

Decision by the Management Committee of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)

on the secondment to the BEREC Office of national experts and national experts in professional training

The MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE,

Having regard to the Council and European Parliament Regulation (EC) n° 1211/2009 of 25 November 2009 establishing the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (hereinafter "BEREC") and the BEREC Office, and in particular Article 10 thereof.

Whereas:

(1) Seconded national experts (hereinafter "SNEs") should enable the BEREC Office to benefit from the high level of their professional knowledge and experience, in particular in areas where such expertise is not readily available.

(2) It is highly desirable to foster the exchange of professional experience in, and knowledge of, European policies by temporarily assigning experts from the administrations of the Member States to the BEREC Office, even for short periods. For the same reason, steps should also be taken to facilitate the use of experts drawn from the administrations of Member States of the European Free Trade Area (hereinafter "EFTA"), candidate countries that have reached an agreement with the BEREC Office on personnel matters, and public intergovernmental organisations (hereinafter "IGOs").

(3) In order to ensure that the BEREC Office's independence is not compromised by private interests, it should be stipulated that SNEs must come from a national, regional or local public administration or an IGO. The secondment of an SNE by an employer other than a national, regional or local public administration or an IGO should be authorised only on a case-by-case basis, once it has been ascertained that the SNE's employer is part of the public sector or is an independent university or research organisation that does not seek to make profits for redistribution.

(4) In order to avoid any conflict of interests, the rights and obligations of SNEs, as set out in this Decision, should ensure that they carry out their duties solely in the interests of the European Union and BEREC Office.

(5) In view of their special status, it should be stipulated that SNEs acting alone will not exercise any of the responsibilities that belong to the BEREC Office by virtue of the powers conferred upon it, unless specially empowered to do so in writing by the Vice-Chair of the Management Committee.

(6) In view of the importance of training officials of the Member States – and, where appropriate, of EFTA countries, candidate countries and IGOs – in Community policies and the Commission and BEREC Office's working methods, a specific legal and administrative framework for the induction and professional training of these officials, to be known as national experts in professional training (hereinafter "NEPTs"), should be set up.

(7) The Permanent Representations of the European Union Member States and the National Regulatory Authorities play a crucial role in implementing these Rules and should therefore enjoy a particularly close working relationship with the BEREC Office.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

TITLE I

SECONDED NATIONAL EXPERTS

Chapter I

Article 1

Scope and definitions

1. These Rules shall apply to national experts seconded to the BEREC Office.

SNEs are staff employed by a national, regional or local public administration or IGOs, who are seconded to the BEREC Office so that it can use their expertise in a particular field.

For the purposes of this Decision, the public administration means all State administrative services at central, federal and regional level, comprising ministries, government and parliament services, the courts, central banks, and the administrative services of local authorities, as well as the decentralised administrative services of the State and of such authorities, such as national regulatory authorities (NRAs).

The persons covered by these Rules must have worked for their employer on a permanent or contract basis for at least 12 months before their secondment and shall remain in the service of that employer throughout the period of secondment.

The SNE's employer shall thus undertake to continue to pay his salary, to maintain his administrative status (permanent official or contract staff member) throughout the period of secondment and to inform the BEREC Office of any change in the SNE's situation in this regard. The SNE's employer shall also continue to be responsible for all his social rights, particularly social security and pension. The termination of or change in the SNE's administrative status (permanent official or contract staff member) may lead to the termination of his secondment by the Vice Chair of the Management Committee, without notice, in accordance with Article 10(2)(c).

2. Notwithstanding the second subparagraph of paragraph 1, the Vice Chair of the Management Committee, on a case-by-case basis, authorises the secondment of an SNE from an employer other than a public administration or an IGO if the interests of the BEREC Office warrant bringing in specific expertise as a temporary measure, provided that the SNE's employer:

- is an independent university or research organisation which does not set out to make profits for redistribution; or
- is in fact part of the public sector.

For the purposes of this Decision, to qualify as being part of the public sector the SNE's employer must meet all the following conditions:

- it must be attached to a public administration, as defined in paragraph 1, and specifically it must

have been created by legislation or regulation;

– its resources must come primarily from public funding;

– any activities in which it competes against other private or public entities on the market must represent less than half of its activities.

The BEREC Office shall, if necessary, clarify the arrangements for implementing the different criteria and communicate them to the Permanent Representations of the EU Member States, the EFTA Secretariat, the Countries associated with a Community programme by a Council Decision, the NRAs, members of the Management Committee, and the IGOs concerned.

3. An SNE must be a national of an EU Member State or EFTA Member State or a country with which the Council has decided to open accession negotiations and which has concluded a specific agreement with the BEREC Office on staff secondments.

4. When a secondment is being planned, the BEREC Office shall ensure the geographical and gender balance and compliance with the principle of equal opportunities, in accordance with the principles set out in Article 1(d) and Article 27 of the Staff Regulations.

The BEREC Office shall monitor compliance and, in the event of a serious imbalance at BEREC Office level, shall take the necessary corrective measures to ensure balanced representation of SNEs.

5. Any reference in these Rules to a person of the male sex shall be deemed also to constitute a reference to a person of the female sex, and vice-versa, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

Article 2

Cost-free seconded national experts

1. For the purposes of this Decision, “cost-free SNEs” means SNEs for whom the BEREC Office does not pay any of the allowances provided for in Chapters III or cover any of the expenses provided for in this Decision, other than those related to the performance of their duties during their secondment.

2. Cost-free SNEs may be seconded from the public administration, as defined in Article 1(1), of an EU Member State or EFTA Member State or a country with which the Council has decided to open accession negotiations and which has concluded a specific agreement with the BEREC Office on staff secondments, or from an IGO, as part of an agreement and/or exchange programme with the BEREC Office.

3. In addition, the Vice Chair of the Management Committee of the BEREC Office may authorise the secondment of cost-free SNEs on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration their place of origin, and the geographical balance and the work to be carried out.

Article 3

Selection procedure

1. SNEs shall be selected according to an open and transparent procedure, the practical details of which shall be decided by the Vice Chair of the Management Committee.

2. Before the secondment, the BEREC Office must have been authorised to use SNEs under the Annual Strategy Plan / Preliminary Draft Budget procedure (APS/PDB).

3. Applications shall be forwarded by the Permanent Representations, by the EFTA Secretariat, by the diplomatic missions of the non-member countries whose nationals are eligible for the secondment, by the NRAs and by the administrations of the IGOs.

4. The secondment shall be authorised by the Vice Chair of the Management Committee and effected by an exchange of letters between that Vice-Chair of that Committee and the Permanent Representation of the Member States, or the EFTA Secretariat, the diplomatic missions of the non-member countries whose nationals are eligible for the secondment, the NRAs or the IGOs concerned.

Article 4

Period of secondment

1. The initial period of secondment may not be less than six months or more than three years. It may be renewed once or more, up to a total period not exceeding three years.
2. The initial duration of the secondment shall be specified in the exchange of letters referred to in Article 3(4). Any extension of the period of secondment shall be the subject of a new exchange of letters.

Article 5

Place of secondment

SNEs are seconded to the location of the BEREC Office.

Article 6

Tasks

1. SNEs shall assist the temporary staff of BEREC Office. They may not perform middle or senior management duties, even when deputising for their immediate superior.
2. An SNE shall take part in missions or external meetings only as part of a delegation led by a temporary staff member or, if on his own, as an observer or for information purposes.

In all other cases, by way of derogation from paragraph 2, the Administrative Manager may give a specific mandate to the SNE to participate on his own in one or more missions or external meetings, after having ensured that there is no potential conflict of interest.

In such cases the Administrative Manager shall give the SNE clear and specific written instructions on the position to be adopted during the missions or meetings in question.

3. Under no circumstances may an SNE on his own represent the BEREC Office with a view to entering into commitments, whether financial or otherwise, or negotiating on its behalf.

An SNE may, however, represent the BEREC Office in legal proceedings as co-agent with a temporary agent.

4. The BEREC Office shall remain solely responsible for approving the results of any tasks performed by an SNE and for signing any official documents arising from them.
5. The BEREC Office, the SNE's employer and the SNE must ensure that there is no conflict of interest in relation to the SNE's duties while seconded to the BEREC Office.

For this purpose, the Vice Chair of the Management Committee shall inform the SNE and his employer before the start of the secondment about the intended duties and ask them to confirm in writing that they do not know of any reason why the SNE should not be assigned to those duties.

The employer and the SNE shall also undertake to inform the Vice Chair of the Management Committee of any change of circumstances during the secondment which could give rise to any such conflict.

The BEREC Office shall keep a copy of all such exchanges of correspondence in its records and shall hand it over to the Administrative Manager on request.

Where the Vice Chair of the Management Committee considers that the nature of its activities requires particular security precautions, security clearance shall be obtained prior to recruitment.

Failure on the part of the SNE to comply with his obligations arising from paragraphs 2, 3 or 5 shall entitle the Vice Chair of the Management Committee, if he/she sees fit, to terminate the secondment of the SNE pursuant to Article 10(2)(c).

Article 7

Rights and obligations

1. During the period of secondment:

a) The SNE shall carry out his duties and conduct himself solely with the interests of the European Union and the BEREC Office in mind. He shall neither seek nor take instructions from any government, authority, organisation or person outside the BEREC Office. He shall carry out the duties assigned to him objectively, impartially and in keeping with his duties of loyalty to the European Union and the BEREC Office.

b) An SNE wishing to engage in an outside activity, whether paid or unpaid, or to carry out any assignment outside the European Union and the BEREC Office shall be subject to the Commission's rules on prior authorisation for officials¹. The BEREC Office shall consult the SNE's employer before issuing an authorisation.

c) The SNE shall refrain from any action or behaviour which might reflect adversely upon his position and from any form of psychological or sexual harassment².

d) The SNE shall not, in the performance of his duties, deal with a matter in which, directly or indirectly, he has any personal interests such as to impair his independence, and, in particular, family and financial interests. If he has occasion in the performance of his duties to deal with such a matter, he shall immediately inform the Vice Chair of the Management Committee, who will take any appropriate measure and may, in particular, relieve the SNE of responsibility in this matter.

The SNE may neither keep nor acquire, either directly or indirectly, in undertakings which are subject to the authority of the BEREC Office or which have dealings with the BEREC Office, any interests of such kind or magnitude as might impair his independence in the performance of his duties.

The SNE shall declare any gainful activity performed in a professional capacity by his spouse, as defined by the Staff Regulations.

e) The SNE shall refrain from any unauthorised disclosure of information received in the line of duty, unless that information has already been made public or is accessible to the public.

¹ Article 12b of the Staff Regulations and the provisions implementing this Article shall apply mutatis mutandis.

² Article 12a of the Staff Regulations and the provisions implementing this Article shall apply mutatis mutandis.

f) The SNE has the right to freedom of expression, with due regard for the principles of loyalty and impartiality.

The SNE who intends to publish or cause to be published, whether alone or with others, any text on a matter relating to the work of the European Union or the BEREC Office shall inform the Vice Chair of the Management Committee in advance. Where the Vice Chair of the Management Committee is able to demonstrate that the publication is liable seriously to prejudice the legitimate interests of the European Union or the BEREC Office, he shall inform the SNE of his decision in writing within 30 working days of receipt of the information. If no such decision is notified within the specified period, the Vice Chair of the Management Committee shall be deemed to have had no objections.

g) All rights in any work done by the SNE in the performance of his duties shall be the property of the BEREC Office.

h) The SNE shall reside at the place of secondment or at no greater distance therefrom as is compatible with the proper performance of his activities.

i) Based on his professional knowledge and experience, the SNE shall assist and tender advice to the superiors in the BEREC Office to whom he is assigned and shall be responsible to his superiors for performance of the tasks entrusted to him.

2. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of paragraph 1 during the period of secondment shall entitle the BEREC Office, if it sees fit, to terminate the SNE's secondment pursuant to Article 10(2)(c).

3. At the end of the secondment the SNE shall continue to have a duty of loyalty to the European Union and the BEREC Office and be bound by the obligation to act with integrity and discretion in the exercise of new duties assigned to him and in accepting certain posts or advantages.

Article 8

Professional experience and knowledge of languages

1. To qualify for secondment to the BEREC Office a national expert must have at least three years' experience of administrative, legal, scientific, technical, advisory or supervisory functions which can be regarded as equivalent to those of function groups AD or AST – this latter function group being taken into consideration only for highly specialised job profiles – as defined in the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities.

2. The SNE must produce evidence of a thorough knowledge of one of the European Union's languages and a satisfactory knowledge of another European Union language to the extent necessary for the performance of his duties.

Article 9

Suspension of secondment

1. At the written request of the SNE or his employer, and with the latter's agreement, the Vice Chair of the Management Committee may authorise suspensions of periods of secondment and specify the terms applicable. During such suspensions:

a) the subsistence allowances referred to in Article 17 shall not be payable;

b) the travel expenses referred to in Article 19 shall be payable only if the suspension is at the Commission's request.

2. The period of suspension shall not be counted in the period of secondment as defined in Article 4.

Article 10

Termination of periods of secondment

1. Subject to paragraph 2, the expert's secondment may be terminated at the request of the Vice Chair of the Management Committee or the SNE's employer, subject to three months' notice, or at the SNE's request, subject to the same period of notice and with the agreement of the BEREC Office and the SNE's employer.

2. In exceptional circumstances the secondment may be terminated without notice:

a) by the SNE's employer, if the employer's essential interests so require;

b) by the BEREC Office and the employer acting jointly, at the request of the SNE addressed to both parties, if the SNE's personal or professional interests so require;

c) by the BEREC Office in the event of failure by the SNE or his employer to respect their obligations under this Decision; the Vice Chair of the Management Committee shall immediately inform the SNE and his employer accordingly.

Chapter II

Working conditions

Article 11

Social security

1. Before the period of secondment begins, the national public administration or IGO from which the SNE is to be seconded shall certify that he will remain, throughout the period of secondment, subject to the social security legislation applicable to the public administration that employs him and is responsible for expenses incurred abroad. To this end, the SNE's employer shall provide BEREC Office with the certificate referred to in Article 11(1) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 574/72³.

2. From the day on which their secondment begins, SNEs shall be covered by the BEREC Office against the risk of accident. The BEREC Office shall provide them with a copy of the terms of this cover on the day on which they report to the appropriate department of the BEREC Office to complete the administrative formalities related to the secondment.

3. An SNE who cannot be covered by a public sickness insurance scheme may apply to have this risk insured by the BEREC Office. The SNE shall pay half the relevant insurance premium and his contribution shall be deducted monthly from the subsistence allowances referred to in Article 17.

Article 12

Working hours

1. The working hours for SNEs shall be the same as those in force at the BEREC Office.

³ OJL 74, 27.3.1972, p. 1.

2. An SNE shall serve on a full-time basis throughout the period of secondment. Following a duly justified request, the Vice Chair of the Management Committee may allow an SNE to work part time, provided the SNE's employer agrees and the arrangement is compatible with the smooth running of the BEREC Office.

Article 13

Sick leave

1. The rules in force at the BEREC Office on absence due to sickness or accident shall apply to SNEs⁴.
2. Where the period of sick leave exceeds three months or the length of time worked by the SNE, whichever is longer, the subsistence allowances referred to in Article 17 shall be automatically suspended. Sick leave may not extend beyond the duration of the secondment of the person concerned.
3. SNEs who are the victim of a work-related injury which occurs during the secondment shall continue to receive the subsistence allowances in full throughout the period during which they are unfit for work. These allowances shall not, however, be paid beyond the end of the period of secondment.

Article 14

Annual and special leave

1. With the exception of the provisions relating to grade, the rules in force at the BEREC Office on annual and special leave, applicable to officials, shall apply to SNEs⁵.
2. Leave shall be subject to prior authorisation by the immediate superior. In the event of unauthorised absence within the meaning of Article 60 of the Staff Regulations, subsistence allowances shall not be paid.
3. Upon a duly justified request from the SNE's employer, the SNE may be granted up to two days of special leave by the BEREC Office in a 12-month period to visit his employer.
4. Days of annual leave not taken by the end of the period of secondment shall be forfeited.

Article 15

Maternity leave

1. The rules in force at the BEREC Office on maternity leave shall apply to SNEs⁶. While on maternity leave the SNE shall receive the subsistence allowances referred to in Article 17.
2. Where the rules that are binding upon the SNE's employer provide for a period of maternity leave longer than that granted by BEREC Office, the secondment may, at the SNE's request, be interrupted for the period by which that leave exceeds the leave granted by BEREC Office.

A period equivalent to the break may be added to the end of the secondment if the interests of the BEREC Office warrant it.

⁴ Articles 59 and 60 of the Staff Regulations and the provisions implementing these Articles shall apply mutatis mutandis.

⁵ Articles 57 and 59a of and Annex V to the Staff Regulations and the provisions implementing these Articles shall apply mutatis mutandis.

⁶ Article 58 of the Staff Regulations and the provisions implementing this Article shall apply mutatis mutandis.

3. An SNE may, as an alternative, apply for a break in the secondment to cover the sum of the periods allowed for maternity leave. In that case, the second subparagraph of paragraph 2 shall apply.

Article 16

Management and control

For SNEs seconded to locations other than Brussels or Luxembourg, day-to-day administrative and financial management, such as the calculation and payment of subsistence allowances and travel allowances, shall be the responsibility of the BEREK Office.

Chapter III

Allowances and expenses

Article 17

Subsistence allowances

1. An SNE shall be entitled, throughout the period of secondment, to a daily subsistence allowance and a monthly subsistence allowance.

On the date of entry into force of this Decision:

the daily subsistence allowance for Brussels and Luxembourg shall be €125.25;

the monthly subsistence allowance shall be paid in accordance with the following table:

Distance between place of origin and place of secondment (km)	Amount in €
0 – 150	0
> 150	76.74
> 300	136.42
> 500	221.71
> 800	358.14
> 1300	562.80
> 2000	673.67

2. These subsistence allowances shall be granted under the same conditions as the expatriation allowance for officials⁷.

3. In the case of cost-free SNEs, the exchange of letters referred to in Article 3(4) shall stipulate that these allowances will not be paid.

4. The subsistence allowances for SNEs seconded to an EU Member State other than Belgium or Luxembourg shall be subject to the weighting set by the Council pursuant to Article 64 of the Staff

⁷ Article 4 of Annex VII to the Staff Regulations and the provisions implementing this Article shall apply mutatis mutandis.

Regulations.

5. The adjustments to remuneration adopted by the Council pursuant to Article 65 of the Staff Regulations shall apply automatically to the subsistence allowances in the month following their adoption. The BEREC Office shall be responsible for implementing this provision and shall publish the new rate for subsistence allowances on its internet site.

6. These allowances are intended to cover SNEs' living expenses in the place of secondment on a flat-rate basis and shall in no circumstances be construed as remuneration paid by the BEREC Office.

Before the secondment, the SNE's employer shall certify to the BEREC Office that during the secondment it will maintain the level of remuneration the SNE was receiving at the time of his secondment.

The SNE shall inform the Administrative Manager of any allowance similar to the subsistence allowances paid by the BEREC Office received from other sources. This amount shall be deducted from the subsistence allowances paid by the BEREC Office. Following a duly justified request from the employer, the Vice Chair of the Management Committee may decide not to make this deduction.

7. Subsistence allowances shall be payable for every day of the week, including during periods of mission, annual leave, special leave and holidays granted by the BEREC Office.

8. When the SNE starts the secondment, the first 75 days of the subsistence allowances to which he is entitled shall be advanced in the form of a lump sum, and the allowances shall not be paid during the corresponding period. This lump sum shall be paid by the 25th day of the month for SNEs starting on the first day of the same month. For SNEs starting on the 16th day of the month, this lump sum shall be paid by the 10th day of the following month. If the secondment is ended during the first 75 days, the SNE shall return the amount corresponding to the remainder of that period.

9. Subsistence allowances shall be paid no later than the 25th day of each month.

Article 18

Place of origin

1. For the purposes of this Decision, "place of origin" means the place where the SNE performed his duties for his employer at the time of his secondment. The place of secondment shall be the place where the BEREC Office is located. Both places shall be identified in the exchange of letters referred to in Article 3(4).

2. If, six months before his secondment as an SNE, a national expert already has his main residence in a place other than that in which the employer's headquarters is located, the place of origin shall be deemed to be whichever of the places is closer to the place of secondment.

Article 19

Travel expenses

1. An SNE, if not seconded on a cost-free basis, shall be entitled, for himself, to the reimbursement of the cost of his travel between his place of origin and the place of secondment, as defined in Article 18, at the beginning and end of his secondment.

2. Travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the relevant rules and conditions in force at the BEREC Office⁸.

⁸ Article 7(1) and (2) of Annex VII to the Staff Regulations and the provisions implementing these Articles shall apply mutatis mutandis.

3. By way of derogation from paragraph 1, an SNE who proves that he will be assigned to a place other than his place of origin at the end of the secondment shall be entitled to reimbursement of the travel expenses to that new place under the conditions laid down in paragraph 2. However, this reimbursement may not be more than the amount that would have been paid had the SNE returned to his place of origin.

4. The BEREC Office shall not reimburse any expenses referred to in the preceding paragraphs if they have been met by the employer or any other body.

Article 20

Missions and mission expenses

1. SNEs may be sent on mission subject to Article 6.
2. Mission expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the relevant rules and conditions in force at the BEREC Office⁹.

Article 21

Training

SNEs shall be entitled to attend training courses organised by the Commission or by the BEREC Office if the interests of the BEREC Office warrant it. The interests of the SNE, in particular with a view to his reinstatement into his original administration after the secondment, may be considered when a decision is taken on whether to allow him to attend a training course.

Article 22

Administrative provisions

SNEs shall report to the BEREC Office on the first day of secondment to complete the requisite administrative formalities. They shall take up duty on either the first or the sixteenth day of the month.

Chapter IV

Complaints

Article 23

Without prejudice to the possibilities for instituting proceedings after taking up his position, under the conditions and time limits laid down in Article 230 of the EC Treaty, any SNE may submit a complaint to the Vice Chair of the Management Committee about an act adopted by the BEREC Office under this Decision which adversely affects him, with the exception of decisions which are direct consequences of

⁹ Articles 11 and 12 of Annex VII to the Staff Regulations and the provisions implementing these Articles shall apply mutatis mutandis.

decisions taken by his employer.

The complaint must be lodged within two months. The period shall start to run on the date of notification of the decision to the person concerned, but in no case later than the date on which the latter received such notification. The Vice Chair of the Management Committee shall notify the person concerned of his reasoned decision within four months from the date on which the complaint was lodged. If at the end of that period no reply to the complaint has been received, this shall be deemed to constitute an implied decision rejecting it.

TITLE II

NATIONAL EXPERTS IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Article 24

General provisions and definitions

1. National experts in professional training (hereinafter referred to as "NEPTs") are staff from the public administrations of EU or EFTA Member States or, depending on the places available, of countries with which the Council has decided to open accession negotiations and which have concluded a specific agreement with the BEREC Office on staff secondments, or from IGOs, who are admitted to the BEREC Office for professional training purposes.
2. The provisions of Article 1(1), (3), (4) and (5) shall apply by analogy to NEPTs.

Article 25

Purpose of the professional training

1. The purpose of the professional training is:
 - to give NEPTs experience of the BEREC Office's working methods and policies;
 - to enable them to gain practical experience and understanding of the day-to-day work of the BEREC Office and to give them the opportunity to work in a multicultural, multilingual environment;
 - to enable staff of national administrations to put into practice the knowledge they have acquired in their studies, particularly in their respective areas of responsibility.
2. For its part, the BEREC Office:
 - benefits from the input of people who can offer a new point of view and up-to date knowledge which will enrich the daily work of the institution;
 - builds up a network of people with direct experience of its procedures.

Article 26

Eligibility

1. The provisions of Article 8 on professional experience and knowledge of languages shall apply by analogy to NEPTs.
2. People who have already been seconded as an SNE or worked under an employment contract in one of

the European Union Institutions or bodies shall not be eligible for traineeships.

Article 27

Selection of candidates

1. Applications shall be forwarded by the Permanent Representations of Member States or, as the case may be, by the EFTA Secretariat, by the administrations of non-member countries, by NRAs or IGOs to the BEREC Office in accordance with the procedure and methods decided by it.

2. After consulting the service concerned and considering the situation, the BEREC Office shall decide how many NEPTs are to be admitted for each period.

Article 28

Duration of the professional training

1. The professional traineeships shall last between three and five months. The duration shall be fixed at the outset and may not be changed or extended.

An NEPT may complete only one professional traineeship.

2. The professional traineeships are organised twice a year, usually starting on the 1st or 16th of the months of March and October.

Article 29

Organisation of the professional training

Throughout the professional traineeship NEPTs shall be supervised by a training advisor. The training advisor must inform the Administrative Manager of any significant incidents during the professional traineeship (in particular absences, illness, accidents or interruption) which he knows of or has been informed of by the NEPT.

NEPTs must obey instructions given by their training advisor, or their superior in the BEREC Office.

NEPTs shall be allowed to attend meetings, unless they are restricted or confidential, to receive documentation and to participate in the activities of the department to which they are seconded.

Article 30

Suspension of the professional traineeship

At the written request of the NEPT or his employer, and with the latter's prior agreement, the Vice Chair of the Management Committee may authorise a very brief suspension of the professional traineeship or its early termination. The NEPT may return to complete the remaining period of the professional traineeship, but only up until the end of that period. Under no circumstances may the traineeship be extended.

Article 31

Working conditions and remuneration

1. The following Articles shall apply by analogy to NEPTs:

- Article 6 on tasks;
- Article 7 on rights and obligations;
- Article 11(1) and (2) on social security;
- Article 12(1) on working hours;
- Article 13 on sick leave;
- Article 15 on annual leave and special leave;
- Article 20 on missions and mission expenses.

2. NEPTs shall be regarded as cost-free SNEs within the meaning of Article 2. They shall continue to be paid by their employer without any financial compensation being paid by the BEREC Office.

The BEREC Office will accept no requests for grants or fees or the reimbursement of travel or other expenses other than the reimbursement of mission expenses incurred as part of the professional traineeship.

Article 32

Reports and certificate of attendance

NEPTs who have completed the stipulated professional training period shall complete the evaluation reports requested by the BEREC Office at the end of their traineeship. Training advisors must also complete the relevant evaluation report.

Subject to the completion of these reports, NEPTs who have completed their professional traineeships shall receive a certificate showing the dates of the professional training and the department in which it took place.

TITLE III

FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 33

The Permanent Representations, the NRAs, members of the Management Committee, the EFTA Secretariat, the IGOs and the diplomatic missions of the non-member countries concerned shall enjoy a close working relationship with BEREC Office throughout the SNEs' and NEPTs' secondment. Contacts between the SNE's and NEPT's employer for issues related to the secondment, shall be made via the Member State's Permanent Representation, the NRAs, the EFTA Secretariat, the IGOs and the diplomatic missions of the non-member countries concerned, as appropriate.

Article 34

Entry into force

This Decision shall take effect on the day following its adoption.

Done on 23 December 2010

For the Management Committee

Chris Fonteijn
2010 Vice-Chair