



Press Release

Luxembourg, 5 November 2019

Recruiting for the EU: Auditors to check the cost-effectiveness of the European Personnel Selection Office's selection process

The European Court of Auditors is conducting an audit to establish whether the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) meets the EU institutions' recruitment needs in a cost-effective manner. In particular, the auditors will analyse whether EPSO's selection process yields enough successful candidates and whether the cost of EPSO's selection process is proportionate to the institutions' recruitment needs.

The European Personnel Selection Office is the interinstitutional body that organises competitions for permanent staff and selection procedures for contract staff. Successful candidates ("laureates") are placed on reserve lists, from which EU institutions can recruit new staff members. EPSO was set up in 2002 to centralise the selection process achieving economies of scale and has performed its role since 2003.

"The European Personnel Selection Office is the gateway to working for the EU", said Annemie Turtelboom, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit. "It is not only the face of the EU towards candidates, but also the body that ensures that the EU Institutions can recruit the best person for the right job at the right time. Therefore, it is essential that the staff selection process is adequately planned and well-designed."

The ECA last audited EPSO a decade ago, publishing a special report in 2009 which criticised, in particular, the excessive length of the selection process (up to 18 months) and the insufficient number of successful candidates. EPSO responded by adopting some reforms and changes, most significantly a shift in the focus of candidate testing – from knowledge to skills. Competitions now assess the skills of candidates in real-life professional situations. To ensure that testing methods do not result in any bias against applicants (particularly based on age, gender or nationality), EPSO monitors them regularly and guarantees candidates with disabilities fair and equal treatment during the selection process.

However, some challenges in selecting potential recruits for the EU remain, in particular regarding geographical balance and diversity.

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors' audit preview. The full preview is available at eca.europa.eu in English.

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The ECA's audit will cover the overall selection process, from the planning of needs (done in cooperation between EPSO and the institutions), to the running of competitions and selection procedures (all phases of tests) and the management of reserve lists. The auditors will also look at the cost-effectiveness of EPSO competitions and selection procedures.

Notes to Editors

In 2019, the ECA looked into some other HR-related issues in the EU institutions, with [special report 15/2019 on the implementation of the 2014 staff reforms package at the Commission](#) and [special report 13/2019 on the ethical frameworks of the EU institutions](#), both available on the ECA website (eca.europa.eu) in 23 EU languages.

The report on EPSO is expected to be published at the beginning of 2021.

Audit previews provide information in relation to an ongoing audit task. They are based on preparatory work undertaken before the start of the audit and are intended as a source of information for those interested in the policy and/or programme being audited. They should not be regarded as audit observations, conclusions or recommendations.

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