CPVO
Community Plant Variety Office

SOCIAL REPORT OF THE CPVO 2012

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the 2012 CPVO Social Report is to highlight the turn-over, the work environment and the social aspects of the CPVO during the reporting year. It is also used to compare information from a qualitative and quantitative perspective.

2. THE CPVO

2.1 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 Union 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.

2.2 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 EU 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.

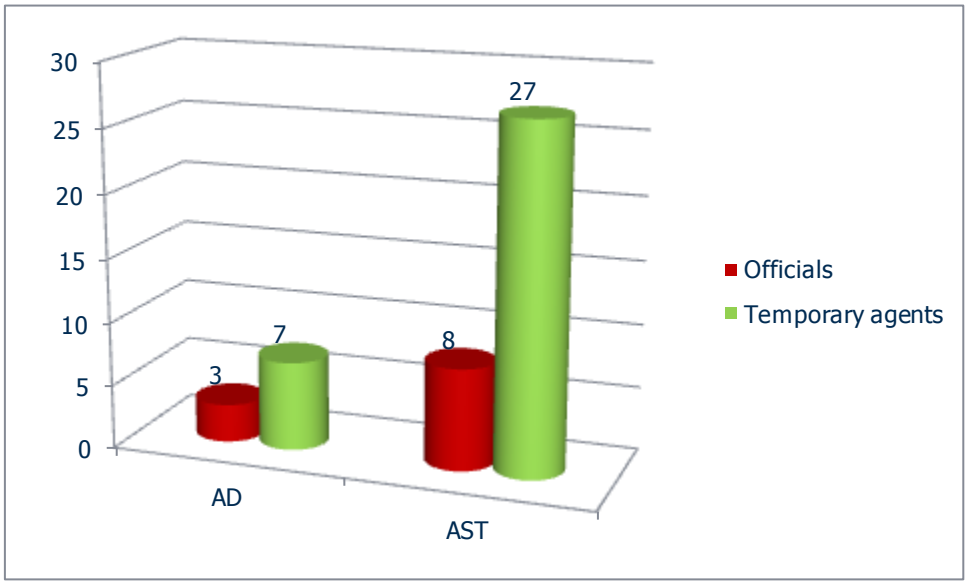
The CPVO is organized internally into three units (the Technical Unit, the Finance and Administration Unit and the Legal Unit) and two support services dealing with human resources and IT matters. A Quality Audit service was created in 2008 with the aim of verifying that technical examination offices 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.

3. EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Staff members

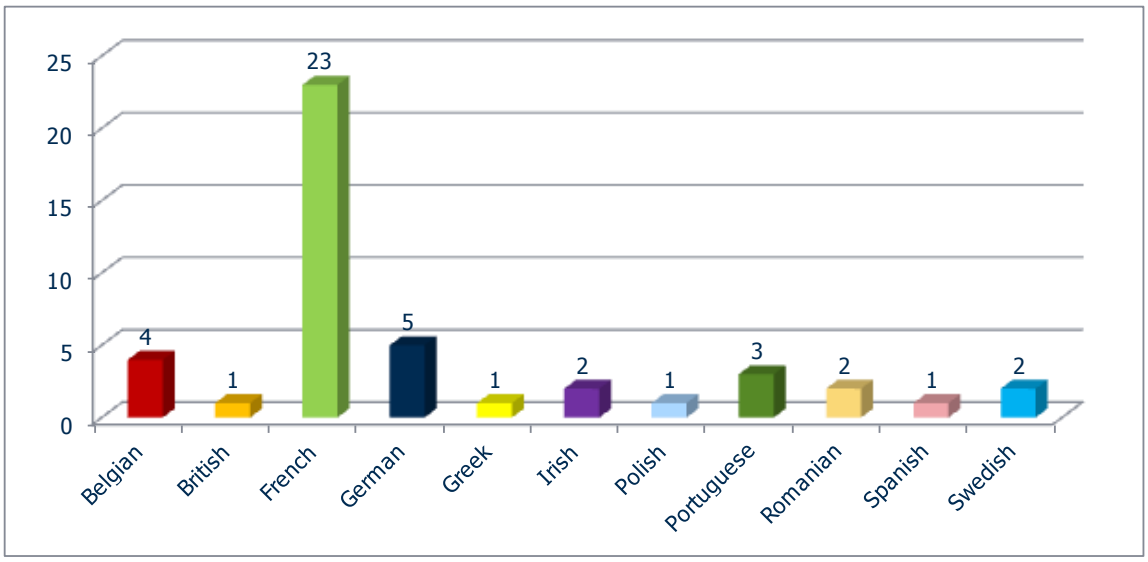
By the end of 2012, 45 staff members were employed at the CPVO comprising of 11 officials and 34 temporary agents (of which 3 were part-time employments). The representation in function groups AD and AST was as illustrated below:

Function groups:



11 nationalities were present in the office with a majority of French nationals.

Nationalities:



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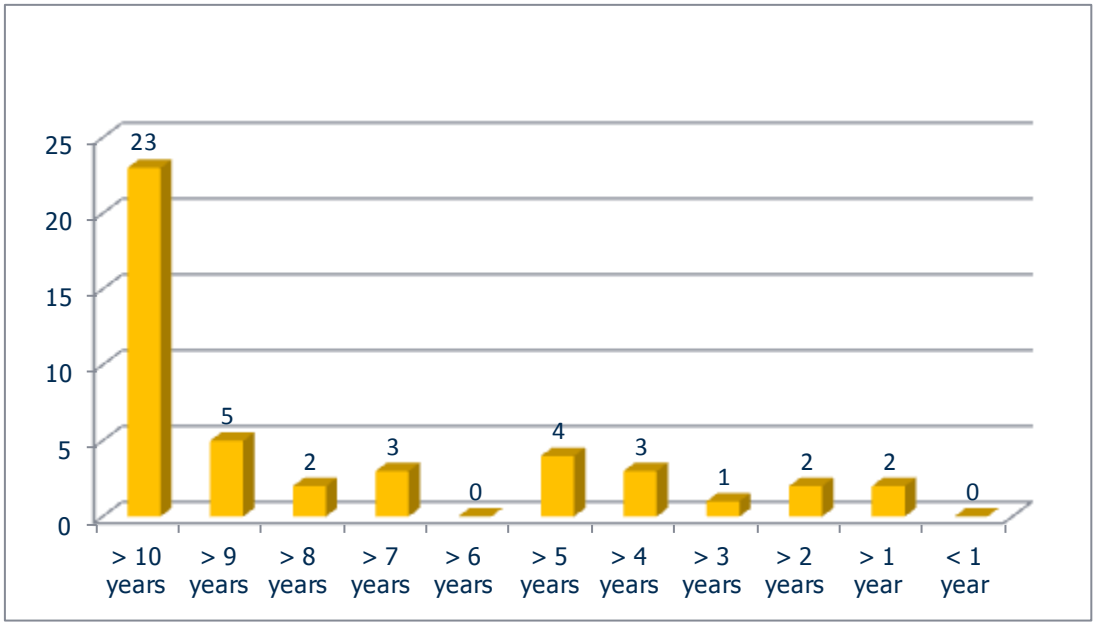
The office has a low turn-over and 51% of the staff has been working for more than 10 years in the office.

Seniority in the Office in 2012:



3.2 Recruitment procedures organized in 2012

Three recruitment procedures were launched during 2012: Head of Administration & Finances (internal publication), Technical expert & Technical assistant (external publications).

3.3 Staff that joined the CPVO

Two new temporary agents were recruited in 2012. A **Lawyer** took up office on 1 January 2012 for an initial period of four years and a **Technical Assistant** took up office for a definitive period of 8,5 months (replacement for a maternity and parental leave)

One *interim agent* was recruited during 2012 for a period of 1 ½ month, in order to cover the absence of a staff member in the Technical Unit during a part of the certification procedure.

3.4 Staff that left the CPVO

One temporary agent contract came to an end on the 30/10/12. The number of staff has been stable the last 3 years with 45-46 staff members. The budget for 2013 foresees 48 posts with 13 officials and 35 temporary agents, due to the certification procedure and the possible appointment of two former AST agents in grade AD.

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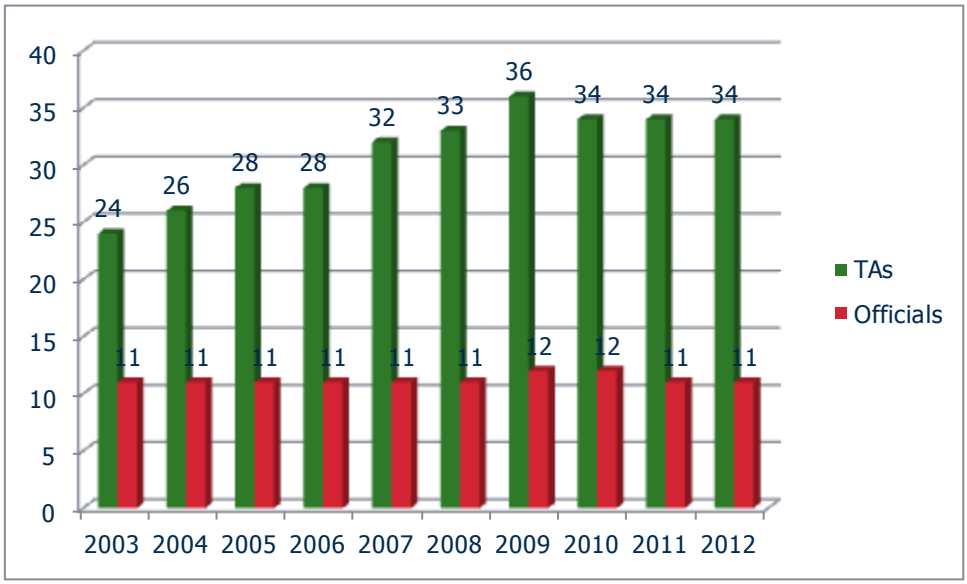
Evolution of Temporary Agents/Officials over the past 10 years:



3.5 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.

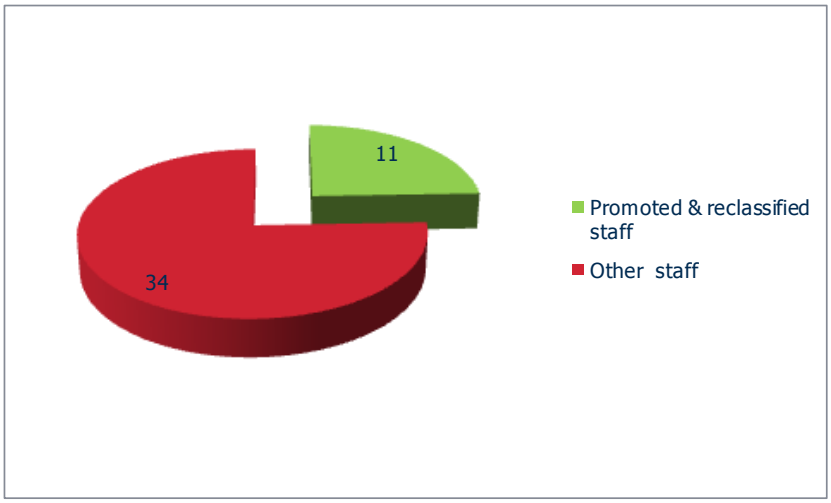
Career development reports are drawn up once a year for all staff members, including the President and Vice President.

In 2012 the annual evaluation procedure was made electronic and the career development reports were filled in electronically. This new procedure was a success as deadlines were being better respected and no reports were lost.

3.6 Promotions and reclassifications

A total of 11 staff members were awarded a promotion or reclassification to the next grade in their career with retroactive effect from 01/01/2012. This represents 24% of the staff, which is a little bit above the percentage laid down in the Staff Regulations and the average rate applied by the Commission. But since the percentage has been quite low in previous years, the average is respected if it is calculated over a period of years.

Promotions and reclassifications in 2012:



3.7 Absenteeism

The Staff Regulations of the European Communities, applicable to CPVO staff, stipulate that staff members 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 2012, 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 209 days (which includes one long sick leave of 73 days for one staff member). This represents 2.1% of the total working days during 2012 and makes an average of 4.5 days per post.

total calendar days	365
weekend days	104
CVPO official holidays	18
average annual holidays	28
working days	215
persons present in year 2012*	46
total working days **	9.890

*includes staff with short-term contracts, replacing temporarily staff on long-term contracts
** 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	209	2,1%	46	4,5

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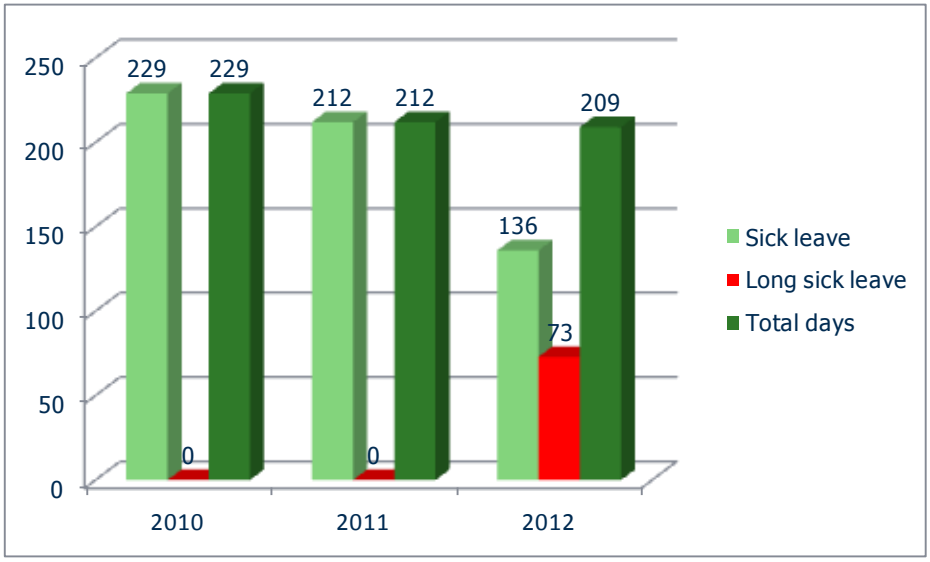
For comparison:

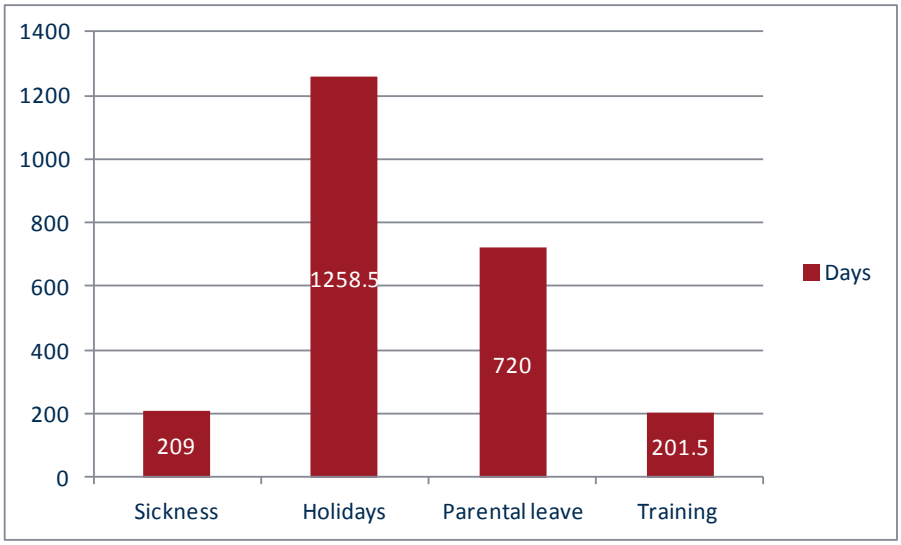
In 2011, the total number of days lost for medical reasons was 212 days. This represents 2,0% of the total working days during 2011 and makes an average of 4.6 days per post.

In 2010, the total number of days lost for medical reasons was 229 days. This represents 2,1% of the total working days during 2010 and makes an average of 5.0 days per post.

Absenteeism over the past three years:



Total absences in 2012:



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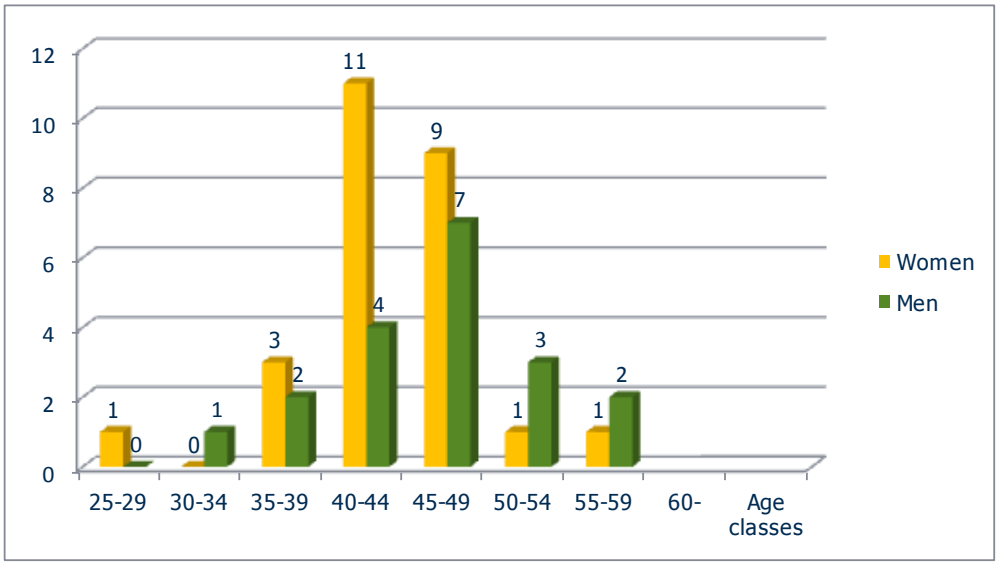
3.8 Gender and age balance

The gender balance amongst CPVO staff is almost 50-50, slightly weighted towards female staff. It should be noted that almost 70% of the staff of the CPVO is presently in the age range between 40 and 49. This situation should be monitored in the medium-long term period to ensure continuity and transfer of knowledge.

Gender & age balance:



4. 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 made 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 2012 the CPVO had no trainees present.

5. WORKING CONDITIONS

5.1 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.

5.2 Security and prevention of occupational hazards

The CPVO did not experience any accidents, occupational hazards or risks to its security during 2012. 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. Trainings on how to handle fire extinguishers and first aid situations were organized for 27 staff members.

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5.3 Flexi-time and teleworking

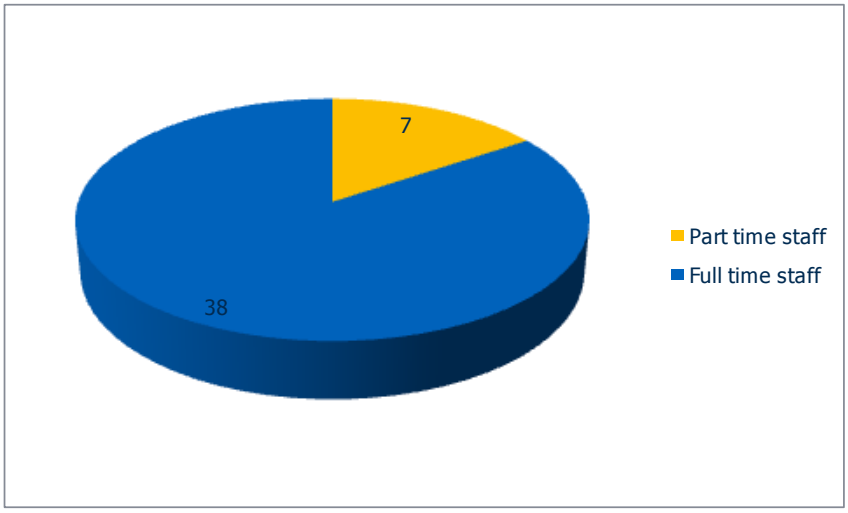
In 2012 a decision was adopted on flexible working hours as a sort of flexi-time. If a staff member in a given week works the 37,5 hours during 4,5 days instead of 5 days, he/she can take the Friday afternoon or the Monday morning off. The hours to be worked and the half-days to be taken off have to be agreed on by the head of unit in advance.

A pilot project on teleworking was also launched. One staff member is currently testing this possibility of working from home and is thus absent from the office on Mondays. The staff member can be reached, however by phone, e-mail and Skype. The project will last for 6 months and then an evaluation will be made to see if this work possibility can be made possible for other staff members. So far, the feed-back has been positive.

5.4 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 2012, seven staff members were granted the right to work part-time at 80% in order to take care of their young children and to better balance private and professional life.

Part time in 2012:



5.5 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 2012, fifteen staff members took parental leave for a total period of 24 months.

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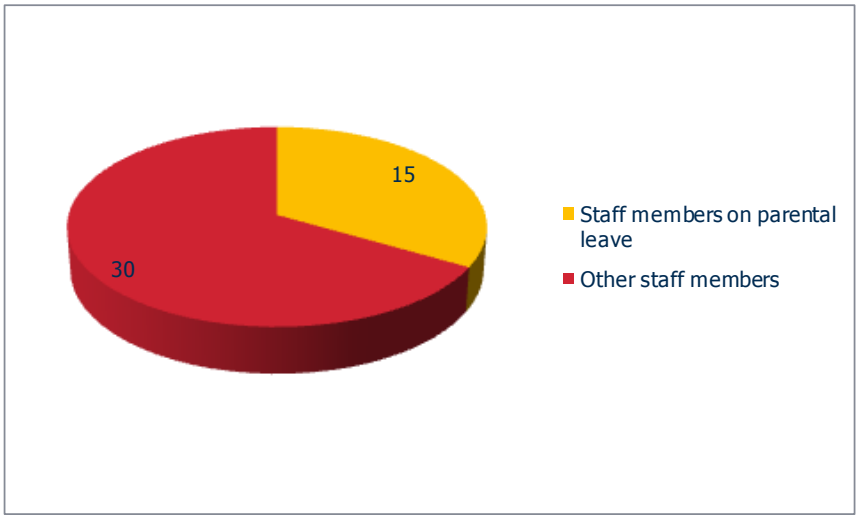
Parental leave in 2012:



6. 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 2012, a budget of 88 000 € was allocated for training. A total of 87 764,65 € was committed, which represents an execution level of 99.73 % of the budget.

A total of 337.5 days were spent in training, which gives an average of 7.3 days per post. The European Commission has put up as a target of 10 days per year and post, so in relation to previous years the CPVO is getting closer to this target.

6.1 Language courses

In 2012, 9 staff members followed language courses. A total of 540 hours (=540/7.5=72 days) were spent in these courses, divided in English (240 hours) and German (300 hours) language courses. In addition to this, two immersion courses in Germany were organized for two staff members, each for a period of 10 days. 31 664 € was committed, which represents 35.98 % of the training budget.

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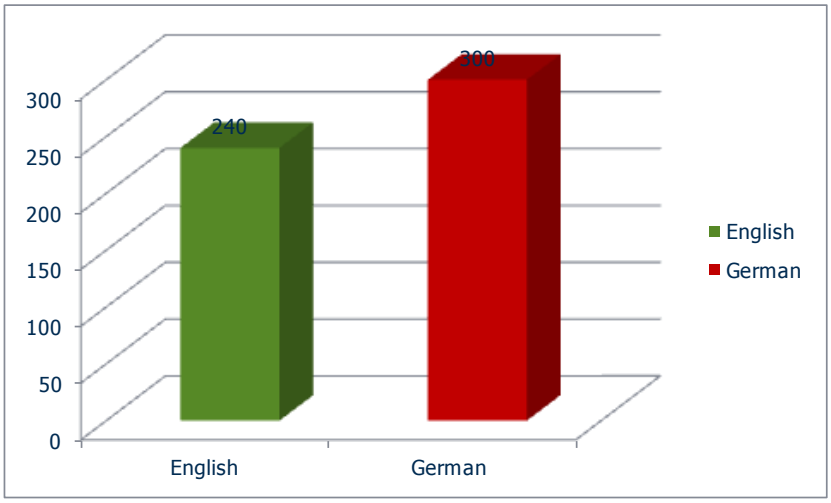
Language courses in 2012:



6.2 IT Training

9 staff members followed IT training courses (Tableau advanced, MSc in Information Systems Technology, virtualization of Microsoft servers, PowerPoint beginners), which amounted to a total of 247.5 hours (=33 days). 6 456,6 € was committed, which represents 7.33 % of the training budget.

6.3 Prevention of harassment

All staff members were invited to take part in the training on prevention of harassment. This training is an integral part of the policy of preventing harassment that the CPVO adopted on 2011. 42 staff members took part in this training, which amounted to a total of 315 hours (=42 days). 5780,00 € was committed, which represents 6,57 % of the training budget.

6.4 Other training

42 staff members followed other training courses (finances, communication & management, human resources, technical expertise, introduction when entering into service, first aid & security) which amounted to a total of 1365 hours (=182 days). 43 864,05 € was committed, which represents 49,85 % of the training budget.

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

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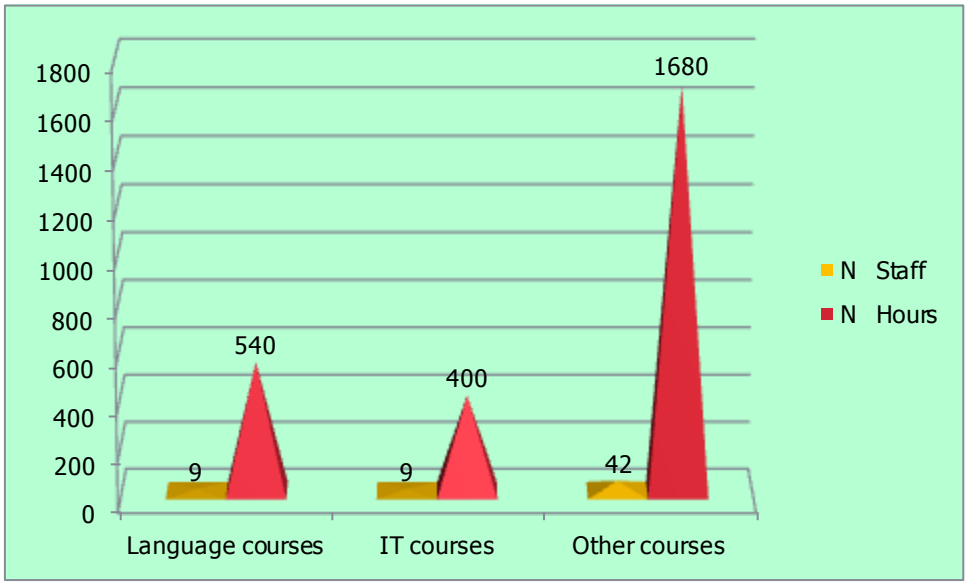
Total training in 2012:



7. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS

7.1 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 2011 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.

8. CONCLUSION REMARKS

The CPVO has a good working climate with very low and decreasing absenteeism. Part-time possibilities are well taken up and allow a more flexible work organization and better reconciliation of work and family life. The new decision on flexi-time will increase this balance. If the pilot project on teleworking gets a positive outcome, this possibility to work from home will also improve the balance between work and family life. The investment into training has increased in relation to previous years. This is an indication that staff members are eager to learn and that the CPVO encourages life-long learning.

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