FAQ

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I. General Questions

1. What types of traineeship does the CoR offer?
The CoR offers three types of traineeship, of which only the first provides financial remuneration for trainees from the European Union:
(1) standard traineeships;
(2) traineeships reserved for government officials;
(3) short-term study visits.
The admission criteria and other relevant information can be found on the CoR website, www.cor.europa.eu.

2. What is the deadline for applying?

For standard traineeships:

**Spring session** (16 February – 15 July)
Opening date for online applications: 1 July of the previous year
Closing date for online applications: 30 September of the previous year (midnight Brussels time)

**Autumn session** (16 September – 15 February)
Opening date for online applications: 1 January of the same year
Closing date for online applications: 31 March of the same year (midnight Brussels time)

For short-term study visits:

The period of the study visit is agreed between the trainee and the unit concerned and depends on the availability of human resources and office space. There is no deadline for applying for short-term study visits.

3. Can I apply to several institutions at once for a traineeship?
Yes, you can. Each institution has its own selection procedure, and it is possible to apply to as many institutions as you would like, but you are only allowed to do one traineeship of over 8 weeks in the European institutions.

4. Can I choose the directorate or unit in which I would like to be placed during a standard traineeship?
No, but you have the opportunity to express a preference for three different units in the application form.

5. Does the CoR cover travel expenses?
Trainees recruited from outside Brussels shall be entitled to the reimbursement of travel expenses incurred at the beginning and the end of the traineeship period. Trainees recruited within 50 km of their place of assignment shall not be entitled to the reimbursement of travel expenses.
Travel expenses shall be paid as a **lump sum**, and are calculated in line with provisions on financial contributions to travel expenses actually incurred by standard trainees at the CoR at the beginning and the end of traineeships.

Trainees must complete a **minimum of 3 months** of the total traineeship period in order to qualify for the reimbursement of travel expenses set out in the previous paragraphs. No applications for change of address shall be accepted after the decision to grant the traineeship has been taken.

**6. Does the CoR provide health insurance?**

Health insurance is compulsory for all trainees. If necessary, health insurance can be provided by the CoR. In this case, the trainee shall contribute one third of the premium, which will be deducted from their grant. The remainder of the cost shall be borne by the CoR.

**7. Does the CoR help with public transport costs in Brussels?**

All trainees shall receive a monthly allowance contributing to the cost of local transport in Brussels. The amount is determined by the Traineeships Office before the start of the traineeship period and shall apply for the duration of the traineeship. The transport allowance shall be paid together with the monthly grant for as long as this monthly grant is paid.

**8. Can I do a traineeship outside the normal traineeship periods?**

Please note that, for standard traineeships, you must be available for the entirety of the traineeship period (from 16 February to 15 July or from 16 September to 15 February), and in this case the dates are not flexible. Short-term study visits are flexible and may take place at any moment of the year (except the period from 16 July to 15 September).

**II. ELIGIBILITY**

**1. What are the admission criteria for a standard traineeship?**

Any person holding the nationality of one of the EU Member States may apply for a traineeship if they:

- have completed at least the first cycle of a higher education course and obtained a full undergraduate academic degree by the closing date for applications;
- have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the European Union and a satisfactory command of another EU language, one of which must be English or French.

**2. I will receive my degree after the deadline for submitting my application. Can I still apply?**

Article 8.1 of Decision 7-2020 states that "Any person holding the nationality of one of the EU Member States may apply for a traineeship if they (...) have completed at least the first cycle of a higher education course and obtained a full undergraduate academic degree by the closing date for applications".

If you receive your full degree after the closing date for applications, you may only apply for the subsequent traineeship period.
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3. Is there an age limit for applications?
No age limit applies.

4. I am a national of a non-EU country. Can I apply?
Applicants from non-EU countries may be granted a traineeship by the Secretary-General in exceptional, duly justified cases. The CoR reserves the right to revoke the assignment letter and select another suitable candidate if, by the beginning of the traineeship period, the candidate does not comply with requirements under national immigration laws for residing and working in Belgium.

5. Can I apply again if my application is not successful?
Yes, you are welcome to apply for any subsequent traineeship periods.

6. Can I apply for a traineeship even though I have already worked in another European Institution?
To ensure that as many European citizens as possible are offered an insight into the work of the European institutions, applications from candidates who have already had more than eight weeks of in-house placement (whether formal or informal, paid or unpaid) in a European institution or body, or who have had any form of employment in a European institution or body, shall not be accepted. This includes work as: an assistant to a Member of the European Parliament, an intramural consultant or researcher, a temporary staff member, a contract staff member, an auxiliary staff member or an interim staff member of any EU institution, body, delegation or representative office.

III. APPLICATION PROCESS
1. How do I apply?
For standard traineeships:
Traineeship programmes at the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) are governed by Decision 7-2020, which is to be found on the traineeship page on the CoR’s website. Article 7.1 of Decision 7-2020 stipulates that "Applications for standard traineeships are to be made exclusively via the online application form which is available on the CoR’s website." The online application form is available on the CoR website and can be completed on the following page: https://trainee.cor.europa.eu/Form.aspx?m=i&culture=en.

For short-term study visits:
There is no online link to apply for short-term study visits. Instead, please forward your CV and letter of motivation to trainee@cor.europa.eu. The letter must state clearly in which department you would like to work. Your e-mail will then be forwarded to the department concerned, which will evaluate your request while taking into account the availability of human resources and office space.

For more information on this type of traineeship, please take a look at the traineeship page on the CoR website.

2. Can I apply in my own language?
The application form can be completed in the most common working languages of the European institutions: English, French or German.
3. **To what should I pay attention when filling in the registration form?**
   - You should apply using the Firefox or Chrome browser. Many errors occur when applying via other browsers.
   - Some things to bear in mind before filling in the application form:
     - Check whether your application meets the admission criteria (see Decision 7-2020).
     - Make sure you have all the necessary information to hand (e.g. dates of education and professional experience, exact name of university, etc.).
     - Write your letter of motivation and competences beforehand.
     - Read the document entitled "CoR Departments Explained" to help you decide for which unit you would like to work.
   - Read all "?" in the tabs, as they contain valuable information.
   - If you encounter difficulties in filling in or submitting the form, please send a "print screen" image of the error message to trainee@cor.europa.eu.
   - Documents will only be requested if your application receives "pre-selected" status.
   - Documents or applications sent by post, etc. will be disregarded.
   - The application form can only be submitted once you have filled in all the tabs. After submitting the application form, you will receive an e-mail with an identification number. This number will enable you to access the application form again and make any necessary changes before the application deadline.
   - The Traineeships Office recommends that you apply well ahead of the deadline. Due to the very high number of applications, the system may encounter problems processing the large amounts of data as the application deadline approaches.
   - Be honest. Do not forget that the Traineeships Office will request proof of what you have declared in your application form. If it becomes apparent that you knowingly made a wrongful declaration or provided false statements or documents at the moment of application or at any time during the traineeship period, your application will be cancelled.

4. **Can I save my application before submitting it?**
   No, if you wish to save your application, you must fill in all the tabs and at the very end submit your application. After submitting your application, you will receive e-mail confirmation of your online registration. This e-mail confirmation contains a password that you can use to access your application form again as many times as you wish before the deadline.

5. **Can I append my CV to the application form?**
   Please do not append your CV. All the information needed for a selection to be made has been requested in the application form.
6. **What can I write in my letter of motivation? What does "Do not add personal data" mean?**

In order to ensure that the selection process is objective, anonymous and merit-based, the database does not allow departments to search on the basis of applicants' names or other personal data. Therefore, you should not include any personal data, such as your name, picture, signature, address or other such information.

7. **What is an area code? What is a country code?**

   **An area code** is that part of a telephone number indicating the general geographical location of the (fixed) phone receiving the call. The area code is the section just before the local number, and just after the access and country codes. An area code usually does not need to be dialled if the number being called is in the same area as the number making the call, unlike the local number, which must always be dialled in its entirety.

   **A country code** is that part of a telephone number indicating which country the phone receiving the call is based in. It only needs to be dialled if the number being called is based in a different country from the number making the call.

8. **Will my personal data be disclosed and to whom?**

To ensure that the selection process is objective, anonymous and merit-based, the database does not allow departments to search on the basis of applicants' names or other personal data.

9. **How do I indicate in the application form that I have dual nationality?**

   In the "personal details" tab you will be able to indicate your first and, if appropriate, second nationality, the first being your main nationality and the one you would like to apply under.

10. **I have not received confirmation that my application has been submitted. What do I do?**

    Please send an e-mail to the functional mailbox of the Traineeships Office (trainee@cor.europa.eu) to check whether your application has been properly submitted.

11. **I have not received a password after submitting my application. What do I do?**

    The password is sent in the e-mail confirming your registration. If you have not received this confirmation e-mail, please check whether it is in your spam folder. As a last resort, please send an e-mail to the functional mailbox of the Traineeships Office (trainee@cor.europa.eu) to ask for a password.

12. **Can I make changes to or correct mistakes in my online form after it has been submitted?**

    Yes, after submitting your application you will receive an e-mail confirming your registration and giving you a password that you can use to access your application form again as many times as you wish before the deadline.

13. **How can I check my status in the application procedure?**

    You can access your application and check your status by following this link: https://trainee.cor.europa.eu/login.aspx?culture=en.
14. I have received an e-mail saying my application is valid. What does this mean?
Validation of the application form is the second step in the selection procedure, where the Traineeships Office checks whether applications meet the criteria laid down in Decision 7-2020. If your application meets these criteria, you will receive an e-mail stating "Application valid". You will be notified of the validation of your application at the latest 15 days after the deadline for submitting the application. However, this does not mean that your application has been pre-selected or selected.

For more information on the selection process, please have a look at the traineeship page on the CoR website: https://cor.europa.eu/en/about/Pages/traineeships.aspx.

15. I have received an e-mail saying my application is invalid. What does this mean?
Validation of the application form is the second step in the selection procedure, where the Traineeships Office checks whether the applications meet the criteria laid down in Decision 7-2020. If your application does not meet these criteria, you will receive an e-mail stating "Application invalid".

16. When will I find out whether or not my application has been successful?
The provisional timetable and target dates are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Spring session</th>
<th>Autumn session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application registration</td>
<td>1 April to 30 September of the previous year</td>
<td>1 October to 31 March of the same year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-selection</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final selection</td>
<td>December</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. I have received an e-mail saying "Reserve list". What does this mean?
Your application has changed to "Reserve list", meaning that your application will be recorded in the database of non-preselected candidates. This database may be used as a reserve pool at a later stage of the selection process in exceptional circumstances that are determined by the Traineeships Office only. In that case, you would be contacted directly by the Traineeships Office.

18. I have received an e-mail saying "Pre-selected – awaiting documents". What does this mean?
Short-listed candidates will be informed by the Traineeships Office that they have been pre-selected and will be requested to upload the substantiating documents electronically by a specific deadline. Applicants will in that case receive an e-mail with the status "Pre-selected – awaiting documents".

19. I have received an e-mail saying "Pre-selected – reserve list". What does this mean?
Pre-selected candidates who are not first in order of preference on the shortlist will receive an e-mail with the status "Pre-selected – reserve list". If the candidate initially selected declines or terminates their assignment, the Traineeships Office will contact the other candidates on the pre-selection list in order of preference.
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20. I have received an e-mail saying "Selected". What does this mean?
This would mean that you are first in order of preference on the shortlist of pre-selected candidates, that your administrative file is complete and that you have now been selected for the traineeship. The Traineeships Office will notify successful candidates with an assignment letter.

21. What if I have not received any e-mail or reply from the Traineeships Office concerning my traineeship?
Please contact the Traineeships Office by sending an e-mail to the functional mailbox: trainee@cor.europa.eu.

22. Can I contact staff members from the European Committee of the Regions once I have submitted my application form?
For data protection reasons, the Traineeships Office does not give out staff members' e-mail addresses or phone numbers. Please note that the CoR Traineeships Office does not encourage applicants to contact staff in their preferred unit before they are selected. Should your application be pre-selected, you may be contacted for a telephone interview, during which you will be able to give all necessary details to the staff member responsible for selecting a trainee.

23. My application was not selected. Can I contact the Traineeships Office to find out how I can improve my application for next time?
The pre-selection and selection of trainees is carried out by CoR departments, not by the CoR Traineeships Office. Therefore the Traineeships Office does not provide feedback on applications. Moreover, it is not possible to contact your preferred units to obtain the search criteria they used during the (pre-)selection process.

Not being pre-selected or selected does not mean that you are not qualified. We would like to underline that this is not a reflection on your academic qualifications or work experience. A selection process involves finding the right match between the unit’s search criteria and the available candidates. When someone has not been pre-selected or selected, it means that there was a better match, not a better candidate. Each unit has its own criteria and these may vary from one traineeship period to another. It is therefore difficult to advise you on how to apply next time.

IV. TROUBLESHOOTING
1. I am trying to submit my application but receive an error message "there is no enrolment period". What does this mean?
There are various reasons for registration problems:
- The link is out of date: Here is the link to the current traineeship application form: https://trainee.cor.europa.eu/Form.aspx?m=i&culture=en.
- The application form is a "secure" access (https). You can check the security level on the "Options" tab of your internet and change it as necessary.
- Wrong browser: It appears that the application form does not work properly in Internet Explorer. We suggest that you use another browser such as Firefox or Chrome. Alternatively, you can try to upload your documents using a different computer with different settings.
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- Due to the high number of applications, the system may encounter problems processing large amounts of data when the deadline for uploading documents is approaching.

2. After accessing my application again, my information has disappeared and the fields are blank. What has happened?
To check your data, you can use the following updated link: https://trainee.cor.europa.eu/Login.aspx?culture=en. When you access the application form again, you must press "Next" to visualize your data in the different tabs; clicking directly on the tabs will not reveal the corresponding information, and the fields will look empty as you move the cursor across.

3. How can I add a second bachelor's degree in the online application form?
In the online application form you may state 3 degrees in total, including on-going studies. In order to add your second bachelor's degree (or master's), however, the Level of Study must be different. You can use "Other Studies" in the scroll menu to avoid generating an error in the system, which only allows you to enter a completed bachelor's degree (not an on-going one).