

University of Strasbourg  
Conferences and debates

# Conference *Meet Your Future*

*Employment, professions and competitions within the European institutions: meet former LEA students.*



Speakers: Jeanne Bisch, Ivaylo Petrov, Jeannine Uysal  
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Strasbourg, France



**Focus-LEA**

Langues Étrangères Appliquées

Université de Strasbourg

*On Wednesday 24th November 2018, as part of the "Meet your future" conference cycle organised by the LEA (applied foreign studies) department, a conference of professional speakers was held at the University of Strasbourg. Former LEA students of the University, Jeanne Bisch, parliamentary assistant at the European Parliament, Iwaylo Petrov, assistant at the European Union Court of Justice, and Jeannine Uysal, human resources advisor at the Council of Europe, presented the European institutions in which they work before exchanging with the public.*

#### **Jeanne Bisch: parliamentary assistant at the European Parliament**

Jeanne Bisch, the first speaker to take the floor, spoke about her experience at the European Parliament. Her career, marked by a LEA degree at the University of Strasbourg and a first year of Conference Interpreting master's degree at the ISIT in Paris, led her first to an internship and then to a position as an accredited parliamentary assistant (APA) in the European Parliament. She is assisting a Polish Member of the European Parliament. Her tasks are mainly related to office work like secretarial, administrative, and legal work, i. e. amendments and committees. Her knowledge of the French, Polish, English and German languages is essential to her daily life, in an environment with no less than 24 official languages.

#### **Iwaylo Petrov: assistant at Court of Justice of the European Union**

Iwaylo Petrov, the second professional to talk about his job, has been working at the European Court of Justice since 2015. After passing his LEA degree, he joined the IEP, the Institute of political studies of Strasbourg to pursue a Master's degree in European and International Studies. He thus specialised in the history of international relations and the process of regional integration. Iwaylo Petrov is an assistant at the Registry. It is responsible for keeping the court register and is at the heart of the institution.

#### **Jeannine Uysal: human resources advisor at the Council of Europe**

Third and final speaker of the evening, Jeannine Uysal has a diversified career path. After graduating as an executive secretary and obtaining a LEA master's degree in Strasbourg, she joined the professional world at the Investment Bank with a status similar to that of civil servant. She subsequently held several positions within the institutions of the Greater Europe: assistant to the Council of Europe for ten years and then to the legal section of the European Court of Human Rights for five years. Since 2011, she is an advisor at the Human Resources Directorate of the Council of Europe.

### **Access to internships and jobs at the institutions**

In the ensuing discussions with the public, the speakers explained how to access internships or careers in the institutions where they are currently working.

#### **European Parliament**

Schuman internships last five months, from October to February or from March to July. They can be done in the field of translation or in one of the many Directorates (communication, security, internal/external policy, etc.). The selection is made by analysing candidates' application forms. Some conditions have to be met, like having a university degree. Contacting Members of Parliament directly for an unsolicited application is also a great way to secure an internship.

#### **Institutions of the European Union**

The institutions of the European Union, including the Parliament, offer various contracts. They include contract agents, temporary agents, permanent officials, freelancers and interns, whether they are paid or not. The EPSO

competition gives access to permanent posts in these institutions, such as lawyer-linguist, translator or assistant.

This procedure is divided into three stages, namely

- online tests: verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning tests
- E-Tray test: assessment of the ability to solve a problem in a given time in a simulated work environment
- assessment centre's tests: interview and case studies

These tests are used to select the hundred or so candidates who will constitute the reserve list. The Human Resources Department will draw recruits from this list to fill job vacancies. While it is possible to apply without passing the competition for job offers as a temporary or contract agent, having done an internship is highly appreciated.

Each European institution has a different programme or terms concerning internship offers. It is therefore important to do some research on each institution to see what kind of offers are available and which internship is best suited for you. At the end of this document you will find all the links you need to help you in your internship search.

### **The Council of Europe**

Contracts of this institution are of three kinds: permanent contracts, fixed-term contracts (generally renewable or limited to 4-5 years under the Junior Professionals Programme), and temporary contracts. Moreover, some of the staff is composed of seconded national experts from the 47 Member States. Similarly to the European Union institutions, access to fixed-term and permanent contracts is based on a competition including a shortlisting, an evaluation and an interview with a selection board before a reserve list is drawn up. On the other hand, applications for temporary posts are spontaneous.

At the Council of Europe, there are two categories of internships: internships under the official programme and those outside of the official programme. As part of the official programme, there are two official traineeship sessions each year lasting from two to five months. A bachelor's degree is required in this case. Outside of the official programme, applications have to be sent directly to the services in question which will handle them. These internships can last from three to eight weeks.

### **Benefits of LEA training at the European institutions**

Among other advantages, Jeanne Bisch highlights her knowledge of languages acquired in LEA and her participation in numerous training projects, including an Erasmus mobility, professionalising conferences and cultural activities. As for Jeannine Uysal, she considers that civilization classes have been a decisive factor of success in her profession, because they have provided her with a deep understanding of foreign cultures. In addition, the high linguistic requirements of the University of Strasbourg have facilitated her professional integration. While Ivaylo Petrov agrees with his colleagues, he notes that a student considering a career at the European Court of Justice should increase the legal knowledge developed in his introductory law course with a master's degree in law.

For more information about internships and competitions, you can visit the websites of the [European Parliament](#), the [European Institutions](#) and of the [Council of Europe](#).