

European Commission

Publication of a vacancy for the function of *Hors Classe* Adviser – EU SME Envoy

(Temporary Agent – Grade AD15)

(Engagement of a Temporary Agent under Article 2(a) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants)

COM/2023/20097

We are

The European Commission is determined to take bold action in support of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), recognising the role they play in achieving the transition towards a green, digital and resilient economy as well as the contribution they make to the EU's long-term prosperity.

Against this background, the Commission adopted a Communication on an SME relief package (COM (2023) 535 final), which includes the appointment of a dedicated EU SME Envoy to provide guidance and advice to the Commission on SME issues and to advocate SME interests externally.

We propose

A position of EU SME Envoy who shall report directly to the President, while also reporting to the Commissioner for Internal Market on all SME-related activities conducted in conjunction with the services of the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), which shall support the Envoy's work.

The EU SME Envoy will chair the SME Envoy Network, a high-level expert group of national SME envoys with business organisations as observers and report yearly on the achievements.

Drawing insights from the SME Envoy Network, the EU SME Envoy will also provide guidance and advice to the Commission on SME issues, contributing to making EU legislation SME-friendly and to reducing the administrative burden for SMEs.

In addition, the Envoy will be involved in the Commission's Better Regulation agenda, participating in Regulatory Scrutiny Board hearings with Directorates-General on initiatives that have a high impact on SMEs. The EU SME Envoy will also advocate SME interests externally.

More specifically, the EU SME Envoy's tasks will comprise:

SME Envoy Network

- a) The EU SME Envoy will chair the meetings of the SME Envoy Network, guide the work of the Network and ensure the exchange of good practices as regards the safeguarding of SME interests with EU and Member States' institutions.
- b) The SME Envoy will be in close and regular contacts with SMEs and their associations.

Guidance and advice on SME policy

- a) The EU SME Envoy will promote the 'Think Small First' principle throughout the European Commission and in external meetings and conferences.

- b) The EU SME Envoy will advise the Commission on issues related to SMEs, e.g. in relation to all industrial ecosystems, regarding horizontal SME-related issues, and SME policy developments in Member States.
- c) The EU SME Envoy will provide guidance and context on how to implement European SME policy and facilitate the mainstreaming of SME-relevant issues in all policy areas and advise the Commission and co-legislators on how to support SMEs during the phasing in of new legislation.
- d) The EU SME Envoy will present a yearly report to the College of Commissioners on topics related to SMEs, including the issue of compliance and cumulative cost, and discuss this report with the College. Upon request, the EU SME Envoy will present interim reports.
- e) In agreement with the Council Presidency, the EU SME Envoy will report annually to the Competitiveness Council on the work of the SME Envoys network, and will make the annual report available to the relevant Committees of the European Parliament.
- f) The EU SME Envoy can participate in the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce for certain SME-related points.
- g) The EU SME Envoy will be closely involved in the work on updating the SME definition, on developing a harmonised definition for small mid-cap companies and on preparing legislative proposals in light of such new or revised definitions.

Better regulation and reduction of administrative burden

- h) The EU SME Envoy will, together with the SME Envoy Network, filter upcoming EU legislation that is relevant for SMEs and signal, in collaboration with SME stakeholders, to the Commission those that merit close attention from an SME perspective and follow up to ensure that their impact on SMEs is adequately analysed.
- i) The EU SME Envoy will be closely involved in the European Semester process, in particular by participating in the assessments of the situation in Member States, as far as SMEs are concerned.
- j) The EU SME Envoy will help disseminate the calls for evidence and public consultations to improve feedback from SMEs and encourage national SME associations to provide data for impact assessments and evaluations.
- k) The EU SME Envoy can suggest an additional analysis of impacts related to SMEs during the co-legislative process in case of substantive changes to the proposal that affect SMEs; such a suggestion will be made to the European Parliament and to Council respectively and be made known to stakeholders.
- l) The EU SME Envoy will contribute to identifying topics for the annual work programme of the Fit for Future Platform and to identifying the new challenges and possibilities for SMEs, by participating in the Fit for Future Platform meetings to help identify the existing legislation that is particularly burdensome for SMEs and suggest to the Commission user-friendly solutions to make it easier for SMEs to comply with the legislation.
- m) The EU SME Envoy will contribute to the establishment of a methodology for measurement of cumulative and compliance cost for SMEs.
- n) The EU SME envoy will contribute to the work to rationalise reporting obligations with a view to progressively reduce them by 25% at EU level.
- o) The EU SME Envoy will raise awareness on SME-related aspects in the Commission's Better Regulation agenda in a regular dialogue with the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, and by participating in RSB hearings with Directorates-General on initiatives that have a high impact on SMEs. In that context the EU SME envoy may raise issues and alert the Board on significant adverse impacts on SMEs, potential additional options to mitigate them, the reliability of cost/benefits and competitiveness analysis and the consultations activities.
- p) The EU SME envoy will promote the proper uptake of the 'SME test' methodology by Commission services, in cooperation with the member of the SME Envoy Network who is rapporteur for Better Regulation.

We look for (selection criteria)

Candidates should have:

Personal qualities

- Accomplished interpersonal, advocacy and negotiation skills at high level and ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with all stakeholders inside and outside the Commission, to build trusted relationships with them and to represent the Commission in business and institutional fora;
- A strong reputation in the EU SME community so as to be considered as an authoritative EU counterpart to national SME envoys, business organisations and other relevant partners would be a desirable asset.

Specialist skills and experience

- Thorough understanding of the main drivers of entrepreneurial business activity, the opportunities for and constraints on business growth and innovation, as they pertain to SMEs in the modern European economy.
- Sound knowledge of the administrative challenges faced by SMEs in ensuring compliance with EU policy and legislation;
- Experience in the safeguard and advocacy of SME interests, such as through dedicated business or institutional networks;
- Sound knowledge or experience in the work of European and/or national public administrations including in relation to the EU decision-making and policy-making process;
- Business or entrepreneurial experience or academic experience in the field of SME or industrial policy would be an asset.

Advisory skills

- Proven ability to provide strategic guidance and advice on improving business conditions, and on policy development and legislation at the highest level in the domain of industrial policy, entrepreneurship and SMEs,
- Demonstrated ability to advise on implementing and streamlining SME policy and to provide guidance on supporting SMEs during the phasing in of new legislation.
- Ability to analyse, assess and report on the impact of (potential) policy initiatives and legislation on SMEs and to formulate sound recommendations and proposals.

Candidates must (eligibility requirements)

Candidates will only be considered for the selection phase on the basis of the following formal requirements to be fulfilled **by the deadline for applications**:

- Nationality: candidates must be a citizen of one of the Member States of the European Union.
- University degree or diploma: candidates must have:
 - either a level of education which corresponds to completed university studies attested by a diploma when the normal period of university education is 4 years or more;

- or a level of education which corresponds to completed university studies attested by a diploma and appropriate professional experience of at least 1 year when the normal period of university education is at least 3 years (this one year's professional experience cannot be included in the postgraduate professional experience required below).
- Professional experience: candidates must have at least 15 years postgraduate professional experience¹ at a level to which the qualifications referred to above give admission.
- Advisory experience: at least 5 years of the post-graduate professional experience must have been gained in a high-level advisory function.
- Languages: candidates must have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the European Union² and a satisfactory knowledge of another of these official languages. Selection panels will verify during the interview(s) whether candidates comply with the requirement of a satisfactory knowledge of another official EU language. This may include (part of) the interview being conducted in this other language.
- Age limit: candidates must not have reached regular retirement age, which for temporary staff of the European Union is defined as being the end of the month in which the person reaches the age of 66 years (see Article 47 of the Conditions of Employment of other Servants of the European Union³).

Selection and appointment

The selection and appointment will be conducted according to the European Commission's selection and recruitment procedures (see: Document on Senior Officials Policy⁴).

As part of this selection procedure, the European Commission sets up a pre-selection panel. This panel analyses all applications, proceeds with a first eligibility verification and identifies candidates having the best profile in view of the selection criteria mentioned above, and who may be invited for an interview with the pre-selection panel.

Following these interviews, the pre-selection panel draws up its conclusions and proposes a list of candidates for further interviews with the European Commission's Consultative Committee on Appointments (CCA). The CCA, taking into consideration the conclusions of the pre-selection panel, will decide on the candidates to be invited for an interview.

Candidates who are called for an interview with the CCA participate in a full-day management assessment centre run by external recruitment consultants. Taking account of the results of the interview and the report of the assessment centre, the CCA establishes a shortlist of candidates it considers suitable for the function.

Candidates on the CCA shortlist will be interviewed by the relevant Member(s) of the Commission.

¹ Professional experience is only taken into consideration if it represents an actual work relationship defined as real, genuine work, on a paid basis and as employee (any type of contract) or provider of a service. Professional activities pursued part-time shall be calculated pro rata, on the basis of the certified percentage of full-time hours worked. Maternity leave / parental leave / leave for adoption is taken into consideration if it is in the framework of a work contract. PhDs are assimilated to professional experience, even when unpaid, but for a duration of three years maximum, provided that the PhD has been successfully completed. A given period may be counted only once.

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:01958R0001-20130701&qid=1408533709461&from=ENhttps://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01958R0001-20130701>

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01962R0031-20140701>

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/jobs-european-commission/job-opportunities/managers-european-commission_en#documents (only exists in English)

Following these interviews, the European Commission takes the appointment decision.

The selected candidate must have fulfilled any obligations imposed by law concerning military service, produce appropriate character references as to their suitability for the performance of their duties and be physically fit to perform their duties.

The selected candidate should hold, or be in the position to obtain, a valid security clearance certificate from his/her national security authority. A personal security clearance is an administrative decision following completion of a security screening conducted by the individual's competent national security authority in accordance with applicable national security laws and regulations, and certifying that an individual may be allowed to access classified information up to a specified level. (Note that the necessary procedure for obtaining a security clearance can be initiated on request of the employer only, and not by the individual candidate).

Until the personal security clearance has been granted by the Member State concerned and the clearance procedure completed with the legally required briefing from the European Commission's Security Directorate, the candidate will not be able to access EU Classified Information (EUCI) at the level of CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL or above, nor attend any meetings at which such EUCI is discussed.

Equal opportunities

In accordance with Article 1d of the Staff Regulations, the European Commission pursues a strategic objective of achieving gender equality at all management levels by the end of its current mandate and applies an equal opportunities policy encouraging applications that could contribute towards more diversity, gender equality and overall geographical balance.

Conditions of employment

The salaries and conditions of employment are laid down in the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union.

The selected candidate will be engaged by the European Commission as a Temporary Agent at grade AD 15. He/she will be classified depending on the length of his / her previous professional experience in step 1 or step 2 within that grade.

She/he will be appointed for an initial period of four years, with a possible prolongation for a maximum of two years.

Applicants should note the requirement under the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union for all new staff to complete successfully a nine-month probationary period.

The place of employment is Brussels, Belgium.

Independence and declaration of interests

During the selection process, shortlisted candidates will be required to make a declaration of commitment to act independently in the public interest and to declare any interests, which might be considered prejudicial to his/her independence.

Important information for candidates

Candidates are reminded that the work of the selection panels is confidential. It is forbidden for candidates to make direct or indirect contact with their individual members or for anybody to do so on their behalf. Any query has to be addressed to the secretariat of the respective panel.

Protection of personal data

The Commission will ensure that candidates' personal data are processed as required by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁵. This applies in particular to the confidentiality and security of such data.

Application procedure

Before submitting your application, you should carefully check whether you meet all eligibility requirements ('Candidates must'), particularly concerning the types of diploma, high-level professional experience as well as linguistic capacity required. Failure to meet any of the eligibility requirements means an automatic exclusion from the selection procedure.

If you want to apply, you must register via the Internet on the following website and follow the instructions concerning the various stages of the procedure:

<https://ec.europa.eu/dgs/human-resources/seniormanagementvacancies/>

You must have a valid e-mail address. This will be used to confirm your registration as well as to remain in contact with you during the different stages of the procedure. Therefore, please keep the European Commission informed about any change in your e-mail address.

To complete your application, you need to upload a CV in PDF format, preferably using the Europass CV format⁶, and to fill out, online, a letter of motivation (maximum 8 000 characters). Your CV and your letter of motivation may be submitted in any of the official languages of the European Union.

It is in your interest to ensure that your application is accurate, thorough and truthful.

Once you have finished your online registration, you will receive an electronic mail confirming that your application has been registered. **If you do not receive a confirmation mail, your application has not been registered!**

Please note that it is not possible to monitor the progress of your application on-line. You will be contacted directly by the European Commission regarding the status of your application.

Applications sent by e-mail will not be accepted. If you require more information and/or encounter technical problems, please send an e-mail to: HR-MANAGEMENT-ONLINE@ec.europa.eu

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).

⁶ You can find information on how to create your Europass CV online at: <https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv>

It is your responsibility to complete your online registration in time. We strongly advise you not to wait until the last few days before applying, since heavy internet traffic or a fault with your internet connection could lead to the online registration being terminated before you complete it, thereby obliging you to repeat the whole process. Once the deadline for the submission of registrations has passed, you will no longer be able to introduce any data. Late registrations will not be accepted.

Closing date

The closing date for registration is **25 October 2023, 12.00 noon Brussels time**, following which registration is no longer possible.