Mission to the European Union.

12. How can I submit my application?

To apply for a professional traineeship, fill out the application form (available through the contact point, your employer, or the Permanent Representation / Mission to the European Union). You can indicate up to three different units within the Commission (Directorates-General and Cabinets) and EEAS as a preference. We recommend

choosing areas/fields where your expertise or experience give the best match and, therefore, most chances of being selected. Directorates-General generally look for candidates whose professional profile, experience and/or studies are most relevant to their work. You can indicate only one priority if you wish to do so. There is no guarantee for the candidates to be appointed to one of the indicated preferences in the application form.

13. Is it compulsory to draft the CV in English, French or German using the Europass CV format?

Yes, you should submit the **Europass CV format** ([Create your Europass CV | Europass](#)). It must mention your nationality. Please do not add any other documents (such as copy of passport, copy of degrees or certificates of professional experience, etc.). If necessary, these will be requested at a later stage.

14. What is the timing for the different steps of the selection procedure?

Once the Commission has received your application and considered it eligible, it will transmit it to the three Directorates-General which you have indicated. First priority goes to the first Directorate-General on your list; second priority to the second one and the third Directorate-General may choose you if the first two have not done so. Although the Commission will do its best to ensure that you will be working in one of the three Directorates-General which you have indicated, there is no absolute guarantee that this will always happen. In case, none of the three Directorates-General has chosen you, your application becomes open to the other Directorates-General in the Commission who may offer you a place instead. Once a Directorate-General has made its choice, it will contact you to see whether you want to accept the offer.

15. I do not like the offer; it hardly matches with my profile. What should I do?

If you or your employer do not agree with this offer, you may withdraw your application for the current selection procedure (exercise) and apply again for another exercise. It can also happen that a few pre-selected candidates may not be selected by the Commission due to the limited number of places available. In this case, we strongly encourage unsuccessful candidates from the previous exercise to apply on the next.

16. Can I withdraw the application?

The only possibility for the candidate to withdraw his/her application for the current exercise is by sending an e-mail to the Permanent Representation, with a copy to the NEPT team (HR-ENFP@ec.europa.eu) and to the unit. The candidate may apply again for another exercise.

17. Is there any Commission service which can help me before I start?

In Brussels, Luxembourg and Ispra there is a Welcome Office of the Commission which can help you and your family settling down into life in Brussels and the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg. Some of the services may only be accessible if your secondment

starting date has been confirmed.

Brussels: the e-mail address is: HR-BXL-WELCOME-OFFICE@ec.europa.eu

Telephone: +32 229 66600

Luxembourg: the e-mail address is: HR-LUX-WELCOME-OFFICE@ec.europa.eu

Telephone: +352 4301 33000

Ispra: the e-mail address is: HR-JRC-ISPRA-WELCOME@ec.europa.eu

Should you wish to visit the offices, the staff kindly asks you to make an appointment beforehand.

18. [Is there any Expat welcome desk which can help me to settle in Brussels?](#)

There is a [Commissioner Brussels Office](#) which seeks to give practical assistance to officials and other staff working for the Community institutions, particularly in the following areas: assistance with and information concerning the administrative formalities they must complete to settle legally in the Brussels Capital Region; help with procedures for setting up home; general information regarding cultural activities. This office was opened by Brussels authorities to promote the image of Brussels vis-à-vis the Community institutions and their staff, and to make the population of Brussels more aware that their region has a role to play in Europe.

19. [Is there any Expat welcome desk which can help me to settle in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg?](#)

The Commission published a practical guide "[Soon in Luxembourg](#)" where you can find useful information. Moreover, the [Just Arrived Guide](#) is the reference guide for settling, living, working, and integrating in Luxembourg.

20. [The Joint Research Centre \(JRC\) has 6 locations in total. Where do I get relevant information?](#)

The NEPTs can be referred to the same central website [JRC newcomers](#) for newcomers as the rest of the JRC staff. The link includes both brochures and contact details for all staff categories, including NEPTs.

21. [How can I officially declare that I will work for the Commission before the start of the professional traineeship?](#)

The "traineeship certificate" is the only document that the European Commission provides to attest your professional traineeship. The certificate is sent in advance with the invitation package by e-mail.

22. [Do I need to request the A1 document?](#)

Yes. The aim of the A1 is to prove to Belgian social security / medical services that you are insured by your national social security (through your employer). The document is to be delivered by your national social security. The A1 form is also needed, for e.g. registration at the local town hall/commune in your place of secondment (within 3 months of arrival).

A1 form (formerly known as E101 and E 103) is a social security certificate proving that you pay social contributions in your home country. NEPTs are required to **request** the A1 form or a certificate of the competent organization certifying that they will remain subject throughout the period of the secondment to the social security legislation applicable to the civil service of employment, which will assume responsibility for expenses incurred abroad. Make sure which country's social security system should cover you.

From day one of your secondment, you are covered by ALLIANZ, a private insurance company, via the Commission against accidents (whether you are on mission, at work, on vacation). This supplementary accident coverage applies only to you and not to your family members.

23. Do I need to provide to DG.HR. B.1 the A1 document?

You do not need to provide us with the form. However, please have it with you in case of a medical appointment or when you go to the municipality to register.

24. How shall I proceed in case I suffer an accident?

The accident insurance ALLIANZ will cover the medical expenses that are not covered by the reimbursements of medical expenses of your national social security. In case of an accident, you should send a filled-in declaration of accident to the insurance company, as soon as possible. You should also contact your national social security service, in order to be reimbursed. Keep all the bills and reimbursement receipt notifications, as the insurance will ask for it. All trainees received the useful information and forms with the invitation email.

25. Is there any information session before the starting date of the professional training?

An interactive welcome session on specific aspects related to the NEPTs will be organised a few days after your taking-up of duties. You will receive an invitation in due time.

26. What are the daily working hours?

The normal working time is 8 hours per day on average (40 hours per week). Staff shall work mainly between 8.00 and 19.00. Staff should be available for interaction with other colleagues: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday - from 9.30 to 12.00 and 15.00 to 16.30 and Wednesday and Friday - from 9.30 to 12.00 and from 15.00 to 16.00

27. May I telework?

After the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has adopted a new flexible framework for our daily work, including new arrangements on working time, flexitime, and teleworking. In line with the new Decision on working time and hybrid working, all staff must come to the office **at least two days a week**.

It is recommended that you consult your Head of Unit/Advisor to check which days the staff should be present in the office (for meetings, to meet colleagues, etc.).

28. Should I register my daily working hours manually?

Yes, there is an obligation to record the time you have worked. This is a requirement under the Working Time Directive and it is necessary to verify compliance with your rights as a worker.

You should register your working hours in **Sysper – “time management”**. This is also where you need to indicate whether you have worked from home or from the office (or you were on mission). Sysper is set by default for 8 hours: 08.30-12.30 and 13.30-17.30. This can be changed to match the actual working hours.

29. Am I allowed to telework outside the place of employment?

The Commission Decision on working time and hybrid working applies to NEPTs as well. You may telework outside the place of employment for up to 10 days per calendar year, **subject to the agreement of your line manager**. Requests for teleworking outside the place of employment must be recorded in Sysper under occasional telework (“Telework away from the place of employment”). This request should include the address of the place from which you will be teleworking.

30. How to know who is my “GECO” (=Gestionnaire de congé)?

Go to the HR Commission database Sysper, select “My file”- “Time management” – “Working hours”. You click on the name of your GECO (in general more names appear) and follow the process.

31. How many days of holidays am I granted?

NEPTs are entitled to 2 days’ paid leave per month. This entitlement is acquired pro rata counting from the first day of the month. Leave needs to be agreed in advance with your advisor and possibly your Head of Unit. The request should be done personally in Sysper and validated by the hierarchy before you can go on leave. Moreover, the Commission is closed on public holidays, such as Christmas and Easter. A list for each year is updated and sent in advance with the invitation package.

32. Can I take part in the Commission’s official trainings?

Your participation is welcome; however, your advisor must be informed. Some trainings may require hierarchical approval. On **myIntracomm**, under ‘Top tools’ you find the database **EU LEARN** where many on-line courses are available, including eLearning language Courses platform goFLUENT. The time spent on the platform for personal interest is not counted as working time.

33. Do I need to register in Brussels?

For a short-term stay (max. 90 days), if you are not staying in a hotel, Airbnb’s or B&B, you have **10 working days (3 working days for non-EU citizens)** to go to the commune of your residence within the Brussels Region in order to make a declaration of arrival and legalise your stay. You will need the secondment certificate (sent by

email with all documents) and a valid ID card or passport. You will receive an "appendix 3ter" form (declaration of presence), which is the document that proves your presence on the Belgian territory. This document will be valid for a maximum of three months. The Commune does not issue a declaration of arrival to those who stay in a hotel, Airbnb, or B&B.

For long-term stay (90 days and more) you should apply for a Belgian ID Card. We recommend contacting your "Commune" (Maison Communale/Town hall) of the place of residence for the administrative procedure.

34. Do I need to make a declaration of arrival in Luxembourg?

Depending on your status, you have more or less time to fulfil this administrative obligation with the local authorities in your place of residence.

If you are a **citizen of the European Union**, and you stay **less than three months** there is no need for registration in the country. If you stay **longer than 3 months**, you must register in Luxembourg (**within 8 days**).

If you are a **national of another country**, you must fulfil this obligation **within 3 days** of your arrival in Luxembourg. However, before you arrive, make sure you have a **visa or residence permit**. More information on [Just Arrived](#).

Non-EU spouses or registered partners need to have a valid visa for Luxembourg. This does not apply to citizens from the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) and Switzerland.

If you are leaving Luxembourg permanently, you must also declare your departure to your last commune of residence.

35. Am I entitled to the contribution towards my commuting expenses in Brussels?

No. The contribution is reserved for the statutory staff (officials, temporary staff and contract agents) in activity, working in the Commission.

36. Am I entitled to the contribution towards my commuting expenses in Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg?

Since 1 March 2020, public transport became free throughout the Grand-Duchy, except for first-class trains. The Jobkaart and M-Pass seasonal ticket disappear.

37. I am planning to bring the car from abroad to Belgium. Are there any rules to be followed?

Since 1 January 2018, the Brussels-Capital region is a "Low-Emission Zone" the access to which is prohibited to the most polluting vehicles. Failure to comply with the access criteria will result in a fine (not payable by the Commission). If you plan to use your personal vehicle for your professional travel to Brussels, please read the information provided on [this link](#).

38. May I use Commission parking spots for my personal vehicle?

You may access the parking of the Commission building with the “Certificate of access and parking pass”. Please note that in some buildings is required to book a parking place via the application. Be aware that you will be able to access the application once your professional training has started.

39. How and when I get the IT equipment?

It is up to your Directorate-General to take the necessary steps to request it from the corporate service in charge, DG DIGIT (Digital services), which will then contact you to set up an appointment.

40. How do I access the buildings?

In order to prepare your arrival, you should contact the Directorate in charge of Security to arrange an appointment to receive an access badge to the Commission premises (**you already received the application form, please bring it with you**).

The contact details of the service in charge are the following: HR-DS-CARTES-DE-SERVICE-BRUXELLES@ec.europa.eu; tel. +32-2-29 56654.

To manually book a suitable appointment at their new office in **PLB3 001/ P083 (3, rue Philippe Le Bon)**, please indicate your availabilities dates and times during the opening hours from your first day onwards (several possibilities please).

Please note that a badge cannot be issued before the date of entry into service.

Open working days from 8h30 till 16h30 (appointment slots from 08h30-12h20' & 13h30'-16h10').

While waiting for your appointment, as long as you are encoded in SYSPER, you can simply go to the guards at the reception and request a replacement badge.

No escort needed once in the building.

41. Will I get a professional mobile phone from the Commission?

Very few staff members have a professional mobile phone. At work, we mainly use MS teams, skype for business and other similar tools to communicate via our computers.

42. May I use the services of restaurants and cafeterias?

Yes. Bank cards and cash (less and less) may be used for payments. Members of your family and your guests may also use these facilities as visitors, if accompanied by somebody with staff badge.

43. Do the family members and guests get the access to the Commission buildings?

Yes. Members of your family and your guests may also use these facilities as visitors through the ID card or passport, if accompanied by somebody with staff badge.

44. If I get ill, who shall I contact?

Inform your immediate superior/or the secretariat of your unit as soon as possible. In the event of illness exceeding **3 calendar days**, a medical certificate is compulsory and is to be sent to the Medical Service (E-mail: HR-BXL-CERTIFICATS-MEDICAUX@ec.europa.eu). You are not obliged to send a copy of the medical certificate to your unit as this is personal information.

45. Can I take part on business trips for which the designation, “mission” is used?

NEPTs can indeed leave on a mission with the Head of Unit approval. The mission expenses are refunded according to the relevant rules and conditions. To be reimbursed for mission expenses, a copy of the financial documents (legal entity form and financial identification form + id card) have to be sent prior the start of the first mission to the Paymaster's Office (PMO.8) to : PMO-BUDGET-PAIEMENT-MASSE-MIS@ec.europa.eu

46. Do I need to send you the legal entity and financial identification forms?

No. The ‘legal entity’ and ‘financial identification’ forms will only be useful if you need to go on “mission” (at the request or with the authorisation of your Head of Unit).

Indeed, to be reimbursed for mission expenses, a copy of the financial documents (legal entity form and financial identification form + id card) have to be sent prior the start of the first mission to the Paymaster's Office (PMO.8) to : PMO-BUDGET-PAIEMENT-MASSE-MIS@ec.europa.eu

You received the documents in advance so that you can have them completed by your bank. Sometimes the bank stamp is also required and so it is easier to do it in the country of origin. An alternative to the stamp is to join a recent bank extract which clearly shows: your name and bank account number, your bank's name, and address as well as your IBAN code.

Therefore, please **keep the forms** legal entity and financial identification for future use (in case of mission).

47. What happens after the termination of the Professional Training?

After the end of the professional traineeship, the NEPTs take back to their home administration the knowledge of EU policies and experience acquired during the period of secondment. Both sides benefit from the exchange and network. Even after leaving, NEPTs still have to act towards the European Union with loyalty, integrity, and discretion. Eventually and if their application is endorsed by their sending authorities, the NEPT can join the Commission as SNE “seconded national expert” or follow a variety of career paths offered by the EU institutions.

48. What is the last step before the termination of the Professional Training?

NEPTs who have completed the stipulated professional training period shall complete **the evaluation reports** requested by the Directorate-General for Personnel and Administration at the end of their traineeship. Training advisors must also complete the relevant evaluation report.

Subject to the completion of these reports, NEPTs who have completed their professional traineeships shall receive a certificate showing the dates of the professional training and the department in which it took place.