

SOCIAL REPORT OF THE CPVO 2008

INTRODUCTION

The Social Report of the CPVO 2008 is the third in a series of annual reports. Its' purpose is to highlight the turn-over, the work environment and the social aspects of the CPVO. It is also used to compare information from a qualitative and quantitative perspective.

THE CPVO

Mission:

The mission of the CPVO is to implement and apply a system for the protection of plant variety rights, which was established by Community legislation in 1994. This system allows intellectual property rights, valid throughout the Community, to be granted for plant varieties.

Structure:

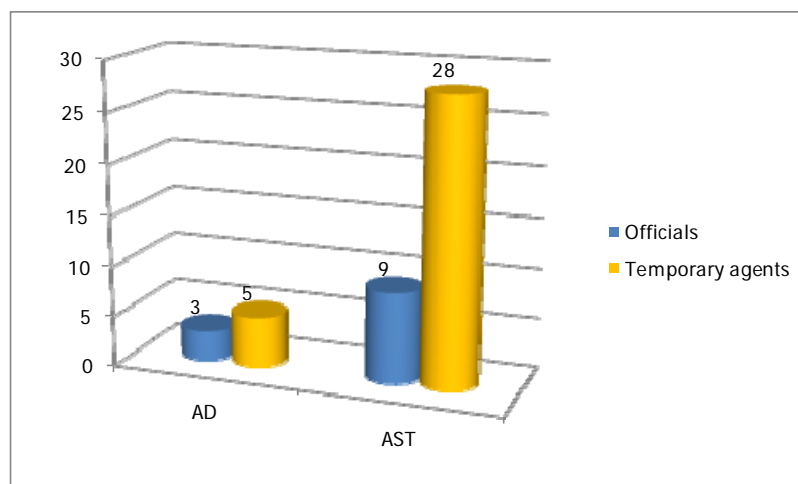
The CPVO is managed by its President, who is nominated by the Council of the European Union. The President takes all necessary measures in order to produce the budget of the CPVO and to ensure its correct implementation in the framework of the powers conferred to him under the Community Regulations. He is assisted by a Vice President, to whom he has delegated some of his duties, and who ensures his replacement in case of impediment.

The CPVO is organized internally into two units (the Technical Unit and the Finance and Administration unit) and three support services dealing with legal, human resources and IT matters. A Quality Audit service was created in 2008 with the aim of verifying that technical examination offices meet the quality standards required for providing services to the CPVO in the area of testing compliance of candidate varieties with the distinctness, uniformity and stability (DUS) criteria in addition to novelty. This service reports directly to the Administrative Council of the CPVO.

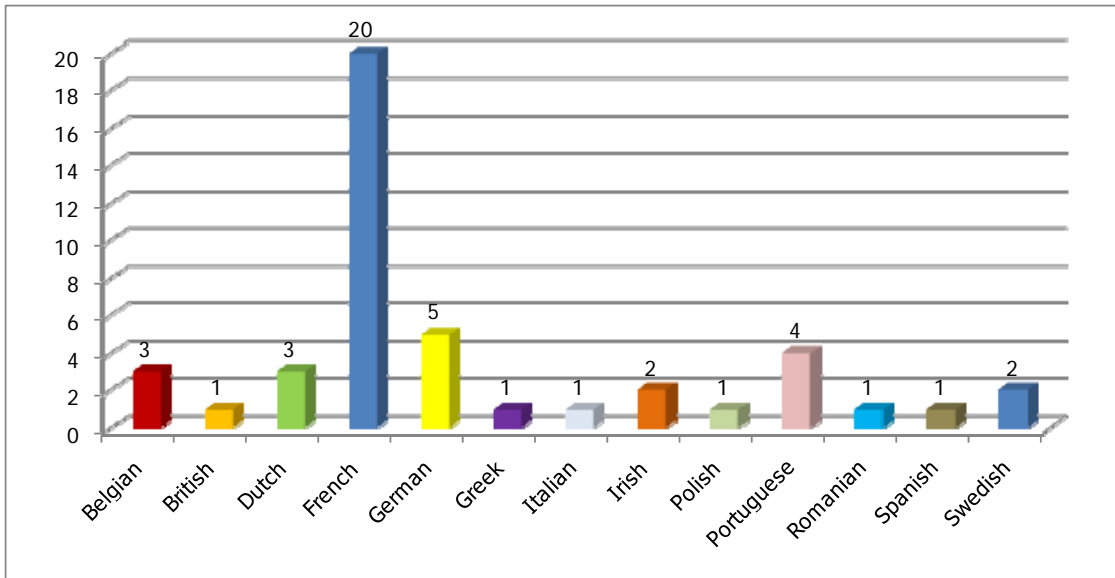
EMPLOYMENT

Staff members:

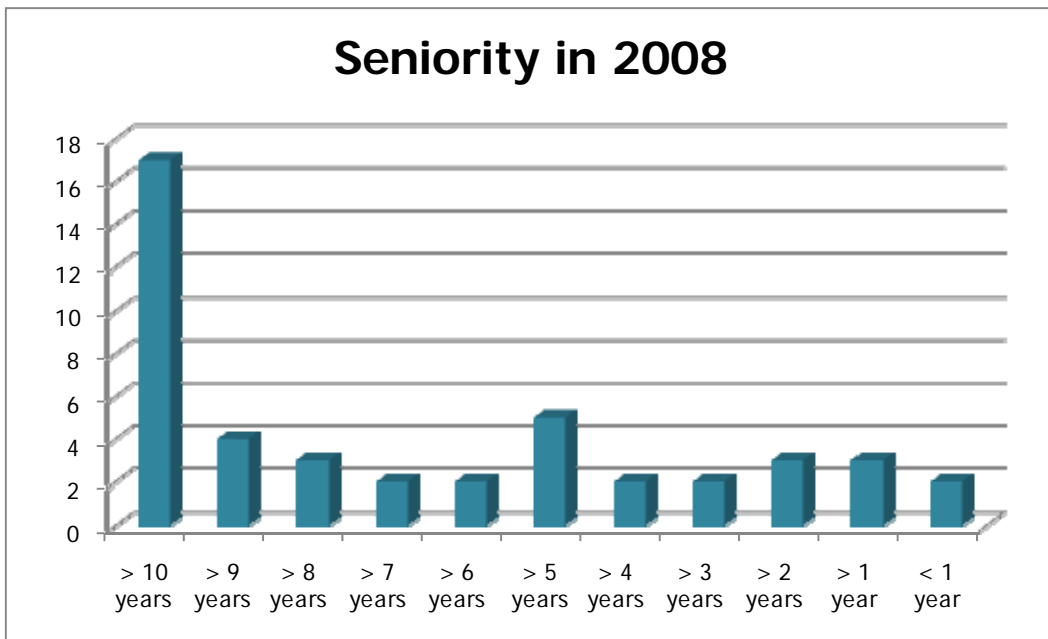
By the end of 2008, 45 staff members were employed at the CPVO comprising of 12 officials and 33 temporary agents (3 on half-time employment). The representation in function groups AD and AST was as illustrated below:



13 nationalities were represented as illustrated below.



Seniority in the Office:



Recruitment procedures organized in 2008:

Three recruitment procedures were launched during 2008; one for the post as Quality Audit Team Leader, one for the post as Accountant and one for the post as Data Protection assistant.

Staff that joined the CPVO:

Two new temporary agents were recruited in 2008. A **Secretary in Accountancy/Receptionist** took up office on 16 April 2008 and a **Quality Audit Team Leader** took up office on 1 September 2008, both for an initial period of four years.

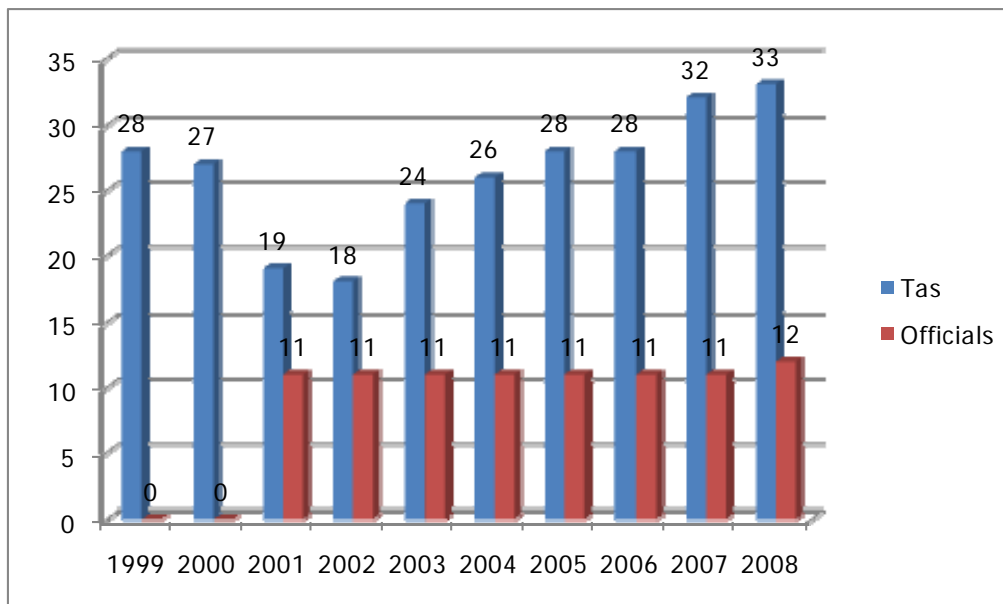
One official was transferred from the European Commission to the Office for the post at **Accountant**. He took up office on 1 November 2008.

Three *interim agents* were recruited for determined periods of time for replacement of sick leave (16/01 to 14/03/08), for recuperating a backlog in the scanning of files (01/06 to 31/08/2008), for preparing a seminar (01/09 to 26/09/08), for a training (27/10 to 28/10/08) and for replacement of holidays (30/04 + 05/05 to 08/05/08, 21/05 to 03/06, 30/06 to 04/07, 21/07 to 20/08 and 21/08 to 29/08/08).

Staff that left the CPVO:

One temporary agent resigned and left the Office on 31/08/08.

Temporary Agents/Officials over the past 10 years



Career development reports:

The ability of the CPVO to achieve its objectives depends on its staff members. Their skills and abilities in carrying out their responsibilities determine how successful the CPVO as a whole will be. Career development reports are a means of formally recognizing, evaluating and providing feedback on each staff member's performance and contribution as a member of a team.

The career development report is an important means of communication between management and staff, as well as to identify training needs, and a vital tool for career development. In this process, staff members have a continuing opportunity to inform management about how they feel about the work and identify professional goals and interests. Managers in turn convey their commitment to each staff member's career success by communicating information concerning the staff member's performance in relation to the CPVO expectations and action needed to meet these expectations and to advance the staff member's career at the CPVO.

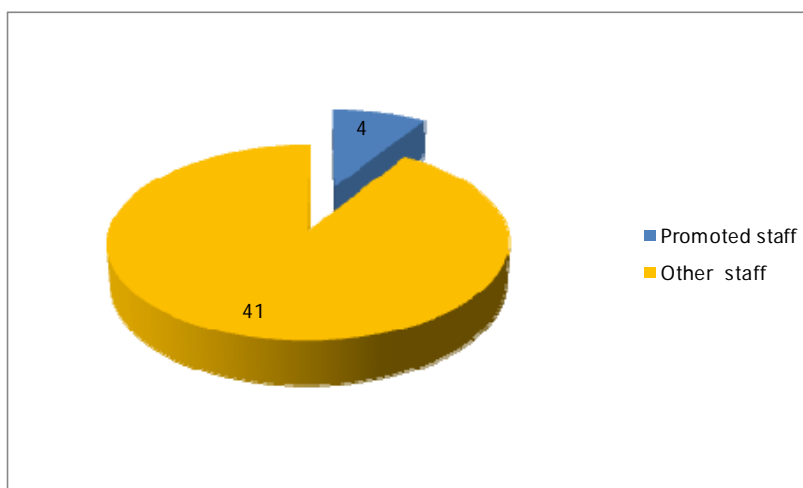
Career development reports provide a link between the CPVO objectives and a staff member's performance and should also enhance accountability for results.

Career development reports are drawn up once a year for all staff members. The CPVO has sent in draft implementing rules on the evaluation of the President and Vice President to the Commission, and received comments back from the Commission. Once these decisions are adopted by the CPVO, the President and Vice President will be evaluated by the Administrative Council of the CPVO.

In 2008 the CPVO revised its' implementing rules for the annual appraisal procedure foreseen in Article 43 of the Staff Regulations. An external consultant organised workshops with staff members, where they could give ideas on improvement of the appraisal system. The outcome was a modified career development report form and guide, and a procedure where communication should be emphasised.

Promotions:

A total of four staff members were awarded a promotion to the next grade in their career with retroactive effect from 01/01/2008. This represents 9% of the staff.



Absenteeism:

The Staff Regulations of the European Communities stipulate that staff members of the CPVO do not have to present a medical certificate until the fourth day of absence. This absence of three consecutive days without a medical certificate can be repeated four times during a calendar year. All absences after that must be covered by a medical certificate. During 2008, no staff member of the CPVO was absent 12 days without a medical certificate.

The total number of days lost for medical reasons was 321.5 days (which includes one long sick leave of 97.5 days for one staff member). This represents 3.3% of the total working days during 2008 and makes an average of 7.5 days per post

If the long sick leave is disregarded, a total of 224 days were taken as sick leave, which represents 2.3% of the working days and which gives an average of 5.2 days per post.

total calendar days	365
weekend days	103
CVPO official holidays	17
average annual holidays	30
working days	215
persons in year 2008	45
total working days	9.675

medical leave	days off	% of working days	number of posts	average number of days per post
absence	321,5	3,3%	43	7,5
excluding long leave	224,0	2,3%	43	5,2

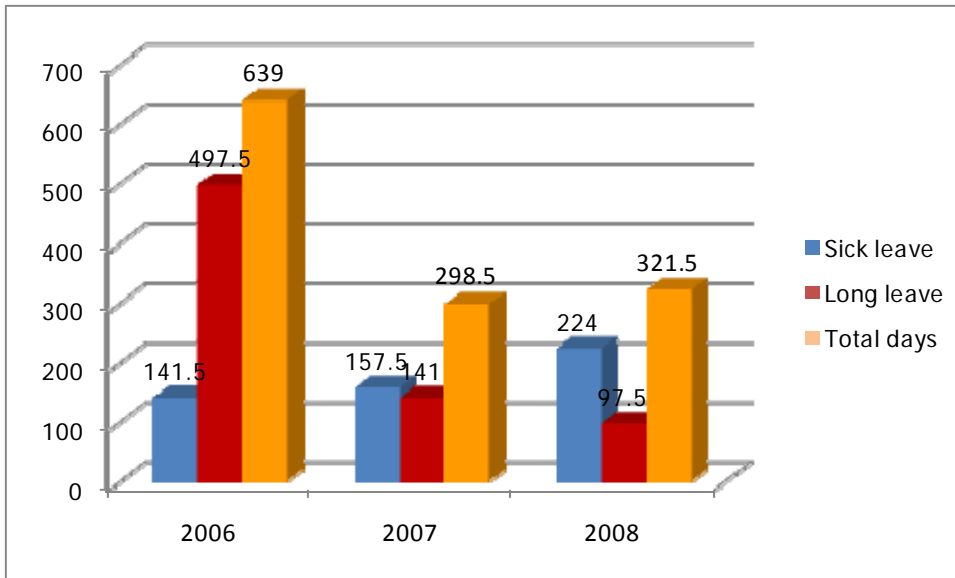
For comparison:

In 2006, a total of 639 days was lost for medical reasons, which represents 7.6% of the working days. This includes seven rather long absences of 497.5 days.

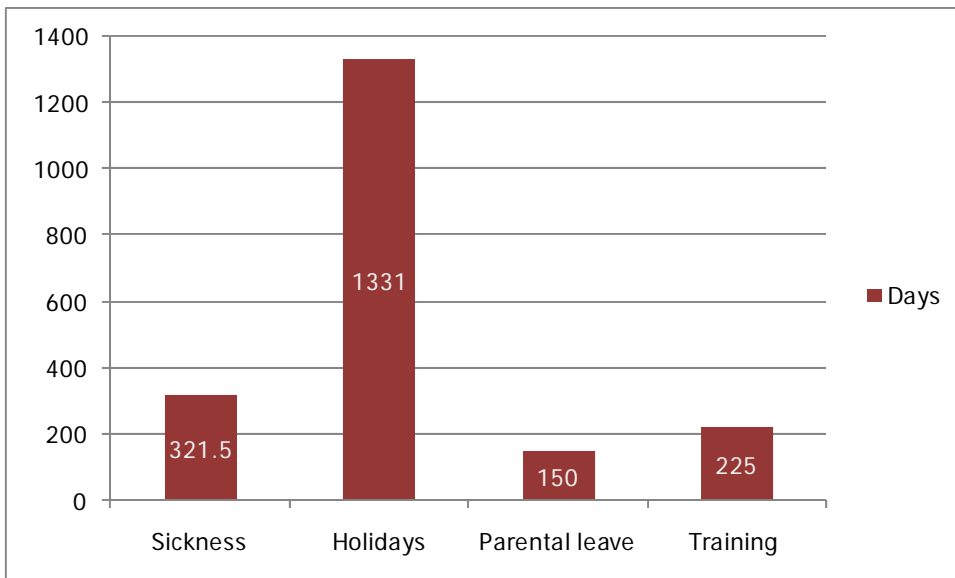
In 2007, the total number of days lost for medical reasons was 298.5 days (which includes one long sick leave of 141 days for one staff member). This represents 3.2% of the total working days during 2007 and makes an average 7.1 days per post.



Absenteeism over the past three years



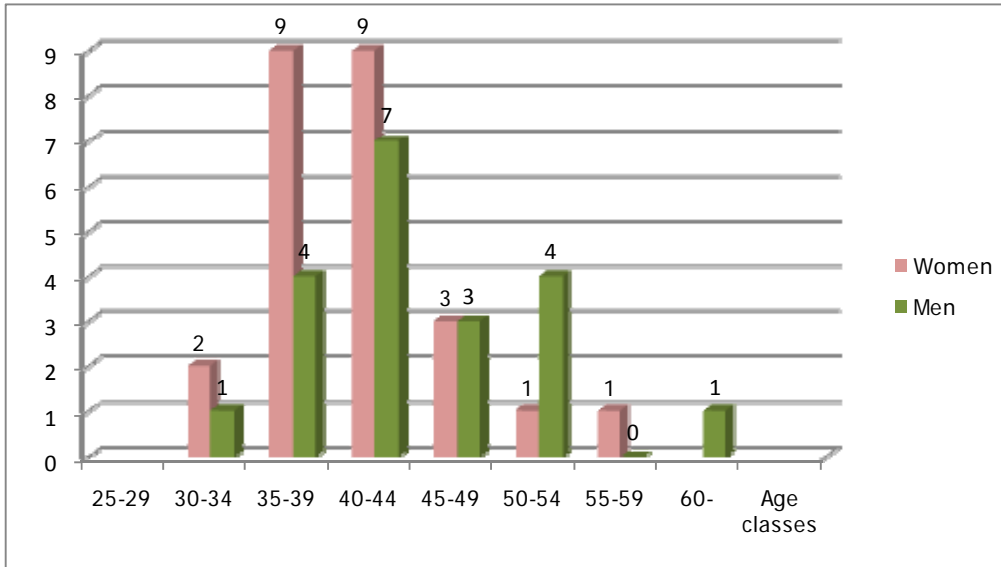
Total absences in 2008



Gender balance:

The gender balance amongst CPVO staff is almost 50-50, slightly weighted towards female staff;





WORKING CONDITIONS

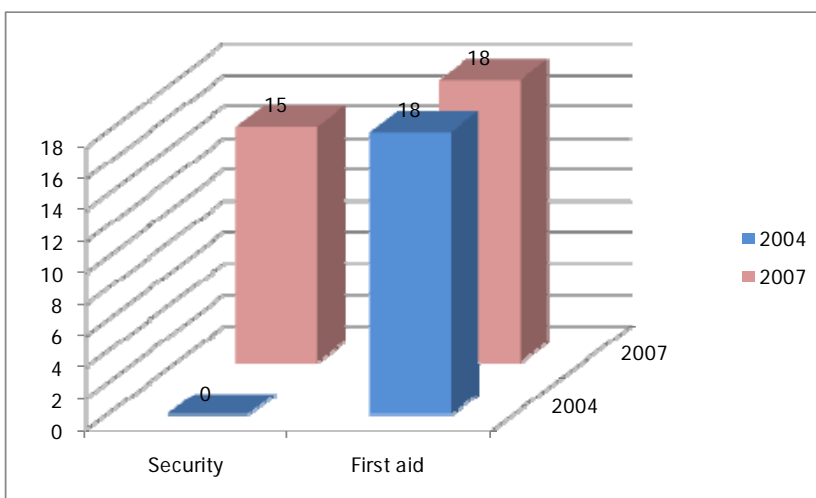
Hours worked

The working week of the CPVO is 37.5 hours with a minimum of 7.5 hours worked per day Monday through Thursday, and a minimum of 6.5 hours worked on the Friday.

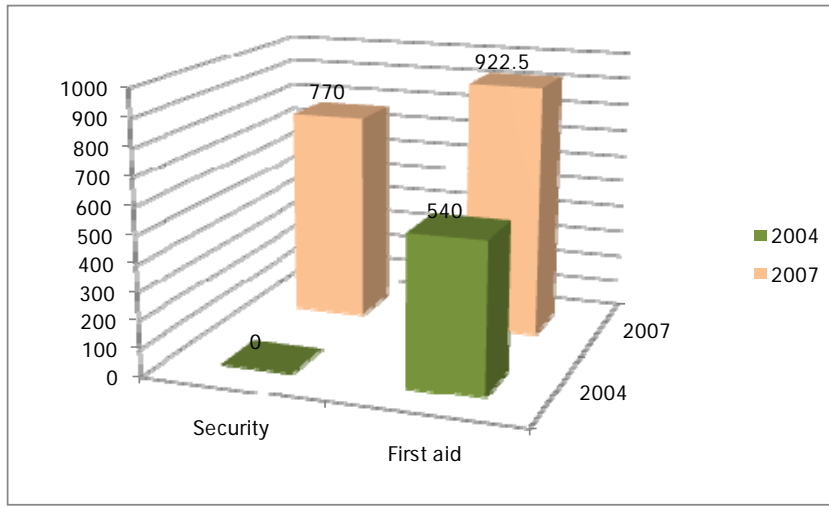
Security and prevention of occupational hazards

The CPVO did not experience any accidents, occupational hazards or risks to its security during 2008. However, trainings are organized in these fields in order for the staff members to have knowledge about the actions to take in case anything happens. No such training was organized in 2008.

Number of staff participating in security and first aid training over the past 5 years

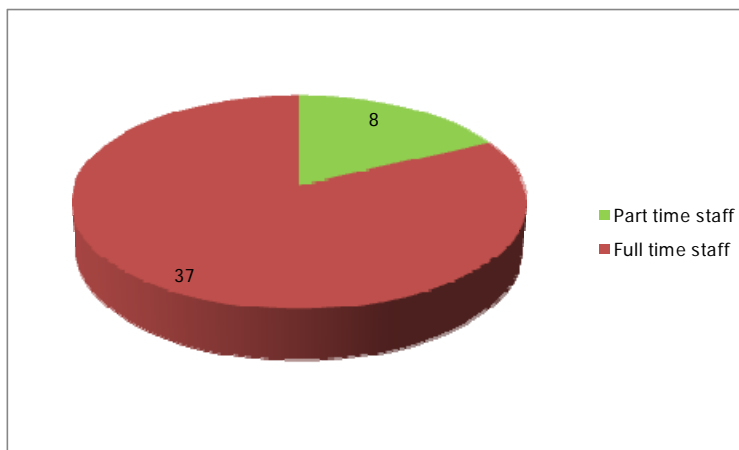


Cost for training in security and first aid over the past 5 years (in Euros)



Part time

The Staff Regulations of the European Communities give the right to staff members to work part-time. The CPVO adopted the Commission implementing rules on part-time work by analogy in April 2006, to give effect to these rules. These rules stipulate that staff members have the right to request to work part-time (50, 60, 70, 80 or 90%) under certain conditions. In 2008, four staff members were granted the right to work part-time at 80% in order to take care of their young children, and one staff member was granted the right to work part-time at 60% in order to prepare for retirement. Three staff members were working half-time on half-time posts created to this effect.

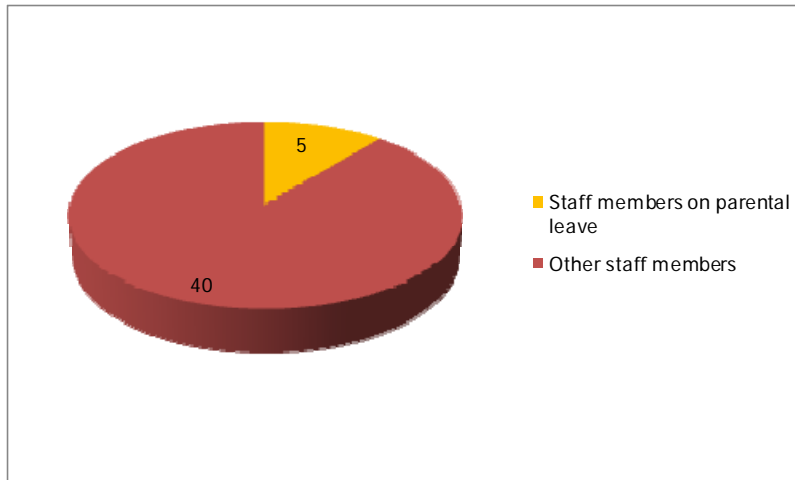


Parental leave

Parental leave is also a right established in the Staff Regulations. In 2004, the CPVO adopted by analogy the Commission implementing rules on parental leave. These rules stipulate that staff members have the right to request parental leave for up to six months per child until the child reaches the age of 12. The leave can be taken right after the maternity leave or at any other time. It can be taken all at once (six consecutive months) or be divided into a minimum period of one month at a time.



In 2008, five staff members took parental leave for a total period of 5 months.



TRAINING

Training is an integral part of the human resources policy of the CPVO and it serves the interests of the individual as well as of the CPVO. Training should serve to improve individual competencies, professional effectiveness and commitment at the workplace so that each staff member can contribute optimally to the achievement of the CPVO's goals. By developing relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes, training should further help staff members to make desired career moves, both laterally (mobility) and vertically (promotion, including change of category). Learning is both a right and a duty for all persons working in the CPVO.

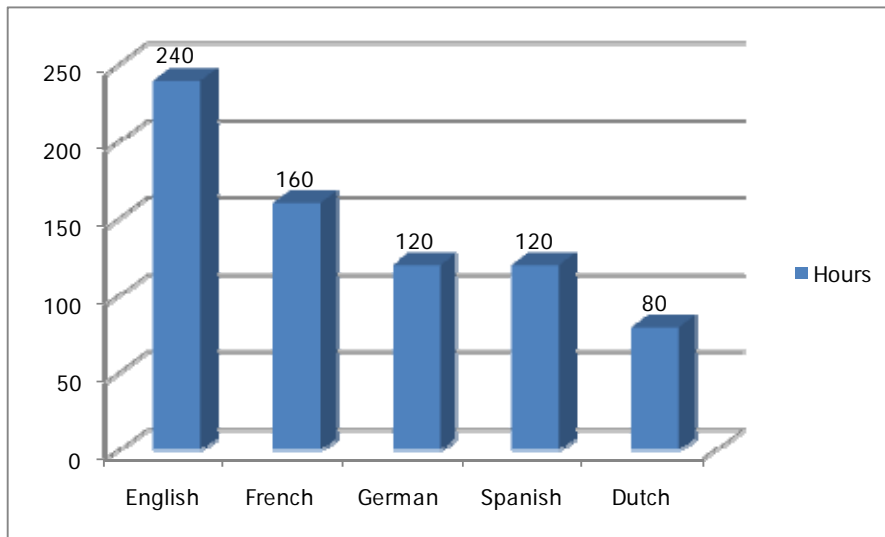
In 2008, a budget of 80 000 € was allocated for training. A total of 79 884.27 € was committed, which represents 99.9 % of the budget.

A total of 225 days were spent in training, which gives an average of 5, 2 days per post. The European Commission has put up as a target of 10 days per year and post, so there is room for improvement before the CPVO reaches this target.

Language courses

In 2008, 18 staff members followed language courses. A total of 720 (=720/7.5=96 days) hours was spent in these courses, divided in English (240 hours), French (160 hours), German (120 hours), Spanish (120 hours) and Dutch (80 hours) language courses. Two language tests were also organized by the CPVO in application of the rules to have knowledge of a third language before promotion. 41 814.57 € was committed, which represents 52.3 % of the budget.





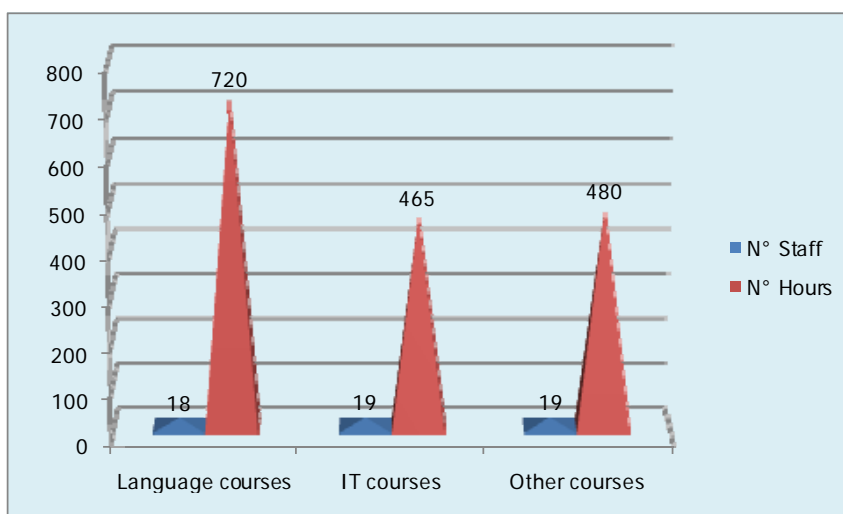
IT Training:

19 staff members followed IT training courses (advanced Word and Excel, SharePoint services, Centurio, Joomla, Outlook, Language SQL, Business Objects, Dreamweaver and WebDev), which amounted to a total of 465 hours (=62 days). 11 900 € was committed, which represents 14.9 % of the budget.

Other training

19 staff members followed other training courses (introduction course, prevention of harassment, improvement of the appraisal exercise, team building, self affirmation, being professional in the assistant function, administrative writing, financial applications in enterprises, seminar on data protection) which amounted to a total of 480 hours (=64 days). 24 979, 70 € was committed, which represents 31.2 % of the budget.

One training was foreseen for a staff member (professional efficiency) and the cost committed (1190 € = 1.5% of the budget) on the 2008 budget, but the training will take place in 2009.



PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS

Staff Committee

There exists a Staff Committee in the CPVO, which is elected by the staff members every three years and which should represent the different grades and categories of staff. In December 2008 a new Staff Committee was elected, which consists of three full members and two alternates. Four of these staff members come from the assistant function group and one from the administrator function group.

The role of the Staff Committee is to be a means of communication between the staff and the management of the Office. Once every other month, the Staff Committee and the management meet to discuss issues which have been brought forward by staff members, and which are deemed to be of concern for everybody. The Staff Committee seeks explanations and solutions to questions and problems experienced by staff members.

The Staff Committee also participates actively in the work of adopting internal staff related decisions of the CPVO. Its opinion and agreement is sought before adopting any such decision. The Staff Committee also plays a role in designating members of various internal committees of the Office.

Finally, the Staff Committee has a social role to play within the CPVO. It organizes a social day per year, which is the occasion for the staff members to meet outside the Office in an environment which changes from year to year (castles, museums, expeditions, etc.). The Staff Committee also organizes a Christmas party where the children and spouses of the staff members are invited. All these events help to create bonds between staff members and they are highly appreciated.

Conclusion

The CPVO has a good working climate with very low absenteeism. Part-time possibilities are well taken up and allow a more flexible work organization and better reconciliation of work and family life. The investment into training has been rather limited until now, which is in line with the limited needs identified in the career development reports.

