



The READER

The REA internal magazine

#41 | Summer 2019



Happy birthday, REA!

10 YEARS OF SUCCESS

REA in numbers

PERSONAL PROFILES

Keep moving,
keep learning

CHRISTOPHER'S TIPS

Word of the year

EDITORIAL

Dear REAders,

10 years ago this month the REA became autonomous! A lot has happened in the meantime for each of us and for the agency as a whole. So it's time to look back but also to look forward – and time to celebrate!

When REA became autonomous in June 2009 the agency had around 250 staff, up from zero a year before, and was gradually moving into previously empty floors here at Covent Garden. REA in 2009 also meant: 10 units, 2 parent DGs, paper files (a lot of them), IT tools (also quite a lot of them), IT problems (don't ask), Adonis for document management, SicPersonnel for staff matters, expert appointment letters, no canteen – and in front of the building: Place Rogier before the renovations... Brussels, the Commission, REA and the way we work have all changed a lot in those 10 years, and almost always for the better, I would say.

Today, REA employs over 700 colleagues representing almost all EU nationalities. Our average age is 44, which makes our agency a quite young and dynamic working environment. As a result of that dynamism there are great achievements, also in terms of wellbeing activities; for example I'm glad that this year, for the first time, our footballers will participate in the inter-agency tournament with a REA football team (p.10).

In this special issue of The REAder, we look back to 10 years ago: you will see some differences, such as in the faces of the brave colleagues who take the 10 Year Challenge (p.16). We also look even further back to the days before our autonomy with some of the members of the “start-up team” who share their stories about that somehow special experience



of setting up an agency that has become what we all know as REA today (p.8).

Our history has not been one of ‘static growth’. Since our autonomy, REA has tripled in size and many colleagues have moved inside the agency, to another unit or to another profile (p.14). Many colleagues have also left the agency to take up new challenges elsewhere. The REA alumni club is huge.

Many former REA staff now work in the Commission, in the Parliament or in other agencies. Some of them who are further away have also sent us postcards with their wishes (p.6) and others will be here in person for the party. On 13 June, we will celebrate together REA's 10th birthday and I am very happy that my predecessors Graham Stroud and Gilbert Gascard have taken time off their music and golf obligations and will join us for the party together with colleagues from the DGs and the other agencies. 10 years of REA has been a team effort from the beginning and we will celebrate as a team as well.

Finally, you will find some words on the future of REA in this issue (p.19). We can be certain that the future (after 2020) will be bright even though a lot of the details still need to be decided on. Also through our excellent work over the last 10 years, REA and the other executive agencies are now well-established and well-placed within the Commission framework and will continue to be so in the future.

So, here's to the next 10 years – and I hope to see you all on 13 June!

Marc Tachelet
Director

IN THIS ISSUE

04

WISHES

Happy birthday, REA!

06

GREETINGS

P.S. With best wishes

08

THE START

Colleagues hold the history of our agency

10

10 YEARS OF SUCCESS

REA in numbers

12

SUCCESS STORIES

REA's life-changing projects: the engine of success

14

PERSONAL PROFILES

Keep moving, keep learning

16

REA'S 10Y CHALLENGE

10 years later

18

FUTURE

The future of REA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, REA!

10 years ago, REA was born to fund high-quality research projects. Today, it is a consolidated Executive Agency managing a budget of €16.9bn thanks to the hard work of around 750 colleagues. REA supports Europe's most outstanding scientific minds by demonstrating a service-oriented attitude, transparency and proximity to the stakeholders it serves. We are committed to reinforcing Europe's ability to innovate through our professional, efficient and results-orientated approach. By collaborating closely with our stakeholders, we provide the building blocks for a brighter tomorrow, helping to transform cutting-edge ideas into reality. Six DGs parent our Agency in the different themes covered by our research projects. They all have a kind word for REA and its future.



DG RTD

Jean Eric Paquet

Director-General for Research and Innovation

"Congratulations to REA on their 10th anniversary!

Thanks to you, REA is the largest executive agency implementing EU programmes and a model of efficiency and effectiveness. Your contribution has supported the Commission's goal to foster growth in the EU. I know I can count on you to continue REA's excellent performance, facing future challenges together!" ■

DG HOME



Paraskevi Michou

Director-General for Migration and Home Affairs

"I am sincerely looking forward to a continued and enhanced collaboration with REA so to ensure that research projects can actively support and contribute to the overall implementation of the Security Union objectives. The relationship set up by REA with the different policy DGs could be used as a reference model in establishing future inter-institutional synergies." ■



DG AGRI

Jerzy Bogdan Plewa

Director-General for Agriculture and Rural Development

"I want to congratulate all REA colleagues for their great work! Programming and implementation of research are two sides of the same coin. Our AGRI-REA collaboration has proven to be constructive and excellent. I wish our partnership to keep thriving in the next 10 years and more for our mutual benefit and that of Europe's citizens." ■



DG CNECT

Roberto Viola

Director-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

“We have collaborated with REA extensively in fields such as Future & Emerging Technologies, Digitising Industry, and eGovernment, and we wish our colleagues all the best for the future. We are grateful for their efforts, competence, creativity and openness, and remain proud of REA as it becomes an integral part of the European Innovation Council.” ■



DG GROW

Timo Pesonen

Director-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

“Building on the positive experience from 10 years of successful cooperation, GROW wishes REA to continue to meet the challenges of the future. In the case of space research and innovation this is linked to the increasing international competition in the space sector and the need to continue to work closely together with all the relevant players in the field to strengthen competitiveness of European industry.” ■



DG EAC

Themis Christophidou

Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

“Our colleagues in REA are a very experienced and highly skilled team, and we know we can count on them to manage Europe’s crown jewel research programme, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. Not only are they super knowledgeable, but they are also nice colleagues with whom it is a pleasure to cooperate on a daily basis. Happy birthday REA! To many more happy returns!” ■

P.S. WITH BEST WISHES

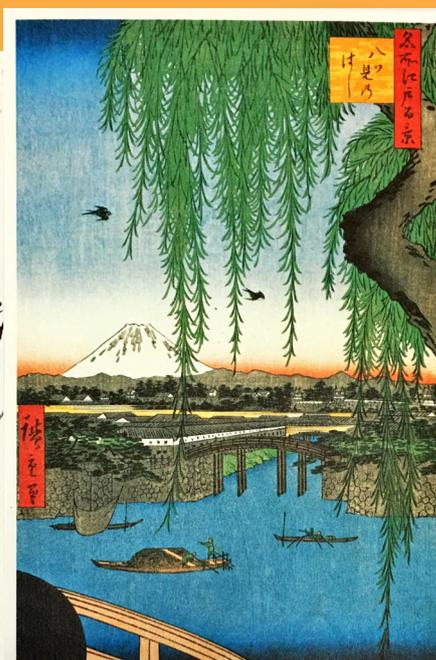
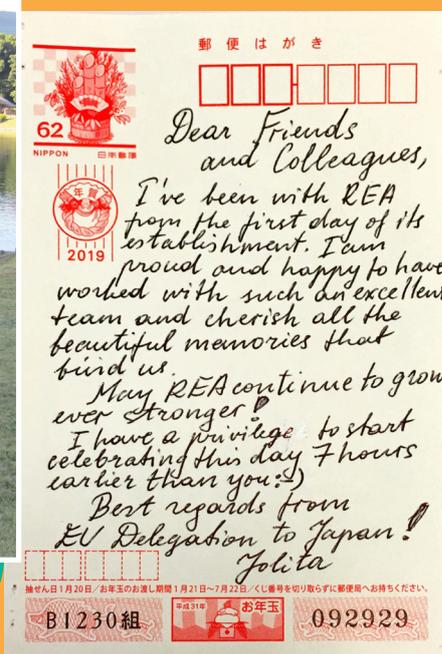
Some of our cherished colleagues, who are currently moving elsewhere because of a CCP or a change of job, wanted to be present at this special festive period. They have sent us postcards from Japan, Greece, Moldova and France. We thank them for their thoughts and warm wishes, and we hope to see them soon!



Agatha Stasiak



Jolita Ramanauskiene





Theodoros Staikos

Crete



Heracleon

George Merts

Dear colleagues,
I'm sending you my warm greetings from sunny Crete, and happy anniversary REA!!!
It's been almost two years since we decided to move over here. Life is good, but we miss Brussels from time to time.
Hope to see you soon.
Cheers,
Theodoros

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My dear colleagues and friends,

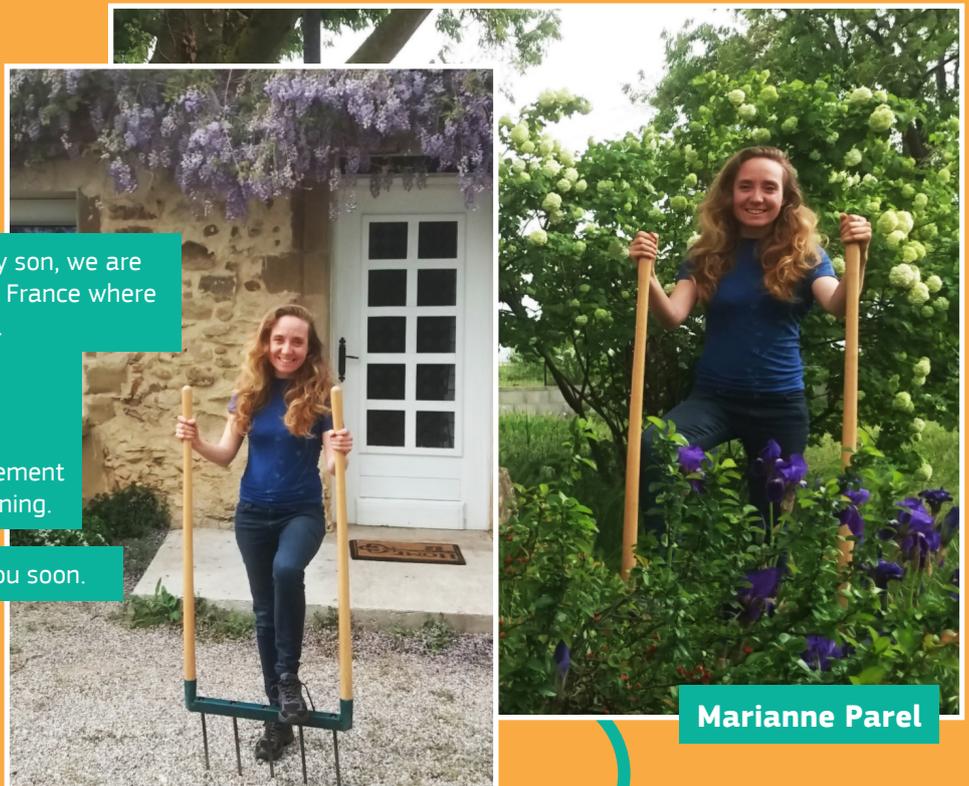
With Alain my partner and Max my son, we are living near Valence in the south of France where we are creating pedagogic garden.

Our main aim is to help children to develop environment and ecology awareness and enhance their participation in environment management through hands-on experimental learning.

Keep in touch and hope to see you soon.

Cheers,

Marianne



Marianne Parel

COLLEAGUES HOLD THE HISTORY OF OUR AGENCY

10 years have passed, and some of the first colleagues to arrive at Covent Garden share with us some anecdotes of their early days at REA. They all have a word for our cherished colleague Cristina Papoulia, passed away too early, who was a major contributor to the setting up of the Agency.



Oliver Corr

My first souvenir is that there were no blinds on the window, so I was wearing sunglasses while working. As the IT department was composed of me and another colleague, sometimes I had to unload the printers from the lorry myself!

I remember that we had submitted a request in advance for access for staff to the Commission network, but 2-3 weeks before we started, we were told by the Security Directorate that REA

represented a 'threat' and that for this reason no access to the Commission network could be given. When I communicated this to Graham he called for an urgent meeting with the relevant Commission colleagues, and managed to resolve the issue at his level.

As we were not many people, Cristina Papoulia and Catherine Rubens organised our first Christmas lunch in a Greek restaurant called 'The Chicken Run'. We had a lot of fun! ■

I remember that we moved to the building in December 2008 and there was no heating so we were freezing.

Covent Garden was not a Commission building at the time and there were just two people at the reception downstairs.

It was only some time later that the security arrived.

I remember that there were works in *Place Rogier* and I was thinking 'How long will they last?' After 10 years, they are still working on it! ■



Emilie Zicot



Mildret Hernandez

At the beginning, we had no SYSPER so we had no idea about the new people. All contracts had to be signed manually so we were going with our paper files from Covent Garden to Square de Meeus by metro in order for Graham Stroud to sign the documents.

I remember in particular that we had

to scan all the school fees declarations; we had to scan and put them in each *dossier* manually. In the first years there was a baby boom. I believe that in 2010 we had more than 30 kids born in one year.

On another note, as we had no canteen and we had to go out for lunch, in one way or another, we always ended up in *Rue Neuve* together and spent a lot of money on shopping. ■

Sabrina Fasoli (REA),
Legal and Financial Adviser (C3)



Marcella Nardelli

I remember that at the beginning we were all in an open space on the 13th floor and when we were moving around we always went in groups; there was no phone in the elevator and it used to block and stopped only on the 13th floor. We were always eating together and we could even smoke in the building at that time!

I remember that in the toilet there was no toilet brush and no paper. As Covent Garden was a new building, there was a strange ecological system for the toilets linked to the plants downstairs, but it was not working and there were constantly floods in the toilets. Cristina had to come during the weekend to take care of the floods. This is why this system was abandoned quite quickly.

I was one of the first eight people to be recruited to set up the REA on the 1st of August 2008. At the time, I was recruited by Graham Stroud to be responsible for setting up the human resources team. Together with colleagues from RTD Directorate S, who were also setting up the ERC, we had meeting with EACI staff (currently EASME) to see how they had achieved this.

We moved to the Covent Garden Building on the 16th of December. We had no furniture, no curtains, no food and no IT system. We had to recruit 300 people during the first six months and

we did all the recruitment manually. HR ADMIN created an application to save all the CV as we could not have access to the Commission database. We participated as secretaries in the recruitment panel for Head of Departments and Head of Unit.

I remember that we all discussed how to decide which unit would go on which floor. None of them wanted to be on the 13th floor because they said that the number 13 brought bad luck. Eventually, Sebastiano Fumero, former Head of Unit in C3, chose that floor because he did not want to go to the 17th floor as in Italy this number brings bad luck.



Catherine Rubens



Carole Bachelet

I remember the first REA meeting; we were 20 people and the Director told us "Don't be afraid! Be confident!"

It was very funny in the beginning we were inviting people for interview to Covent Garden, and they thought we were based in London!

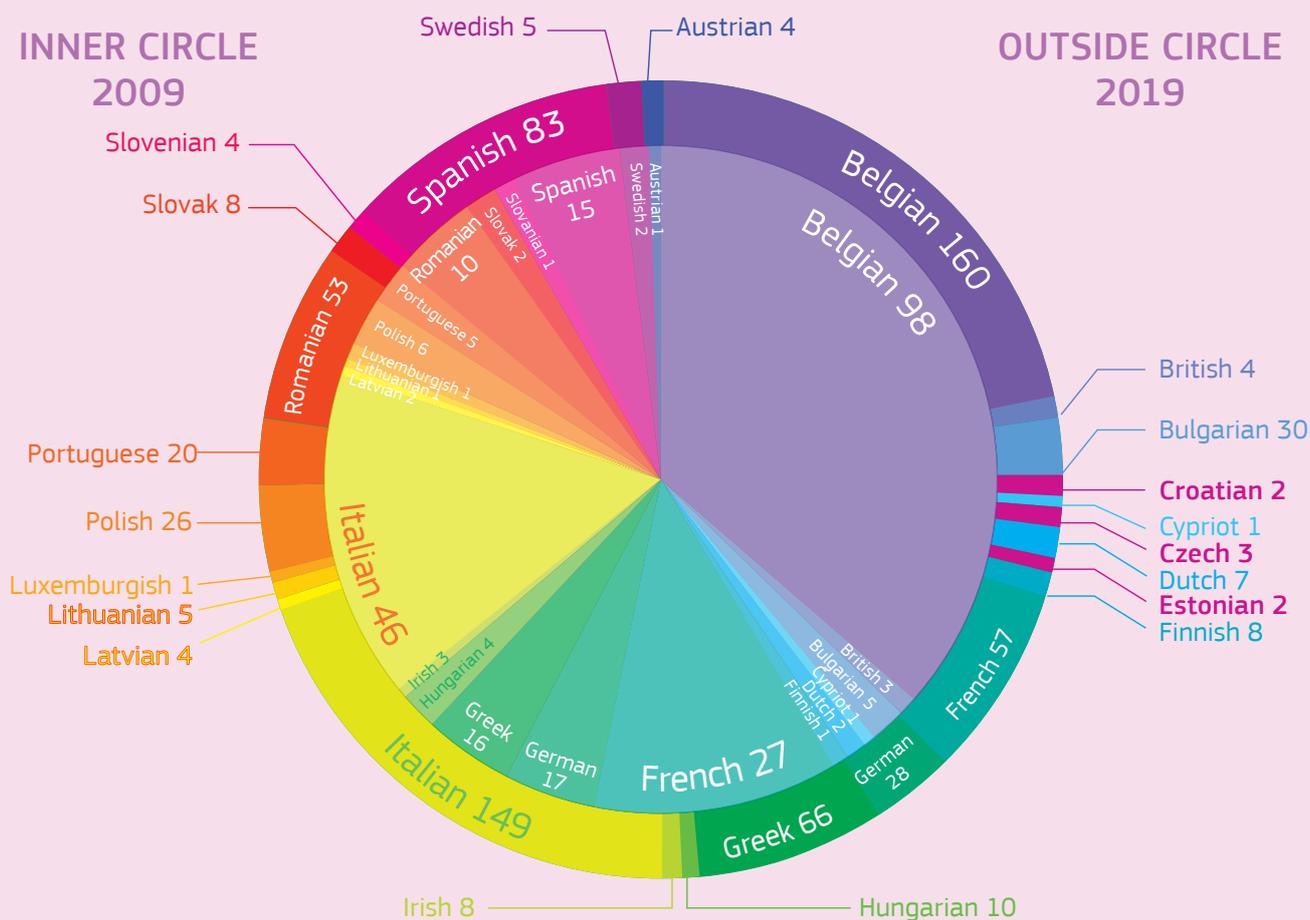
We were all in an open space on the 13th floor and we had no furniture. At first we got a table with a chair and only after we received a lamp. I remember that I was given 40 different catalogues to choose things like pens, printers, folders, chairs, etc.

REA IN NUMBERS

Statutory active staff:



Nationalities



REA premieres its own football team

Next Inter-Agency Competition takes place in Turin, Italy, on 15-16 June.



Budget delegated to REA

FP7 (2007-2013): € 6.4bn



€ 4.079,346m



€ 998,445m



€ 794,833m



€ 623,258m

Horizon 2020 (2014-2020): € 14.3bn



€ 5.898,69m



€ 2.571,780m



€ 1.158,671m



€ 980m



€ 823,062m



€ 1.192,298m



€ 782,644m



€ 443,005m

¹ Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research, and the bioeconomy

² Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies" of Part III – "Societal Challenges

³ Secure societies – Protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens

⁴ Spreading Excellence and widening participation

Grant management

12 593 grants signed in FP7

8 516 grants signed in Horizon 2020 (till May 2019)

95.7% of closed FP7 projects achieved all or most of their objectives

91.1% of closed Horizon 2020 projects achieved all or most of their objectives

Excellent support services*



117 360

*(evaluators and monitors)



84 226

*(evaluators and monitors)



47 111



259 659

*received in SEP



66 664

legal entities validated



83 151

appointments and mandates of LEAR* done

*Legal Entity Appointed Representative



20 413

financial viability checks & financial capacity assessments carried out



86 748

information requests answered by the Research Enquiry Service

*Numbers from 2009 to 2018

REA'S LIFE-CHANGING PROJECTS: THE ENGINE OF SUCCESS

From getting a 'Science Bus' on the road in the UK to discovering neutron stars colliding in the far reaches of a distant galaxy, REA has funded an extraordinary range of projects. In this special 10th anniversary edition, we look back at five innovative projects and their ongoing benefits.

“GraWIToN confirmed Einstein’s hypothesis on the existence of these waves.”

GraWIToN was a flagship project for REA, and many of its fellows ultimately went on to help win the Nobel Prize for Physics in 2017. Managed by Unit A1, with €3.6 million in funding and lasting four years, the results were literally intergalactic. The project allowed 11 MSCA fellows (PhD students) to receive training in the gravitational wave search field, leading them to go on to help track down the cosmic neighbourhood of two merging black holes as well as a pair of colliding neutron stars millions of light-years away. These events produced ripples in the curvature of space-time and the emission of gravitational waves, and thus confirmed Einstein’s hypothesis on the existence of these waves some 100 years earlier. It marked the beginning of a new era in how we understand the universe with gravitational wave astronomy.



Sudden cardiac deaths account for half of all cardiac mortality in developed countries. REA’s Unit A3 funded a Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) project, coordinated by the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, which aimed to detect arrhythmias at an early stage to ensure timely treatment and reduce mortality rates. As current heart rhythm monitoring methods are invasive or short-term, the **WASTCArD** project - Wrist and Arm Sensing Technologies for Cardiac Arrhythmias Detection - developed a new non-invasive device that patients wear on the wrist or arm. It is equipped with an ECG detection technique to look for cardiac arrhythmias over extended periods. Ultimately, it can reduce healthcare costs by ensuring prompt treatment, thereby reducing emergency care and hospital

“WASTCArD established a successful international and intersectoral partnership for the development of new technologies that address cardiovascular problems.”

stays resulting from undiagnosed cardiac problems. The project established a successful international and intersectoral partnership for the development of new technologies that address cardiovascular problems. With an estimated market size for cardiovascular healthcare services and devices of around 70% of Europe’s elderly, a smart

Graham Izatt,
Bluebook Trainee in the
Communication Sector (C1)



Amy Allsop,
Communication Officer (C1)



“By ‘doing science together’ our combined resources and expertise can lead to innovative, lasting solutions grounded in society.”

and convenient project like WASTCARd has the potential to not only save many lives, but also secure a high level of return on investment.

“TIRAMISU’s toolkit has the potential to save thousands of lives in post-conflict zones.”

Mines, submunitions and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) remain a danger in many areas of the world, especially since their detonators deteriorate over time, making them even more sensitive to movement. Since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, they have killed more than 40,000 people and injured more than 60,000 others. 800,000 tons of UXO remain in Vietnam alone. Unit B4 – Safeguarding Secure Society – funded a novel toolkit with the potential to save thousands of lives each year in post-conflict zones. The project **TIRAMISU** – Toolbox Implementation for Removal of Anti-Personnel Mines – began in 2012, to provide a foundation for a global toolbox to cover the main mine action activities, from surveying large areas to disposing of explosive hazards. The twelve-country consortium involved achieved nine patents and received extensive media coverage for their inno-

vative work. The next step for the project is to convince the international community of the capability and safety of these tools through certification, rigorous testing, and the establishment of a Centre of Excellence to promote and exploit the project. There is no doubt that the project has the potential to save thousands of lives.

One of the largest projects funded by the MSCA fellowships in the field of cultural heritage protection managed by REA was **ITN-DCH** – The Initial Training Network for Digital Cultural Heritage. The project trained 20 fellows in the area of cultural heritage digital documentation, preservation and protection. The goal was to create a cost-effective system to document, conserve, protect and visualise all aspects of European cultural heritage to make it more comprehensive and accessible. For instance, in the village of Nikitari in Cyprus, for the first time in the world the team used drones, 3D laser scanners, 360-degree cameras and ground-based multi-spectral devices to obtain complete documentation of the UNESCO World Heritage Asinou Church. UNESCO and other international organisations will soon adopt this new methodology for the digital documentation of archaeological sites and monuments. In 2018 the project won the ‘Best Innovation Award’ at the ‘Fair of European Innovators in Cultural Heritage’ event.

Perhaps no project exemplifies Unit B5 – ‘Spreading Excellence, Widening Participation, Science with and for Society’ – quite like the Do It Together With Science (**DITO**). Scientific research at present is almost exclusively driven by major institutions and laboratories, with a resulting communication and participation gap between these bodies and ordinary citizens. Recognising the role that we will all need to play in creating a sustainable future, DITO focused on promoting active involvement in Citizen Science – to empower people to explore, measure and experiment with the world around them. By ‘doing science together’ our combined resources and expertise can lead to innovative, lasting solutions grounded in society.

What better way to engage the next generation of researchers than DITO’s ‘Science Bus’. In 2017, it travelled throughout Europe – from the UK to Croatia, Spain, Germany and many places in-between. It hosted workshops for children and anyone with curious minds to do experiments and build scientific instruments, such as making and testing DIY sunscreen and creating a phone charger with a bicycle dynamo. Locals were encouraged to share their ingenious folk remedies, to show how we all have it in us to come up with innovative solutions to simple problems. ■

KEEP MOVING, KEEP LEARNING

It's 10 years since REA was established, and in that time plenty of colleagues have changed posts. *The READER* speaks to four colleagues who've been here since the beginning and whose different career paths at the Agency show that moving means learning.

The READER: What were you doing before you joined REA?

Anne-Barbara Tippmann (ABT): I was teaching the Chinese language at a university in France and worked in the private sector. Later on I worked at OLAF, EPSO and DG RTD. Coming to REA was a natural step for those with grant management skills.

Federica Roffi (FR): I was working for the SME Unit in DG RTD. Our programmes were going to be externalised, so moving with them to REA was a natural evolution of my career.

Bronius Goossens (BG): I worked for a long time in a pharmaceutical company in logistics and warehousing. Passing a concours led me to a job as an Administrative Assistant in the HR team at DG RTD. My Head of Unit at the time advised me to go to REA.

Pedro Ramos (PR): My background is in IT. When I first came to Belgium I started working for the contractor that was managing CORDIS. I then joined the Communications Unit at DG RTD where I assisted the webmaster. One of my final tasks at RTD was to help create the first REA website! The idea of joining a newly established Agency was an exciting one.



Anne-Barbara Tippmann

The READER: What was your first position at REA?

ABT: It was January 2009 and we were around 20 people at that time, all in the open space in the Square De Meeus building working on FP6 finalisation. By the spring, I had moved to Covent Garden. My first position was as a Project Assistant in Unit P1 led by Klaus-Guenther Barthel for the MSCA IF.

FR: My first position was a CA FG IV in the REA SME Unit; I was a PO and a team leader of the energy and environment group.

BG: When I first joined REA I was actually working at RTD because REA didn't have a building yet! I was dealing with the Marie Curie Individual Actions as a Project Assistant. When we moved to Covent Garden I joined Unit P4 (Host-driven Actions).

PR: I joined the IT team, and like everyone else we were all in the open space. An intranet had been established, but it was very basic so improving this was one of my priorities. In fact, managing the intranet was one of my main tasks until I changed profile in 2015.



Bronius Goossens

The READER: How has your career evolved since then?

ABT: After a few years as a PA, I became a Financial Officer in the same unit, and later changed to the HR unit (C1). Initially I was a member of the recruitment team and then I got a FG IV position and became team leader of the recruitment team. Then I moved again to C3 as a Financial Adviser. I like to learn new things and I feel the need to learn all the time, but every change also means a new adjustment. It's a challenge.

Christopher Reynolds,
Head of Sector (A2)



Agne Dobranskyte-Niskota,
Research Programme Officer (B5)



Federica Roffi

FR: I was already on a reserve list and became a TA in 2011. I applied for Head of Sector posts and in 2014 got a position as operational HoS in the MSCA IF Unit. Although the job was not new to me in terms of responsibilities, initially it was a challenge to work on a completely different programme. In 2015 I won a competition to be Deputy Head of Unit in the newly created Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation Unit and there I really felt in my comfort zone in terms of content of the programmes. I particularly like the fact that I helped the Head of Unit to create and shape this new unit.

BG: I stayed in P4 as a PA for four years. I'd passed the CAST RELEX as a FG-III and eventually I was able to use this to change profile and FG. I became a PO first in P4, and then moved to A2 in 2016.

PR: I had been working in IT for over 15 years and had a kind of "IT fatigue". It also felt like the right moment in my life to make a career change. An opening came up in the training team, which was in the same Unit. I was really happy to be chosen.

The READER: What did you do to make sure you had skills for your new position?

ABT: Changes are difficult, but normally you always have the possibility to learn directly in your new position too. In some positions I had a mentor – the system is well organised at REA. I also followed the mandatory training for each change. People need mobility, it's very important.

FR: From HoS to DHoU was the biggest jump, as DHoU is less hands-on, and more of a coordinating job so the results are less tangible. Specific management trainings are useful, but you learn from your colleagues and you learn on the job.

BG: The transition was not that difficult, since I'd been so closely involved in the projects as a PA. Taking on the responsibilities was new, but there weren't big surprises in terms of the job. I felt quite well-prepared.

PR: I got a lot of support from my colleagues, especially Inge and Sebastien. They taught me the internal procedures, but more important was to learn the business, which I did with trainings, but also with their help. Mostly I learnt "on the job".

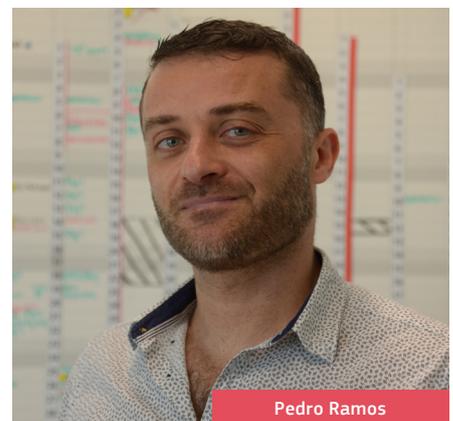
The READER: What professional ambitions do you still have?

ABT: I am curious about Horizon Europe and I will be interested to see where they move different programmes and how the different Agencies will be organised. I might have a look...

FR: My ambition is to one day become a Head of Unit. Staying in the same job for a long time fossilises you, so it is good to change, it brings new challenges and it renews you, gives you new motivation, allows you to work with new people and broadens your horizons.

BG: I'm happy in my current job. I have a lot of different tasks and I like the contact with the outside world. I would still like to progress in terms of the responsibilities and tasks that I have, or to a higher function group, but I'm not looking for a different type of job.

PR: Since early 2018 I have been training coordinator. I'm happy in my job and enjoy working with my colleagues. In my free time I'm currently studying social and environmental studies, so once that's completed I may think about whether I can do something with that.



Pedro Ramos

The READER: What advice can you give to other people looking to change career at REA?

ABT: Change can bring fresh air, optimism and it is important to stay on the move if you wish to grow!

FR: Never lose hope, always give the best of yourself with a positive attitude, learn from others, and try to help others along the path.

BG: It is very motivating to keep progressing in your career and changing job is a key element to reach new goals.

PR: Just go for it! If you're motivated and willing to learn new things, there will always be opportunities. ■

10 YEARS LATER



Marc Tachelet



Frank Marx



Brito Ferreira

Emilie Zicot



Eleni Notoglou

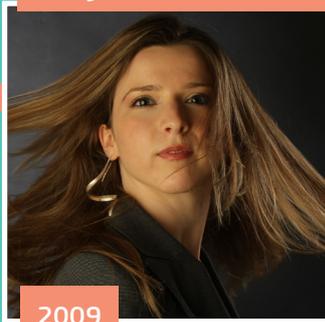


2009



2019

Benjamine Dobbelaere



2009



2019

Sandrine Jacobs



2009

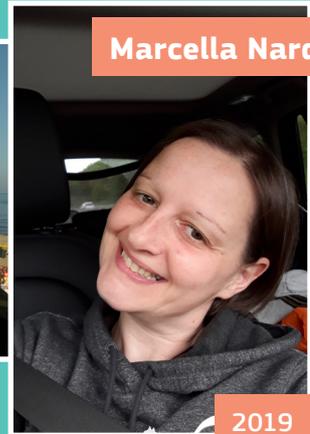


2019

Marcella Nardelli



2009



2019

Gisele Van Bunnan



2009



2018

Mounia M'zoughui



2008



2018

Sabrina Cambre



2009



2019

Maria Korda



2009



2019

Ioana Popa Alexandrina



2009



2019

Petri Backman



2009



2019



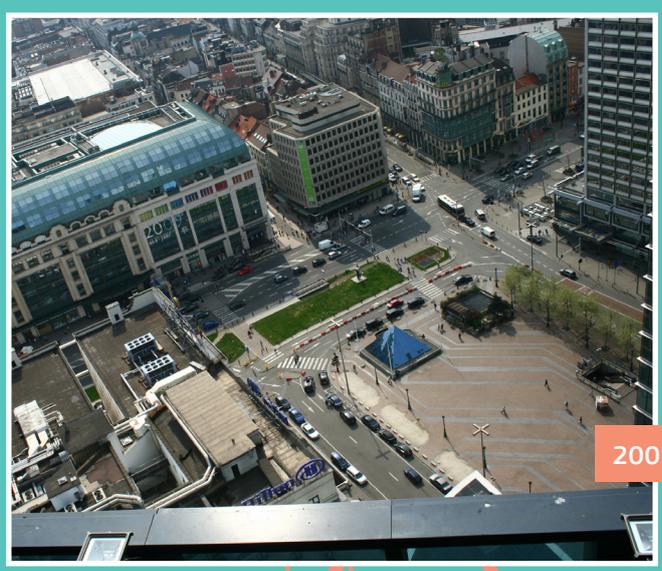
1925



1958



1969



2009

Marc Tachelet,
REA's Director



THE FUTURE OF REA

When REA became autonomous in 2009, it was the end of a long process. Graham Stroud, the first REA Director, had already started working on alternative ways of managing the growing research budgets in the 90s. However, executive agencies only started as of 2003 and it took time until the REA project saw the light of day.

What we could not foresee at the time was that less than 5 years later, an even bigger change would follow. Under Horizon 2020, the Commission delegated the majority of the framework programme budget. INEA and EASME joined the R&I family; project management by the DGs became the exception rather than the rule; and the Common Support Centre became the new central point for procedures, IT and audits. I would not have dared predict anything like that 10 years ago – and it has been a remarkable success. For REA, the changes were positive and the 2014 mandate gave room to shake up our structure and to give staff options to move and to develop their career.

“For the management side, I expect an evolution, not a revolution, but it is too early to say exactly what REA will look like in 2022.”

So will there be another big change next year for REA's mandate, like in 2014? For the management side, I expect an evolution, not a revolution, but it is too early to say exactly what REA will look like in 2022. However, a few things are already agreed:

(1) REA and the other agencies have been very successful. Further delegation to agencies is in the air. Actions that are

currently managed by the DGs today, will mostly be delegated in the future.

(2) The Commission's Central Services have confirmed that they see no new agencies in the future. If there is more to be managed, it will be managed by the six existing agencies. They have also confirmed that no agency should become bigger than 1,000 staff which still leaves some room to grow for REA.

(3) It is not yet decided to what extent the Commission will move actions from one agency to another. There is one exception: Unit A.5 and the FET open action will be integrated in the agency that will manage the new European Innovation Council.

I had hoped that by now there would already be greater clarity on the next mandate. However, the situation is still very complex, with the legal bases of the programmes still in the co-decision process, no agreement yet on the EU long-term budget 2021-2027 and a new College of Commissioners coming in in autumn.

So we will have to wait a few more months before things get clearer. The Commission's Corporate Management Board is steering the discussions and this will also give us the opportunity to show our good work.

Overall, I see a bright future for REA, with a lot of stability for most actions, some changes in other actions (like the budget increases for “Widening” and Societal Challenge 2) and maybe some additions to our portfolio. We will also see a further ‘deepening’ of corporate procedures and workflows and a deepening for policy feedback and outreach activities. In all these areas, REA has been a frontrunner since 2014 and we are in an excellent place to continue in the future. ■

Christopher Reynolds
Head of Sector (A2)



CHRISTOPHER'S TIPS

Word of the Year

They say that a week is a long time in politics. In linguistics, perhaps not so much. But over the longer term – such as the 10 years of REA's existence – the English language has, like the societies which use it, very clearly evolved. An interesting indicator of this is to track the Oxford English Dictionary's Word of the Year, chosen annually since 2004. Looking back, the OED's choices tell us a lot about social change over the past decade.

The Rise of Social Media

When the REA was established, smartphones were still in their infancy (the first iPhone was launched only in 2007). Today they are ubiquitous, with more than 70% of the population in some [European countries](#) owning one. These devices, and the apps and media we use on them, have had a profound influence, not just on our daily lives but also on our language. WhatsApp was born, like REA,

only in 2009 but is now a tool many of us use every day, including to send “*selfies*” (Word of Year 2013) or a “*face with tears of joy*” emoji (“Word” of the Year 2015) to our friends. We might even “*unfriend*” (Word of the Year 2009) those same friends on Facebook after a falling out. Social media also helped to power 2016's Word of the Year, “*post-truth*”, with the spread of fake news squeezing out objective facts and truths.

Economic and Social Change

A different strand of words reflect the challenges following the 2008 economic crisis. When REA was established in 2009, the global economy was slowly emerging from its biggest recession since the 1930s. OED's Word of the Year in 2010 was “*Big Society*”, a term coined by David Cameron and his coalition government, with society and volunteers encouraged to fill the void left in social

services as budgetary austerity led the state to retreat. Similarly, in 2011 the Word of the Year was “*squeezed middle*”, referring not to a condition caused by wearing too-tight trousers but rather to the social group whose “*income is too low to support them comfortably but not low enough to exempt them from higher tax rates or qualify for government assistance.*” More positively perhaps, 2017's Word of the Year was “*youthquake*”, denoting “*a significant cultural, political, or social change arising from the actions or influence of young people*”, seen particularly in the context of the UK's 2017 general election.

Words which didn't make the final cut also provide a fascinating overview of the past decade. Back in 2009, who'd ever heard of onesies, vuvuzelas, the alt-right, Brexit, bitcoin, twerking, GIFs, hashtags, manspreading, the gig economy, or even tweets? Almost enough to make you feel old, isn't it? ■

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Many thanks to:

Directors-General Mr Paquet, Ms Paraskevi, Mr Pesonen, Mr Plewa, Mr Viola, Ms Themis' teams, Athina Zampara (A1), Bronius Goossens (A2), Amanda Jane Ozin-Hofsaess, Brito Ferreira, Irina Elena Tiron (A3), Oliver Corr (A5), Sandra Stuijck (B1), Astrid Guiffart (B2), Guillaume Lapeyre, Carla Rocha-Gomes (B4), Bengamine Dobbelaere, Colombe Warin, Federica Roffi, Maria Korda, Sabrina Cambre (B5), Barbara Kampis, Celina Pastor Rubio, Lydia Zimmermann (C.01), Beatrice Magel, Carole Bachelet, Dimitrina Ivanova, Eleni Notoglou, Emilie Zicot, Marcella Nardelli, Mildret Hernandez, Nora Imestir, Pedro Ramos, Themistoklis Vasilikiotis (C1), Antonio Ventura (C2), Anne-Barbara Tippmann, Catherine Rubens (C3), Agata Stasiak, Jolita Ramanauskiene, Marianne Parel, Theo Staikos.

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