CPVO
Community Plant Variety Office

SOCIAL REPORT OF THE CPVO 2009

INTRODUCTION

The Social Report of the CPVO 2009 is the fourth 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 Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) is responsible for the management of the Community Plant Variety Rights System. This system provides protection with an intellectual property right for new plant varieties on European Community level. The system, based on the 1991 act of the UPOV Convention, became operational in 1995. The mission of the CPVO is to foster innovation in plant varieties by high quality processing of applications for Community plant variety rights at affordable costs while providing policy guidance and assistance in the exercise of these rights for the benefit of stakeholders..

Structure:

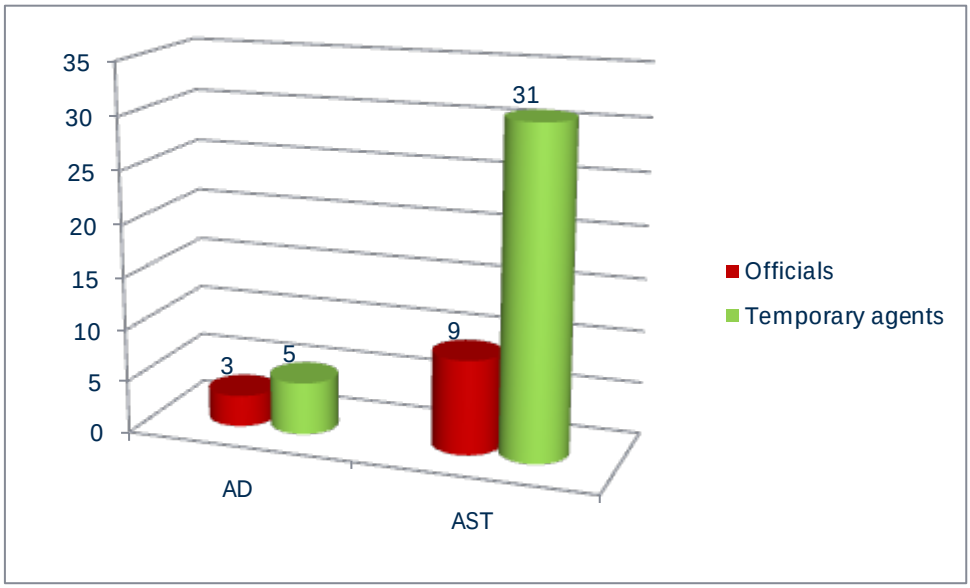
The CPVO is managed by its President, who is nominated by the Council of the European Union. The President takes all necessary measures in order to produce the budget of the CPVO and to ensure its correct implementation in the framework of the powers conferred to him under the Community Regulations. 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.

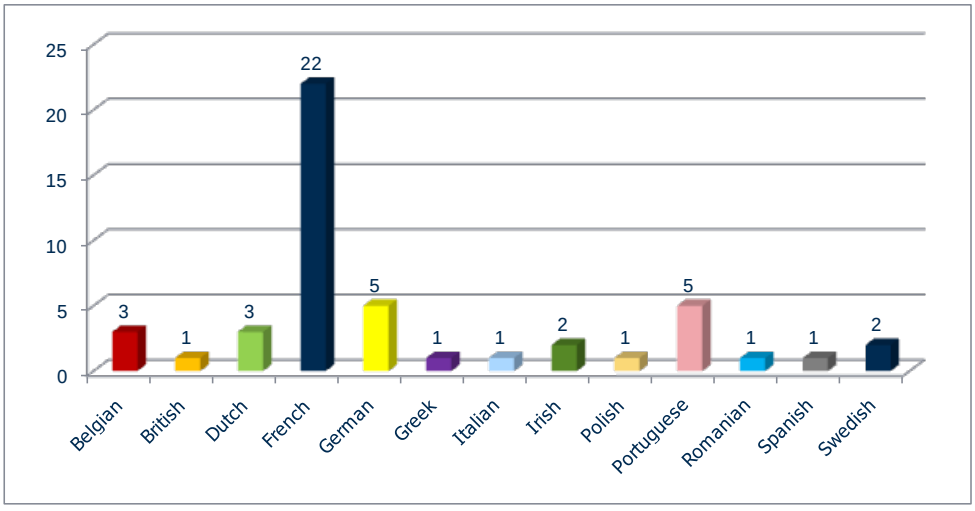
EMPLOYMENT

Staff members:

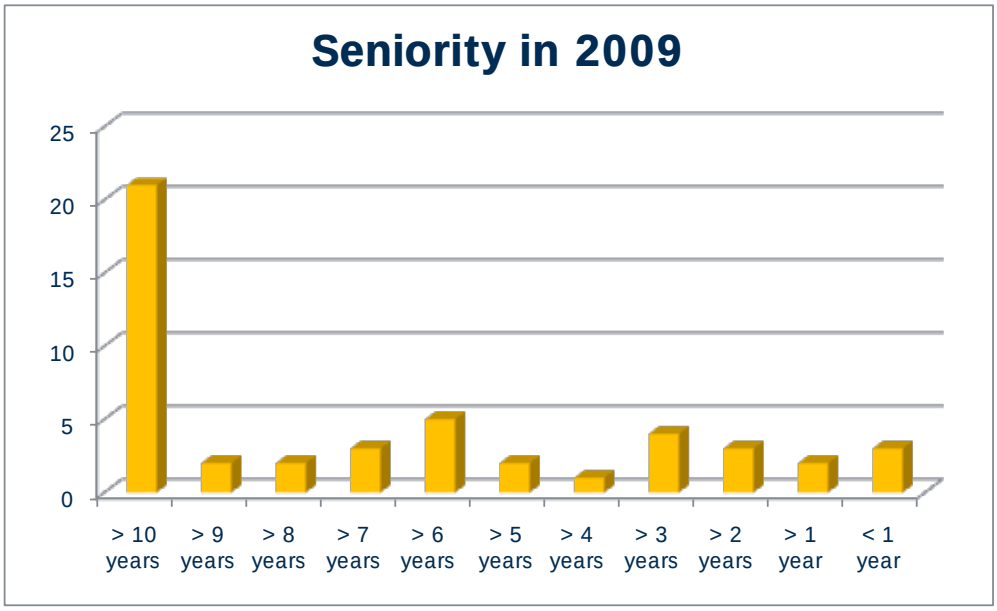
By the end of 2009, 48 staff members were employed at the CPVO comprising of 12 officials and 36 temporary agents (of which 7 are part-time employments). The representation in function groups AD and AST was as illustrated below:



13 nationalities were represented as illustrated below.



Seniority in the Office:



Recruitment procedures organized in 2009:

Six recruitment procedures were launched during 2009: ICT infrastructure maintenance agent, DPO assistant, legal assistant, technical secretary (external publications), variety denominations assistant and scanning clerk (internal publications)..

Staff that joined the CPVO:

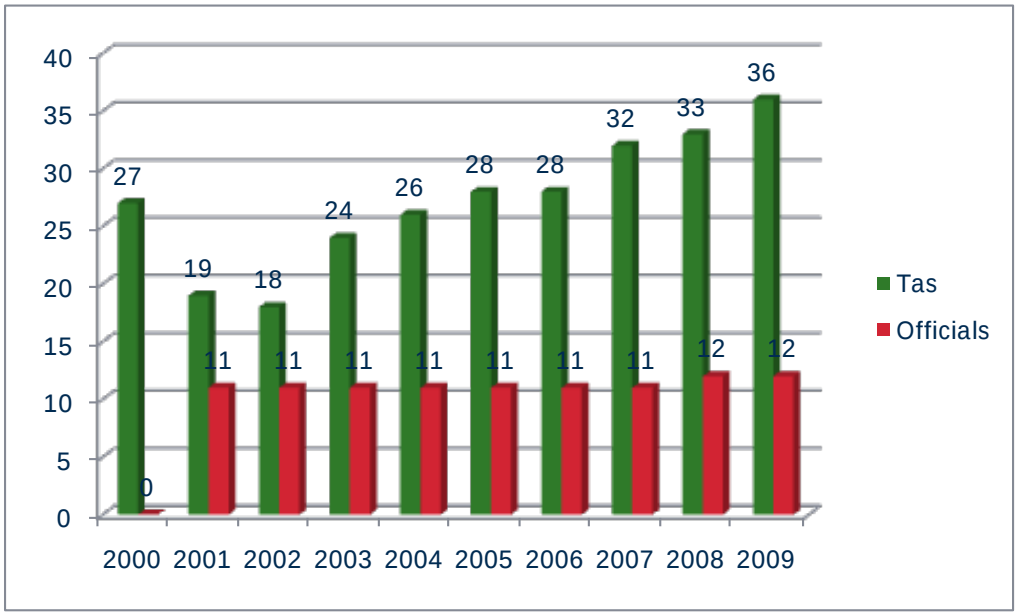
Three new temporary agents were recruited in 2009. An **ICT infrastructure maintenance agent** took up office on 1 May 2009 for an initial period of two years, a **Data Protection Assistant** took up office on 16 August 2009 for a determined period of 9 months and a **Legal Assistant** took up office on 1 November 2009 for a determined period of 10 months.

Two *interim agents* were recruited for determined periods of time for recuperating a backlog in the scanning of files (19/01 to 13/02/2009) and for replacement of holidays (30/04 + 05/05 to 06/05, 13/05, 20/05 to 27/05 and 12/06/09).

Staff that left the CPVO:

One temporary agent contract came to an end on 31/12/09 and was not renewed.

Evolution of 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, including the President and Vice President.

Promotions:

A total of seven staff members were awarded a promotion to the next grade in their career with retroactive effect from 01/01/2009. This represents 15% 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 2009, no staff member of the CPVO was absent more than 12 days without a medical certificate.

The total number of days lost for medical reasons was 242.5 days. This represents 2.3% of the total working days during 2009 and makes an average of 5.3 days per post

total calendar days	365
weekend days	104
CVPO official holidays	17
average annual holidays	27
working days	217
persons in year 2009	48
total working days *	10.416

* no distinction made between part-time and full time

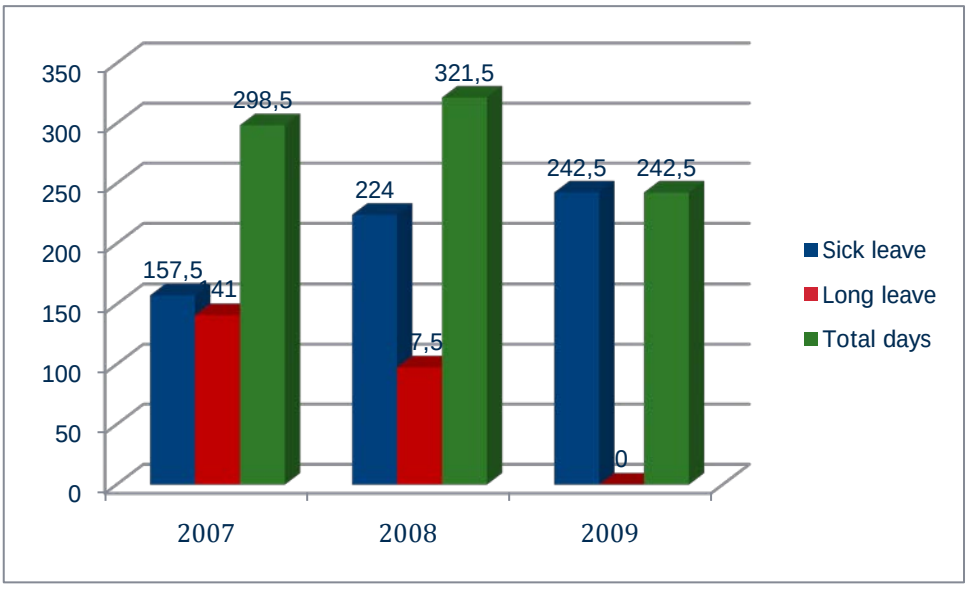
medical leave	days off	% of working days	number of posts	average number of days per post
absence	242,5	2,3%	46	5,7

For comparison:

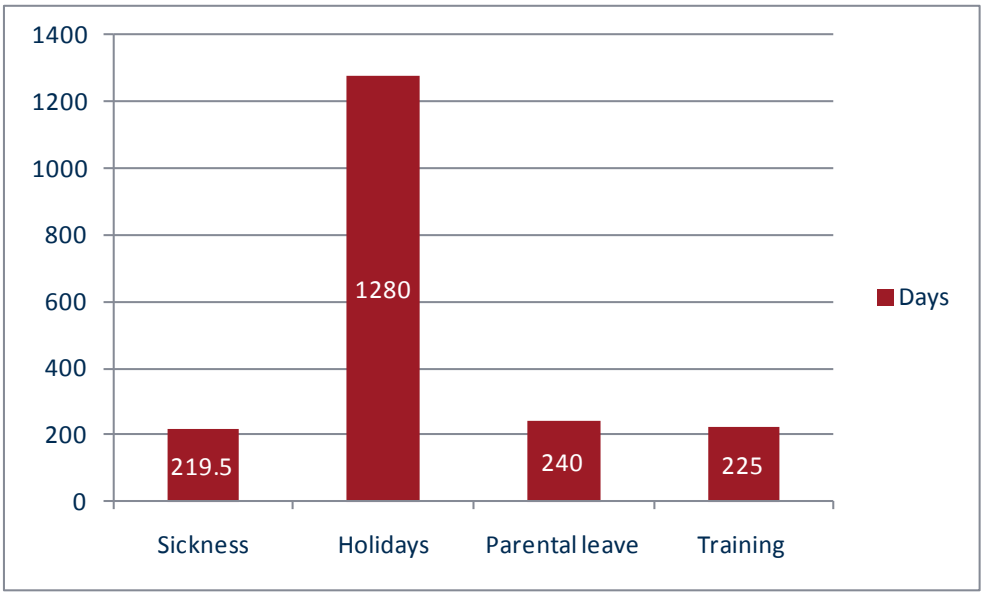
In 2007, the total number of days lost for medical reasons was 298.5 days (which includes one long sick leave of 141 days for one staff member). This represents 3.2% of the total working days during 2007 and makes an average 7.1 days per post.

In 2008, 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

Absenteeism over the past three years

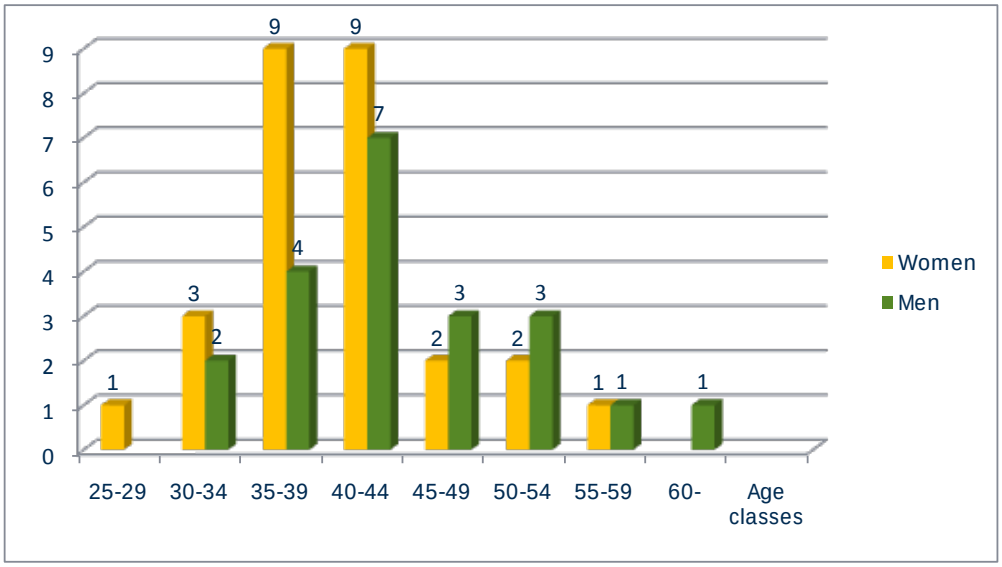


Total absences in 2009



Gender balance:

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



TRAINEES

In January 2009 the President of the CPVO adopted rules governing in-service training at the CPVO. The purpose of the in-service training with the CPVO is to give external people an opportunity to learn about the CPVO and its role within the European Union, to provide them with practical knowledge of the work at the CPVO, to enable them to acquire personal experience by means of the contacts lade in the course of their work, to enable them to further and put into practice the knowledge they have acquitted during their studies or professional careers, and to make use of this knowledge to the benefit of the CPVO.

In 2009 the CPVO had one trainee in the legal service, for a period of two months. This person was charged with updating the denomination jurisprudence database.

WORKING CONDITIONS

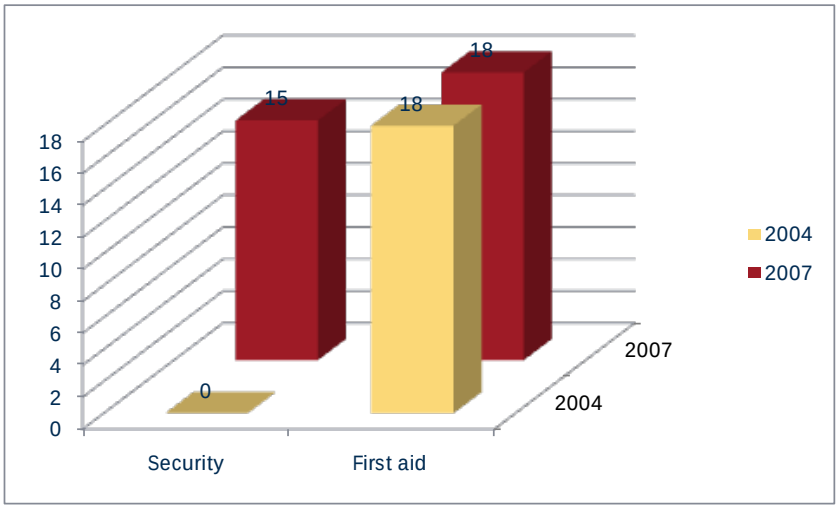
Hours worked

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.

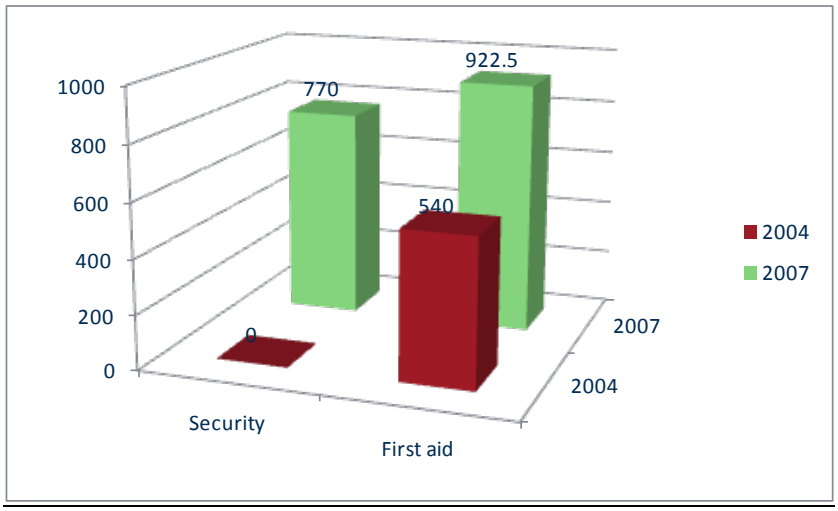
Security and prevention of occupational hazards

The CPVO did not experience any accidents, occupational hazards or risks to its security during 2009. 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 2009.

Number of staff participating in security and first aid training over the past 6 years

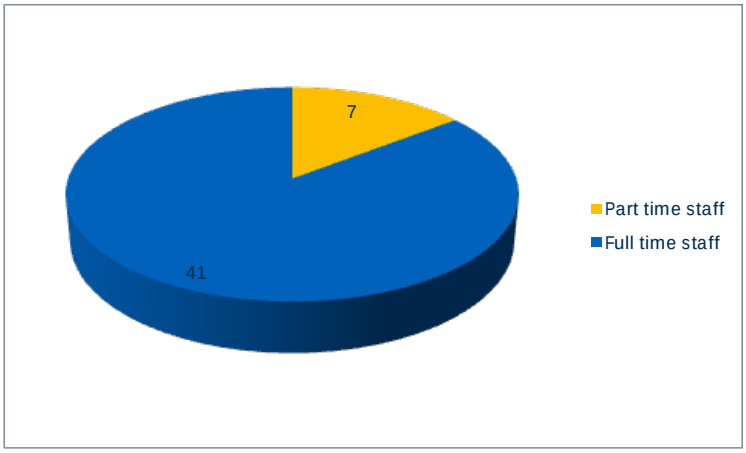


Cost for training in security and first aid over the past 6 years (in Euros)



Part time

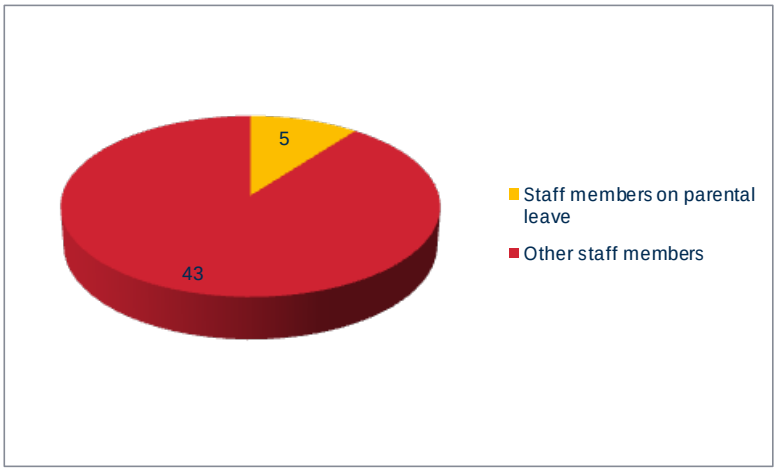
The Staff Regulations of the European Communities give the right to staff members to work part-time. The CPVO adopted the Commission implementing rules on part-time work by analogy in April 2006, to give effect to these rules. These rules stipulate that staff members have the right to request to work part-time (50, 60, 70, 80 or 90%) under certain conditions. In 2009, 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. Two 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 2009, five staff members took parental leave for a total period of 8 months.



TRAINING

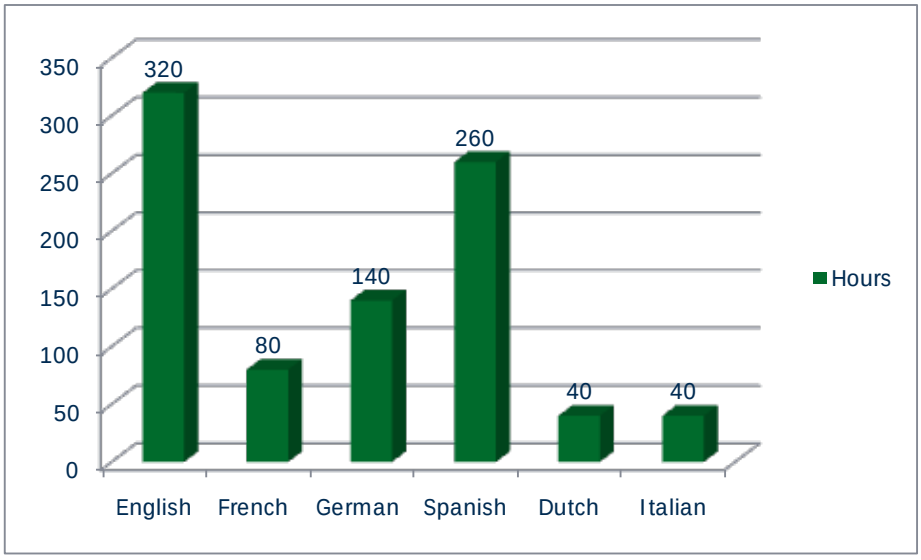
Training is an integral part of the human resources policy of the CPVO and it serves the interests of the individual as well as of the CPVO. Training should serve to improve individual competencies, professional effectiveness and commitment at the workplace so that each staff member can contribute optimally 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 2009, a budget of 80 000 € was allocated for training. A total of 76 802.55 € was committed, which represents 96 % 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 2009, 22 staff members followed language courses. A total of 880 (=880/7.5=117 days) hours was spent in these courses, divided in English (320 hours), French (80 hours), German (140 hours), Spanish (260 hours), Dutch (40 hours) and Italian (40 hours) language courses. 45 973.55 € was committed, which represents 57.5 % of the training budget.



IT Training:

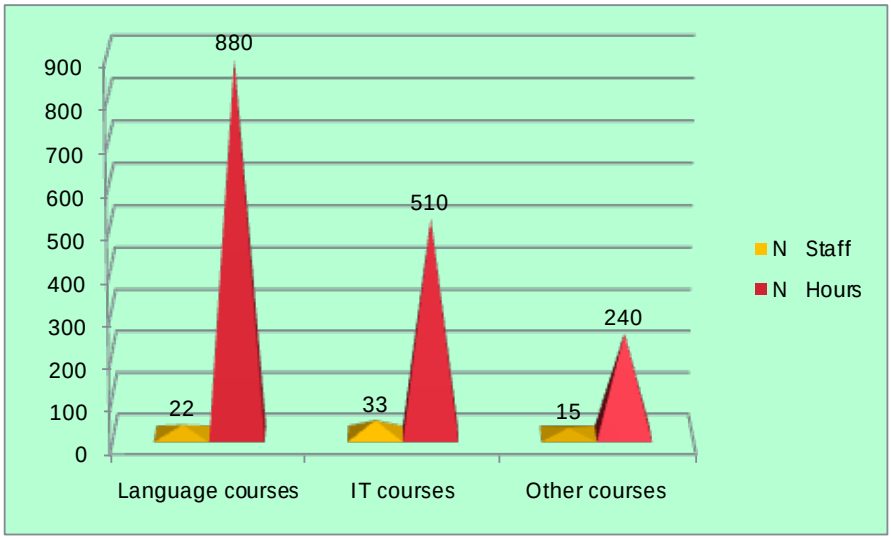
33 staff members followed IT training courses (advanced Word, Excel and PowerPoint, ZEND Framework, Photoshop, MS Project initiation, MS Windows server 2008, NETASQ, Outlook, and Business Objects, which amounted to a total of 510 hours (=68 days). 17 205 € was committed, which represents 21.5 % of the training budget.

Other training

15 staff members followed other training courses (induction course, finances, human resources, technical expertise) which amounted to a total of 240 hours (=32 days). 13 624 € was committed, which represents 17.% of the budget.

One staff member started a BTS for a duration of 750 hours (100 days) spread over 2009-2010.

This amount also includes the cost for the Service Level Agreement on training concluded with the Commission.



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 explications 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.