

FAQ – TRAINEESHIPS AT THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

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I. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What types of traineeships does the CoR offer?

The Committee of the Regions offers three types of traineeship:

- The standard traineeship for young graduates
- The (unpaid) short-term study visit, which allows university students with a full academic degree to take up a traineeship (as part of their studies)
- Internships reserved for governmental officials

The admission criteria and other relevant information can be found on the CoR website, www.cor.europa.eu.

2. When is the deadline for applying?

For standard traineeships:

Spring session (16 February to 15 July)

Opening date for online applications: 1 April of previous year

Closing date for online applications: 30 September of previous year (midnight Brussels time)

Autumn session (16 September to 15 February)

Opening date for online applications: 1 October of previous year

Closing date for online applications: 31 March of same year (midnight Brussels time)

For short-term study visits:

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

3. Can I apply for a traineeship to several institutions at once?

Yes, you can. Each institution has its own selection procedure, and it is possible to apply to as many institutions as you like, but you are only allowed to do a single traineeship exceeding a period of 8 weeks in the European institutions.

4. Can I choose the directorate or unit in which I would like to be placed during the standard traineeship?

No, but you have the opportunity to choose three preferred units in the application form.

5. Does the CoR pay for travel expenses?

Standard trainees can request reimbursement of travel expenses after having completed at least three months of traineeship. The conditions for reimbursement are laid out in **Regulation 79/2017**.

"A trainee who is recruited elsewhere than in Brussels shall be entitled to the reimbursement of travel expenses actually incurred at the beginning and the end of the traineeship period. A

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trainee whose place of recruitment is within 50 km of his place of assignment shall not be entitled to the reimbursement of travel costs.

Travel expenses are paid on a modulated lump sum basis and are calculated by analogy in accordance to the method applicable for the reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by candidates interviewed for a job vacancy at CoR. Travel expenses for the outward journey are paid on presentation of the supporting documents. The cost of the return journey is reimbursed on the same basis as the outward journey, without the documents having to be produced."

6. Does the CoR provide health insurance?

Health insurance is compulsory for all trainees. Standard trainees who are not covered by any other health insurance scheme will be insured against sickness under the conditions laid down in the sickness insurance policy that the CoR holds with an insurance company. A trainee who wishes to rely on another health insurance policy will be asked to provide proof of this insurance before the start of the traineeship period.

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

Standard trainees who sign a declaration of honour in which they commit to buy a nominative seasonal public transport title for the full traineeships period, will be entitled to an additional 50% reimbursement of the corresponding costs in the framework of the monthly traineeship grant. At any time during the traineeships period, the trainee can be invited to provide evidence of being holder of a nominative seasonal public transport title. The case being, any sum overpaid shall be recovered. This partial reimbursement scheme only applies to public transport within the Brussels capital region and is not applicable for trainees' family members.

8. Can I do a traineeship outside of 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 during the summer, due to the limited availability of human resources).

II. ELIGIBILITY

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

Article 8 of Regulation 79/2017 governing the traineeship schemes at the European Committee of the Regions lays down four criteria:

- **Nationality:** Any national of one of the Member States of the European Union or of a State which is an official candidate for accession may apply for the traineeship. However, applicants of third countries may be granted a traineeship by the Secretary General or his delegate in exceptional, duly motivated cases.
- **Diploma:** To apply for a traineeship, applicants must have completed at least the first cycle of a higher education course and obtained a full academic degree by the closing date for applications.

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- **Languages:** Applicants must have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the European Union and a satisfactory knowledge of another of these languages, one of which has to be either English or French (most used working languages).
- **Single traineeship:** In order to enable as many European citizens as possible to familiarize themselves with the European institutions, no application shall be accepted from any person who has **already received more than eight weeks** of any kind of in-service training (formal or informal, paid or unpaid) within a European institution or body, or who has been in any kind of employment within a European institution or body, including anyone who is or has been an assistant to a Member of the European Parliament, an *intramuros* 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.

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

Article 8.1 of Regulation 79/2017 states that "Any national of one of the Member States of the European Union or of a State which is an official candidate for accession **may apply** for the traineeship if he has **completed at least the first cycle of a higher education course** and obtained a full academic degree by the closing date for applications.

If you'll receive your full degree later than the closing date for applications, you can only submit your application for the following traineeship period.

3. Is there an age limit to apply?

No age limit applies.

4. I am a national of a non-EU country. Can I apply?

Yes, you can apply as national of a non-EU country, but, as stipulated in Article 8.3 of the regulation, "Applicants of third countries may be granted a traineeship by the Secretary General or his delegate in exceptional, duly motivated cases." If a unit wishes to pre-select your application, it will have to ask the Secretary-General (or his delegate) to grant derogation.

5. Can I apply again if my application is not selected?

Yes, you are welcome to apply to any of the following traineeship sessions.

6. Can I apply for a traineeship even though I have already worked for another European Institution?

Applications shall not be accepted from any person who has already received **more than eight weeks** of any kind of in-service training (formal or informal, paid or unpaid) within a European institution or body, or who has been in any kind of employment within a European institution or body, including anyone who is or has been an assistant to a Member of the European Parliament, an *intramuros* 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.

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III. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. How do I apply?

For standard traineeships:

Traineeship programmes at the Committee of the Regions (CoR) are governed by **Regulation 79/2017**, which you will find on the traineeship page on the CoR website: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/about/Pages/traineeships.aspx>. Article 7.1 of Regulation 79/2017 stipulates that "*applications for paid traineeships are to be made exclusively via the Internet*". 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 a short-term study visit. 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 have a look at the traineeship page on the CoR website: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/about/Pages/traineeships.aspx>.

2. Can I apply in my language?

The application form can be completed in the most common working languages of the European institutions: English, French or German.

3. What should I pay attention to when I fill in the registration form?

- You should apply using the Firefox or Chrome browser. Many errors occur due to applying via other browsers.
- Some things to keep in mind before filling in the application form:
 - Check whether your application meets the admission criteria (see Regulation 79/2017).
 - Make sure you have all the required information ready to submit (e.g. dates of education and professional experience, exact name of university, etc.).
 - Write your motivation and competences beforehand.
 - Read the document "CoR Departments Explained" to help you decide which unit you would like to work for.
- 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 of the error message to trainee@cor.europa.eu.
- Documents will only be requested if your application has the status "pre-selected".
- Documents or applications sent by post, etc. will be disregarded.
- The application form can only be submitted once you have filled in all tabs. After submitting the application form, you will receive an e-mail with an identification number. This number will

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enable you to re-enter the application form 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. Early application may also give the CoR's IT department more time to have a closer look at your specific question.
- 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 an e-mail confirmation of your online registration. This e-mail confirmation contains a password that you can use to re-enter your application form as many times as you wish before the deadline.

5. Can I add my CV to the application form?

Please do not add your CV. All the information needed to make a selection has been requested in the application form.

6. What can I write in my motivation letter? 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, etc.

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

An area code is a section of a telephone number indicating the general geographic location of the 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 doesn't 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 a section 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.

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

In the "personal details" tab you will be able to indicate your first and second nationality, the first being the most important 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 submitted.

11. I did not receive a password after submitting my application! What do I do?

You can find the password in the e-mail confirming your registration. If you did not receive this confirmation e-mail, please check whether it was directed to 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 your password.

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

Yes, after submitting your application, you will then receive an e-mail confirming your registration and providing a password that you can use to re-enter your application form 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 the link <https://trainee.cor.europa.eu/login.aspx?culture=en>.

14. I have received an e-mail saying my application is valid. What does it mean?

Validation of the application form is the second step in the selection procedure, in which the Traineeships Office checks whether the applications meet the criteria laid down in Regulation 79/2017. If your application meets the admission 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 it mean?

Validation of the application form is the second step in the selection procedure, in which the Traineeships Office checks whether the applications meet the criteria laid down in Regulation 79/2017. If your application does not meet the admission criteria, you will receive an e-mail stating "Application invalid".

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16. When will I find out whether or not my application has been selected?

The **provisional timetable** and target dates are as follows:

Phase	Spring session	Autumn session
Application registration	1 April to 30 September of previous year	1 October to 31 March of same year
Pre-selection	15 November	15 May
Final selection	31 December	30 June

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 at a later stage of the selection process in exceptional circumstances that are to be decided by the Traineeships Office only. In that case, you will 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 justifying documents electronically by a specific deadline. Applicants will 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 short list will receive an e-mail with the status "Pre-selected – reserve list". If the candidate initially selected declines or terminates his/her assignment, the Traineeships Office will contact the other candidates on the pre-selection list in order of preference.

20. I have received an e-mail saying "Selected". What does this mean?

The candidate is first in order of preference on the short list of pre-selected candidates, his/her administrative file is complete and the candidate is now selected for the traineeship. The Traineeships Office will notify the successful candidate 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 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 the selection of a trainee.

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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 candidates-trainees is carried out by the CoR departments, not by the CoR Traineeships Office. Therefore, the Traineeships Office does not provide feedback on evaluation of applications. In addition, it is not possible to contact your preferred units in order to get the search criteria they used during the (pre-) selection process.

Not being pre-selected/selected does not mean 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/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 I 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: Please find below 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.
- Due to the high number of applications, the system may encounter problems processing large amounts of data when reaching the deadline for uploading documents.

2. After re-entering my application, my information has disappeared and the fields are left blank. What happened?

To check your data, you can use the following updated link: <https://trainee.cor.europa.eu/Login.aspx?culture=en>. When you re-enter the application form, 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 add in total 3 degrees, 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 an error from the system, which only allows you to enter a completed bachelor's degree (not ongoing).