

Patrick van der Born (1971) is one of the Dutch RET members and one of the organizers of the kick-off conference. The theme *Staff Capacity* is his responsibility.

In 1998 Patrick started to work for COA (Dutch Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers). The first 9 years he was a social worker in several centers in the province North-Holland. In 2007 he changed jobs and joined a project based team of advisors. His main task was to advise and train managers and social workers to develop their skills to a higher level. The project ended at the end of 2008. After a short period, Patrick became the manager of the applications that calculates the numbers of staff needed for the reception of asylum seekers. In this function he evaluated the staff standard that was used at the implementation of a new Reception model.



The main reason he joined the reception expert team is the opportunity to come up with suggestions for a Common European Asylum System and for the establishment of a European Asylum Support Office. He thinks the cooperation with and the possible contribution to each other and to the European Union is exciting. For his personal development, Patrick is very interested in the way other European countries recruit their staff, which skills they find necessary and how they calculate the needed numbers. The experiences of the other members may also be of use to him and COA.

The achievement Patrick would like to reach is: *'a solution for the need of staff capacity in strongly changing in- and outflow of asylum seekers'*. If there's enough time in the workshop, he also would like to start with the development of a manual.



Gerrit Olthoff (1958) is employed by COA since 2006 as an Accommodation Manager. The theme *Accommodation* is therefore his responsibility.

Since 2006 Gerrit is responsible for 12 reception centers for approximately 6000 asylum seekers in the south of the Netherlands. During the asylum procedure asylum seekers in the Netherlands stay in accommodations scattered over the nation. The capacity of each accommodation varies between 400 and 1100 inhabitants. Fluctuating numbers of asylum seekers, different procedures and programmes, demands of the partners, are several influences he has to cope with in his daily practice. Gerrit has a lot of experience and expertise in accommodation and safety matters.

In the search and development of better accommodation solutions, he has great confidence in the expertise of his European colleagues. He is looking forward to the cooperation with a wide range of experts.

According to Gerrit the reception of asylum seekers is not only an issue during the working days, but it is a subject that exists constantly. The situation in the Netherlands is not unique and is part of a European system with world-wide connections. Gerrit believes furthermore that it is an honour to be a part of the cooperation in the EU for the development of a minimum standard for the accommodation of asylum seekers.

'My goal is not to create an isolated minimum standard but a broad accepted integral standard that matches the other 4 RET themes. I hope that, during the RET-Kick Off Conference, we can make a good start in the think-tank-sessions in the appointment of the main challenges and influences on the issue of accommodation of asylum seekers in the European Union.'

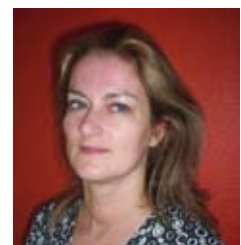
Désirée Horbach (1961), the theme *Cooperation with (chain) partners and interest groups* is her responsibility.

Désirée began her career at COA in 1991 and has held several positions within the organization including: Social Worker, Policy Maker and Advisor. As a staff member she continually supports COA-Managers to identify and enhance ways to build better communication and cooperation with various partners involved in the field of asylum and related issues.

Her commitment and determination is evident in her business approach. Her perseverance allows her to continually seek out new projects and possesses a proven track record in achieving her goals. In her opinion: *'It is not just knowledge and experience that counts....but also having enthusiasm and an open mind.'*

During the spring of 2009, Désirée participated in two COA-missions to the Republic of Cyprus. The goal of the ERF Project Particular Pressures Cyprus is to generate an advice for the government of the Republic of Cyprus about improvements to the asylum system. During these missions field research was undertaken and transmission of knowledge and expertise took place through individual on-the-job coaching and group trainings. This resulted in two written reports containing an analysis of the situation and concrete proposals. The first mission focused on research in the areas of social welfare and to offer trainings on intercultural communication to officers and managers of the Social Welfare Services. The second report was to gather information regarding the reception of minor asylum seekers in Cyprus.

Désirée speaks 4 languages and holds several degrees including a Master of Science Degree in Public Administration and Organization Science from the University of Utrecht (Netherlands) and two Bachelor Degrees in Teaching and Social Work. Her education and teaching experience allow her to facilitate workshops like these, enabling group members to work together to develop inclusive solutions and build sustainable agreements. In addition to her work, Désirée has a passion for volunteering, travelling to new places and experiencing different cultures.





Leendert Kampman (1972), the theme *Integration* is his responsibility.

In 1998 Leendert graduated for his Bachelor degree in Cultural Education and started working for COA. In the first years he worked in several reception centers. During this time Leendert worked with many different integration programs and gave trainings to asylum seekers. He experienced the big steps COA took in developing orientation & integration programs as well as programs based on return of asylum seekers to the country of origin.

Currently Leendert is working as a case manager at a reception centre located in the centre of the Netherlands. In his position as a case manager he is responsible for a caseload of asylum seekers. He guides them towards orientation, integration and return programs. Recently Leendert participated in the Particular Pressures Cyprus project (PPC) where he gave several trainings on integration divided over two missions in Cyprus. This project offered him the possibility to share and improve his skills and knowledge with the colleagues in Cyprus. *'It was very nice to share ideas and experiences with each other. Improving yourself can only happen if you are open to new ideas and able to look in the mirror. Especially in the field of integration it's important to know where you're coming from and where you want to go to.'*

As an expert on integration in the RET project Leendert hopes to keep exchanging ideas and experiences in the important work on integration in the European context. In the workshops he would like to share and compare existing ideas and views on integration. *'Each European country has its own cultural dimension and background as well as its own political reality. It will be a challenge to share best practices and to come to some kind of basic guidelines where integration in general should rely to.'*

In the seminars Leendert would like to deepen the subject to come to the core of integration. The aim will be to come to methodology descriptions on integration which can be used as a guide line anywhere in Europe. The ENARO exchange program will be used as a field research on the topic. The seminars will also be used to define clear questions which can be investigated during the exchange program. Leendert is looking forward to discuss the topic with his European colleagues.

Rob Metz (1950) started to work for the Dutch Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) in 2000, at the policy making division.

Rob has mainly been active in the field of special reception of vulnerable groups of asylum seekers, such as unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers with psychiatric problems and asylum seekers with unacceptable behavior. The theme *Reception of vulnerable groups of Asylum Seekers* is his responsibility.

Together with mental health organizations the Dutch Central Agency for Reception of Asylum Seekers has created a combination of special reception and mental care. COA also created a special reception unit for asylum seekers with unacceptable behavior.

Rob is very curious to find out if other countries also have experience in this sort of special reception and he is looking forward to meet his European colleagues: *'I hope to be able to contribute to a vivid exchange of experiences in this field. It would be great if we can reach an international accepted blue print of how to deal with this subject in the best way possible.'*

Rob has high hopes for the conference and the following seminars. In the workshops he would like to come up with a definition of which groups are vulnerable and in need of special reception. If time allows it, he would also like to start with a description of minimum standards needed for these groups. This can be further developed in the seminars.

