



Joint Assessment Report on Action Plan on Geographical Balance

SLOVAKIA

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 Slovakia which was endorsed on 28 March 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, Slovakia and jointly, aim to strengthen geographical balance in the Commission workforce¹. Slovakia continues to develop and implement various outreach measures to promote EU careers at national level and support their candidates. Slovakia 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 Slovakia (2023)

In terms of underrepresentation as of 31 December 2023, Slovakia falls below the 80% threshold of its guiding rate² in Contract Agents in FG IV and AD5-AD8 Officials. The analysis of the result indicators for the period 2021 - 2023 shows an increased share in relation to AD5-AD8 Temporary Agents, and AD5-AD8 Officials and Temporary Agents (combined). 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 externally³. 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

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 guiding rates, as defined in the European Commission's 2018 Report on Geographical Balance (EUR-Lex - 52018DC0377R(01) - EN - EUR-Lex), do not apply to management functions, as those functions are expressly excluded from the scope of that Report. The distribution of nationalities at management level is subject to distinct rules and practices and the monitoring of geographical balance at this level is conducted with regard to the limited size of the population concerned. As of the date of the conclusion of this Joint Assessment Report, Slovakia indicated its preference for an increased presence at the management level in the European Commission.

³ The new decision will apply to Temporary Agents engaged under Articles 2(a), (b) and (d) of the Conditions of Engagement of Other Servants.

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 Action Plans in mind, both the Commission and Slovakia 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:	Slovakia	Guiding Rate:	1,8%	80% of Guiding Rate:	1,4%	Population Share:	1,2%
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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	183		151		148		
Blue Book Trainees	35	149%	20	75%	30	114%	↓
JPP Applications	22		17		26		
JPP Selections	2		0		0		
FGIII	25	102%	25	103%	22	91%	
FGIV	28	50%	31	53%	36	57%	
SNE	6	38%	7	41%	12	67%	↑
AD5-AD8 Officials	48	76%	44	73%	45	77%	
AD5-AD8 TAs	10	64%	16	78%	23	100%	↑
AD5-AD8 Officials + TAs	58	74%	60	75%	68	83%	↑
AD9-AD14 (non-management) Officials	88	81%	97	88%	95	84%	
AD9-AD14 (non-management) TAs	3	139%	2	87%	2	83%	↓
AD9-AD14 (non-management) Officials + TAs	91	83%	99	88%	97	84%	
AD5-AD14 (non-management) Officials	136	80%	141	83%	140	82%	
AD5-AD14 (non-management) TAs	13	73%	18	79%	25	98%	↑
AD5-AD14 (non-management) Officials + TAs	149	79%	159	83%	165	84%	
AD Officials retirements	2		3		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	3	5	3	1
BB*	1	1	2	0
FGIII		3	0	0
FGIV	1		2	1
SNE	0	0	0	0
AD5-8 TA	0	0		0

Transitions 2023				
Role as of 31/12/2023	FGIII	FGIV	AD5-AD8 TA	AD5-AD8 Off
External Recruitment	4	4	3	0
BB*	0	1	0	0
FGIII		7	1	0
FGIV	0		5	0
SNE	0	0	1	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	96	102	171
Share of Applicants	0,9%	1,0%	1,0%
Number of completed competitions	15	13	0
Laureates	3	5	
Pass Rate	3,1%	4,9%	
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 Slovakia (SK with COMM for joint measures)

Timeframe: 1st Jan 2021 - 31st Dec 2023

Indicator	Counts	Scope	implemented /started	end date/ ongoing	Additional information / Comments
1. Career fairs and information days on EU careers	2022 - 2; 2023 - 15	2022 - 10 000 visitors; 2023 - 15 769 participants	implemented		2022- 2 Career fairs - Profesia days; 2023 (e. g. Career fairs, Career days in various Slovak universities, Information events at universities, Europe Day, Open doors at MFA, Summer School of diplomacy.....All mentioned activities were completed in 2022 or 2023, however some of them are regular (e.g. participation in career fairs - Profesia days, events at universities). During the events we usually present what we are doing at national level to increase number of Slovaks in EU institutions. We also get in touch online with a couple of Slovak EU Staff Ambassadors (including trainees) working in Brussels to speak about their own experience from the work in EU institutions. Finally, we present the EPSO website to show the audience where to get more information on competitions and other details on work in EU institutions.
2. Webinars on EU careers	2022 - 0; 2023 - 2	over 100 university students	implemented		(Note: in one case it was a hybrid seminar). We organise hybrid seminars in the same way as explained above.
3. Training and coaching sessions	2022 - 0; 2023 - 2	Number of participants in 2023 - 2	implemented	ongoing	We have concluded an agreement on training and coaching with training institute , however the MFA can currently provide training only to its own employees. From the next academic year the University of Economics in Bratislava is planning to organise (in cooperation with one Czech University) online preparatory courses for the EPSO tests available for the wide public.
4. Networking events	2022 - 5 events; 2023 - 13 events	2022 - number of participants - 86; 2023 - number of participants - 1710	implemented	ongoing	Most of the events were organised by the Slovak PermRep in Brussels. Most of the events were organised by the Slovak PermRep in Brussels. After every formal European Council meeting the Slovak PermRep organised a debriefing followed by social event for Slovak nationals working in the EU institutions and agencies from all the ranks and types of contracts. After the start of every new cohort of Blue Book trainees the Slovak PermRep organised a social event to build a network among all Slovak trainees currently working in the "EU Brussels Bubble" (SK PermRep, SK regional representations, EP, Council, EC, CoR, EESC, EU agencies,...). Furthermore, we organised other events (cultural events, exhibitions, film presentation, concert, discussions...) which provided an excellent opportunity for networking. To highlight just one, in June 2023 Slovak PermRep organised a panel discussion followed by social event with 4 Slovak managers in the EC titled "How to become a manager at the Commission, how to prepare for an interview and how not to burn out at work?" for Slovak nationals, who were interested in EU careers.
5. Website	1	MFA created a separate website on EU Carrers in October 2021, 2022 - number of visits - 18 493; 2023 - number of visits - 26 749	19/10/2021	ongoing	MFA website on EU Careers: https://www.mzv.sk/web/sk/diplomacia/slovensko-v-europskej-unii/praca-v-instituciach-eu ; MFA also asks for publishing larger EPSO competitions at the external website GROWNII(https://growni.sk/about)
6. Social media accounts	5 (2022) 6 (2023)	2022 - FB MFA account - number of views - 2 000 000, number of followers - 42 000, number of visits - 301 500; Instagram MFA - views 1 500 000, followers - 9 300, visits 28 500; FB (PermRep BXL) - views - 155 314, followers - 5 210, visits - 33 380; Instagram (PermRep) - views - 15 829, followers - 1 439, visits - 7694; Twitter (PermRep) - followers - 13 362; 2023 - FB (MFA) - views - 1 500 000, followers 47 500, visits - 282 900; Instagram (MFA) - views - 259 400, followers - 10 800, visits - 32 500, FB (PermRep) - views 83 130, followers - 5438; visits - 45 636; Instagram (PermRep) - views - 23 101, followers - 2 431, visits - 9 112; LinkedIn (PermRep) - views - 217 332, followers - 2 592; Twitter (PermRep) - views - 173 188, followers - 14 191	ongoing	ongoing	SK MFA and SK PemRep in Brussels do not have any separate social media accounts for the EU Careers. EU Careers posts are included among other posts on various issues. SK PermRep account publishes regularly posts about vacancy notices, open competitions in the EU institutions and agencies and other useful information on EU Careers.
7. Scholarships for the College of Europe	2 (2023)	There is a political commitment from December 2023 to finance 2 scholarships for Slovak students studying at the College of Europe in Tirana	Dec-23	ongoing	The Memorandum of Understanding between the Slovak Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth and the College of Europe will be signed on 2 May 2024
8. EPSO applications resulting from participation in promotional activities	NA	We are not able to provide concrete data in this case			

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

Joint Measures (initiated by SK/EC/EPSO)	Count	Scope	implemented /started	end date/ ongoing	Additional information / Comments
1. EPSO career student ambassadors 2022/2023	4 people				5 universities involved throughout 2022/2023 period reported by member state
2. EPSO career student ambassadors 2023/2024	5 people				6 universities involved throughout 2022/2024 period reported by member state
3. EPSO career staff ambassadors 2023	9 people				2 reported in 2022 by member state 5 reported in 2023 by member state
4. EPSO outreach events 2023	4 events				
5. EPSO seminar 2023	1 seminar				
6. Participation at job fairs 2023	4 job fairs				
7. Career presentation at schools 2023	20 presentations				

Footnote: The data presented above is provided by SK, 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. Bluebook guiding rates	completed	The application of guiding rates to the Blue Book traineeship database is creating a more geographically balanced Bluebook 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.

