

EAS is launched



The new inter-institutional training centre, created on 26th January 2005 by all the European institutions, was launched at an opening ceremony held last Friday in the Charlemagne building. The European Administrative School's (Ecole européenne d'administration) mission is to promote

co-operation among the institutions in the area of training, support the spread of common values and good practice, and create synergies in the use of human and financial resources.

About 180 people from all the institutions as well as outside training schools were present to hear Roger Grass, Registrar of the Court of Justice and Chairman of the Management Board, open proceedings. He pointed out that the School has been established as a direct result of the reform proposals of 2000. Unlike EPSO, which was created to cope with the exponential expansion of staff selection caused by enlargement, the School has not been set up to

"do better" or "do more with less". It is designed to promote a common culture specific to the institutions and their staff and is at the very heart of the concept of a European public service.

European Parliament Vice-President Dagmar Roth-Behrendt welcomed the initiative and felt its success was demonstrated by the fact that several institutions, including the EP, claimed to be the first to suggest such a school. It is a further testimony to staff development and the importance the institutions place in the role of staff. She hopes that the School will become a model of excellence for the Member States and will contribute to EU colleagues being part of the "best civil service in the world".

The keynote speech by Professor Jean-François Manzoni was lively and thought provoking. He felt Europe was "a bit stuck" and needs to continue to change and reform. But there are a number of pre-conditions: a credible top management and leadership, a fair process (turkeys don't vote for Christmas!) and a healthy sense of self-confidence. He approved of the School's motto: Mahatma Gandhi's saying "Learn as if you were to live forever". He posed nine questions for a successful change process: do enough people understand why we must change?; whose support do we need?; what is the vision we are proposing?; what is the credible plan to get there?; how can we communicate more and



From left to right: Professor Jean-François Manzoni, EP Vice-President Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, Chairman of the Management Board Roger Grass, Vice-President Siim Kallas and Director of the EAS David Walker — (Photo : Médiathèque CE).

more effectively?; what obstacles will we face?; what are the quick wins?; how will we re-energize the effort?; and how can we make the change part of the culture? His conclusion! "We must raise our ambitions. When I was six, I wanted to be a cook. When I was seven, I wanted to be Napoleon. Since then my ambition has grown steadily".

David Walker, Director of the school, then presented a short video describing the School's activities and which underlines in particular the added value it can provide thanks to its inter-institutional dimension.

Vice-President Siim Kallas concluded the

ceremony by stating how he has always been a great believer in the importance for an organisation of developing the talents of its existing staff members. "There is sometimes a tendency to think that we don't have the resources we need, when often the problem is that we haven't spotted the potential among the colleagues we have in our organisation. The certification procedure is an ambitious attempt to remedy this weakness".

The School is expected to make a major contribution to staff development across the institutions for the foreseeable future.

> Denis Mc Gowan

Women and men: building equality together!

International Women's Day aims to commemorate, recognise or make known the role and/or the status of women in society, whether it is in social and professional life or in the private sphere. The Commission has been celebrating International Women's Day for several years, through a conference it organises for its staff.

In recent years, the themes of the conference made it possible to pay tribute to the women of Kabul, to consider the role and place of women in the media, to examine the impact of enlargement on women in the applicant countries, to consider the status of Moslem women in Europe, etc.

For 2006, it is proposed to adopt a rather different perspective, by considering the role of women and of men in the construction and implementation of equal opportunities policy. But why speak about men on a day that is supposed to be dedicated to women? Quite simply because, on the one hand, it is not possible to continue developing equal opportunities policy without involving men in the process and, on the other hand, because the policy concerns them too and can benefit them more than they may initially expect.

Equal opportunities policy for women and men was first established, in Europe as well as within the Commission, to make it possible for women to find and take their place in professional life in what then was, effectively, a man's world. To this end, equal opportunities policy had generally consisted of defending, protecting and promoting

women as being under-represented in working life and, when they did participate, being lower paid and their contribution less recognised. As a consequence, gender equality policy today tends to be wrongly regarded as a policy for women. However, it is a structural policy which is directed at both sexes.

If we wish to continue advancing gender equality policy, it is essential that men are associated with it in order to re-align the relative positions of women and men, having regard to social, professional and personal development, and to build together new elements to the policy, in order to make it even more effective, to the benefit of everyone.

To facilitate the presentation and discussion of the topic, one or more of the themes described below could be examined in more detail by speakers who will take part in the conference of 7th March 2006:

- **The challenges placed on men by the policy of equal opportunities:** to agree to share power and decision-making; accept professional and social changes; reconsider the models they use to make comparisons and by which they make evaluations (masculine terms of reference); re-assess the centrality and the value of working life, to the detriment of private life;
- **The challenges for women to take up:** to work in a man's world, without trying to resemble men at any cost; find and assume their own way of being and of working; learn the existing rules of professional life established by men and create new rules together; establish networks equivalent to those of men; help

men to redefine their role;

- **The contributions women can make to men via equal opportunities policies:** an increase in the competences available in the professional world; new concepts of work or of working methods; the implementation of policies to ensure a better reconciliation of professional and private life for everyone;
- **The barriers to a successful equal opportunities policy:** perpetuation of societal myths and sexist stereotypes; the continuation of violence against women (including in the professional world, e.g. harassment); resistance to change and the defence of privilege; the lack of reference points and role models for both sexes; solving practical difficulties, such as using new work methods to allow the reconciliation of professional and private life;
- **The stakes and contributions of a successful equal opportunities policy:** meet the economic needs of an ageing society (ensure the participation of all the labour force and the contribution of necessary skills); redefine the roles of men and of women in a changing society; ensure a place for everyone in professional life, in accordance with their competences and capabilities (including in terms of wages); allow men and women to find their role in their private lives; ensure equality without requiring things to be the same (different but equal); consider equality beyond reference to male standards; end vertical and horizontal segregation in working life.

> Andrea Gabriela Unkrig

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE

Tuesday 7th March 2006
from 12.30 to 14.30 hrs

Women and Men: Building Equality Together!

Brussels: rue de la Loi 170: Charlemagne Building – Room S3
Videoconference with Luxembourg, Ispra, Petten, Geel, Karlsruhe, Seville and Grange.

12.30: Opening by Vice-President Siim Kallas

12.45: President José Manuel Barroso

13.00: Catherine Day
Secretary-General

13.15: Anne-Marie Devreux
Sociologist and researcher

13.30: Waqar Azmi
Chief diversity adviser
of the British Government

13.45: Mr Lars Jalmert
Expert and former member of the
Swedish Council of Work Life Research

14.00: Debate