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Contents

Page

V *Announcements*

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

**European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO)**

2014/C 42 A/01

Notice of open competition — EPSO/AST-SC/01/14 — Secretaries (grades SC 1 and SC 2) for the following languages: Croatian, English, French and German .....

1

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## V

*(Announcements)*

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

## EUROPEAN PERSONNEL SELECTION OFFICE (EPSO)

## NOTICE OF OPEN COMPETITION

EPSO/AST-SC/01/14

Secretaries (grades SC 1 and SC 2)

for the following languages: Croatian, English, French and German

(2014/C 42 A/01)

The European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) is organising an open competition, based on tests, to constitute a reserve from which to recruit secretaries (\*).

The purpose of this competition is to draw up reserve lists from which to fill vacant posts for officials in the institutions of the European Union.

*Before applying, you should carefully read the guide to open competitions published in Official Journal of the European Union C 270 A of 7 September 2012 and on the EPSO website.*

*This guide is an integral part of the competition notice and will help you to understand the rules governing the procedure and how to apply.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. GENERAL BACKGROUND
- II. DUTIES
- III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
- IV. ADMISSION TESTS
- V. OPEN COMPETITION
- VI. RESERVE LISTS
- VII. HOW TO APPLY

(\*) Any reference in this notice to a person of the male sex must be deemed also to constitute a reference to a person of the female sex.

## I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

| 1. Number of successful candidates sought per language and per grade | grade SC 1   | grade SC 2 |
|--|--|------------|
| HR =   | 40   | 13         |
| EN =   | 70   | 32         |
| FR =   | 56   | 33         |
| DE =   | 21   | 10         |
|  | Please note that, for the most part, recruitments at grade SC 2 will be for the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors in Luxembourg.  |            |
| 2. Remarks   | <p>This notice of open competition covers two grades and the Croatian, English, French and German languages. You may not apply for both grades nor for more than one language.</p> <p>You must make your choice when you apply online and you will not be able to change it after you have confirmed and validated your online application form.</p> <p>However,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— if you applied for grade <b>SC 2</b>, and</li> <li>— if you obtained one of the highest marks in the admission tests so as to be invited to the next stage of the competition, and</li> <li>— if you do not meet the eligibility requirements for grade <b>SC 2</b> but you do meet those for grade <b>SC 1</b>,</li> </ul> <p>the selection board may, with your consent, reassign your application to grade <b>SC 1</b> <sup>(1)</sup>.</p> <p>In that case your results will be compared with those of the candidates for grade <b>SC 1</b> and, if you are among those with the highest marks for that grade, you will be invited to the assessment tests.</p> <p>Any such reassignment will take place before invitations to the assessment tests are sent out and will be made on the basis of the information given in your online application. Candidates whose marks are below the threshold set for the highest marks in grade <b>SC 2</b> will not be considered for transfer to grade <b>SC 1</b>.</p> |            |

## II. DUTIES

The institutions are looking for people to carry out secretarial tasks within their departments.

The main positions concerned are that of secretary/administrative assistant. These tasks, often assigned to administrative/office management, can, however, vary according to the post. In general, a secretary provides support to one or several people, departments or units within the institution. A secretary's duties consist of shaping information, transforming it and distributing it.

The tasks are varied and can include:

- preparing files,
- organising and coordinating the department's activities (meetings, official travel),

<sup>(1)</sup> You will be asked to give your consent during the online application process.

- document management and requests for action (receipt, processing, follow-up, and filing of documents, reports and correspondence),
- preparing, processing, finalising, and checking documents (editing, page layout, formatting, tables) with the aid of specific software,
- finding, compiling and disseminating information (updating databases, files).

### III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

**On the closing date for online applications**, you must fulfil all the following general and specific conditions:

#### 1. General conditions

- (a) You must be a citizen of one of the Member States of the European Union.
- (b) You must enjoy your full rights as a citizen.
- (c) You must have fulfilled any obligations imposed on you by the laws on military service.
- (d) You must meet the character requirements for the duties involved.

#### 2. Specific conditions

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 2.1. | <p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <p><b>Grades SC 1 and SC 2</b></p> <p>Post-secondary education attested by a diploma in the secretarial field</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A level of secondary education attested by a diploma giving access to post-secondary education, followed by at least 3 years' professional experience in the secretarial field with tasks that are directly and mostly related to the secretarial duties described in Section II.</p> <p>NB: The 3 years do not count towards the number of years of professional experience required below.</p> |
| 2.2. | <p><b>Professional experience</b></p> <p><b>Grade SC 2 only</b></p> <p>At least <b>4 years'</b> professional experience in the secretarial field, with tasks that are directly and mostly related to the secretarial duties described in Section II.</p> <p>This professional experience is relevant only where it has been gained after obtaining the qualification giving access to the competition.</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 2.3.   | <p><b>Knowledge of languages <sup>(2)</sup></b></p> <p><i>In the light of the judgment given by the Court of Justice of the European Union (Grand Chamber) in Case C-566/10 P, Italy v Commission, the EU institutions wish to state the reasons for limiting the choice of the second language in this competition to a small number of official EU languages.</i></p> <p><i>Candidates are therefore informed that the second language options in this competition have been defined in line with the interests of the service, which require new recruits to be immediately operational and capable of communicating effectively in their daily work. Otherwise the efficient functioning of the institutions could be severely impaired.</i></p> <p><i>It has long been the practice to use mainly English, French, and German for internal communication in the EU institutions and these are also the languages most often needed when communicating with the outside world and dealing with cases. Moreover, English, French, and German are the most common second languages in the European Union and the most frequently studied as a second language. This confirms what is currently expected of candidates for European Union posts in terms of their level of education and professional skills, namely that they have a command of at least one of these languages. Consequently, in balancing the interests and needs of the service and the abilities of candidates, and given the particular field of this competition, it is legitimate to organise tests in these three languages so as to ensure that all candidates are able to work in at least one of them, whatever their first official language. Assessing specific competencies in this way allows the institutions to evaluate candidates' ability to be immediately operational in an environment that closely matches the reality they would face on the job.</i></p> <p><i>For these same reasons, it is reasonable to limit the language of communication between candidates and the institution, including the language in which application forms are to be drafted. Furthermore, this ensures uniformity when comparing candidates and checking their application forms.</i></p> <p><i>To ensure equal treatment for all candidates, everyone — including those whose first official language is one of the three — must take some tests in their <u>second</u> language, chosen from among these three.</i></p> <p><i>None of this affects the possibility of later language training to enable staff to work in a third language, as required under Article 45(2) of the Staff Regulations.</i></p> |
| <p>Language 1</p> <p>and</p> <p>Language 2</p> | <p><b>Main language:</b></p> <p>a thorough knowledge of the language chosen for the competition from HR/EN/FR/DE</p> <p><b>Second language (must be different from language 1):</b></p> <p>a satisfactory knowledge of English, French or German</p>  |

#### IV. ADMISSION TESTS

The admission tests are organised by EPSO and you will take them on a computer. The selection board decides on the difficulty of the tests and approves their subject matter on the basis of proposals made by EPSO.

<sup>(2)</sup> See the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) — required level: language 1 = C1, language 2 = B2  
<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Downloads/CEF/LanguageSelfAssessmentGrid.csp>

|                                       |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>1. Invitation</b>                  | <p>You will be invited to sit the tests if you have validated your application on time (see Section VII).</p> <p><b>NB:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By validating your application you declare that you meet the general and specific conditions listed in Section III.</li> <li>2. You <b>must</b> reserve a date to sit the tests. This must be done by the deadline notified to you via your EPSO account.</li> </ol> |  |
| <b>2. Nature and marking of tests</b> | A series of tests comprising multiple-choice questions to assess your general aptitudes and competencies as regards:   |  |
| <b>Test (a)</b>                       | Verbal reasoning   | Marking: this test will be marked out of 20<br>Pass mark: 10 |
| <b>Test (b)</b>                       | Professional skills:<br>Accuracy and precision   | Marking: this test will be marked out of 40                  |
| <b>Test (c)</b>                       | Professional skills:<br>Prioritising and organising  | Marking: this test will be marked out of 40                  |
|                                       |  | Aggregate pass mark for tests (b) and (c): 40                |
| <b>Test (d)</b>                       | Language comprehension test  | Marking: this test will be marked out of 10<br>Pass mark: 5  |
| <b>3. Language of the tests</b>       | <p>Language 1 for tests (a) and (d)</p> <p>Language 2 for tests (b) and (c)</p>  |  |

## V. OPEN COMPETITION

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>1. Invitation</b> | <p>You will be invited to sit the assessment tests, normally in Brussels, in a 1-day session <sup>(3)</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— if you have passed all the admission tests with one of the highest aggregate marks, and</li> <li>— if checks on the information given in your online application show that you fulfil the general and specific conditions listed in Section III <sup>(4)</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>The number of candidates invited to the assessment tests will be approximately <b>2,5 times</b> the number of successful candidates sought that is indicated in the competition notice. It will be published on EPSO's website (<a href="http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/eu-careers.info/">http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/eu-careers.info/</a>).</p> |
|----------------------|--|

<sup>(3)</sup> Where a number of candidates tie for the last available place, they will all be invited to the assessment tests.

<sup>(4)</sup> This information will be verified against the supporting documents before the reserve list is drawn up (see Section VI.1 and Section VII.2).

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>2. Assessment tests</b> | <p>You will sit two types of assessment tests, the content of which is validated by the selection board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— specific competencies: (e) and (f)</li> <li>— general competencies: (g) and (h)</li> <li>— <b>Your specific competencies</b> will be assessed by means of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(e) a practical test involving the preparation and/or processing of an MS Word and Excel document <sup>(3)</sup>;</li> <li>(f) a practical test to assess your drafting skills (particularly spelling, syntax and grammar).</li> </ul> </li> <li>— <b>Your general competencies</b> <sup>(4)</sup> will be assessed by means of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(g) an in-tray exercise;</li> <li>(h) a structured interview.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>You will also sit an IT literacy test. This test will not be marked as it is organised solely for statistical analysis purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) IT literacy</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------|--|

**These general competencies will be tested as shown in the following table:**

|                                | In-tray | Structured interview |
|--------------------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Analysis and problem-solving   | x       |                      |
| Communicating                  |         | x                    |
| Delivering quality and results | x       |                      |
| Learning and development       |         | x                    |
| Prioritising and organising    | x       |                      |
| Resilience                     |         | x                    |
| Working with others            |         | x                    |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>3. Languages for the assessment tests</b> | <p>Language 1: tests (e) and (f)</p> <p>Language 2: tests (g), (h) and (i)</p>   |
| <b>4. Marking and weighting</b>              | <p><b>Specific competencies</b></p> <p><b>Test (e)</b> will be marked out of 20.</p> <p>Pass mark: 12</p> <p><b>Test (f)</b> will be marked out of 10.</p> <p>Pass mark: 6</p> <p><b>Weighting: 30 % of the overall mark</b></p> <p><b>General competencies (g) and (h)</b></p> <p>These tests will be marked out of 10 for each general competency.</p> <p>Pass mark:</p> <p>3 for each competency</p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p>an aggregate of 35 out of 70 for all 7 general competencies</p> <p><b>Weighting: 70 % of the overall mark</b></p> |

<sup>(3)</sup> Details of the keyboards available will be provided with the invitation to the assessment tests. Standard European keyboards will be provided.

<sup>(4)</sup> More information on these competencies can be found in point 1.2 of the guide to open competitions.



## VI. RESERVE LISTS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <b>Candidates placed on the reserve lists</b> | <p>The selection board will place your name on the reserve list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— if you have passed the assessment tests with one of the highest aggregate marks (see number of successful candidates sought, Section I.1) <sup>(7)</sup>,</li> <li>— <b>and if, your supporting documents show</b> that you meet all the eligibility requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Supporting documents will be verified in descending order of merit until the number of candidates who can be placed on the reserve list and who actually fulfil all the conditions for admission reaches the threshold.</p> <p>The files of candidates below the threshold will not be examined. If verification <sup>(8)</sup> shows that the information given in your online application form is not borne out by appropriate supporting documents, you will be disqualified from the competition.</p> |
| 2. <b>Classification</b>                         | <p>Lists will be drawn up for each language and grade, and names will be listed in alphabetical order.</p>   |

## VII. HOW TO APPLY

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <b>Online application</b>              | <p>You must apply online, following the instructions on the EPSO website and particularly in the online application manual.</p> <p><b>Deadline (including validation): 18 March 2014 at 12.00 (midday)</b>, Brussels time</p>                                  |
| 2. <b>Submission of application files</b> | <p><b>If you are invited</b> to the assessment tests, you must bring your full application file (signed online application form and supporting documents) with you <sup>(9)</sup>.</p> <p><b>Details:</b> See point 6.1 of the guide to open competitions.</p> |

<sup>(7)</sup> Where a number of candidates tie for the last available place, they will all be placed on the reserve list.

<sup>(8)</sup> The information relating to the general conditions is verified by EPSO, while the information relating to the specific conditions is verified by the selection board.

<sup>(9)</sup> You will be notified in good time via your EPSO account of the date when you have to attend.



## REVIEW OF 'COMPETITION' C A OJs

Please find below the list of C A published during the present year.

Unless otherwise indicated, OJs are published in all language versions.

5

6

11

19

21

26

27

30 (PL)

35

41 (DE/EN/FR)

42

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