



Learning together

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David Walker, EAS Director

EP Newshound
June 2005

WHO IS DAVID WALKER?

"I've been an EU official for just over 31 years, most of that time responsible for HR management - including training - in some shape or form. I was head of the Commission's training unit from 1997 to 2000 and, for the past four years, resource director in SCIC, the joint interpreting and conference service."

WHY DID YOU ACCEPT THE EAS JOB?

"It is extremely challenging to start a new venture: an opportunity you don't get very often in the institutions. Also, believe it or not, I actually enjoy working in an interinstitutional environment. I think there is a very clear added value in training thanks to the interinstitutional dimension. There are not that many examples of areas that have become successfully interinstitutional."

WHY HAVE WE SET UP THE EAS?

"There will be some financial savings (although my view is that the main reason for setting up the school is not economic): If you have one body [the EAS] handling the outsourcing of training instead of several institutions then you save money and time and have a more coherent product. I think the potential for savings will grow as the school grows (assuming the EAS is a success). The EAS will also widen the scope of training on offer."

Secondly, the job of a manager, for example, is broadly the same across the institutions - they all have to manage staff, motivate people, achieve objectives, deploy resources, etc. So I think it makes sense to deliver the same sort of product across the institutions. The fact that there will be participants from many institutions on training courses can only be beneficial in the long term to the way the institutions are run. I am not starry eyed about this or naively optimistic but I do think there will be scope for creating networks and a better understanding of how the institutions really work in practice."

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GENESIS OF THE EAS

"The original idea was being kicked about in the 1990s and the first formal trace is in the commission's white paper on reform. In 2002, the institutions' SGs set up an interinstitutional working party to come up with detailed proposals on the school's tasks, added value and operational makeup. It was a long gestation process!"

WHAT IS THE IDEA BEHIND THE EAS?

"It is a body designed to provide professional training that is relevant in the workplace where the needs of the institutions and their staff are broadly similar. What it is not is an academic/

university-type body or a 'competitor' for the institutions' own training units. These maintain a clear role in providing institution-specific training. By the same token, the EAS is not a competitor to outside institutes or schools of public administration (EIPA, college of Europe, etc.), although the EAS will play an active role in the network of schools of public administration across the EU."

WHAT DOES THE EAS DO?

The school's three operating areas, for the time being, are certification, management and induction:

- **Certification** is the mechanism ushered in by the new staff regulations whereby ASTs can become ADs, after following a compulsory training programme and passing the subsequent examinations. "The EAS is entirely responsible for this 300hour-training programme. Everyone will have to take the

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Activities:	certification, management & induction training
Staff:	18 (6 ADs + 8 ASTs + 4 contractuels)
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'common core' (70%), which will concentrate on 'traditional' skills (rather than knowledge) that all administrators need, in fields such as communication, problem solving, negotiation, juggling priorities and so forth. In addition, there will be specific courses (30%) that are more knowledge based and here the institutions have identified five or six key areas - such as working in committee secretariats, audit or law - to choose from. It is here that the obligation for the institutions to provide the EAS with internal trainers will be particularly important. Our big challenge is now to get the certification training programme in place by the end of this year."

The EAS will work with EPSO to design the **certification tests**. We will, I hope, look at innovative ways of assessing candidates - not just traditional written and oral tests. A lot of the training is skills based and practically oriented, which ; it does not lend itself simply to writing an essay. An interinstitutional selection board will monitor this process."

- Our very first interinstitutional **middle management** course began on 10 May 2005. It features four 2-day modules spread over a period of about three months. The school's mandate refers to staff in (or with the potential to hold)

management positions. We have chosen to interpret that narrowly [i.e. existing HoUs] to begin with. Once we have launched certification training, I think we will revisit that definition because there is room for the EAS to be more ambitious and offer courses to a wider audience."

- The four-day **induction** course has been interinstitutional since June 2004 and is running well, although we will of course continue to monitor it closely. I would personally like to see more in-house content."

IS THE EAS LOOKING TO BRANCH OUT?

"I would imagine this project will become much bigger as time goes on. It would make sense sooner rather than later for the EAS to take over interinstitutional language training. In time, whatever the area, where the institutions' training needs are broadly similar, the EAS should be responsible. If you sat down with the training programmes of the institutions, you would find 70-80% of the content overlaps. Over the next five years, these courses could flow gradually to the EAS. Nonetheless, there will always be a need for specific tailor-made (non-EAS) training within each institution. We will need to uphold the subsidiarity principle, even if some form of 'variable geometry' does develop."

WHERE IS THE SCHOOL BASED?

The school's HQ - and most of the staff - is in Brussels; there is an antenna in Luxembourg. However, there is no discrimination. "Luxembourg is absolutely equal to Brussels. We organise management and induction courses in Luxembourg and will organise certification courses there too. Staff outside headquarters will represent a challenge for certification training but we shall do all we can to ensure there is no discrimination."

WHO HAS A SAY IN THE RUNNING OF THE EAS?

"I don't think the EAS represents a **loss of autonomy** for the EP or any institution: au contraire. There is no legal reason why any single institution should steamroller its way through the management board. The basic rule is one institution, one vote, despite their different relative sizes. As for course places, my aim is to satisfy the requests that I get from all the institutions and look on an annual basis to ensure there has been a fair share of places among the institutions."

I have absolutely no problem with **staff representatives** providing input; I have always been very pro dialogue and I think my track record shows that. The last management board expressed a favourable opinion to staff consultation. It is now in the hands of the staff representatives to start the ball rolling if an interinstitutional consultative committee is going to evolve. I would see such a body, linked to each institution's own joint committee [CCPP], as a flexible forum for permanent dialogue so that ideas from staff representatives of all institutions can feed into the EAS. In any information process, the nearer the players are to each other the better."

EAS AND EPSO: MOTHER & DAUGHTER OR CO-LOCATAIRES?

The EAS founding texts stipulated that the EAS would be administratively attached to EPSO for the first three years of its existence. "There are some obvious advantages to this: we don't have to devote as many of our limited resources to support functions, for example. In my eyes the decision was taken for purely functional reasons. We will see how that evolves. Because the head of the EAS is now filled at director level, in practice the head of EPSO does not need to be involved in the day-to-day running of the school and has, for example, designated me as authorising officer. So, from a practical point of view, the school is operationally independent."

NEW EP in-house trainers

The EAS is not the only training novelty. In the 2005 budget, the EP agreed to create four new posts for internal trainers (2 ADs, 2 ASTs).

Why? The Leitmotif of our new training policy is focusing training courses on the genuine workplace needs of our institution and its staff. As external providers do not always fit the bill satisfactorily in all areas, we now have four 'experts' from different fields, all with a sound knowledge of the way the EP works, who can design and deliver tailor-made courses.

Who are they? The new colleagues recently recruited to carry out this task (see also p. 8 'In the news') are:

In-house trainer	Area(s) of experience
Jacques Hincx (AD) - BRU	information policy; EP committees
Mme Marie-Noëlle Husson (AST) - BRU	personnel & HR procedures
Pierre Parreau-Verdier (AST) - LUX	budgets & finance
Darryl Whiteley (AD) - LUX	plenary procedures; languages

Some of the new courses should kick off in the autumn. For more information on core-skills courses ('toolkit training') see europarl-inside/officials & other staff/professional training.





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