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(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

EUROPEAN PERSONNEL SELECTION OFFICE (EPSO)

GENERAL RULES GOVERNING OPEN COMPETITIONS

(2015/C 070 A/01)

These general rules are an integral part of the competition notice, and together with the notice they constitute the binding framework of the competition procedure.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. WHAT IS AN OPEN COMPETITION?

The European institutions select future officials⁽¹⁾ through open competitions, which involve a series of competitive examinations. The competitions are open to all citizens of the European Union⁽²⁾ who meet the specified requirements. This procedure gives all candidates a fair chance to demonstrate their abilities and guarantees selection based on merit while observing the principle of equal treatment.

Candidates who pass a competition are placed on a reserve list from which the institutions draw recruits as and when they need them. The aim of a competition, then, is not to fill a specific post, but to constitute a reserve pool for recruitment.

A selection board is appointed⁽³⁾ to select the best candidates in the light of the requirements set out in the competition notice. The board compares the candidates' performance in order to assess their suitability for the duties described in the notice. Its task is not only to evaluate their competencies and aptitudes but also to identify those who are best qualified in terms of merit.

Competitions are organised in annual cycles for general job profiles, or on demand for specialised profiles to meet specific needs of the institutions.

1.2. WHAT IS THE GENERAL PROFILE SOUGHT?

The institutions are looking for candidates who are talented, motivated, and highly qualified in their field, and who can demonstrate the following general competencies:

Analysis and Problem Solving	Identify the critical facts in complex issues and develop creative and practical solutions
Communicating	Communicate clearly and precisely both orally and in writing
Delivering Quality and Results	Take personal responsibility and initiative for delivering work to a high standard of quality within set procedures
Learning and Development	Develop and improve personal skills and knowledge of the organisation and its environment
Prioritising and Organising	Prioritise the most important tasks, work flexibly and organise own workload efficiently
Resilience	Remain effective under a heavy workload, handle organisational frustrations positively and adapt to a changing work environment
Working with Others	Work cooperatively with others in teams and across organisational boundaries and respect differences between people
Leadership (for administrators only)	Manage, develop and motivate people to achieve results

⁽¹⁾ Any reference, in the framework of selection procedures organised by EPSO, to a person of the male gender must be deemed also to constitute a reference to a person of the female gender.

⁽²⁾ Subject to any exceptions granted under Article 28(a) of the Staff Regulations of Officials and any specific measures adopted with a view to recruiting citizens of countries joining the Union.

⁽³⁾ The names of the selection board members are published on the EPSO website (<http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/eu-careers.info/>).

1.3. ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible to participate in a competition candidates have to meet certain criteria, which are laid down by the competition notice.

Candidates must confirm that they meet all general and specific eligibility conditions defined in the competition notice, and must provide the necessary supporting documents in a full application file when required (usually only at the assessment centre stage unless otherwise specified in the competition notice, see point 2.1.7 below).

General conditions

The general eligibility conditions ⁽⁴⁾ are common to all competitions. They are the following:

You must:

- (a) enjoy full rights as a citizen of a Member State of the European Union ⁽⁵⁾;
- (b) fulfil any obligations imposed by laws on military service;
- (c) meet the character requirements for the performance of the duties involved in the competition.

To prove that you hold the required **citizenship**, you should provide a copy of your passport, identity card or any other official document specifying your citizenship, which **must be valid on the closing date** for online applications.

In general no supporting documents are required to prove that you enjoy your full rights as a citizen, or that you have fulfilled any obligations imposed on you by the laws on military service. By validating the online application form, you declare on your honour that you satisfy these conditions. However, formal proof of the above must normally be presented before recruitment.

Specific conditions

The specific conditions regarding qualifications and professional experience may vary from one competition to another depending on the profile sought, and will be laid down in the competition notice. It is your responsibility to provide the selection board with all the information and documents it needs in order to verify that you fulfil these conditions.

- (a) *Diplomas ⁽⁶⁾ and/or certificates attesting successful completion of studies.* The selection board will allow for differences between education systems. Examples of the minimum qualifications required for each category can be found in the annex to these general rules and on the EPSO website, however, the competition notice may lay down stricter requirements. Please note: if you studied outside the EU your diploma should be recognised by an official body in one of the EU Member States (e.g. by the Ministry of Education).

In the case of post-secondary diplomas, include in your online application form as much detail as possible, in particular concerning what subjects you studied and for how long, so that the selection board can assess how relevant your diploma is to the duties described in the competition notice. If you have followed technical or professional training, or attended a further training course or specialisation course, indicate whether it was full-time, part-time, or an evening class, what subjects were covered, and the duration.

⁽⁴⁾ Competition notices do not set any age limit, but please note the retirement age laid down in the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union ('the Staff Regulations'), which can be found on the EPSO website.

⁽⁵⁾ Subject to any exceptions granted under Article 28(a) of the Staff Regulations of Officials, and any specific measures adopted with a view to recruiting citizens of countries joining the Union. If exceptions or specific measures apply in a given competition, they are indicated in the competition notice.

⁽⁶⁾ Please refer to Annex I (examples of qualifications).

(b) *Professional experience (if required)*. Your professional experience will be taken into account only if it is relevant to the nature of the duties described in the competition notice. As a general rule, it should also:

- constitute genuine and effective work,
- be remunerated,
- involve a subordinate relationship or the supply of a service.

Any elements of your professional experience which fall into the categories listed below will be accounted for as follows:

- *Voluntary work*: only paid voluntary work can be taken into account. It must be of comparable intensity (in terms of weekly hours) and duration to a regular job.
- *Traineeships*: traineeships will be considered as professional experience if a salary is paid.
- *Compulsory military service*: compulsory military service will be taken into account for a period not exceeding the statutory duration of compulsory military service in the Member State of which you are a national. Military service may have been completed before or after the award of the diploma required for admission to the competition, unless otherwise specified in the competition notice.
- *Maternity/paternity/adoption leave*: maternity/paternity/adoption leave will be taken into account if it is covered by an employment contract. If the event (birth or adoption) occurs while you are seeking work, the leave will not be considered as professional experience.
- *Doctorate*: all doctorates, whether or not they involve remuneration, will be considered as professional experience up to a maximum of three years, provided that the doctorate degree was actually obtained.
- *Part-time work*: part-time work will be calculated *pro rata* based on the number of hours worked. If, for example, you worked half-time for six months, your experience will be accounted for as three months.

Please note that if the competition notice requires professional experience in the field of the competition, any elements of your professional experience which fall into the categories listed above will only be taken into account if they are relevant to that field.

It is important that you specify in your application form the nature of the duties you performed in as much detail as possible so that the selection board can assess the relevance of your experience for the duties for which you are applying. All the periods of professional activity in question must be covered by the following supporting documents:

- references from former and current employer(s) attesting that you have the professional experience required for admission to the competition; the references must state the nature and level of the duties performed, their starting and ending dates,
- if you cannot enclose references, photocopies of your employment contract(s) and your first and last pay slips may be supplied, and must be accompanied by a detailed description of the duties performed,
- in the case of non-salaried work (e.g. self-employed, liberal professions), invoices or order forms detailing the work performed or any other relevant official supporting documents may be accepted as evidence,
- in the case of competitions for conference interpreters, where professional experience is required, documents will be taken into consideration only if they show that the experience relates specifically to conference interpreting and clearly indicate the number of days and the languages interpreted.

Knowledge of languages

Depending on the competition you will be asked to demonstrate your knowledge of the official EU languages⁽⁷⁾. As a general rule you will need a thorough knowledge (level C1 of the CEFR⁽⁸⁾) of one official EU language and a satisfactory knowledge (level B2 of the CEFR) of another one. However, the competition notice may impose stricter requirements (this is the case, in particular, for linguist profiles). Unless otherwise stated in the competition notice the choice of second language will normally be limited to English, French or German⁽⁹⁾.

When organising open competitions, EPSO applies the 'General Guidelines on the use of languages in EPSO competitions'⁽¹⁰⁾ adopted by the College of Heads of Administration on 15 May 2013.

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.

The second language options for competitions have been defined in 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.

To ensure equal treatment for all candidates, everyone — including those whose first official language is one of the three — must take certain test in their second language, chosen from among these three. 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. 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.

In general, no supporting documents are required to prove your knowledge of languages, except for certain competitions for linguists. In those cases the competition notice will state that you must provide evidence of your knowledge of the languages required in the form of a diploma or a written note explaining how you acquired your knowledge of them.

2. STAGES IN THE COMPETITION

2.1. APPLICATION

1. Check carefully that you satisfy the eligibility conditions for the competition.
2. Create your EPSO account if you do not yet have one.
3. Complete the interactive sample tests.
4. Fill-in your online application.
5. Indicate any special arrangements needed for taking tests.
6. Confirm and validate your online application by the given deadline.
7. Submit a full application file.

⁽⁷⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/linguistic-diversity/official-languages-eu_en.htm

⁽⁸⁾ The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Downloads/CEF/LanguageSelfAssessmentGrid.csp>).

⁽⁹⁾ Following 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 must state the reasons for limiting the choice of the second language to a small number of official EU languages.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Please refer to Annex II for the text of the General Guidelines.

2.1.1. Check that you satisfy the eligibility conditions

Before applying, check carefully to make sure that:

- you satisfy all the eligibility conditions, both general and specific; this means you must read the competition notice and these general rules carefully and accept the terms set out in them;
- you have made the correct choice of field and profile; for some competitions published at the same time you can only apply for one field or profile, this will be clearly indicated in the competition notice.

The information concerning your eligibility given in the online application will be verified against the supporting documents in your full application file before the reserve list is drawn up (see point 2.1.7 and Section 2.6 below).

2.1.2. Create your EPSO account

Your EPSO account serves as an online interface between you and EPSO. This is where you receive communications from EPSO and where you can track your applications. This is also where your personal data is stored, and where you can request it to be updated ⁽¹¹⁾.

If you do not yet have an account, you can create one following the instructions on the EPSO website ⁽¹²⁾. You must have a valid, functioning e-mail address to do this.

You may only create **one EPSO account**, which will remain valid for all future applications. You may be disqualified at any stage of the procedure if EPSO discovers that you have created multiple accounts (see also Section 3.5 below).

2.1.3. Complete the interactive sample tests

Depending on the competition you apply for, you may be asked to take some compulsory interactive sample tests. These will give you an idea of the level required for the preselection tests to the competition.

2.1.4. Fill in your online application

You must apply through the EPSO website, following the instructions in the online application manual ⁽¹³⁾.

Please note that the application procedure itself can take quite some time because of the amount of information you have to fill in. It is your responsibility to ensure that you complete and validate your application before the deadline given in the competition notice.

Depending on the competition, you will be asked to include the relevant information ⁽¹⁴⁾ on:

- your diplomas/qualifications,
- your professional experience (if required),
- your reasons for applying,
- your knowledge of the official languages of the European Union.

In the case of specialist competitions you may also have to answer a series of specific questions about your experience and qualifications relating to the field of the competition (see Section 2.4 ‘Selection based on qualifications — the talent screener’).

All parts of the online application form, including the ‘talent screener’, must be completed in English, French, or German, unless otherwise specified in the competition notice. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to your exclusion from the competition.

⁽¹¹⁾ In compliance with the rules on data protection:
https://europa.eu/epso/application/passport/index.cfm?action=pdplegal&sb=1&comp_id=

⁽¹²⁾ www.eu-careers.eu

⁽¹³⁾ http://europa.eu/epso/doc/epso_brochure_en.pdf

⁽¹⁴⁾ Please refer to the annex for more information on eligibility and supporting documents.

2.1.5. Indicate any special arrangements needed for taking tests

If you have a disability or a condition which might require special arrangements for taking the tests, please fill in the relevant information on the online application form.

You will need to send either a medical certificate or a certificate issued by a recognised body attesting your disability as soon as possible after validating your online application, by one of the following means:

- by e-mail to: EPSO-accessibility@ec.europa.eu
- by fax to: **+32 22998081**
- by post to: European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), C-25, 1049 Brussels, Belgium

Please clearly label this correspondence '**EPSO accessibility**,' quoting **your name**, the **number of the competition** and **your application number**.

The supporting documents will be examined on a case-by-case basis and where duly justified, in light both of the evidence submitted and of the principle of equal treatment of candidates, special arrangements may be offered by EPSO within the limits of what is judged to be reasonable.

If a disability or condition develops after the deadline for online applications, you must inform EPSO as soon as possible of the arrangements you consider necessary and send the relevant supporting documents by e-mail, fax or post to EPSO using the details indicated above.

2.1.6. Confirm and validate your online application

After completing your online application form you must submit it by clicking on the 'validate application' button in order for it to be taken into account and processed by EPSO.

By validating your application you declare on your honour that you meet the general and specific eligibility conditions specified in the competition notice.

Please note that EPSO cannot accept applications from candidates who fail to validate their application before the deadline.

Once you have validated your application, you will no longer be able to make any changes; the data entered is immediately processed by EPSO with a view to organising the competition.

All the eligibility conditions, both general and specific, must be met on the date(s) specified in the competition notice.

2.1.7. Submitting a full application file

A full application file is a file comprising a copy of your application form and all the required supporting documents.

Unless the competition notice states that the file must be submitted at the same time as the online application, only candidates invited to the assessment phase will be required to bring their full application file on the day of the assessment centre.

When we request you to provide your full application file, our letter will indicate what kind of supporting documents you need to enclose (e.g. uncertified photocopies or originals of the documents required).

EPSO will not return any documents and, in accordance with data protection rules, after the expiry of the applicable retention period the files will be destroyed.

If you are placed on the reserve list and offered a position, you will have to produce the originals of all documents for certification before you can be recruited.

References to websites, printouts of web pages, or references to previous applications or documents, do not constitute valid supporting documents.

When requested to submit your full application file, you should:

- (1) Print out your validated online application form from your EPSO account.
- (2) Number, attach and include a numbered index of all required supporting documents ⁽¹⁵⁾.

2.2. COMPUTER-BASED MULTIPLE-CHOICE PRESELECTION TESTS

For most competitions EPSO organises computer-based multiple-choice preselection tests. The selection board decides on the difficulty of these tests and approves their subject matter on the basis of proposals made by EPSO. The tests are marked by computer.

In some competitions (in particular those for specialist profiles, which include a selection based on qualifications) computer-based preselection tests are organised only if the number of candidates who applied for the competition exceeds a certain threshold. This threshold is determined by the Director of EPSO, as the appointing authority, after the deadline for applications, and it is published on EPSO's website. In competitions including several fields, the threshold can vary from one field to another.

Depending on the competition you have applied for, the preselection tests may include the following:

- a verbal reasoning test: to assess your ability to think logically and understand verbal information,
- a numerical reasoning test: to assess your ability to think logically and understand numerical information,
- an abstract reasoning test: to assess your ability to think logically and understand the relations between concepts involving no linguistic, spatial or numerical elements,
- situational judgement test: to assess your typical behaviour in a working context,
- test(s) of language skills,
- test(s) of specific professional skills.

In order to take the computer-based preselection tests you must book a testing appointment. You will receive instructions on how to book your tests via your EPSO account, including the indication of the time period within which you are allowed to make the booking, and a tutorial on the booking process.

Normally you will be offered several possible dates and a list of different centres in which you can sit the tests. **Please note that the period during which you can book and sit your tests is limited. If you fail to book a testing appointment within the indicated period, you will be automatically disqualified from the competition.**

2.3. VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY (ADMISSION)

EPSO checks whether your application is admissible, i.e. whether it was submitted by the deadline and in accordance with the conditions laid down in the competition notice.

⁽¹⁵⁾ See annex for further general information on supporting documents.

If your application is admissible, the information given in your online application will then be checked for compliance with the general and specific eligibility conditions ⁽¹⁶⁾, as specified in the competition notice. This information will be verified at a later stage against the supporting documents provided (unless the competition notice foresees document checks at an earlier stage, see point 2.1.7). Please note, however, that the selection board has the right to ask you for additional information or documents at any stage of the procedure ⁽¹⁷⁾ — thus, even before the stage where the competition notice foresees verification of the supporting documents.

Only applications that satisfy all the conditions spelled out in the competition notice will be taken into consideration.

If the competition includes computer-based multiple-choice preselection tests (see Section 2.2 above), the verification of eligibility takes place after those tests are completed. Compliance with the general and specific conditions is checked in descending order of the marks obtained at the preselection tests, until the number of candidates who:

— have passed the tests with the highest marks,

and

— satisfy the eligibility conditions,

reaches the number that can be invited to the following competition stage. (This number is either defined directly in the competition notice, or — in cases where preselection tests are organised only if the number of applications exceeds a certain threshold — it corresponds to the threshold number triggering the organisation of those tests, defined by the Director of EPSO according to Section 2.2).

Where a number of candidates tie for the last available place, they will all be invited to the next stage of the competition. The online applications of the candidates below the threshold will not be examined.

The final number of the candidates invited to the next stage is published on EPSO's website.

2.4. SELECTION BASED ON QUALIFICATIONS — THE TALENT SCREENER

For most specialist profiles, candidates have to go through a phase called 'selection based on qualifications'. In this phase, the selection board assesses the applications of the candidates and selects those whose qualifications (in particular diplomas and professional experience) best match the duties and selection criteria set out in the competition notice.

If you are a candidate in a competition of this type, you have to answer a series of questions in the 'talent screener' section of the online application form. The questions are based on the selection criteria given in the notice of competition and your answers are assessed by the selection board. All candidates in a competition answer the same set of questions. In this way, the selection board is presented with each candidate's answers in the same structured framework helping the board to carry out a careful objective assessment of the comparative merits of all candidates.

The 'selection based on qualifications' takes place after the verification of eligibility on the basis of the online applications is completed. The selection board only assesses the qualifications of those candidates who were found to satisfy all eligibility conditions.

This selection is made **solely** on the basis of responses to specific questions in the 'talent screener' tab of the online application form.

The selection board first decides on a weighting (from 1 to 3) for each talent screener question, according to the importance attached to the criterion. Then, the selection board examines the content of the candidates' answers to the questions and awards 0 to 4 points for each answer. The points are then multiplied by the weighting for each question and added up.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Compliance with the general eligibility conditions is verified by EPSO, whilst compliance with the specific eligibility conditions is verified by the selection board of the competition.

⁽¹⁷⁾ On the basis of Article 2 of Annex III to the Staff Regulations.

The candidates with the highest total of points go through to the next competition stage (the competition notice specifies how many could be admitted; where a number of candidates tie for the last available place, they will all be invited).

The final number of candidates who go through to the next stage of the competition is published on EPSO's website.

2.5. ASSESSMENT CENTRE

Candidates who succeed at the computer-based multiple-choice preselection tests and/or the selection based on qualifications, and whose online application forms show that they meet all general and specific eligibility conditions of their competition, are invited to an assessment centre.

The assessment centre is normally held in Brussels or Luxembourg, and may take place over one or more days. Some exercises, although part of the assessment centre model, may be organised on computer in other cities. In this case the procedure for making practical arrangements (reserving a date and place) will be much the same as described in Section 2.2.

In the assessment centre, candidates' general competencies (see Section 1.2) and their specific competencies (related to the duties in question) will be tested.

The content of the assessment centre tests is validated by the selection board of the competition. Depending on the competition these tests may include the following:

- **case study:** a written test based on a relevant scenario, in which you are faced with various problems that you are asked to solve or to which you must react, relying solely on the material provided,
- **oral presentation:** an individual test of analysis and presentation, in which you are asked to come up with a proposal concerning a fictitious work-related problem. After analysing the documentation provided, you have to present your ideas to a small group of people,
- **competency-based interview(s):** an individual exercise designed to obtain, in a structured way, relevant information about your general skills (and/or specific skills, in the case of specialist competitions), based on past experience,
- **group exercise:** after absorbing a certain amount of information on your own, you are put in a group with several other participants to discuss your conclusions and reach a collective decision,
- **e-tray:** a computer-based test in which you are asked to answer a number of questions using the documentation provided in an e-mail inbox,
- **practical language tests,**
- **other exercises relating to specific skills,**
- **verbal, numerical, abstract reasoning and situational judgement tests** (if such tests were not arranged earlier in the competition, at the preselection test stage).

The tests used in each individual competition are indicated in the competition notice. A detailed explanation of these tests will also be given in the 'Assessment Centre Manual' that candidates receive when invited to take part in this stage of the competition.

2.6. CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY

For those candidates who obtain the required pass marks at the assessment centre tests, the selection board carries out a verification of the supporting documents (except in cases where, pursuant to the competition notice, the verification of the supporting documents takes place at an earlier stage of the competition).

This verification is carried out in descending order of merit based on the candidates' total score, and it continues until the number of candidates who actually fulfil all the eligibility conditions reaches the number that can be placed on the reserve list.

The files of candidates below the threshold are not examined. If verification shows that the information given in your online application is not borne out by appropriate supporting documents, you will be disqualified from the competition.

In assessing qualifications, supporting documents will be taken into account only to confirm the information already given under the 'talent screener' tab.

2.7. SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES/RESERVE LIST

The selection board draws up a 'reserve list' containing the names of those candidates who performed best and obtained the highest scores, and whose supporting documents confirm that they meet all eligibility conditions, as specified in the notice of competition. The number of places on the reserve list is defined in the competition notice. Where a number of candidates tie for the last available place, they will all be included on the reserve list.

The list is then sent to the EU institutions, which are responsible for recruiting successful candidates from the list. **Being included on a reserve list does not mean you have any right or guarantee of recruitment.**

The reserve list and its expiry date are published ⁽¹⁸⁾ in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and on the EPSO website. The validity of the list may be extended in some cases. The decision extending a list will be published only on the EPSO website.

All candidates who took the assessment centre tests ⁽¹⁹⁾ will be sent a document known as a 'competency passport', which provides both quantitative and qualitative feedback about their performance at the assessment centre.

The competency passports of successful candidates will also be made available to the EU Institutions, which they may use during the recruitment procedure and with a view to career development. If you are among the successful candidates, EPSO will also provide you with additional useful information material.

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1. COMMUNICATION

3.1.1. EPSO: communication with candidates

Your results and all invitations will be sent to you solely via your EPSO account in **English, French, or German**.

You must consult your EPSO account at regular intervals — **at least twice a week** — to keep track of the progress of the competition and to check the information relevant to your application.

If you are prevented from doing so because of a technical problem that is due to EPSO, you must notify EPSO immediately:

— via the online contact form ⁽²⁰⁾,

or

— by telephone on + 32 22993131 ⁽²¹⁾.

General information on the successive stages of competitions can be consulted on the relevant competition page on the EPSO website (www.eu-careers.info).

⁽¹⁸⁾ Successful candidates may explicitly request that their name not be published. Any such request must reach EPSO no later than 2 weeks after the date when your results are uploaded to your EPSO account.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Except for those who fail to complete one or more tests, or are excluded from the competition due to non-compliance with the procedural rules (see Section 3.5 below).

⁽²⁰⁾ <https://europa.eu/epso/application/passport/webform.cfm?usertype=2&lang=en&langsub=ok>

⁽²¹⁾ In order to best serve you, we strongly encourage you to submit your queries via the web forms on our website. You may of course use the telephone number in cases of urgency, however please note that this line is only accessible for a limited period each working day.

3.1.2. Candidates: communication with EPSO

Before contacting EPSO please check first that you have read thoroughly all information in the competition notice, in these general rules, and on the EPSO website, including the 'Frequently Asked Questions' ⁽²²⁾.

Contact details can be found on the website ⁽²³⁾. In all correspondence to do with an application, candidates must quote their **name** as given in their application, the **competition number**, and their **application number**.

EPSO takes great care to apply the principles of the code of good administrative conduct ⁽²⁴⁾. However, under those same principles, EPSO reserves the right to cease any correspondence if that which it receives from a candidate is improper — i.e. repetitive, abusive and/or irrelevant.

3.1.3. Candidates: communication with selection boards

To ensure the selection board's independence, it is strictly forbidden for anyone outside the board to attempt to contact any of its members. The one exception is that candidates may write to the chair of the selection board via the European Personnel Selection Office in order to state their case or assert their rights. All correspondence intended for a selection board must be sent only to EPSO, which will pass it on to the board. Any direct or indirect intervention by candidates that does not comply with the procedures referred to above is forbidden and may result in disqualification from the competition.

3.2. DATA PROTECTION

As the body responsible for organising competitions, EPSO ensures that candidates' personal data are processed as required by Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of personal data ⁽²⁵⁾. This applies in particular to guaranteeing the confidentiality and security of such data.

More information on this issue can be found in the data protection section of the EPSO website (privacy statement) ⁽²⁶⁾.

Data collected in the framework of tests may be used, in an anonymous form, for the purposes of scientific research.

3.3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

3.3.1. Candidates' specific access rights

As a candidate involved in an open competition, you have specific access rights, resulting from your status of candidate, to certain competition documents and information concerning you directly and individually, according to the terms and conditions set out in this Section.

These specific rights of access are granted in light of the obligation to state reasons, with due regard to the provisions of Article 6 of Annex III to the Staff Regulations according to which the proceedings of selection boards shall be secret.

Under Article 25(2) of the Staff Regulations, any decision relating to a specific individual and adversely affecting him must state the grounds on which it is based. The purpose of the obligation to state reasons is to give the person concerned the information necessary to ascertain whether or not the decision in question is well founded, and to allow judicial review.

⁽²²⁾ Under the heading 'Contact us' on the EPSO website www.eu-careers.eu

⁽²³⁾ <https://europa.eu/epso/application/passport/webform.cfm?usertype=2&lang=en&langsub=ok>

⁽²⁴⁾ OJ L 267, 20.10.2000, p. 63.

⁽²⁵⁾ Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 8, 12.1.2001, p. 1).

⁽²⁶⁾ https://europa.eu/epso/application/passport/index.cfm?action=pdplegal&sb=1&comp_id=

In the case of decisions taken by a selection board in a competition, the obligation to state reasons must be reconciled with the confidential nature of the selection board proceedings under Article 6 of Annex III to the Staff Regulations. This secrecy was introduced to safeguard the independence of selection boards and the objectivity of their proceedings, by protecting them from all external interference and pressures. The secrecy of board proceedings therefore precludes both disclosure of the attitudes adopted by individual members of selection boards and disclosure of any factors relating to individual or comparative assessments of candidates.

The right to information defined in this Section is specific to candidates in an open competition and should not be mistaken with the right of access as defined in Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001⁽²⁷⁾ (the Transparency Regulation: see Section 3.3.2 below). Please note that with regard to information relating to your personal participation in an open competition, you cannot derive more rights from Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 than what case-law has recognised as belonging to the candidates' specific right of access described above.

3.3.1.1. Automatic individual communication

In light of the above, as a candidate, you will **automatically receive** the following information:

Competition stage	Communication
Computer-based multiple-choice tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Your results. — A grid showing, for each test question, the answer(s) you chose and the correct answer(s). It will not show the wording of the questions and answers, but merely their reference numbers/letters. <p>Please note that the communication of the wording of the questions and answers of the computer-based multiple-choice tests is hereby explicitly excluded. Case-law has confirmed that for tests in the form of multiple-choice questions, the obligation to state reasons is complied with by communicating to the candidates the information specified above.</p>
Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Your results (admitted/not admitted). — If not admitted, the eligibility criteria that were not met will also be indicated.
Selection on the basis of qualifications (talent screener)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Your results. — You will also receive the grid showing the weighting for each question of the 'talent screener', and the points awarded by the selection board for each answer.
Preliminary tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Your results.
Assessment Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Your results. — Your competency passport showing your overall marks for each competency assessed, and the selection board's comments. <p>Please note that candidates who fail to complete one or more tests, or are excluded from the competition due to non-compliance with the procedural rules, will not receive a competency passport.</p>

3.3.1.2. Automatic public disclosure

For certain types of tests, once they are completed, EPSO publishes on its website the source texts/assignments. The objective of this disclosure is to increase the transparency of competitions, in cases where this can be achieved without compromising their fairness and objectivity.

⁽²⁷⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43).

The publication takes place after the tests have been completed and their final results have been established and communicated to the candidates.

It concerns **exclusively** those specific types of tests where the source texts/assignments are not intended to be reused in future competitions. These are the following:

- translation tests in translators' competitions,
- translation tests in lawyer-linguists' competitions,
- 'summary in the language of the competition' in lawyer-linguists' competitions.

3.3.1.3. *Information upon request*

Candidates can request an **uncorrected** copy of their answers in those written tests where the test content is not intended to be reused in future competitions (that is, the types of tests listed under point 3.3.1.2 above).

Such requests should be submitted exclusively via the online contact form on EPSO's website.

On the other hand, **access to uncorrected copies cannot be granted in those cases where test content is intended to be reused in the future, and where disclosing these copies would compromise development of future tests and the fairness and objectivity of future competitions**. This concerns, in particular, the case study, for which access to uncorrected copies is hereby explicitly excluded.

As a general rule, please note that **all** requests for information will be evaluated in light of the abovementioned obligation to state reasons and taking account of the confidential nature of selection board proceedings under the Staff Regulations (Annex III, Article 6), and in compliance with the rules on the protection of personal data.

Please note that the corrected answer scripts and the details of the marking, in particular, are covered by the secrecy of selection board proceedings and will not be disclosed ⁽²⁸⁾.

A great deal of information about the selection procedures EPSO organises is available on its website. If you cannot find the information you require on the website, please submit your information request via the contact form on the EPSO website and indicating as precise as possible the information you wish to obtain and whether you ask for this information in light of your status as candidate in the open competition.

3.3.2. **Access to documents under regulation (EC) 1049/2001 — transparency**

Regulation (CE) No 1049/2001 provides that any citizen of the Union and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State has a right of access to documents of the institutions, subject to the principles, conditions, and limits defined in the Regulation. However, according to case-law, the right of access to documents as set out in Regulation (CE) No 1049/2001 may be limited or denied where there are special rules governing specific matters, under the principle that a special rule overrides the general rule (*lex specialis derogat legi generali*).

In the case of open competitions, the application of Regulation (CE) No 1049/2001 (the general rule) is **excluded** by virtue of Article 6 of Annex III to the Staff Regulations, which constitutes a special rule ⁽²⁹⁾.

In the light of the above, it is very unlikely that you would obtain a given document in light of this regulation which was refused to you as a candidate in a selection procedure.

⁽²⁸⁾ Case C-254/95, *Parliament v Innamorati*, judgment of 4 July 1996, published in European Court Reports — Staff Cases 1996 I-03423 (paragraph 29 of the judgment); case F-127/11, *De Mendoza v Commission*, judgment of 12 February 2014, not yet published (paragraph 99 of the judgment).

⁽²⁹⁾ T-371/03, *Le Voci v Council*, judgment of 14 July 2005, published in the European Court Report Staff Cases 2005 FP-I-A-00209 FP-II-00957, paragraphs 121-124 with further references.

Moreover, the Regulation applies only to requests for access to **existing documents**, i.e. 'any content whatever its medium (written on paper or stored in electronic form or as a sound, visual or audiovisual recording) concerning a matter relating to the policies, activities and decisions falling within the institution's sphere of responsibility' ⁽³⁰⁾. The institutions cannot be required to compile new documents upon request.

3.4. COMPLAINTS

Competition procedures are organised professionally by EPSO, a dedicated inter-institutional office with long-standing expertise in the field. We do our best to guarantee fair, objective procedures and appropriate testing conditions for all candidates. However, despite our best efforts, at times technical problems or human mistakes may occur.

3.4.1. What to do if something goes wrong?

If, at any stage of the competition procedure, you encounter a serious technical or organisational problem which is likely to impact your participation in the competition, please inform EPSO immediately, in order to allow us to investigate the issue and take any corrective measures.

You must do this in one of the following ways:

- for **problems occurring outside test centres** (such as those concerning the application or booking process), please send EPSO a message via the contact form ⁽³¹⁾ on our website with a brief description of the problem encountered,
- if the **problem occurs at a test centre**, please alert the invigilators and ask them to record your complaint in writing, **and** send EPSO a message via the contact form ⁽³¹⁾ on our website with a brief description of the problem encountered.

Please always quote the competition number and your application number in your message.

Please note:

- if you wish to complain about an **error in the content of the computer-based multiple-choice tests**, please refer to the **neutralisation** procedure described in Section 3.4.2 below,
- if you wish to **contest a decision** taken by EPSO or the Selection Board, please refer to the **internal review procedure** described in Section 3.4.3 below.

3.4.2. Neutralisation

What is neutralisation?

The database of questions used for the computer-based multiple-choice tests is subject to permanent in-depth quality control, including checks carried out by the selection boards. Despite the above, it might still happen that certain questions contain material errors.

Neutralisation is a corrective measure, endorsed by the Court of Justice ⁽³²⁾, the purpose of which is to ensure the objectivity of assessments and equal treatment of candidates when competition tests contain irregularities in the form of erroneous questions.

When such an error is detected after the tests have taken place, the selection board may decide to cancel the question containing the error and to redistribute the points initially attributed to that question among the remaining questions of the test. This system means that the re-calculation of marks following the neutralisation of a question affects only those candidates to whom the specific question was put. The marking of the tests remains as indicated in the competition notice.

⁽³⁰⁾ See Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

⁽³¹⁾ <https://europa.eu/epso/application/passport/webform.cfm?usertype=2&lang=en&langsub=ok>

⁽³²⁾ Case T-49/03 *Schumann v Commission*, judgment of 21 October 2004, published in European Court Reports — Staff Cases 2004 II p. 1371 (paragraphs 53-55 of the judgment); Case F-2/07 *Matos Martins v Commission*, judgment of 15 April 2010 (paragraph 191 of the judgment).

It should be stressed that the neutralisation system has been designed to ensure that no candidate is unfairly penalised. In order to make sure of this, a simulation is carried out, comparing the results before and after neutralisation. EPSO and the selection boards apply an inclusive rather than exclusive approach, setting the threshold for the tests after neutralisation so as to make allowance for candidates who may have been adversely affected by the neutralisation procedure.

Please also note that under the relevant case-law, the difference in time that candidates devoted to answering questions which were cancelled does not constitute unequal treatment between candidates⁽³³⁾.

Requests

If you consider that one or more of the questions put to you in the computer-based multiple-choice tests contained an error such as to make it impossible to answer or such as to affect candidates' ability to answer correctly, you are entitled to ask for the question(s) to be reviewed by the Selection Board under the neutralisation procedure.

Requests for neutralisation of specific CBT questions must be made **within 10 calendar days of the date of your computer-based tests**,

- either directly to the invigilator at the exam centre after you have taken the tests,
- or using the contact form⁽³⁴⁾ available on the EPSO website.

Please always quote in your message the competition number, your application number, and the phrase 'complaint procedures'.

In your request, you **must** provide the information necessary to identify the question(s) that you believe contained errors (for example by describing what the question was about), and explain as clearly as possible the nature of the alleged error.

Requests for neutralisation received after the deadline, those which are not clear enough to help identify the question(s) contested, or which do not explain the nature of the alleged error, will not be taken into account.

3.4.3. Internal review procedure

You can request a review of any **decision** of the selection board or EPSO that directly and immediately affects your legal status in the competition (that is to say, that establishes your results and/or determines if you can proceed to the next stage of the competition or are excluded therefrom).

Requests for review may be based on one or more of the following reasons:

- a material irregularity in the competition process⁽³⁵⁾,
- non-compliance, by the selection board or EPSO, with the rules governing the competition procedure as laid down by the Staff Regulations, the notice of competition, these general rules, and case-law.

Please note that you are not allowed to challenge the validity of the selection board's assessment concerning the quality of your performance in a test. This assessment is the expression of a value judgment and falls into the wide discretion enjoyed by the selection board. Therefore, it is not subject to administrative or judicial review⁽³⁶⁾.

Competition for posts in the EU institutions is intense, and only few candidates can succeed. Because of the very nature of the competition procedure, the comparative assessment that it involves, and the limited number of places on the reserve list, the majority of the candidates in any competition will inevitably be unsuccessful even if they are generally competent. This is a normal aspect of the competition, rather than an indication that something has gone wrong.

⁽³³⁾ Joined Cases T-167/99 and T-174/99 *Giulietti and Others v Commission*, judgment of 2 May 2001, published in European Court Reports — Staff Cases 2001 II p. 441) cf. point (59); Case F-2/07 *Matos Martins v Commission*, judgment of 15 April 2010 (paragraph 183 of the judgment).

⁽³⁴⁾ <https://europa.eu/epso/application/passport/webform.cfm?usertype=2&lang=en&langsub=ok>

⁽³⁵⁾ This does not apply to errors in questions in the preselection tests, which are examined under the neutralisation procedure referred to in point 3.4.2.

⁽³⁶⁾ Case F-127/07, *Coto Moreno v Commission*, judgment of 11 September 2008, published in European Court Reports — Staff Cases 2008 FP-I-A-1-00295; FP-II-A-1-01563 (paragraph 33 of the judgment).

Procedure

Submit your request **within 10 calendar days from the date when the decision you wish to contest is uploaded in your EPSO account**:

- either via the contact form ⁽³⁷⁾ on EPSO's website,
- or by post to the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), C-25 1049 Brussels, Belgium.

Please always quote in your message the competition number, your application number, and the phrase 'Request for review'.

You must clearly indicate the decision you wish to contest, and you must state the grounds on which your request is based.

The internal review procedure is managed by the legal team of EPSO.

Upon receipt of your request we will send you an acknowledgment of receipt within 15 working days.

Your request will then be analysed and submitted for consideration to the same body that adopted the contested decision (either the selection board or EPSO) ⁽³⁸⁾. The selection board or EPSO will then take a decision on your request. After a decision is taken, a reasoned reply addressing your arguments will be prepared by the legal team.

We will examine your request thoroughly, fairly and objectively. The procedure may take several weeks. We will send you a reasoned decision as swiftly as possible, via your EPSO account.

If your request for review receives a positive response, you will be reintegrated into the competition at the step where you have been excluded regardless of how far the competition has progressed in the meantime, so that your rights may be safeguarded.

3.4.4. Other forms of contestation

3.4.4.1. Administrative complaints

As a candidate in a competition, you have the right to address to the appointing authority (i.e. the Director of EPSO) an administrative complaint under Article 90, paragraph 2, of the Staff Regulations.

The complaint must be directed against an act that adversely affects you (that is to say, a decision — or lack of it where there is an obligation to take a decision imposed by the Staff Regulations — which brings you prejudice). To be considered as an act adversely affecting you, the measure in question must be such as to directly and immediately affect your legal status as a candidate.

Note that decisions by a selection board in a competition cannot be annulled or changed by the Director of EPSO following an administrative complaint. There is therefore no point in submitting a complaint against a selection board's decision ⁽³⁹⁾.

Administrative complaints must be lodged within three months counting from the notification of the decision you wish to contest (or, in the absence of a decision, from the day when a decision should have been taken):

- either via the contact form ⁽⁴⁰⁾ on EPSO's website,
- or by post to the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), C-25, 1049 Brussels, Belgium.

Please always quote in your message the competition number, your application number, and the phrase 'complaint procedures'.

⁽³⁷⁾ <https://europa.eu/epso/application/passport/webform.cfm?usertype=2&lang=en&langsub=ok>

⁽³⁸⁾ This due to the division of competences imposed by the Staff Regulations.

⁽³⁹⁾ Case 34/80 *Authié v Commission*, judgment of 26 February 1981, published in European Court Reports 1981 p. 665 (paragraph 7 of the judgment); Joined Cases 4/78, 19/78 and 28/78 *Salerno and others v Commission*, judgment of 30 November 1978, published in European Court Reports 1978 p. 2403.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ <https://europa.eu/epso/application/passport/webform.cfm?usertype=2&lang=en&langsub=ok>

3.4.4.2. *Judicial appeals*

As a candidate in a competition, you have the right to submit a judicial appeal to the European Union Civil Service Tribunal, under Article 270 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 91 of the Staff Regulations.

Note that appeals against decisions taken by EPSO rather than by the selection board will not be admissible before the European Union Civil Service Tribunal unless an administrative complaint under Article 90(2) of the Staff Regulations has first been made following the procedure described above in Section 3.4.4.1. In particular, this is the case with the decisions concerning the general eligibility criteria, which are taken by EPSO not the selection board.

For details of how to submit an appeal, please consult the website of the European Union Civil Service Tribunal ⁽⁴¹⁾.

3.4.4.3. *Complaints to the European Ombudsman*

Like all citizens of the European Union and Member State residents, you can make a complaint to the European Ombudsman ⁽⁴²⁾.

Please note that, under Article 2(4) of the general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties, **any complaint lodged with the Ombudsman must be preceded by the appropriate administrative approaches to the institutions and bodies concerned.**

Complaints made to the Ombudsman have no suspensive effect on the period laid down in Articles 90(2) and 91 of the Staff Regulations for lodging complaints or for submitting appeals to the Civil Service Tribunal.

3.5. DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE COMPETITION

You may be excluded from the competition in question if, at any stage in the procedure, EPSO finds that:

- you have created more than one EPSO account,
- you have applied for profiles that are incompatible,
- you have made any false declarations, or the declarations you have made are not supported by the appropriate documentation,
- you have failed to book your computer-based tests (multiple-choice tests, etc.),
- you have cheated during tests,
- you have attempted to contact a member of the selection board in an unauthorised manner,
- you have submitted your application in a language other than English, French or German,
- contrary to the instructions received before your written or practical test, you have signed or written a distinctive mark on your copies.

Anyone applying for recruitment by the institutions must show themselves to be of the highest possible integrity. Fraud or attempted fraud may render you liable to penalty and may compromise your eligibility for future competitions.

⁽⁴¹⁾ http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/T5_5230/

⁽⁴²⁾ <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/start.faces>

ANNEX I

Examples of qualifications corresponding, in principle, to those required by the notices of competition

COUNTRY	AST-SC1 to AST-SC6 AST1 to AST7	AST3 to AST11	AD5 to AD16	
Belgique — België — Belgien	Secondary education ⁽¹⁾ (giving access to post-secondary education) Certificat de l'enseignement secondaire supérieur (CESS)/Diploma secundair onderwijs Diplôme d'aptitude à accéder à l'enseignement supérieur (DAES)/ Getuigschrift van hoger secundair onderwijs Diplôme d'enseignement professionnel Getuigschrift van het beroepssecundair onderwijs	Post-secondary education (non-university higher education course or short university course lasting at least 2 years) Candidature — Kandidaat/ Graduat — Gegraduateerde Bachelor/Professioneel gerichte Bachelor	University education (lasting at least 3 years ⁽²⁾) Bachelor académique (180 crédits) Academisch gerichte Bachelor (180 ECTS)	University education (4 years or more) Licence/Licentiaat Master Diplôme d'études approfondies (DEA) Diplôme d'études spécialisées (DES) Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées (DESS) Gediplomeerde in de Voortgezette Studies (GVS) Gediplomeerde in de Gespecialiseerde Studies (GGS) Gediplomeerde in de Aanvullende Studies (GAS) Agrégation/Aggregaat Ingénieur industriel/Industrieel ingenieur Doctorat/Doctoraal diploma
България	Диплома за завършено средно образование	Специалист по ...		Диплома за висше образование Бакалавър Магистър
Česká republika	Vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce	Vysvědčení o absolutoriu (Absolutorium) + diplomovaný specialista (DiS.)	Diplom o ukončení bakalářského studia (Bakalář)	Diplom o ukončení vysokoškolského studia Magistr Doktor

COUNTRY	AST-SC1 to AST-SC6 AST1 to AST7	AST3 to AST11	AD5 to AD16	
<p>Danmark</p>	<p>Secondary education ⁽¹⁾ (giving access to post-secondary education)</p> <p>Bevis for: Studentereksamen Højere Forberedelseksamen (HF) Højere Handelseksamen (HHX) Højere Afgangseksamen (HA) Bac pro: Bevis for Højere Teknisk Eksamen (HTX)</p>	<p>Post-secondary education (non-university higher education course or short university course lasting at least 2 years)</p> <p>Videregående uddannelser = Bevis for = Eksamensbevis som (erhvervsakademiuddannelse AK)</p>	<p>University education (lasting at least 3 years ⁽²⁾)</p> <p>Bachelorgrad (B.A eller B.Sc) Professionsbachelorgrad Diplomingeniør</p>	<p>University education (4 years or more)</p> <p>Kandidatgrad/Candidatus Master/Magistergrad (Mag.Art) Licenciatgrad Ph.D.-grad</p>
<p>Deutschland</p>	<p>Abitur/Zeugnis der allgemeinen Hochschulreife Fachabitur/Zeugnis der Fachhochschulreife</p>		<p>Fachhochschulabschluss Bachelor</p>	<p>Hochschulabschluss/ Fachhochschulabschluss/ Master Magister Artium/Magistra Artium Staatsexamen/Diplom Erstes Juristisches Staatsexamen Doktorgrad</p>
<p>Eesti</p>	<p>Gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus + riigieksamitunnistus Lõputunnistus kutsekehariduse omandamise kohta</p>	<p>Tunnistus keskhariduse baasil kutsekehariduse omandamise kohta</p>	<p>Bakalaureusekraad (min 120 ainepunkti) Bakalaureusekraad (< 160 ainepunkti)</p>	<p>Rakenduskõrghariduse diplom Bakalaureusekraad (160 ainepunkti) Magistrikraad Arstikraad Hambaarstikraad Loomaarstikraad Filosoofidoktor Doktorikraad (120–160 ainepunkti)</p>

COUNTRY	AST-SC1 to AST-SC6 AST1 to AST7	AST3 to AST11	AD5 to AD16	
	Secondary education ⁽¹⁾ (giving access to post-secondary education)	Post-secondary education (non-university higher education course or short university course lasting at least 2 years)	University education (lasting at least 3 years ⁽²⁾)	University education (4 years or more)
Éire/Ireland	Ardeistiméireacht Grád D3 i 5 ábhar Leaving Certificate Grade D3 in 5 subjects Gairmchlár na hArdteistiméireachta (GCAT) Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)	Teastas Náisiúnta National Certificate Céim bhaitisiléara Ordinary bachelor degree Diplóma Náisiúnta (ND, Dip.) National Diploma (ND, Dip.) Dámhachtain Ardteastas Ardoideachais (120 ECTS) Higher Certificate (120 ECTS)	Céim onórach bhaitisiléara (3 bliana/180 ECTS) BA, B.Sc, B.Eng) Honours bachelor degree (3 years/180 ECTS) BA, B.Sc, B.Eng)	Céim onórach bhaitisiléara (4 bliana/240 ECTS) Honours bachelor degree (4 years/240 ECTS) Céim ollscoile University degree Céim mháistir (60-120 ECTS) Master's degree (60-120 ECTS) Céim dochtúra Doctorate
Ελλάδα	Απολυτήριο Γενικού Λυκείου Απολυτήριο Κλασικού Λυκείου Απολυτήριο Τεχνικού – Επαγγελματικού Λυκείου Απολυτήριο Ενιαίου Πολυκλαδικού Λυκείου Απολυτήριο Ενιαίου Λυκείου Απολυτήριο Τεχνολογικού Επαγγελματικού Εκπαιδευτηρίου	Δίπλωμα Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης (Ε.Κ.) Δίπλωμα Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης (Ε.Κ.)	Πτυχίο (ΑΕΙ πανεπιστημίου, πολυτεχνείου, ΤΕΙ) Μεταπτυχιακό Δίπλωμα Ειδίκευσης (2ος κύκλος) Διδακτορικό Δίπλωμα (3ος κύκλος)	Πτυχίο (ΑΕΙ πανεπιστημίου, πολυτεχνείου, ΤΕΙ) Μεταπτυχιακό Δίπλωμα Ειδίκευσης (2ος κύκλος) Διδακτορικό Δίπλωμα (3ος κύκλος)
España	Bachillerato + Curso de Orientación Universitaria (COU) Bachillerato BUP Diploma de Técnico especialista	FP grado superior (Técnico superior)	Diplomado/ Ingeniero técnico	Licenciatura Máster Ingeniero Título de Doctor

COUNTRY	AST-SCL1 to AST-SC6 AST1 to AST7		AST3 to AST11		AD5 to AD16	
	Secondary education ⁽¹⁾ (giving access to post-secondary education)	Post-secondary education (non-university higher education course or short university course lasting at least 2 years)	University education (lasting at least 3 years ⁽²⁾)	University education (4 years or more)		
France	Baccalauréat Diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires (DAEU) Brevet de technicien	Diplôme d'études universitaires générales (DEUG) Brevet de technicien supérieur (BTS) Diplôme universitaire de technologie (DUT) Diplôme d'études universitaires scientifiques et techniques (DEUST)	Licence	Maitrise Maîtrise des sciences et techniques (MST), maîtrise des sciences de gestion (MSG), diplôme d'études supérieures techniques (DEST), diplôme de recherche technologique (DRT), diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées (DESS), diplôme d'études approfondies (DEA) Master 1, master 2 professionnel Master 2 recherche Diplôme des grandes écoles Diplôme d'ingénieur Doctorat		
Italia	Diploma di maturità (vecchio ordinamento) Perito ragioniere Diploma di superamento dell'esame di Stato conclusivo dei corsi di studio di istruzione secondaria superiore	Diploma universitario (DU) Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore/ Attestato di competenza (4 semestri)	Diploma di laurea — L (breve)	Diploma di laurea (DL) Laurea specialistica (LS) Master di I livello Dottorato di ricerca (DR)		
Κύπρος	Απολυτήριο	Διπλωμα = Programmes offered by Public/Private Schools of Higher Education (for the latter accreditation is compulsory) Higher Diploma		Πανεπιστημιακό Πτυχίο/Bachelor Master Doctorat		

COUNTRY	AST-SC1 to AST-SC6 AST1 to AST7	AST3 to AST11	AD5 to AD16	
	Secondary education ⁽¹⁾ (giving access to post-secondary education)	Post-secondary education (non-university higher education course or short university course lasting at least 2 years)	University education (lasting at least 3 years ⁽²⁾)	University education (4 years or more)
Latvija	Ateistiāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību Diploms par profesionālo vidējo izglītību	Diploms par pirmā līmeņa profesionālo augstāko izglītību	Bakalaura diploms (min. 120 kredīti)	Bakalaura diploms (160 kredīti) Profesionālā bakalaura diploms Maģistra diploms Profesionālā maģistra diploms Doktora grāds
Lietuva	Brandos atestatas	Aukštojo mokslo diplomas Aukštesniojo mokslo diplomas	Profesinio bakalauro diplomas Aukštojo mokslo diplomas	Aukštojo mokslo diplomas Bakalauro diplomas Magistro diplomas Daktaro diplomas Meno licenciato diplomas
Luxembourg	Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires et techniques	BTS Brevet de maîtrise Brevet de technicien supérieur Diplôme de premier cycle universitaire (DPCU) Diplôme universitaire de technologie (DUT)	Bachelor Diplôme d'ingénieur technicien	Master Diplôme d'ingénieur industriel Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées (DESS) en droit européen
Magyarország	Gimnáziumi érettségi bizonyítvány Szakközépiskolai érettségi — Képesítő bizonyítvány	Felsőfokú szakképesítést igazoló bizonyítvány (Higher Vocational Program)	Főiskolai oklevél Alapfokozat (Bachelor degree 180 credits)	Egyetemi oklevél Alapfokozat (Bachelor degree 240 credits) Mesterfokozat (Master degree) (Osztatlan mesterképzés) Doktori fokozat

COUNTRY	AST-SCL1 to AST-SC6 AST1 to AST7		AST3 to AST11		AD5 to AD16	
	Secondary education ⁽¹⁾ (giving access to post-secondary education)	Post-secondary education (non-university higher education course or short university course lasting at least 2 years)	University education (lasting at least 3 years ⁽²⁾)	University education (4 years or more)		
Malta	Advanced Matriculation or GCE Advanced level in 3 subjects (2 of them grade C or higher) Matriculation certificate (2 subjects at Advanced level and 4 at Intermediate level including Systems of Knowledge with overall grade A-C) + Passes in the Secondary Education Certificate examination at Grade 5 2 A Levels (passes A-C) + a number of subjects at Ordinary level, or equivalent	MCAST diplomas/certificates Higher National Diploma	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree Master of Arts Doctorate		
Nederland	Diploma VWO Diploma staatsexamen (2 diploma's) Diploma staatsexamen voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs (Diploma staatsexamen VWO) Diploma staatsexamen hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs (Diploma staatsexamen HAVO)	Kandidaatsexamen Associate degree (AD)	Bachelor (WO) HBO bachelor degree Baccalaureus of «Ingenieur»	HBO/WO Master's degree Doctoraal examen/Doctoraat		
Österreich	Matura/Reifeprüfung Reife- und Diplomprüfung Berufsreifeprüfung	Kollegdiplom/Akademiediplom	Fachhochschuldiplom/Bakkalaureus/Bakkalaurea	Universitätsdiplom/Fachhochschuldiplom/ Magister/Magistra Master Diplomprüfung, Diplom-Ingenieur Magisterprüfungszeugnis Rigorosenzeugnis Dokortitel		

COUNTRY	AST-SCL to AST-SC6 AST1 to AST7	AST3 to AST11	AD5 to AD16	
	Secondary education ⁽¹⁾ (giving access to post-secondary education)	Post-secondary education (non-university higher education course or short university course lasting at least 2 years)	University education (lasting at least 3 years ⁽²⁾)	University education (4 years or more)
Poljska	Świadectwo dojrzałości Świadectwo ukończenia liceum ogólnokształcącego	Dyplom ukończenia kolegium nauczycielskiego Świadectwo ukończenia szkoły policealnej	Licencjat/Inżynier	Magister/Magister inżynier Dyplom doktora
Portugal	Diploma de Ensino Secundário/ Certificado de Habilitações do Ensino Secundário		Bacharel Licenciado	Licenciado Mestre Doutorado
Republika Hrvatska	Svjedodžba o državnoj maturi Svjedodžba o završnom ispitu	Stručni pristupnik/pristupnica	Baccalaureus/Baccalaurea prvostupnik/prvostupnica)	Baccalaureus/Baccalaurea (sveučilišni prvostupnik/prvostupnica) Stručni specijalist Magistar struke Magistar inženjer/magistrica inženjerka (mag. ing.) Doktor struke Doktor umjetnosti
România	Diplomă de bacalaureat	Diplomă de absolvire (colegiu universitar) învățăământ preuniversitar	Diplomă de licență	Diplomă de licență Diplomă de inginer Diplomă de urbanist Diplomă de master Certificat de atestare (studii academice postuniversitare) Diplomă de doctor

COUNTRY	AST-S1 to AST-SC6 AST1 to AST7	AST3 to AST11	AD5 to AD16	
	Secondary education ⁽¹⁾ (giving access to post-secondary education)	Post-secondary education (non-university higher education course or short university course lasting at least 2 years)	University education (lasting at least 3 years ⁽²⁾)	University education (4 years or more)
Slovenija	Maturitetno spričevalo (spričevalo o poklicni maturi) (spričevalo o zaključnem izpitu)	Diploma višje strokovne šole	Diploma o pridobljeni visoki strokovni izobrazbi	Univerzitetna diploma/magisterij/specializacija/doktorat
Slovensko	vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške	absolventský diplom	diplom o ukončení bakalárskeho štúdia (bakalát)	diplom o ukončení vysokoškolského štúdia bakalár (Bc.) magister magister/inžinier ArtD
Suomi/Finland	Ylioppilastutkinto tai peruskoulu + kolmen vuoden ammatillinen koulutus – Studentexamen eller grundskola + treårig yrkesinriktad utbildning (Betyg över avlagd yrkesexamen på andra stadiet) Todistus yhdistelmäopinnoista (Betyg över kombinationsstudier)	Ammatillinen opistoasteen tutkinto – Yrkesexamen på institutnivå	Kandidaatin tutkinto – Kandidatexamen/ Ammattikorkeakoulututkinto – Yrkehögskoleexamen (min. 120 opintoviikkoa – studieveckor)	Maisterin tutkinto – Magisterexamen/ Ammattikorkeakoulututkinto – Yrkehögskoleexamen (min. 160 opintoviikkoa – studieveckor) Tohtorin tutkinto (Doktorsexamen) joko 4 vuotta tai 2 vuotta lisensiaatin tutkinnon jälkeen – antingen 4 år eller 2 år efter licentiatexamen Lisensiaatti/Licentiat

COUNTRY	AST-SC1 to AST-SC6 AST1 to AST7	AST3 to AST11	AD5 to AD16	
Sverige	Secondary education ⁽¹⁾ (giving access to post-secondary education) Slutbetyg från gymnasieskolan (3-årig gymnasial utbildning)	Post-secondary education (non-university higher education course or short university course lasting at least 2 years) Högskoleexamen (80 poäng) Högskoleexamen, 2 år, 120 högskolepoäng Yrkeshögskoleexamen/Kvalificerad yrkeshögskoleexamen, 1–3 år	University education (lasting at least 3 years ⁽²⁾) Kandidatexamen (akademisk examen omfattande minst 120 poäng, varav 60 poäng fördjupade studier i ett ämne + uppsats motsvarande 10 poäng) Meriter på grundnivå: Kandidatexamen, 3 år, 180 högskolepoäng (Bachelor)	University education (4 years or more) Magisterexamen (akademisk examen omfattande minst 160 poäng, varav 80 poäng fördjupade studier i ett ämne + uppsats motsvarande 20 poäng eller två uppsatser motsvarande 10 poäng vardera) — Licentiatexamen — Doktorsexamen Meriter på avancerad nivå: — Magisterexamen, 1 år, 60 högskolepoäng — Masterexamen, 2 år, 120 högskolepoäng Meriter på forskarnivå: — Licentiatexamen, 2 år, 120 högskolepoäng — Doktorsexamen, 4 år, 240 högskolepoäng
United Kingdom	General Certificate of Education Advanced level — 2 passes or equivalent (grades A to E) BTEC National Diploma General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), advanced level Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education, A level (VCE A level)	Higher National Diploma/Certificate (BTEC)/SCOTVEC Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) level 4	(Honours) Bachelor degree NB: Master's degree in Scotland	Honours Bachelor degree Master's degree (MA, MB, MEng, MPhil, MSc) Doctorate

⁽¹⁾ Access to the AST function groups is subject to the additional requirement of having appropriate professional experience of at least three years.

⁽²⁾ Access to grades 7 to 16 is subject to the additional requirement of having appropriate professional experience of at least one year.

ANNEX II

General guidelines of the College of the Heads of Administration on the use of languages in EPSO competitions

It is confirmed that as a general rule the use of languages in EPSO competitions will be as follows:

- Stable elements on the EPSO website will be in all official languages.
- Competition notices, including competitions for linguists and competitions in connection with enlargement, as well as the general rules governing open competitions will be published in all official languages.
- The following tests will be in all official languages:
 - preselection tests (verbal and numerical reasoning),
 - language comprehension tests for translator competitions,
 - preliminary translation tests for lawyer-linguist competitions,
 - intermediate interpreting tests (on computer) for interpreter competitions,
 - competence tests (translation or interpreting) for linguist competitions.

It should be noted that although EPSO can organise these kinds of tests in all the official languages, this does not mean that they will systematically be held in 24 languages in all competitions. The preselection tests are organised in the light of the stated first languages of applicants, and the language tests depend on the language combinations of the competitions in question.

- Assessment centres will be held in the candidates' second language only, chosen from English, French, and German.

Similarly, calls for expressions of interest in selection procedures for contract staff organised by the Office will be published in all official languages.

Several factors justify limiting the choice of second language.

Firstly, the interests of the service require that new recruits should be immediately operational and capable of effectively performing the duties for which they were recruited in the field or role covered by the competition.

English, French, and German are the languages most widely used in the institutions. Traditionally they are the languages used in meetings of members of the institutions. They are also the languages used most often for communication both in-house and with the outside world. This is borne out by statistics on the source languages of the texts translated by the institutions' translation services.

Given the institutions' actual language requirements for the purposes of internal and external communication, one selection criterion under the first paragraph of Article 27 of the Staff Regulations must be a satisfactory knowledge of one of these three languages, which must be tested by simulating a realistic working situation. Knowledge of a third language as provided for in Article 45(2) of the Staff Regulations cannot be a substitute for knowledge of one of the three languages at the time of recruitment.

Secondly, limiting the languages for the subsequent stages of competitions is justified by the nature of the tests involved. In line with Article 27 of the Staff Regulations, the appointing authorities of the institutions decided to modify the selection procedures by introducing from 2010 onwards methods of assessment based on competences so as to be able to predict better whether candidates are capable of performing their duties.

A substantial body of scientific research has shown that assessment centres, simulating real-life working situations, are the best predictor of real-life performance. As the most effective method of assessment, they are used worldwide. Given the length of careers and the degree of mobility within the institutions, this kind of assessment is crucial. With the help of a competency framework defined by the appointing authorities, a number of suitable exercises are chosen to assess the competences being sought. To ensure that candidates can be assessed fairly and can communicate directly with assessors and the other candidates taking part in an exercise, applying this method requires, in particular, that the assessment centre be conducted in a *lingua franca* or, in certain circumstances, in the one main language of the competition. In the former instance, the *lingua franca* has to be chosen from the languages that candidates are most likely to know. Given this premise, everything must be done to avoid discrimination between candidates; hence everyone has to be tested in their second language. But as that language must also be a *lingua franca*, the choice of second language must be limited. Since the traditional usage referred to above is still the current practice in-house, that choice has to be between English, French, and German. The assessment centres do not involve assessing candidates' knowledge of the language; a satisfactory knowledge of one of the three as a second language is quite sufficient to be able to take the tests (this is in line with the minimum requirements laid down by Article 28 of the Staff Regulations). This level of language knowledge is not in any way disproportionate given the real needs of the service as described above.

Use of English, French, or German as the chosen second language in the later stages of competitions does not entail any discrimination on the basis of mother tongue. It is not a restriction on the use of the mother tongue. The obligation on candidates to choose a second language (English, French, or German) that is different from their first (normally mother tongue or equivalent) ensures that they can be compared on an equal footing. It should also be noted that possessing a sufficient knowledge of the second language depends essentially on a personal effort by candidates.

This requirement is, in any case, proportionate in view of the real needs of the service. Limiting the second language options reflects what languages people in Europe currently know. Not only are English, French, and German the languages of several Member States of the European Union, they are also the foreign languages most widely known. They are the languages most often learned as foreign languages and the languages that people think are the most useful to learn. The actual requirements of the service thus seem to be a reasonable reflection of the language skills that candidates can be expected to have, especially since language knowledge in the strict sense (errors of grammar, spelling, or vocabulary) is not assessed in the competence tests. Limiting the choice of second language to English, French, or German does not, therefore, pose a disproportionate barrier for people wishing to take competitions. Indeed, to go by the information available, it closely matches what people are used to and expect.

The relevant statistics bear out the conclusion that limiting the second language options for certain stages of competitions is proportionate and non-discriminatory. For instance, English, French, or German were the most frequent choices when candidates were given the option of choosing their second language from among the 11 official languages in the major generalist EUR-25 competitions for administrators and assistants in 2005. The statistics for competitions after the 2010 reform show no bias in favour of nationals of the countries where English, French, or German are official languages. And the statistics for the AD 2010 round of competitions show that substantial numbers of candidates still chose one of the three as their second language.

For the same reasons, it seems reasonable to require candidates to choose one of these three for communicating with EPSO and filling in the talent screener.

Consequently, in seeking a balance between the interests of the service and candidates' abilities, certain tests should be held in a limited number of European Union languages, both to ensure that successful candidates possess adequate knowledge of a combination of languages that will enable them to carry out their duties effectively and so that selection methods based on an assessment of performance can be applied. Since the competition notices and guides for candidates are published in the 24 languages of the Union and since candidates can take the important first phase of competitions in whichever of those 24 languages they choose as their mother tongue, a fair balance would seem to have been found between the interests of the service and the principle of multilingualism and non-discrimination by language.

A case-by-case choice should therefore be made in line with the language arrangements adopted by the EPSO Management Board and the institutions' specific need to be able to recruit candidates who will be operational immediately. Thus there are two possible general cases:

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- First, general profiles or specific profiles where the main factor in selection, besides the general competences, is expertise or experience in a particular field or job. Here, the essential requirement is to be able to work and communicate in a multilingual context where the need to have a command of the languages most widely used in the institutions justifies limiting the choice of European Union languages in the selection procedure.
 - Second, profiles where knowledge of one or more languages is of particular importance, for example linguists or other profiles where the selection procedures are organised by language. Here, besides assessment of the general competences as indicated above in the first scenario, other tests of specific competences have to be organised in the language(s) in question.

Even taking this approach, any decision limiting the number of languages in competitions should allow for consideration of the issue in the case of each individual competition so as to reflect the specific needs of the institutions as regards the profile (s) in question.
