



**AIACE**

**International Association of Former Staff of the European Union**

*More than 12.000 members – open to former employees of the EU institutions and all bodies*

The President



## **Work Programme 2018-2020**

### **A changing context**

Throughout its existence, AIACE has adapted to the evolution of the Union, as it changed with in line with the varying contexts in terms both of the process of European integration and Institutional development. The successive waves of administrative and statutory reform of the European Civil Service were significant chapters in this process.

This process continues apace, and new challenges present themselves. This draft Work Programme is an attempt to acknowledge the changes going on around us, by ensuring that AIACE continues to develop and foster the positive contributions it has made in such areas as the pension and sickness insurance schemes, whilst showing itself capable of meeting new and perhaps unforeseen challenges.

### **1. Cooperation with the European Institutions**

AIACE's whole approach is based on the spirit of active cooperation which inspired the 2008 Agreement between the European Commission and AIACE. The tenth anniversary of this watershed will be marked by a Joint Declaration solemnly reaffirming our shared desire for cooperation and underlining the ways in which this process can be further promoted.

An initial consolidated document, covering the pension scheme, has already been produced, and will be followed by another covering the sickness insurance scheme.

The main thrust of our approach is finding ways of harnessing the collective expertise of AIACE members and sharing that both with our active colleagues and with the Institutions. We seek to build on the productive role played by AIACE in various joint committees and groups (such as the JSIS Management Committee, the Technical Group, and the Harmonisation Group) in other areas where close cooperation is essential, in particular

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through the consolidated document approach so successfully followed in other fields.

## **2. JSIS**

We will continue with the excellent work already undertaken in monitoring and analysing all developments in relation to pensions, in particular on the budgetary front, with a view to defending the system against any risks of deterioration, by closely following and explaining the real situation as regards contributions made and how these are translated, especially with regard to ensuring that pension liabilities are correctly reflected in the EU budget, and by scrutinising expenditure. A consolidated document on pensions has recently been finalised and will be submitted to the Autumn Administrative Board.

We will pursue our current efforts on the screening front, both in terms of the substance of the programmes and the ways in which these are implemented and made available in each of our countries, as well as in assisting members who encounter practical difficulties. AIACE is especially well-placed to help identify reliable partners in the various Member States.

This process can likewise bear fruit well beyond the field of preventive medicine. The agreements negotiated by a number of Sections with health providers offers real promise of future joint working, both in terms of service quality for members and cost control, which is also to the benefit of serving staff. The particular problems with excessive costs in Luxembourg will require especial attention. We shall also be actively engaged with the announced scheduled revision of the GIP (General Implementing Provisions for the JSIS, often known by their French acronym 'DGE'), and where appropriate will be tabling proposals for change. Dependency is emerging as an area of major significance, as our members continue to age, and often find themselves with inadequate family support, but also as we grow in number. It is essential to retain dependency within the general healthcare system, and current expenditure trends show that this is an entirely reasonable option.

## **4. Welfare**

Welfare and social assistance are one of the main areas of cooperation between AIACE and the European Institutions. The fact is that AIACE has shown, through its ability to intervene effectively to specific welfare needs,

just how useful a partner it is: we are on the spot, and understand the issues that arise locally and what can (or can't) be done to deal with them. The Institutions recognise the advantages such closeness can bring, and the recent creation of the new network of "AIACE Ambassadors" has got off to a good start, and will continue to have our full commitment and support. Recent moves to facilitate the sharing of actual experience and good practice between Sections have proved most encouraging, and the draft Family Guide is an initiative we will be supporting with real interest.

## **5. Information and Communication**

Both information in itself and the way in which it is communicated have been seen to be of crucial interest to AIACE members, whether vis-à-vis the Institutions or between Sections. This will therefore be a priority for us in the coming years. To start with, VOX - which is the main vector of information and communication for pensioners - will be a top priority for us, both in printed and in electronic form, and we will be looking in particular at enhancing online access, including through social media.

The transfer of successive Commission services to secure electronic platforms (JSIS ONLINE, SYSPER, My IntraComm (Staff Matters), and PMO Contact) has required an great deal of information and support to members. There will be a continuing need to make user-friendly communication tools (such as Yammer) available to members, and the Commission has recently renewed its contract with the supplier in question. AIACE International's Help Desk continues to play a key role.

A further priority for us, in partnership with DG Human Resources (DG HR), the Paymaster's Office (PMO) and the Brussels Infrastructure Office (OIB) is finding ways of enhancing paper-based communications to pensioners both from the Institutions and from the Sections.

Lastly, under this same overall heading, particular attention will continue to be paid to the U.K. Withdrawal ("Brexit") negotiations, as the consequences of withdrawal could have significant effects on EU pensioners living in the U.K. as well as British pensioners living elsewhere in the EU. AIACE has already been invited to a number of meeting with those responsible, and will let members know what the outcomes are.

## **6. AIACE and European Construction**

In addition to the aforementioned issues, Article 4 of our Statutes lists a series of activities in relation to studying the issues raised by European integration and raising awareness amongst the public at large to the problems that arise. AIACE intends to contribute in its own way to this debate, inter alia by:

- including speakers on European affairs in each of its annual Assises;
- continuing to ensure that VOX includes features focusing on the problems and prospects for European integration;
- by enhanced cooperation with European associations such as the European Movement.

## **7. Whither the European Civil Service?**

Finally, AIACE will undertake an in-depth analysis of a theme which could be viewed as our common pillar, namely our shared experience in the European Civil Service. In pursuit of this, your President has launched a specific initiative on “The role and future of the European Civil Service”, which he presented to President Juncker at his recent meeting with AIACE INTERNATIONAL.

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