

Communication from Vice-President KINNOCK to the Commission
Guidelines on Mobility

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. ENCOURAGING MOBILITY WITHIN THE COMMISSION.....	3
2.1.General approach to encouraging mobility within the Commission	4
2.2.Improving the organisational framework for filling vacant posts	4
2.3.Introducing benchmarks	6
Generalists	6
Specialists	7
Sensitive posts.....	8
2.4.Transfers in the interests of the service	9
3. ROLE OF THE DIFFERENT ACTORS	10
3.1.The role of the individual official.....	10
3.2.The role of line managers	10
3.3.The role of the human resources units in the directorates-general	10
3.4.Role of the Personnel and Administration DG.....	11

1. INTRODUCTION

Mobility can be defined as changing your job or your working environment. It may be a change in the type of work you do (new tasks, implying a new job description), either within the same unit or in another unit, directorate or directorate-general, or even a post outside the Institution. But it may also involve changing unit, directorate or directorate-general while continuing to do the same kind of job.

Mobility has two basic aims: the first is to satisfy the requirements of the Institution in terms of performance, efficiency and quality of service, enabling the organisation to adapt to an ever-changing environment. The second is to meet the needs of the individual in terms of interest, challenge, achievement and career development. When properly managed, mobility can thus be beneficial to both the Institution and the individual.

Two sets of Articles in the Staff Regulations are of direct relevance to mobility: firstly, Articles 4, 7 and 29, which relate to movements within and between the European Institutions; and secondly, Articles 37, 38, 39 and 40, which relate to movements outside the Institution.

These guidelines set out a policy¹ to encourage and facilitate mobility within the Commission. They are based on the principle that mobility is voluntary².

2. ENCOURAGING MOBILITY WITHIN THE COMMISSION

About 1 000 officials³ of all grades change directorate-general or department each year. That figure does not include moves within a directorate-general, for which accurate figures are difficult to obtain.

Although these figures suggest that mobility is a success, there still remain a great many obstacles. A policy is therefore needed which will facilitate mobility and highlight the essential role it plays in both career development and the optimum placement of staff.

¹ The mobility of officials in top management posts is governed by a Commission Decision of 29 September 1999, which provides for regular rotation of grade A 1 and A 2 officials (every five to seven years), and recently confirmed by the Commission Communication on the appraisal, selection and appointment of senior Commission officials [SEC(2000) 2305/5, 21 December 2000]. The mobility rules for middle managers are set out in the Commission Communication of 30 October 2001.

² There is, however, one exception to the rule that mobility is voluntary: namely the case of sensitive posts. Officials in such posts will be required to change jobs at the end of a period fixed in advance for each post.

³ For the ten-year period 1990-99, the number of officials who changed posts in the context of inter-departmental mobility amounted to 8 669. The figure for 1999 is 1 058.

2.1. General approach to encouraging mobility within the Commission

The Commission's policy is to facilitate and encourage mobility within the Institution. Above all, this involves:

- increasing transparency and objectivity when filling vacant posts, by improving the procedures from publication of a vacant post to induction of the new jobholder;
- introducing benchmarks. These are merely indicators and are in no way compulsory, but they should enable officials and their departments to assess their careers and professional development within the Commission.

This policy gives both officials and the directorates-general the means they need to organise mobility to suit their specific needs. Direct responsibility for implementing and monitoring the measures in place to implement mobility lies with the personnel departments of each directorate-general, leaving the Personnel and Administration DG to assist and evaluate the implementation of the guidelines throughout the Commission.

2.2. Improving the organisational framework for filling vacant posts

In order for officials and directorates-general to organise mobility in the best way, the procedures for filling vacant posts must be as fair and transparent as possible. The following measures will therefore be implemented:

- (1) Publication of vacant posts: in order to provide greater transparency for the officials concerned and a larger pool of potential applicants for the manager concerned to choose from, all vacant posts will be systematically published at central level on the Commission's intranet⁴. The directorates-general can of course devise additional means of advertising to attract internal applicants.
- (2) Deadlines for publishing vacant posts: Vacant posts should be published as soon as the jobholder has been officially selected for a new post, with the consequence that his or her current post is about to fall vacant. Posts should be published in all cases by the time they become vacant.
- (3) Content of vacancy notices: The vacancy notice will be based on the job description and must specify clearly all the requirements for the post.
- (4) Applying for a post: officials applying for a post must:
 - fill in a standard application form,

⁴ Vacancy notices continue to be published on paper for officials who do not have access to EUROPAplus and for posting in each building.

- provide a curriculum vitae following the format recommended by the Commission recommendation for a standard format for curricula vitae (CV)⁵ and
 - attach a letter explaining the reasons for their interest in the post.
- (5) Notification to the manager(s): The department of origin will not be informed about an official's application unless the official decides otherwise⁶.
- (6) Selection procedure: During the selection procedure, applicants will be judged solely on the basis of their qualifications and in strict compliance with equal opportunities so as to achieve the best possible match between an individual's profile and the job requirements.
- (7) Selection interviews: All the officials considered eligible by the new head of unit, except for applicants who are clearly not qualified, will be invited for an interview using standard interview grids. The directorates-general will be responsible for organising selection interviews in their departments in accordance with their requirements. However, it is recommended that a representative of the human resources unit be present during interviews.

If no applicant meets the requirements, the directorates-general and departments concerned may open a new procedure to fill the vacant post. The new procedure must start no later than four weeks after the previous decision to reject all applications.

- (8) Notification to unsuccessful applicants: The head of unit will inform unsuccessful applicants **verbally**, or in writing if he or she prefers, as to why they have not been selected within one week of the decision.
- (9) Period of notice: Where staff move to another directorate-general or service, their managers must release them within 20 working days unless otherwise agreed by all parties.

Officials can be allowed to work part-time in their new post, on terms to be agreed by the two departments concerned. If this is impossible to arrange, the departing official must still be allowed to return to his/her former department for some of the time basis to brief his/her successor.

- (10) Briefing files: To ease transition, all officials leaving their post in a directorate-general must prepare a **briefing file** for their successor summing up the state of play of the departing official's tasks and giving clear indications on where essential documents can be found so that on-going work can be continued. Managers will be responsible for ensuring that a briefing file is prepared before an official is transferred. If no file has been prepared, the official's departure to his/her new post may be delayed.

⁵ Commission Recommendation of on a standard format for curricula vitae (CV).

⁶ This measure has already been introduced under MAP 2000.

- (11) Induction at the new place of work: New arrivals should be helped to settle in by having their basic **working tools** ready for them (including office space, telephone, and computer equipment) and by appointing a colleague to help them adjust to the new working environment ('**coaching**'). Where appropriate, training should be provided.

2.3. Introducing benchmarks

The Commission's need for well-qualified and motivated staff so that it can adapt to ever-changing circumstances means that officials should be invited to take stock of their professional development at certain points in their careers. These points can be determined ahead of time by introducing "benchmarks". It should be stressed that these benchmarks are not compulsory and may not be imposed on officials, unless they occupy 'sensitive' posts (see point 2.3.3.), in which case mobility is compulsory.

The introduction of benchmarks in no way prevents the directorates-general from setting up their own organised mobility or career development arrangements inside the DG if they so wish.

2.3.1. *Generalists*

- (1) Scope: It should be remembered that benchmarks are not compulsory. However, they can provide general guidance to individuals and departments without imposing a job change.
- (2) The duration of benchmark periods:
- As a rule, officials should consider changing jobs once they have spent at least **two** (minimum period) but not more than **five** years in the same job (regular period).
 - Newly recruited officials should acquire broad experience at the beginning of their career. A reasonable period for a new official to remain in a first assignment would therefore be **three** years.
 - Individuals aged 55 and above who wish to remain in their post may do so. However, they may be asked to take on other activities like coaching new officials joining the unit.
- (3) Organising and monitoring benchmarks: the local human resource units in the directorate-generals are responsible for implementing and monitoring mobility. They should inform officials when a benchmark is approaching, give them advice on a possible change of post and provide help and support once they decide to start looking for a new job:
- One year before the end of the benchmark period for a given job, the official concerned will be reminded by the directorate-general's human resource unit that he or she will soon reach the benchmark. The official will then have to decide whether to actively prepare for a change of jobs.

- If an official wishes to change jobs, the human resources unit and, if necessary, the Central Career Guidance Function, can advise on the options.
 - Where an official wishes to move to a new job at the end of the benchmark period and has applied for several posts without success, the local career officer in the directorate-general, in collaboration with the Central Career Guidance Function, will provide relevant assistance, including specific training if necessary.
- (4) Ex-post monitoring: Directors-General will include information on actual mobility of officials belonging to their directorate-general in their annual activity report, so that the Personnel and Administration DG can verify the commitment of all the directorates-general to implementing the current guidelines.

2.3.2 *Specialists*

A general benchmarking approach is more difficult to implement when the **post** to be filled requires specific qualifications in terms of prior education, expertise or both. "Specialist posts" arise where the only potential jobholders must have specific education and expertise in order to carry out the tasks.

The problem in this case is how to fill vacancies that specialists leave behind when they move. The difficulty for the Commission is to find a proper balance between the need to offer good career prospects to all its staff and the costs (recruitment, training) it is ready to incur in order to replace good specialists who move to a more general field of activity. Moreover, the officials concerned do not often have an express wish to leave their field entirely.

For these reasons, the policy for dealing with mobility for specialists cannot follow the same lines as for generalists and a more flexible case-by-case approach is therefore recommended, based on the following principles:

- (1) Save in exceptional circumstances, specialists like interpreters, translators and computer experts can normally expect to remain in their professional field. When an official holding a specialist post changes jobs, therefore, the post left vacant will probably be filled by another specialist.

In such situations, departments employing large numbers of specialists can set up their own arrangements for cross-mobility or rotation to facilitate mobility among their staff.

- (2) On top of longer term postings, mobility may be complemented by short-term assignments, where people might be posted to another area for a period of a few months to two or three years, for example to work on a special project.
- (3) In close collaboration with the Personnel and Administration DG, therefore, each directorate-general will draw up a list of all its specialist posts and propose an appropriate course of action for each of them.

2.3.3. *Sensitive posts*

For posts classified as "sensitive", i.e. where the requirements of the post are such that a regular turnover of staff should be the norm (e.g. officials responsible for authorising payments, purchasing goods, determining rights, etc.), the benchmark periods for a change in job will be **compulsory** with a maximum of five years.

- (1) Definition of sensitive posts: In compliance with the standards for internal control adopted by the Commission on 13 December 2000, the Budget DG has established guidelines on identifying sensitive posts⁷ in the directorates-general, which will then use these guidelines to draw up a list of all the sensitive posts in their departments.

A function can be characterised as being sensitive:

- By the nature of the activity itself: this could be the case of all activities where a high degree of personal judgement for taking decisions with financial implications is involved, e.g. officials taking decisions in the area of procurements or contracts.
- By the context where the activity is carried out: this could apply for functions dealing with policy-making where officials could be subject to pressures to disclose sensitive information that might endanger the interests of the Commission.

Thus a sensitive function is one where, through the nature and/or context of the activity involved, there is judged to be an enhanced risk of financial impropriety or potential conflict of interest which could be detrimental to the Commission.

- (2) Benchmarks: Before an official takes up a sensitive post, he or she will be informed by the human resources unit of the directorate-general concerned that the post is sensitive and that he/she will be required to change jobs at the end of the benchmark period. The duration of benchmark periods is maximum five years.
- (3) Publication of vacancies: In order to enhance transparency and offer guidance to officials seeking a new assignment, one year before the end of the benchmark period directorates-general and departments will publish on the intranet a prior announcement listing all the sensitive posts due to become free in the near future.
- (4) Transfer in the interests of the service: Where an official holding a sensitive post has not been assigned to another post at the end of the benchmark period, he or she may be transferred by the appointing authority⁸ with the post under

⁷ See Mr Mingasson's note No 72141 of 14 May 2001.

⁸ The powers of the appointing authority and of the authority responsible for concluding contracts of employment currently provide (at October 2001) that transfers in the interests of the service within a directorate-general will be decided by the director-general. By contrast, transfers in the interests of the service between directorates-general will be decided by the director-general of the Personnel and Administration DG, which is the appointing authority for all officials except those holding a management position, to whom the so-called "six-day" procedure will apply.

Article 7(1) of the Staff Regulations. Such transfers can be within or between directorates-general.

Transfers in the interests of the service between directorates-general raise the problem of compensation, as officials move with their posts. This means that, as a rule, the directorate-general of destination should compensate the directorate-general of origin by transferring a post to it. Such compensation may involve transferring either a vacant post or an official holding a similar post in the interests of the service (cross-mobility).

- (5) Role of the Personnel and Administration DG: Once the sensitive posts are clearly identified, the Personnel and Administration DG will be responsible for ensuring that the officials holding those posts abide by their obligation to change jobs at the end of their benchmark period.

In the case of transfers in the interests of the service, it will be left to the Personnel and Administration DG to decide whether compensation should take place immediately or not. In practice, when compensation is deemed necessary, adjustments can always be made as part of the annual resource allocation exercise.

2.4. Transfers in the interests of the service

Under Article 7(1) of the Staff Regulations, officials can be reassigned with their posts to another unit in the interests of the service. These transfers can be within or between directorates-general.

Transfers in the interests of the service are the exception to the general rule of voluntary mobility. The official must always be informed and consulted beforehand except in urgent or exceptional cases. Such transfers will take place, notably, in the following cases.

- When benchmarks are compulsory and the official concerned has not moved to a different job at the end of the period. This is the case for officials occupying sensitive posts.
- In cases where benchmarks are not compulsory, but the parent department considers, in particular, that the official is no longer performing to the high standard normally expected (See document "Maintaining professional standards"). In such cases, the appointing authority may decide to transfer the official within the directorate-general or request that the Personnel and Administration DG transfer him or her to another directorate-general.
- Where the parent department considers that there is a mismatch between an official's qualifications and skills and the requirements of the job. In such cases, it is worth considering moving the official to a post better suiting his or her profile.
- In general, when another department urgently needs reinforcement for an assignment matching the specific profile of the official concerned.

3. ROLE OF THE DIFFERENT ACTORS

3.1. The role of the individual official

Individual officials should be aware that mobility is beneficial because it will enhance their motivation, their level of qualification and their range of contacts within the Commission. Since mobility is considered as an asset for the curriculum vitae, it can improve their career prospects.

3.2. The role of line managers

For mobility to operate effectively, it will be important for line managers to play an active role in promoting and implementing the Commission's policy on mobility and actively to support the career development of their staff. To that end, managers should look to the wider needs of the directorate-general and the Commission and ensure that their staff develop the sort of skills in their job which they may need to ease their next career move. In particular, managers should:

- play a central role in the induction of officials arriving in their unit,
- encourage their staff to follow training,
- allow their staff to leave at the end of the benchmark period.

The evaluation of managers under the new career-development report system will include an assessment of their commitment to implementing the new policy on mobility. Technical support and specific training will be provided to enable managers to play their role fully.

3.3. The role of the human resources units in the directorates-general

Overall responsibility for organising and monitoring mobility lies with the human resources units of each directorate-general. They should ensure that line managers abide by these guidelines and, in particular, that they take account of the interests of the whole directorate-general or department as well as those of the person concerned when selecting candidates for a vacant post. Specifically, the human resources units are expected to inform officials when they will soon be reaching the benchmark and to draw up a list each year of officials in sensitive posts who must change jobs.

Where an official holding a sensitive post has not moved to a new job by the end of the benchmark period, the human resources unit is responsible for proposing appropriate action to the appointing authority after consulting the local careers officer.

In addition, close monitoring of movements will allow the human resource units to detect potential problems in certain units or departments (atmosphere, interest of the work, management style) and discuss them with the managers concerned. In this context, the human resource units can receive back-up from the network of careers officers, which is coordinated by the Central Career Guidance Function (CCGF). The recommendations on individual career prospects made by the career officers should be useful in assisting the selection process once vacancies have been published.

3.4. Role of the Personnel and Administration DG

The Personnel and Administration DG will play a three-fold role in the context of mobility:

- (1) Monitoring: The Personnel and Administration DG will ensure that the new guidelines are actually applied. To do this it will analyse the data on internal mobility presented by the directorates-general in their annual activity reports as well as the lists they supply, with a view to checking whether the overall policy on mobility is being implemented in accordance with these guidelines. This information will be used to determine whether further adjustments to the policy are needed.

The Personnel and Administration DG will also check that applicants for management posts have previously occupied a sufficient number of different positions relevant to the post concerned.

- (2) Implementation: The Personnel and Administration DG will check and ensure that officials holding sensitive posts abide by the mandatory rules on mobility. Where it finds that an official is still in the same post at the end of the benchmark period and that no transfer within the directorate-general has been possible, the Personnel and Administration DG will transfer the official with his/her post to another directorate-general in the interests of the service in accordance with Article 7(1) of the Staff Regulations. Compensation to the directorate-general of origin will be decided case by case.
- (3) Support: The CCGF and the network of decentralised career officers will act as mobility 'help-desks' by offering guidance to individuals on career prospects throughout their working lives. The CCGF will play an important role in cases where a career spans several directorates-general.
