

Action Plan on Geographical Balance

LUXEMBOURG

2023

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	3
	1.1. Developments in 2022	4
2.	Luxembourg: challenges and outlook	4
	2.1. Geographical balance snapshot as per 31/12/2022	4
	2.2. Outlook	8
3.	Measures to address under-representation	8
	3.1. Luxembourg's actions and initiatives	8
	3.1.1. Current (updated by Luxembourg)	
	3.2. European Commission's measures	9
	3.2.1. Actions aiming at redressing the observed imbalances in the short term, with impact on long term	
	3.3. Joint measures	11
4.	Data and performance indicators	12
	4.1. Data sharing on geographical balance	12
	4.2. Action Plan performance indicators	12
5.	Next steps	14
6.	Annex: Glossary on Staff Grades and Categories	15

1. Introduction

In line with the 2018 report on Geographical balance¹, the new HR strategy² "Communication to the Commission: A new Human Resources Strategy for the Commission³" highlights the importance of geographical balance of all staff which is to be strengthened and foresees the development of Action Plans together with under-represented Member States taking into account the specificities of each Member State.

This Action Plan represents a joint political commitment by Luxembourg and the European Commission (Commission) to strengthen geographical balance and takes the form of measures to be undertaken by Luxembourg and the Commission respectively, as well as joint measures.

As a rule, discrimination based on nationality is prohibited by the Treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Staff Regulations. At the same time, the EU Staff Regulations require that EU institutions recruit staff from the broadest possible geographical basis.⁴ In 2014, the co-legislators introduced a new legal basis for each institution to adopt appropriate measures where a significant imbalance between nationalities of Officials is observed and is not justified by objective criteria.

The methodology for defining the objective to be reached has been subject of several communications⁵ over time. It has taken the form of guiding rates or reference values, as well as indicative recruitment targets for enlargements.⁶ In its 2018 report on geographical balance⁷, the Commission considers that a significant imbalance is observed if the share of nationals of one or more Member States amongst staff is lower than 80% of the relevant guiding rate and focuses on AD staff occupying non-management functions (excluding linguists). The Commission regularly reports on the state of play on presence by nationality among its staff. Measures have been adopted by EPSO and the Commission when imbalances were observed. However, these measures have not always provided results in line with the objective. Under-representation in many staff categories is still observed in several nationalities, including in the case of Luxembourg.

In addition, the recent HR Strategy indicates that, in line with Article 27 of the Staff Regulations, the Commission will consider adopting General Implementing Provisions to enable actions aiming at improving geographical balance.

¹ COM(2018)377final/2

² C(2022) 2229 final

³ According to the Communication to the Commission: A new Human Resources Strategy for the Commission, COM(2022) 2229 final, 'On geographical balance at all levels, though by law we need to recruit staff on the broadest possible geographical basis from among nationals of Member States of the Union, there are categories of staff for which certain Member States are currently under-represented. [...] In 2022, specific Action Plans will be developed together with these Member States to improve their balance, keeping in mind that by law, no posts should be reserved for nationals of any specific Member States.'

⁴ See in that sense Article 27 of the Staff Regulations and Article 12 of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants.

⁵ Commission Communication of Mr Van Miert SEC(1994)844 of 17 May 1994 at the occasion of the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden; Communication of Mr Kinnock concerning the recruitment of Commission Officials from the new Member States of 14 February 2003 C(2003)436/5, adopted on 19 February 2003; Communication of Mr Kallas C(2006)5778 concerning the recruitment of Commission Officials and Temporary Agents from Bulgaria and Romania of 24 November 2006, adopted by Written Procedure on 1 December 2006 (SEC(2006)1574/5); Communication of Vice-President Šefčovič concerning the recruitment of Commission Officials and Temporary Agents from Croatia of 12 July 2012, (SEC(2012)436 final).

⁶ The indicative recruitment targets refer to nationals from Member States joining the EU on the occasion of enlargements.

⁷ COM(2018)377final/2

1.1. Developments in 2022

In order to address the geographical imbalances of Luxembourg nationals in the Commission (both structurally and in the shorter term), the Director-General for HR and the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg agreed on 15 July 2022 to jointly prepare an Action Plan, based on the specific situation of Luxembourg. The aim of this Action Plan is to outline some of the reasons for Luxembourg's underrepresentation, and to set out measures to be undertaken by the Commission, EPSO and Luxembourg, as well as measures to be undertaken jointly in order to address it. The implementation of some measures has already commenced in 2022 and is ongoing. The assessment of the results will be undertaken in the first quarter of 2024.

In this context, it should be noted that, in line with the Staff Regulations, all work to address geographical imbalances is to be done in light of the fact that no posts can be reserved for nationals of a specific Member State, and merit remains the primary selection criterion.

2. Luxembourg: challenges and outlook

2.1. Geographical balance snapshot as per 31/12/2022

Luxembourg's presence among the Commission staff is below 80% of its guiding rate across almost all of the indicators (Figure 1). The presence of overall AD non-linguist staff (including management) and in the category AD5-AD8 is below 80% of the guiding rate. Since 2016 the non-linguist AD staff (non-management) is on a stably low level and the AD5-AD8 is increasing slightly (Figure 2). Luxembourg is below 100% of the guiding rate at Middle Management level, and above 100% of the guiding rate at Senior Management level. The trended presence of non-permanent positions is depicted in Figure 3. The same figure also shows that Luxembourg is below 80% of the guiding rate at the level of Temporary Agents and Contract Agents FGIV with a significant drop of Temporary Agents since 2017.

Detailed analysis:

For a guiding rate of **0,8%**, under-representation is defined as below 80% of the guiding rate, which for Luxembourg nationals correspond to **0,6%**. Therefore, Luxembourg nationals are:

⁸ In its 2018 report on geographical balance, the Commission considers a significant imbalance is observed if the share of nationals of one or more Member State amongst staff is lower than 80% of the relevant guiding rate and is focussing on AD staff occupying non-management functions excluding linguists.

⁹ According to the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council pursuant to Article 27 of the Staff Regulations of Officials and to Article 12 of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (Geographical balance (COM(2018) 377 final/2), only the distribution of staff occupying non-management functions is considered. The report excluded management staff from its scope and the guiding rates defined for non-management staff are not therefore directly applicable. Indeed, the only relevant legal basis referring to geographical balance in management staff in the Commission, the Compilation Document on Senior Officials Policy (SEC(2004) 1352) only refers to functions of Director-General or equivalent (i.e. Deputy Director-General or Hors Classe Adviser) stating that the Commission considers it a desirable objective that each nationality should hold at least one function corresponding to the basic post of Director-General. Nonetheless, it is longstanding internal administrative practice to monitor the presence of Middle and Senior Management staff by analogy to the levels defined in the different Communications in effect (see footnote 6). Since 2018, the guiding rates per Member State used for internal monitoring of the presence of Middle and Senior Management staff in the Commission are the percentages defined in the 2018 report, even if they are not directly applicable. Internal reporting is established by reference to 100% of the guiding rates.

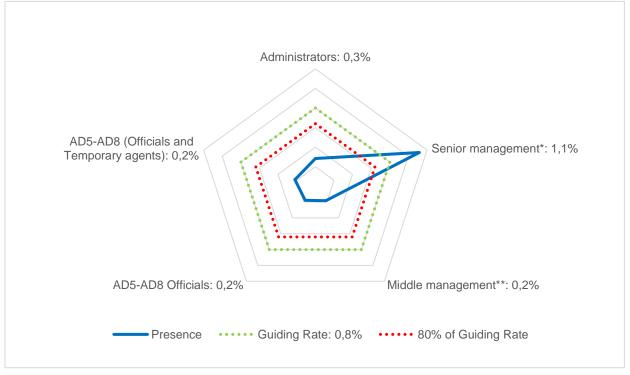
10 Ibid.

¹¹ This Action Plan concerns EU-27 nationalities and guiding rates without the UK from the Geographical Balance Report COM(2018) 377 final/2. Managers that changed their first nationality from British to one of the EU-27 nationalities after 29/3/2017 are considered to have kept their British nationality in line with section 2, 1.2.2.1 of the Report.

- Below 80% of the guiding rate among Commission staff (0.4%) and among AD non-linguists (including management) (0.3%). Regarding the population of all ADs, 14.3% are Temporary Agents;
- Below 80% of the guiding rate among AD5-AD8 non-linguists (0.2%), of which 40% are Temporary Agents;
- Below 80% of the guiding rate among AD9-AD14 grades non-management (0.3%);
- Below 100% of the guiding rate at Middle Management level (0.2%); and above 100% of the guiding rate at Senior Management level (1.1%).

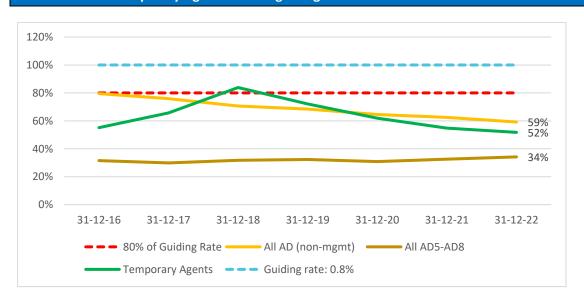
Figure 1. Luxembourg presence of permanent staff (including Temporary Agents¹²) at the Commission on December 31, 2022

(N.B. A nationality within a Staff category is considered as sufficiently represented when it is at/above 80% of the guiding rate of the Member State - i.e., the red dotted line; it is considered as under-represented, when it is below 80% of the guiding rate).



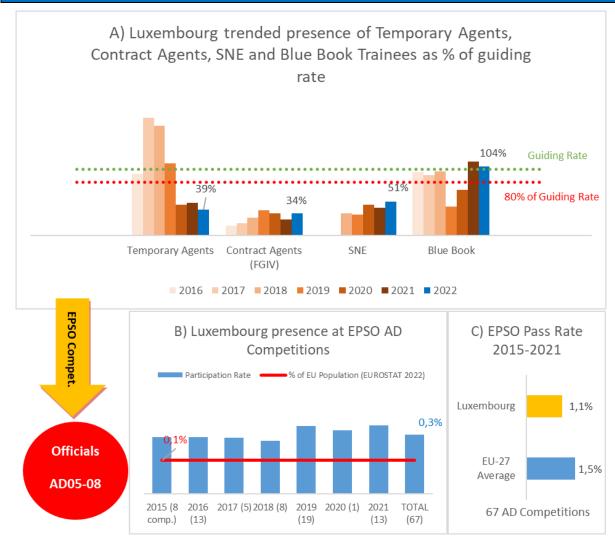
*Includes Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, Hors Classe Advisors, Directors and Principal Advisors. **Includes Heads of Unit, Heads of Departments and Heads of Task Forces.

Figure 2. Luxembourg trended presence of All AD (non-management), All AD5-AD8, Temporary Agents as % of guiding rate



¹² The inclusion of the Temporary Agents in the title is a reflection of the definition of geographical balance which includes both Officials and TAs (as TAs are establishment plan positions). Regarding the population of all ADs, 14,3 % are Temporary Agents.

Figure 3. Factors influencing Luxembourg presence at the Commission¹³



The non-permanent staff of Luxembourg nationality is under-represented in the Commission workforce, with shares below 80% of the guiding rate in 2022. Together with external candidates, they have access to EPSO (external) competitions that could lead to permanent positions (Officials AD5-AD8). In addition, Temporary Agents and Contract Agents are eligible to apply for internal competitions. Only the share of Luxembourg Blue Book Trainees is above the threshold value. Although Seconded National Experts (SNEs) do not fall within the parameters of the Staff Regulations, the Commission takes them into account as a relevant entry point for permanent positions, with potentially significant impact on overall representation of a particular Member State.¹⁴

Participation in EPSO AD competitions of Luxembourg candidates initiated between 2015 and 2021 is above the expected rate based on the size of the population.

¹³ The increase in 2017 is explained by 3 new Temporary Agents ADs. This doubled the Luxembourg count from 2016 (not linked to Cabinets).. From 2020, the number of Luxembourg Temporary Agents was reduced to 3, and at this stage as the overall Temporary Agent staff increased significantly since 2019 the Luxembourg share dropped below that compared to 2016.

¹⁴ Across the Commission, 74% of SNEs are funded jointly by the Commission and the Member State (so called, "shared cost" SNEs) whereas 26% are paid in full by the Member State ("cost-free" SNEs). These percentages relate to the overall population and not specifically to Luxembourg.

The pass rate of EPSO AD competitions initiated between 2015 and 2021 is lower than the EU average. The results from measures targeting EPSO competitions will depend on the frequency of these competitions.

2.2. Outlook

Finally, the picture should also be interpreted in light of the following additional elements:

- Luxembourg presence below 80% of the guiding rate in most¹⁶ entry point categories is mainly seen as due to lengthy and complex EU careers' selection and recruitment procedures¹⁷ resulting in reduced attractiveness of EU careers (for comparison the median recruitment procedure in the Luxembourg public service is two to three months). To be noted, that the new EPSO Competition framework has been adopted at the end of January 2023 and is aimed at shortening and simplifying selection procedures;
- There is a general interest in EU careers among young people, at the same time the Luxembourg labour market is very competitive compared to EU job offers;
- A significant share of Luxembourg Officials (27% of current AD staff of Luxembourg nationality compared to 12% for EU-27 average) is set to retire from the Commission ("cliff edge" effect) between 2023 and 2026. This could potentially increase the under-representation further if recruitments do not compensate for departures. The Commission will therefore carefully follow inflow and outflow trends and take action as appropriate.

3. Measures to address under-representation

3.1. Luxembourg's actions and initiatives

3.1.1. Current (updated by Luxembourg)

The Luxembourg government coalition programme 2018-2023 states a broad policy support for the presence of Luxembourg nationals within international organisations and European institutions in particular. To this end, the secondment of Luxembourg civil servants to European and international institutions is being supported.

Luxembourg has already undertaken the following activities:

• Recruitment of a full time civil servant to work promoting the presence of Luxembourg citizens in EU and international organisations;

¹⁵ The indicated EPSO participation-and success rate refers to an aggregated average of all AD competitions initiated between 2015-2021.

¹⁶ The reference to 'most' relates to the fact that some entry point categories are not subject to complex selection and recruitment procedures, for example, Temporary Agents, SNEs and Contract Agents.

¹⁷ EPSO Final Report, 'Analysis of a survey to improve information and communication activities for EU citizens interested in pursuing an EU career' (2020). P.30

- Better integration of the NEPT programme in the career development of young professionals at the Ministry;
- Provision of training to candidates preparing for the first stage of the EPSO competitions;
- Continued financing of additional junior professionals in the delegations¹⁸;
- Promotion of SNE vacancy announcements & EPSO competitions;
- Interview coaching for some SNE candidates;
- Organisation of information sessions on EU careers;
- Systematic outreach to Bluebook trainees;
- Designation of EU Staff and Student Ambassadors.

3.1.2. Future (updated by Luxembourg)

- Assess options to provide SNEs with allowances within current legal framework and include provisions for allowances for SNEs in the new legal framework of the diplomatic corps, which is currently under revision;
- Reinforced engagement with participants in EU programmes (Blue Book, JPP, JPD, NEPT) as well as relevant student groups;
- Organisation of information sessions on EU careers;
- Increased cooperation with EU Staff;
- Closer cooperation with Student Ambassadors (EU Student ambassador training in Luxembourg in October 2023).

3.2. European Commission's measures

To strengthen geographical balance, the Commission will adopt measures considering the specificities of Luxembourg.

3.2.1. Actions aiming at redressing the observed imbalances in the short term, with impact on long term

In the short-term, actions aiming at improving geographical balance will mainly consist in promoting under-represented nationals in the recruitment process of non-permanent staff as statistics show that a significant part of successful candidates in external competitions belong to these categories.

As concerns the actions focussing on non-permanent non-linguistic AD level recruitments (which are valid both for the short and the longer term):

¹⁸ One JPD (Junior Professionals in Delegation) per Member State for the Commission and one JPD per Member State for the European External Action Service (EEAS). In addition, Member States can offer to finance additional JPDs assigned to one Institution or the other depending of their priorities. Joint Decision JOIN(2012)17 of 12.06.2012 of the Commission and the High Representative of the EEAS establishing a High Level traineeship Programme in the Delegations in partnership with the Member States as amended. The programme is under the overall management of the EEAS and implemented with the Commission. Trainees are assigned to both the EEAS and the Commission that are responsible for the selection procedure of their respective JPD.

- DG HR launched in September a pilot project aiming to increase the share of Temporary Agents
 (TA) from under-represented Member States. DG HR is currently working with DGs to see how
 to increase the visibility of job vacancies, possibly yielding more applications from these
 Member States. The take-up of this initiative would need to be assessed before full roll-out,
 also in view of new IT solutions to handle large number of applicants;
- Commission DGs have been asked to interview at least one candidate from an underrepresented Member States when organising the selection of non-permanent staff since September 2022.
 - These actions are expected to produce a short-term effect and longer-term effect, e.g. by organizing internal competitions, allowing the most successful non-permanent staff to be recruited as Officials. In this sense, the Commission ensured a greater predictability for this internal track by publishing a calendar for internal competitions until 2024;
- In parallel, DG HR is preparing **General Implementing Provisions** (GIPs), which will allow the adoption of appropriate measures to tackle geographical imbalances (including competitions by nationality) if required. The HR Strategy indicates that nationality based open competitions will be used, where appropriate and in line with EU Law, following an analysis of the impact of Action Plans for underrepresented Member States. Whilst nationality-based open competitions are mentioned as possible appropriate measures under certain circumstances¹⁹, it needs to be ensured that they comply with Article 27 of the Staff Regulations;
- The Blue Book Traineeships are also a key entry point in the Commission. DG HR and DG EAC agreed to apply as of 2023 the Member States' guiding rates and replace the current geographical quotas to improve the geographical balance of the Blue Book Trainees. All Trainees already receive introductory training for EU Careers in general and positions such as Contract Agents, AD5 and Junior Professionals Programme (JPP) in particular. For the October 2022 campaign, a top up was used to improve the geographical balance of under-represented Member States, which brought positive results.

3.2.2. Actions aiming at correcting the underlying causes of imbalances in the longer term

Actions aiming at correcting the causes of imbalances in the long term must have a large spectrum. They include amongst others communication, outreach and targeted training.

- External competitions: The main measures in the EPSO Action Plan include:
 - a newly approved competition model focusing on reducing the duration of external competitions to 6 months, from publication of the notices of competition to publication of the reserve lists;
 - terminating the use of the Assessment Centre (oral tests) and using only written tests in the selection procedures;
 - o creating a single-window review mechanism;

¹⁹ Those appropriate measures must be justified and shall never result in recruitment criteria other than those based on merit. Before such appropriate measures are adopted, the appointing authority of the institution concerned shall adopt general provisions for giving effect to this paragraph in accordance with Article 110.

- o pre-publishing information materials for the EU knowledge test (used only for generalist AD and AST competitions);
- possibly introducing a digital skills test for some competitions, in line with the needs of EPSO's institutional clients;
- universal use of remotely proctored tests;
- o reasoning tests organised on a pass/fail basis (not ranked);
- o multilingual competitions with some testing in one specific language, in line with the needs of EPSO's institutional clients.

Moreover, EPSO will continue to publish information on competitions in due time and will strive to enhance communication with successful candidates on its reserve lists.

EPSO will also continue to provide targeted information on working and living conditions in Brussels and Luxembourg, including by providing relevant statistics and video staff testimonials. EPSO will continue to produce webinars for Member States EU Careers experts, public video tutorials, public online landing pages and infographics (in all 24 languages), as well as social media posts and ads for each competition. EPSO's new website (June 2022) will remain the main information hub for external competitions.

- Outreach: The Commission will actively mobilise available resources in the Commission's Representation in Luxembourg to participate in outreach, public events and spread targeted communications materials emphasising the opportunities EU careers offer (value-based jobs, variety of policy fields, possibility to be hosted in other Member States or in third countries outside of the EU, etc);
- Undertake appropriate actions to reach potential candidates who might not see a career for themselves in the EU institutions. This could include qualified candidates from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, candidates with disabilities or from an ethnic minority background. These groups are currently underrepresented among Commission staff and reaching out to them could be a way of both increasing the talent pool and increasing diversity among Commission staff;
- Management: The Commission will continue to work on identification of talent for managerial functions and support those Officials who aspire to Middle Management and Senior Management, also targeting Officials coming from under-represented Member States (including Luxembourg). This includes tailored development programmes for aspiring Middle Managers and Senior Managers, and other support measures. For aspiring Senior Managers, this is in the form of individual coaching sessions, and for aspiring Middle Managers it is in the form of different learning experiences that include coaching, mentoring and career guidance.

3.3. Joint measures

Actions to be jointly undertaken by the Luxembourg Government, the Commission and its Representation in Luxembourg. These initiatives include among others targeted training, outreach and promotion:

- The Commission will strive to make staff available for Luxembourg information sessions to inform about EU careers and recruitment procedures;
- Co-operation with the local European Commission Representation in Luxembourg to disseminate information targeting Luxembourg nationals relating to EU Careers and

collaborate with the Luxembourg authorities to provide support to potential applicants. The Commission Representation in Luxembourg organises twice a year a reception for Blue Book Trainees and invites relevant Officials from the MFEA;

- Produce and disseminate, in cooperation with the Commission, materials for social media campaigns for EU Careers by filming short inspiring testimonial videos from Luxembourg nationals who work for the EC in different languages;
- Ensure that the relevant contact point at the Permanent Representation of Luxembourg is
 informed about updates on recruitment procedures. In particular, the Commission will share
 the relevant information material (infographics, publications etc.) in order to allow appropriate
 dissemination by the Luxembourg authorities. An open line of communication should be kept
 between the Commission and Luxembourg.

4. Data and performance indicators

4.1. Data sharing on geographical balance

The Commission is conscious that Member States need to be regularly informed on the evolution of the situation regarding geographical balance. The 2018 report on geographical balance was a one-off exercise (as foreseen by the Staff Regulations). The Commission committed however to present data on Staff geographical balance to the Working Party on Staff Regulations (WPSR) once a year (higher frequency would not be appropriate for several reasons: statistical significance, influence of external constraints, technical factors; granularity is to be examined also in light of personal data protection; additional ad hoc requests could be examined on a case-to-case basis).

In addition, the Commission will continue to provide **comprehensive statistics at regular intervals** through different channels: via the Europa website (HR statistics and Statistical Bulletin); three times a year directly to Permanent Representations (full staff listings); via regular updates to the WPSR on geographical balance.

4.2. Action Plan performance indicators

The measures implemented by Luxembourg, and the Commission will be assessed in the first quarter of 2024 according to the following indicators (non-exhaustive list). The baseline used will be 31 December 2021:

Output indicators (they relate to implemented operations/measures by measuring what is directly produced/supplied):

- Indicators related to promotional and communication activities to be developed based on the design/setup of the measure and internal capacities to collect the data:
 - Number of participants at webinars, or career fairs to promote specific EU jobs as well as EU careers;
 - Scope of outreach activities, such as mailing lists and social media activities (recipients, followers etc.);
 - Number of SNE candidates coached for SNE vacancies;

- Number of EU Careers Staff Ambassadors;
- Number of EU Careers Student Ambassadors.

Result indicators (they capture the expected effects on participants or entities brought about by an operation/measure):

- Number of applicants to the Blue Book Traineeship programme, and number of trainees who start the traineeship;
- Number of Blue Book Trainees who become Commission staff;
- Number of candidates applying for and successful candidates on the Junior Professionals Programme (JPP);
- Number of non-permanent staff, and the number of external candidates who become Contract Agents FGIV, AD5-AD8 Temporary Agents or AD5-AD8 Officials;
- Number of SNEs;
- Share of administrators across various grades, focusing on AD5-AD8 Officials;
- Participation and success rate at EPSO competitions;
- The number of people who participate in the NEPT programme and as Junior Professionals in the Delegations.

5. Next steps



As per the HR Strategy, the Commission, has committed to improve geographical balance by meeting all Member States and drafting joint Action Plans for those that are under-represented in entry grade categories of staff. These Action Plans are 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.

The implementation of the soft measures from the joint Action Plans will continue throughout 2023. Based on the collected data on output and results indicators, Luxembourg and the Commission will jointly assess the impact of these measures during the first quarter of 2024.²⁰ Based on the jointly reached conclusions from the assessment, it will be discussed whether to include further measures in addition to those already listed in this joint Action Plan.

In addition, an annual follow-up of the statistics in the Working Party on Staff Regulations is foreseen as well as regular monitoring of geographical balance and continuation of a dialogue with the Member States.

The Commission encourages Member States to share their best practices. Synergies can be achieved by launching joint actions in Brussels, including joint job fairs, and organizing communication and outreach events to promote EU Careers, in which the Commission and other EU institutions can participate.

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 $^{^{20}}$ The assessment will be based on measures starting from the 1st of January 2022.

6. Annex: Glossary on Staff Grades and Categories

Administrator: This percentage includes staff between AD5-AD16. It includes managers and Temporary Agents. It excludes linguists.

AD5-AD8 Officials: This percentage includes AD5-AD8 Officials. It excludes linguists and Temporary Agents.

All Commission staff: This percentages includes all ADs, ASTs and AST-SCs in the Commission. It includes linguists and Temporary Agents.

Average EPSO Pass Rate: This percentage shows the EPSO Competition pass rate in comparison to the average EU-27 pass rate (1,5%) for competitions initiated between 2015 and 2021.

Blue Book Trainees (BBT): Twice a year, the Commission offers 5-month paid traineeships. The traineeships begin in March or October. This percentage includes both sessions per year.

Contract Agents (CA): Contract staff are employed for a limited period, with an initial contract of 6-12 months which can be for renewed up to 6 years. This percentage only includes Contract Agents FGIV.

Guiding Rate: It is used to measure and determine whether an EU Member States is underrepresented or not according to Article 27 of the EU Staff regulation. It is calculated on the basis of: 1) population 2) number of seats in the European Parliament and 3) voting rules in the Council. A country is considered to be under-represented if there is a deviation of at least -20% from the guiding rate. It does not set indicative targets for future recruitments of certain nationalities and is used for monitoring purposes.

Junior Professionals in Delegation (JPD): programme that enables young people to gain a first-hand experience in the work of Delegations. The EEAS and the EC finance minimum 54 JPDs posts, additional posts might be financed through voluntary contributions of EU Member States. Luxembourg finances additional JPDs.

Junior Professional Programme (JPP): This percentage includes selected Junior Professionals (up to 50 in total per year). The JPP is targeted at Blue Book Trainees, CAST Contract Agents and Temporary Agents with less than 3 years of work experience. It gives them the opportunity to participate in internal competitions to become EU Officials at the end of the programme.

Middle Management: This percentage includes Heads of Unit, Heads of Departments and Heads of Task Forces.

National Experts on Professional Training (NEPT): staff from the public administrations of EU or EFTA Member States who are working in the Commission for professional training purposes for a duration between 3 and 5 months.

Participation at EPSO Competition: The participation rate shows the country's share of participation in EPSO AD competitions initiated between 2015 and 2021 compared to the share of its population among the EU-27.

Seconded National Experts (SNE): This percentage includes national or international civil servants who are working temporarily for the Commission but remain in the service of their national employer. SNEs

work in the Commission for a limited period, initially for 12-24 months which can be extended to 4 years or, exceptionally, 6 years.

Senior Management: This percentage includes Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, Hors Classe Advisors, Directors and Principal Advisors.

Temporary Agents (TA): Temporary Agents can perform specific tasks as an Administrator on a temporary basis. The maximum duration of the initial contract is four years. The contract can be renewed once for a maximum duration of two years.

