



Joint Assessment Report
on
Action Plan on
Geographical Balance

THE NETHERLANDS

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 The Netherlands which was endorsed on 17 November 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, The Netherlands and jointly, aim to strengthen geographical balance in the Commission workforce¹. The Netherlands continues to develop and implement various outreach measures to promote EU careers at national level and support their candidates. The Netherlands calls for the introduction of nationality-based competitions to address its geographical imbalance as referenced in the European Commission's Human Resources Strategy (2022) and in the Joint Action Plan on Geographical Balance for The Netherlands (2023).

In terms of underrepresentation as of 31 December 2023, The Netherlands falls below the 80% threshold of its guiding rate in Contract Agents in FG III and FG IV, AD5-AD8 Officials, and AD5-AD8 Temporary Agents, and AD5-AD8 Officials and Temporary Agents (combined). The analysis of the result indicators for the period 2021 - 2023 shows an increased share in relation to AD5-AD8 Officials. Despite the measures implemented to date, the numbers in most staff categories remain a point for further detailed monitoring and analysis, and much remains to be achieved. This is why additional measures are needed. Alongside the issue of underrepresentation, The Netherlands also faces an issue of outflow due to forecasted retirements. Without a proper inflow to counteract this, the situation of underrepresentation will further deteriorate.

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

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.

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 Action Plans in mind, both the Commission and The Netherlands 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:	The Netherlands	Guiding Rate: 3,9%	80% of Guiding Rate: 3,1%	Population Share: 3,9%
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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	688		565		436		
Blue Book Trainees	54	105%	61	104%	57	99%	
JPP Applications	37		45		64		
JPP Selections	1		1		5		
FGIII	23	43%	17	32%	17	32%	↓
FGIV	52	43%	57	44%	63	45%	
SNE	51	147%	51	135%	56	142%	
AD5-AD8 Officials	66	48%	70	53%	70	55%	↑
AD5-AD8 TAs	28	81%	29	65%	37	73%	↓
AD5-AD8 Officials + TAs	94	54%	99	56%	107	60%	
AD9-AD14 (non-management) Officials	217	91%	207	86%	207	83%	
AD9-AD14 (non-management) TAs	3	63%	5	99%	4	75%	↑
AD9-AD14 (non-management) Officials + TAs	220	91%	212	86%	211	83%	
AD5-AD14 (non-management) Officials	283	75%	277	74%	277	74%	
AD5-AD14 (non-management) TAs	31	79%	34	68%	41	73%	
AD5-AD14 (non-management) Officials + TAs	314	76%	311	73%	318	73%	
AD Officials retirements	15		19		16		

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 31/12/2021	Role as of 31/12/2022	FGIII	FGIV	AD5-AD8 TA	AD5-AD8 Off
External Recruitment		2	8	2	2
BB*		2	2	4	0
FGIII			7	0	0
FGIV		0		3	0
SNE		0	0	1	0
AD5-8 TA		0	0		3

Transitions 2023

Role as of 31/12/2022	Role as of 31/12/2023	FGIII	FGIV	AD5-AD8 TA	AD5-AD8 Off
External Recruitment		3	9	4	2
BB*		4	5	1	0
FGIII			2	3	0
FGIV		0		3	2
SNE		0	0	0	2
AD5-8 TA		0	0		3

*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	148	153	241
Share of Applicants	1,4%	1,5%	1,5%
Number of completed competitions	15	13	0
Laureates	15	4	
Pass Rate	10,1%	2,6%	
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 The Netherlands (NL with COMM for joint measures)

Timeframe: 1st Jan 2021 - 31st Dec 2023

Indicator	Counts	Scope	implemented / started	end date / ongoing	Additional information / Comments
1. WerkenbijdeEU Talent Network	NA	1.300 (potential) candidates	Mid-2023	Ongoing	Talent Networks are created based on individual selection procedures. Hence the network partially depends on the decisions made by EPSO.
2. WerkenbijdeEU Website (pages of EPSO and the Blue Book programme)	NA	11.000 visits in 2023 for Blue Book programme (no data for EPSO)		Ongoing	Number of entries into the Blue Book programme related pages.
3. WbdEU Social media and website	NA	170.230 website visits 18.000 social media followers (average throughout the year)		Ongoing	Social Media: Only Facebook
3.1 LinkedIn	NA	10.785 followers (average throughout the year)		Ongoing	Growth of 1.672 follows in 2023.
4. Career fairs and events (promoting EU careers and jobs)	8 fairs and events	1.900 participants (throughout the year)		Ongoing	3 were online information sessions in 2023. One focused on the AD5 Generalist selection procedure (533 participants), one for the Blue Book Traineeship (378 participants), and another one for AD6 Economists.
5. Practice material for selection procedures	NA	91 requests for practice material by Talent Networks participants		Ongoing	
6. Mailings	Approx. 30 mailings sent to Talent Networks participants	NA		Ongoing	This depends on the Talent Network. An approximate total has been provided.
7. Contacts with Dutch (Blue Book) trainees	6 contacts	NA		Ongoing	Amount of contact moments, including the Virtual Blue Book phase.

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

Joint Measures (initiated by NL/EC/EPSO)	Count	Scope	implemented/ started	end date/ongoing	Additional information / Comments
1. EPSO career student ambassadors	20 people				20 student ambassadors reported by Member State. However, it is hard to put a correct number, as the activity and permanence of the (EPSO) Career student ambassadors varies throughout the year. Some drop out, or are inactive during their tenure.
2. EPSO career staff ambassadors	12 people				100 staff ambassadors reported by Member State.
3. Participation in outreach/ public (career) events and distribution of targeted communication materials	7 events (2023)	approximately 500 participants			The aim is to emphasize the opportunities EU careers offer, with a focus on students and graduates/young professionals (by the Commission's Representation in The Netherlands).
4. Providing and re-posting of social media content by the Commission's Representation in The Netherlands	15 social media posts				This is done as a part of the always-on and specific recruitment campaigns of WerkenbijdeEU.
5. Support to (potential) candidates by the Commission's Representation in The Netherlands	NA				Support is provided in improving candidates EU-knowledge and co-organizing events for target audiences (especially students). Difficult to put a number on this, since we receive many groups of students at our premises and reach out to a lot of them, and working at the EU/EC is one of the topics often discussed but not always.

Footnote: The data presented above is provided by NL, 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 FGIV 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.

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

