



Joint Assessment Report on Action Plan on Geographical Balance

ESTONIA

2024

Assessment of the Joint Action Plans on Geographical Balance

Joint Conclusions

This is the first Joint Assessment Report completed on the Joint Action Plan on Geographical Balance for Estonia which was endorsed on 12 September 2023. As stated in the Action Plan, it is *'not to be seen as "a one-off reporting" but rather as a continuous, dynamic process made jointly by the Commission and the concerned Member State'*.

As outlined in the Joint Action Plan, the measures introduced by the European Commission, Estonia, and jointly, aim to strengthen geographical balance in the Commission workforce¹. Estonia continues to develop and implement various outreach measures to promote EU careers at national level and support their candidates.

In terms of underrepresentation as of 31 December 2023, Estonia falls below the 80% threshold of its guiding rate in Blue Book Trainees, Contract Agents in FG III and FG IV, and AD5-AD8 Officials. The analysis of the result indicators for the period 2021 - 2023 shows increased shares in relation to Contract Agents in FG IV and AD5-AD8 Temporary Agents. Despite the measures implemented to date, the numbers in some staff categories remain a point for further detailed monitoring and analysis.

The number of external competitions has been limited due to the difficulties EPSO has encountered. For that reason, the actions aiming at correcting the underlying causes of geographical imbalances through external competitions have also been impacted. The Commission will continue to support EPSO, through its participation in the EPSO Management Board. The Commission has also administratively supported EPSO in restarting testing with an interim contractor, while the Procurement Unit of DG HR has helped EPSO to publish a tender for a new contractor.

The Commission also continues to implement measures aimed at improving geographical balance and monitor the trends for permanent and non-permanent positions in a targeted way across the career journey. This is important for strengthening the pipeline for future Officials. The decision to publish vacancies for non-permanent staff externally is an important step for greater transparency and visibility of Commission vacancies. The forthcoming Temporary Agents Decision foresees, as a principle, that all vacancies for Temporary Agents positions will be published externally². Member States will be duly informed once adopted.

In parallel, the Commission will continue to prepare the legal basis for the introduction of additional measures (General Implementing Provisions (GIPs), Article 27 of the Staff Regulations). This will provide a robust legal framework and the continuation of a sustainable and "step-by-step" approach to improving geographical balance. Additional measures may be introduced once the legal basis to do so is established, at which point the recruitment trends will be taken into account. Any measures adopted will ensure that proportionality and merit continue to be the guiding principles underpinning recruitment in the Commission.

The Joint Action Plans, implementation and stocktaking of measures contained therein, and tracking progress by monitoring inflow and outflow trends, are crucial for improving geographical balance in the European Commission. With the long-term goals of the Joint

¹ Article 27 of the Staff Regulations and Article 12 of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants require that EU institutions recruit staff from the broadest possible geographical basis.

² The new decision will apply to Temporary Agents engaged under Articles 2(a), (b) and (d) of the Conditions of Engagement of Other Servants.

Action Plans in mind, both the Commission and Estonia are committed to applying these measures strategically and with a focus on a sustainable approach. The stocktaking is not a one-off exercise; the Commission intends to continue the assessment on a regular basis. It is the combination of the Joint Action Plan measures and the potential measures anticipated by the GIPs, Article 27, that will enable us to address the imbalances in an efficient, sustainable, and proportionate way.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|---------------|------|----------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| Member State: | Estonia | Guiding Rate: | 0,8% | 80% of Guiding Rate: | 0,6% | Population Share: | 0,3% |
|---------------|---------|---------------|------|----------------------|------|-------------------|------|

Result indicators (EC)

| Staffing | 2021 | | 2022 | | 2023 | | |
|---|----------|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|------------------|----------------|
| | Absolute | Share as % of GR | Absolute | Share as % of GR | Absolute | Share as % of GR | Trend vs 2021* |
| Blue Book Applications | 39 | 25% | 29 | 21% | 31 | 23% | |
| Blue Book Trainees | 10 | 94% | 9 | 74% | 8 | 67% | ↓ |
| JPP Applications | 2 | | 4 | | 5 | | |
| JPP Selections | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | |
| FGIII | 12 | 107% | 7 | 63% | 5 | 45% | ↓ |
| FGIV | 13 | 51% | 15 | 56% | 19 | 66% | ↑ |
| SNE | 14 | 195% | 12 | 153% | 15 | 183% | |
| AD5-AD8 Officials | 24 | 84% | 21 | 77% | 19 | 71% | ↓ |
| AD5-AD8 TAs | 4 | 56% | 6 | 65% | 12 | 114% | ↑ |
| AD5-AD8 Officials + TAs | 28 | 78% | 27 | 74% | 31 | 83% | |
| AD9-AD14 (non-management) Officials | 45 | 91% | 44 | 88% | 47 | 91% | |
| AD9-AD14 (non-management) TAs | 4 | 407% | 5 | 477% | 4 | 362% | ↓ |
| AD9-AD14 (non-management) Officials + TAs | 49 | 98% | 49 | 96% | 51 | 97% | |
| AD5-AD14 (non-management) Officials | 69 | 89% | 65 | 84% | 66 | 84% | |
| AD5-AD14 (non-management) TAs | 8 | 98% | 11 | 106% | 16 | 137% | ↑ |
| AD5-AD14 (non-management) Officials + TAs | 77 | 90% | 76 | 87% | 82 | 91% | |
| AD Officials retirements | 2 | | 0 | | 1 | | |

FGIII, FGIV, SNE and AD staff figures exclude linguistic functions. AD Officials retirements include management and linguistic functions

*Significant difference in trend corresponds to 20% deviation for non-AD functions and 10% for AD function when comparing share as % of GR from 2021 to 2023

| Transitions 2022 | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|------|------------|-------------|
| Role as of 31/12/2022 | FGIII | FGIV | AD5-AD8 TA | AD5-AD8 Off |
| External Recruitment | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| BB* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FGIII | | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| FGIV | 0 | | 2 | 0 |
| SNE | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| AD5-8 TA | 0 | 0 | | 1 |

| Transitions 2023 | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|------|------------|-------------|
| Role as of 31/12/2023 | FGIII | FGIV | AD5-AD8 TA | AD5-AD8 Off |
| External Recruitment | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| BB* | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| FGIII | | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| FGIV | 0 | | 1 | 0 |
| SNE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| AD5-8 TA | 0 | 0 | | 0 |

*Role as BB in the previous year during the March/October Session or March of current year

| EPSO competitions | 2021 | 2022 | 2023* |
|---|------|------|-------|
| Number of specialist competitions started | 15 | 13 | 8 |
| Applicants | 55 | 47 | 70 |
| Share of Applicants | 0,5% | 0,5% | 0,4% |
| Number of completed competitions | 15 | 13 | 0 |
| Laureates | 3 | 1 | |
| Pass Rate | 5,5% | 2,1% | |
| EU-27 Pass Rate | 5,2% | 6,8% | |

Note: No Generalist Competitions initiated during this period.

* Note: NEW EPSO competition model

Output indicators 2023 data provided by Estonia (EE with COMM for joint measures)

Timeframe: 1st Jan 2021 - 31st Dec 2023

| Indicator | Counts | Scope | implemented/s tartet | end date/ongoing | Additional information / Comments |
|--|-------------|---|-------------------------|---------------------|--|
| 1. Online Information Sessions (webinars) | 2 sessions | 82 estimated participants (throughout the year) | 2021 | ongoing | MFA organises regularly webinars with the focus on EEAS rotation exercises. 2021 - 35 participants, 2022 - 47 participants, 2023 - N/A, 2024 - planning process ongoing. In addition, we are constantly supporting people interested in EU Career and Traineeship opportunities via e-mail etc. |
| 2. Participation in job fairs | NA | NA | | | Participation in two job fairs in the beginning of 2024 - one in the end of February and the other in the beginning of March. |
| 3. Training- and Coaching-Sessions for EU competitions | 22 sessions | 22 participants (throughout the year) | 2nd half of 2022 | ongoing | All training- and coaching-sessions have been individual and needs-based. The number depends on how many individuals get in contact to ask for aid in preparing for competitions. |
| 4. Information campaigns on social media | NA | | | | |
| 4.1. LinkedIn - Riigikantslei / Government Office of Estonia | 2 posts | NA Number of views 1643 followers | 2nd half of 2023 | ongoing | These posts are made on accounts that do not concentrate specifically for the promotion of EU Careers. |
| 4.2. LinkedIn - Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Välisministeerium | 1 post | 1505 views 5169 followers | 2nd half of 2023 | ongoing | These posts are made on accounts that do not concentrate specifically for the promotion of EU Careers. |
| 4.3. Facebook - EU Careers Estonia | 15 posts | 230 views 1524 followers | 04-May-23 | ongoing | Number of views - 230 is the average number of views for 15 posts. |
| 4.4. Facebook - Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Välisministeerium | 1 posts | 29 000 followers | 2nd half of 2023 | ongoing | These posts are made on accounts that do not concentrate specifically for the promotion of EU Careers. |
| 4.5. Mailing lists | | | ongoing | ongoing | Both the MFA and the Government Office of Estonia promote career possibilities at European Commission, EEAS and other EU institutions regularly (weekly, monthly). MFA shares a newsletter with ca 700 followers, the Government Office shares information with all ministries; they also share it in their organisation. |
| 5. Networking events | 5 sessions | 461 participants | 2021 | ongoing | 2 events have been organised by the Permanent Representation for Estonians working in the institutions (participants - 150) and 3 events by the MFA. The latter ones are annual networking events for our fellow Estonians from the EU institutions and other international organisations. 2021 - 62 participants (+38 online participants), 2022 - 111 participants, 2023 - 99 participants Estonian Blue Book trainees were also invited to events at the Permanent Representation and they participated in them. In 2024, there have also been two such events at the Permanent Representation. |

Footnote: The data presented above is provided by EE and is the sole responsibility of EE.

| Joint Measures (initiated by EE/EC/EPSCO) | Counts | Scope | implemented/start ed | end date/ongoing | Additional information / Comments |
|--|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---|
| 1. EPSO career student ambassadors 2022/2023 | 1 person | | | ongoing | 1 reported by the Member State. At the same time, there has been only one Student Ambassador. However, during the past three years, there have been all in all three different people on this post. |
| 2. EPSO career staff ambassadors 2023 | 3 people | | | ongoing | One career ambassador at TalTech/Tallinn University for Technology. |
| 3. Structural cooperation with University of Tartu | incorporation of lectures into 2 courses | | Oct-23 | Ongoing (start of lectures as of Feb 2024) | 1 reported by the Member State. Incorporation of regular/recurring annual lectures on EU job opportunities in 2 courses: 1) "Introduction to the European Union" (advanced BA students), and 2) "Contemporary Challenges to European Integration" (MA students, European Studies' programme). |
| 4. Creation of an inter-institutional coordination group | regular meetings every 1-2 months | | Sep-23 | | Created in September 2023; regular meetings every 1-2 months to discuss what is being done to promote EU careers, regular (via e-mail) exchanges of information on new EPSO competitions and vacancies in institutions/agencies as well as events/opportunities to present EU careers. (EC Rep, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government Office, EE Perm Rep in Brussels, EU Career Ambassador at TalTech University). |
| 5. Ad hoc lectures by EC Rep staff at the universities of Tartu and Tallinn | ca. 6-7 times/year | Ca. 10-40 students per lecture | Jan-21 | Dec-23 | To give insights into EU policies, various fields of work and EU competitions. |
| 6. Ad hoc lectures about EU policies / EU job opportunities at events of student organisations | 2 | Ca. 50 students per event | Oct-23 | Dec-23 | Society of International Relations, Society of Political Science. |
| 7. Social media videos to promote EU careers | 3-4 times/year | | Jan-21 | Dec-23 | Mainly via Facebook. |

Footnote: The data presented above is provided by EE, EC Representation and EPSO and is a joint responsibility of the aforementioned parties.

| European Commission Measures | State of Play | Additional information / Comments |
|--|---------------|---|
| 1. General Implementing Provisions of Article 27 | progress | The Commission is preparing the legal basis for the introduction of additional measures (General Implementing Provisions (GIPs) Art.27 of the Staff Regulations). The draft GIPs will be subject to inter-service consultation and social dialogue as part of the decision-making process. The final decision lies with the College. |
| 2. Blue Book guiding rates | completed | The application of guiding rates to the Blue Book traineeship database is creating a more geographically balanced Blue Book trainee population. The share of trainees from all 15 under-represented Member States combined reached 100% of the guiding rate in 2023, compared to 85% a year earlier. |
| 3. Temporary Agents decision | progress | The Temporary Agents Decision is not designed to specifically address geo-balance issues. However, its structure will encourage applications from a large pool of candidates. The Decision foresees that, as a principle, all vacancies for TA positions will be published externally. Further, the duration of TA contracts and grading will be clearly defined providing applicants with a clear view of the key contract terms. The decision will go through the final stages of the social dialogue within the coming period and is intended to be adopted shortly after. |
| 4. Publication of vacancies on a single page - pilot phase | completed | This is in pilot phase since November 2023 for the following categories: all non-linguistic TA 2b/d AD posts and CA 3a positions based in Brussels and Luxembourg. The forthcoming Temporary Agents Decision foresees, as a principle, that all vacancies for Temporary Agent positions will be published externally. |
| 5. Interviewing 1 candidate from an under-represented MS for TA and CA FGV posts | completed | Since the introduction (in September 2022) of the measure to interview at least one candidate from an under-represented Member State for certain categories of temporary staff (Temporary Agents at administrative grades and Contract Agents in Function Group IV), 39% of Temporary Agents at administrator-level recruited were from under-represented Member States in 2023, compared to 34% in 2022. Since 2022, 10 out of the 15 under-represented Member States have improved their share of AD5-8 Temporary Agents. |
| 6. Encouraging exchange of best practices | progress | The Commission continues to encourage best practice and sharing of knowledge across the Member States. |

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