



The European Coordinator: Introducing a new support system

Results from the working group
Germany Portugal Belgium

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European Union Foreign Affairs Spouses, Partners and Families Association

What is the aim?

Assistance for spouses, partners and their families abroad in routine daily matters such as:

- A job for the partner
- Schools for the children
- Support in finding volunteer work
- Support in understanding the local culture
- Facilitating dealings with handy men and shopping

The idea is to create a permanent information pool that will be actualized and adjusted continuously, independent of the person in charge.

The main focus should be for Coordinators to collect and transmit useful information to newcomers, helping them start their life at that foreign posting. The intention is not to accompany newcomers socially, i.e. by organizing teas, brunches, cultural outings, etc., though we all know that this is a positive side effect should someone offer to organize such events.

Current Country Support & Coordination Services for partners and their families should not necessarily be replaced by a European Service. Instead, it could run parallel to it, complement and amplify it.

Who is the target group?

All accompanying spouses, partners, and families of any European MFA employee.

Partners of non-European MFA employers may also profit from the system, especially in non-European countries with small diplomatic communities.

Who may be a coordinator?

Individual members of a European Family & Partner Association who is part of EUFASA; i.e. spouses/partners of MFA employees, not local employees nor necessarily the wife / husband of the Ambassador.

What is the role of a European Coordinator?

- To establish contact with the EUFASA member associations present in the respective countries.
- To develop and organize a common platform for information service.
- Later on, to maintain and administer this service.
- Organization of the support service. This means if a country due to provide the service lacks the resources to do so, it should make sure to find a proper replacement.
- Moreover, the European Coordinator will operate as a link to an 'advisory' group within EUFASA

Organization ...

1. ... on postings outside of Europe

For the sake of ease, the turns should be done in alphabetical order. Beginning with the letter “A”, the country taking over responsibility will do so for one year. At the end of its term, this country must ensure that the next one in line alphabetically takes over the responsibility. This will ensure continuity of the program.

Each country’s coordinator/s may run the service as it suits him/her best, alone or in groups – as well as with partners from other European countries. It is only important that ‘A’ is the responsible country.

2. ... in European capitals:

The local Spouse and Family Association should take over an adapted service. Due to the large amount of diplomats in the European capitals, the service of the European Coordinator cannot be offered in the same scale as abroad.

It is conceivable that the local Association (maybe in collaboration with other European diplomats) offers once a year a welcoming event of informational character where questions by the newcomers will be answered. At the same time the newly arrived partners of diplomats and their families would have the opportunity to meet others in their same situation, thus facilitating the start.

Questions to discuss in the working group:

- 1. First steps: How to start?**
- 2. Support & supervision: The role of EUFASA ?**