

**Working in the EU institutions.
General provisions and stages of
the competitions. Tips and
methodology for the admission
tests**



- Why a career in the EU institutions;
- EPSO;
- Minimum requirements to the candidates;
- Career structure;
- Salary and Retirement;



- Selection Procedure;
- Admission tests;
- Written tests;
- Oral test;
- Non-permanent posts;
- Bulgaria and EPSO.

A Rewarding Career

- **Appraisal & Promotion:**
Merit and priority points
- **Training & Development:**
Commitment to lifelong learning;
- **Attractive & flexible working conditions:**
work/life balance

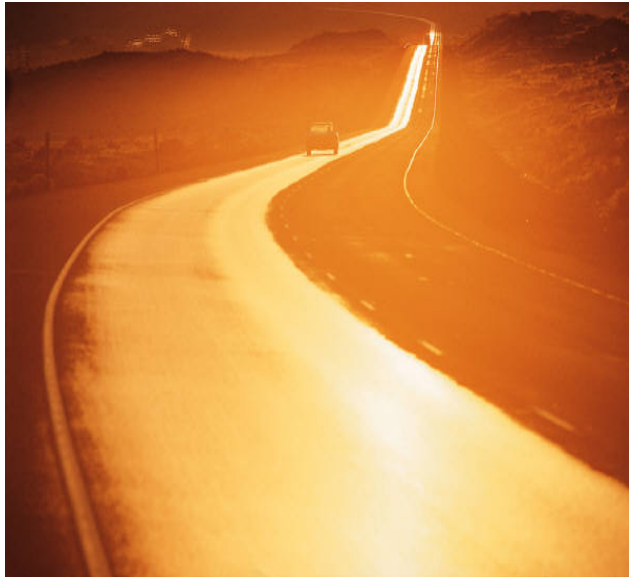


Why?

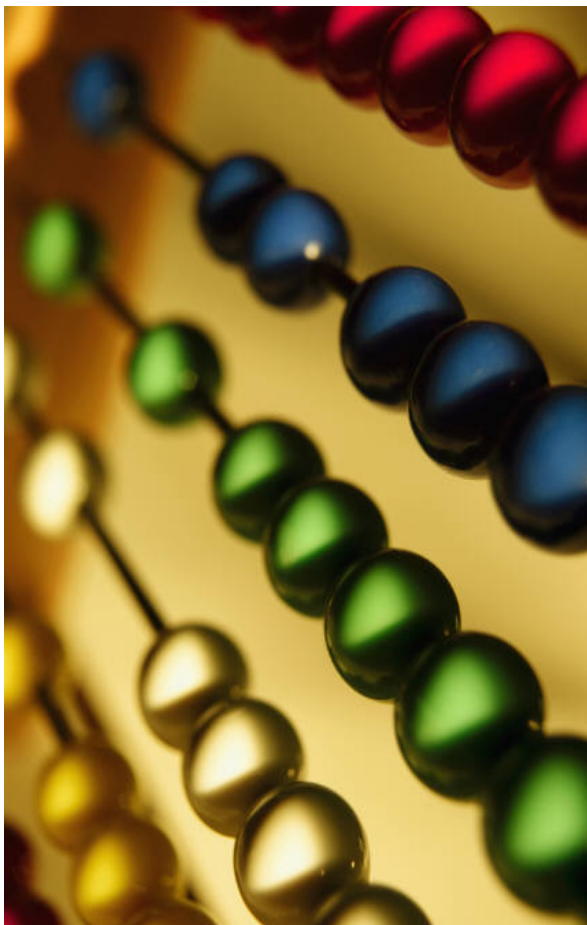
- Multicultural environment
- Learning how the EU works in practice
- Language skills
- Get to know different cultures
- Making international networks
- Enlarging your horizon
- Travelling in Europe and the world

- Basic salary
- Moving costs
- VAT-exemption
- Daily allowance
- Installation allowance
- Expatriation allowance
- Family allowance
- Health care (medical coverage)
- Holidays

The journey begins with EPSO...



EPSO – from the beginning up to now...

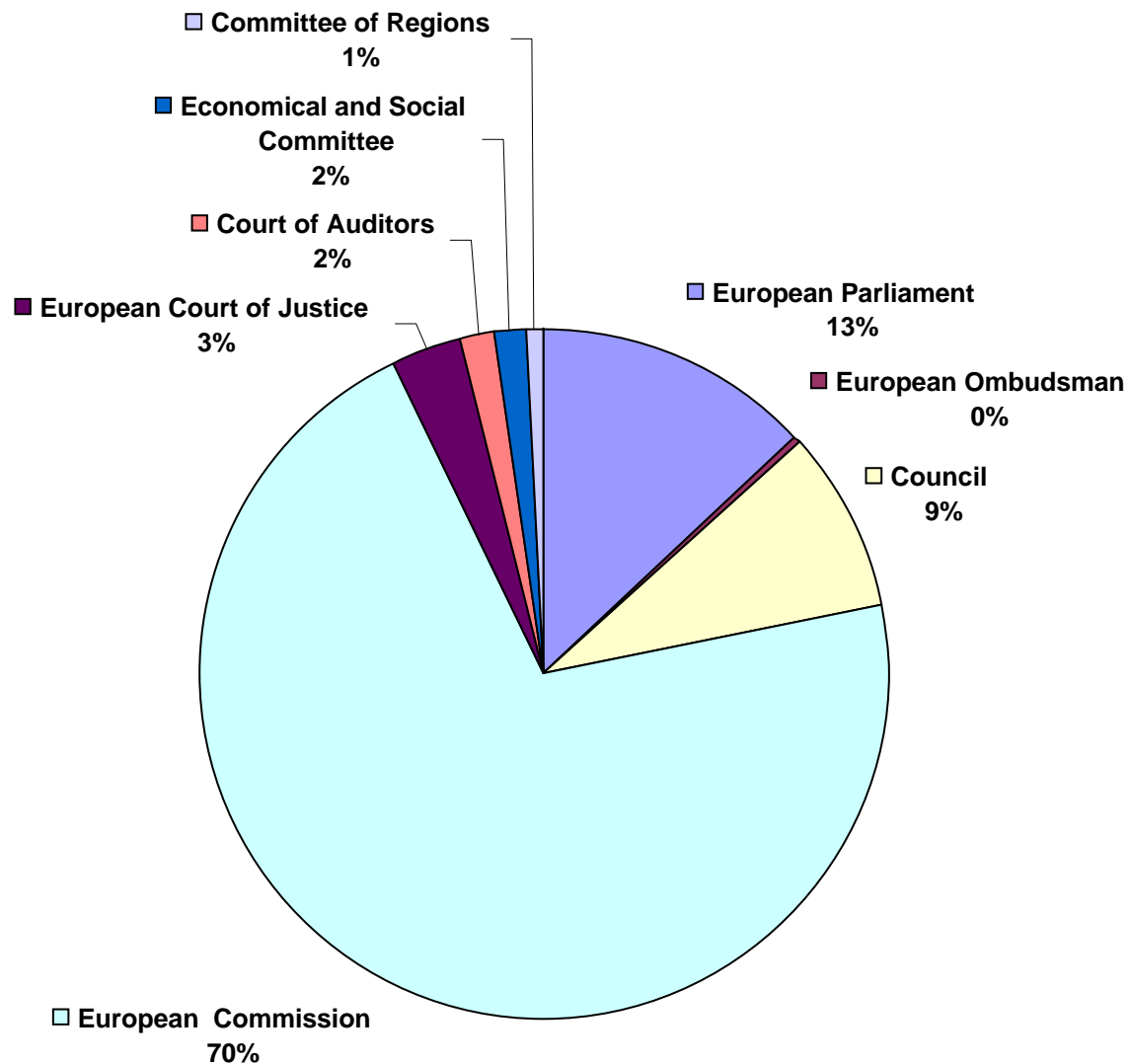


- Selection of staff for all EU institution;
- Created in specific context of enlargement;

Numbers:

- 285 open competitions
- 290.822 online applications
- 10.693 laureates selected
- 7049 laureates recruited

Scale of operations



Minimum requirements for the candidates

All positions:

- EU citizen;
- Knowledge of at least 2 EU official working languages.

AD (graduate) category:

- University degree (at least 3 years);
- Specific requirements for each competition.

AST category:

- Higher secondary level education;
- Relevant work experience (3 years).



Career structure

function group AD		function group AST	
Director-General	AD 16		
Director-General/ Director	AD 15		
Administrator working for example as:			
Director / Head of unit / Adviser / linguistic expert; economic expert; legal expert; medical expert; veterinary expert; scientific expert; research expert; financial expert, audit expert	AD 14		
Head of Unit/Adviser/linguistic expert; economic expert; legal expert; medical expert; veterinary expert; scientific expert; research expert; financial expert, audit expert	AD 13		
Head of Unit/principal translator, principal interpreter, principal economist; principal lawyer; principal medical officer; principal veterinary inspector; principal scientist; principal researcher; principal financial officer, principal audit officer	AD 12		Assistant working for example as:
	AD 11	AST 11	
Head of Unit/senior translator; senior interpreter; senior economist ; senior lawyer; senior medical officer; senior veterinary inspector; senior scientist; senior researcher; senior financial officer, senior audit officer	AD 10	AST 10	Personal assistant (p.a.); clerical officer; technical officer; IT officer
	AD 9	AST 9	
Translator; interpreter; economist; lawyer; medical officer; veterinary inspector; scientist; researcher; financial officer, auditor	AD 8	AST 8	Senior clerk; senior documentalist; senior technician; senior IT operative
	AD 7	AST 7	
Junior translator; junior interpreter; junior economist; junior lawyer; junior medical officer; junior veterinary inspector; junior scientist; junior researcher; junior financial officer, junior auditor	AD 6	AST 6	Clerk; documentalist; technician; IT operative
	AD 5	AST 5	
		AST 4	Junior clerk; junior documentalist; junior technician, junior IT operative
		AST 3	
		AST 2	Filing clerk; technical attendant; IT attendant, Parliamentary usher.
		AST 1	

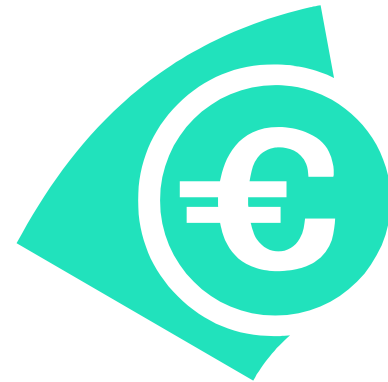
Salary and pension

Salary

- Monthly salary AD5 (step 1): €4,052
- Monthly salary AST 3 : €3,165
- Monthly salary AST 1 : €2,472
- Family allowances: Household allowance, Dependent child allowance, Education allowance
- Expatriation allowance

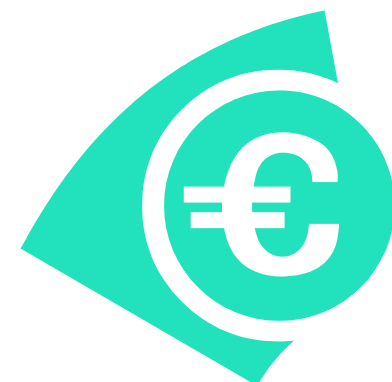
Pension

- Normal retirement age: 65; right stay until 67
- Full pension rights 70% of final basic salary
- Flexible retirement provisions from 55



GRADES	STEPS				
	1	2	3	4	5
1.05.2004					
16	14822,86	15445,74	16094,79		
15	13100,93	13651,45	14225,11	14620,87	14822,86
14	11579,04	12065,60	12572,62	12922,41	13100,93
13	10233,93	10663,98	11112,09	11421,25	11579,04
12	9045,09	9425,17	9821,23	10094,47	10233,93
11	7994,35	8330,28	8680,33	8921,83	9045,09
10	7065,67	7362,57	7671,96	7885,41	7994,35
9	6244,87	6507,29	6780,73	6969,38	7065,67
8	5519,42	5751,35	5993,03	6159,77	6244,87
7	4878,24	5083,24	5296,84	5444,21	5519,42
6	4311,55	4492,73	4681,52	4811,77	4878,24
5	3810,69	3970,82	4137,68	4252,80	4311,55
4	3368,02	3509,54	3657,02	3758,76	3810,69
3	2976,76	3101,85	3232,19	3322,12	3368,02
2	2630,96	2741,52	2856,72	2936,20	2976,76
1	2325,33	2423,04	2524,86	2595,11	2630,96

Salaries



Where?

- Brussels;
- Luxembourg;
- Strasbourg;
- Member States of the EU – Agencies and Representations;
- Delegations in third countries;
- Delegations to international organisations (UN, WTO...)



Competitions

- Organised by: “European Personnel Selection Office” (http://europa.eu/epso/index_en.htm)
- Published in the Official Journal
- **For example: EPSO/AD/46-47/06:**
- European public administration/human resources
- Law;
- Audit;
- Economics/statistics.



Review of the present selection procedure

3 Stages - Each stage eliminatory

- Pre-selection (P&P)/ Admission (CBT) Tests – all applicants (V &N plus EU)
- Written Test(s) – fixed number (Specialist knowledge)
- Oral Test – fixed number

Characteristic of current approach

- Weighted in favour of Knowledge
- Taken in second language

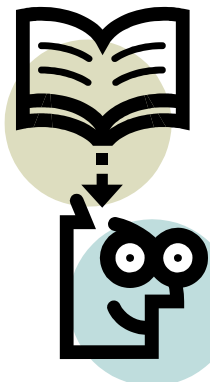


Admission tests



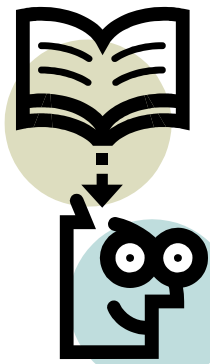
Admission tests

- **EU knowledge** – history, institutions, policies, decision-making process;
- **Verbal and numerical reasoning;**



Role and weight

- **role:** to check logical reasoning ability:
 - mathematic – statistic - “numerical reasoning”;
 - language knowledge – “verbal reasoning”;
 - no need to “reason”: multiple choice;
- **weight:**
 - must pass individually each test!



Timing

- deliberate time pressure: almost always lack of time
- app. one and a half minutes for a question
- verbal questions usually somewhat faster to solve
- priorities, order!



Verbal reasoning (1) - example

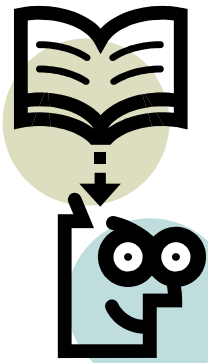
„The EU protects by legislation certain product names that are linked to a territory or to a production method. Protected names are indicated by a quality label. This system has various advantages: the protected names provide substantial guarantees for consumers, who know they are buying the product of guaranteed authenticity, origin and quality, and geographical indications and other quality labels send an excellent marketing message about high value-added products. Some products are exceptional and deserve some explanation of where they come from and how they are produced. Consumers and the food trade are increasingly interested in the geographical origin and other characteristics of food products.”

Which statement about the labels affixed to protected product names is correct?

- a) They indicate the exceptional nature of the product.
- b) They may indicate that the product comes from a particular geographical area.
- c) They do not necessarily imply that the product is protected by EU legislation.
- d) They apply to specific product names, sales of which are declining.

Verbal reasoning (2)

- always a paragraph long text
- usually more (2-3) questions to a given text;
- solve ONLY on the basis of the text!
- identify relevant parts of the text
- often the substitution of some words by their synonyms
- The rule of exclusion.



Numerical reasoning (1) - example

% of female teachers (2000)

	Primary education	Secondary education	Higher education
Germany	82%	60%	31%
Greece	55%	54%	35%
Ireland	80%	56%	30%
Italy	95%	65%	26%
EU-15	77%	56%	36%

In 2000, there were 40 000 teachers in Greece, one fifth of whom in higher education. How many more males than females were there amongst the teaching staff in higher education in Greece in 2000?

- a) 640
- b) 2 400
- c) 5200
- d) 12 000



How to prepare?

- Practice, practice, practice!;
- Measure your time;
- Establish priorities: which is easier for you?

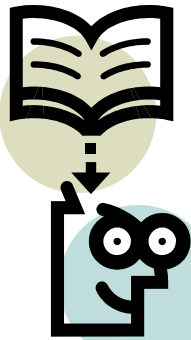


Written tests



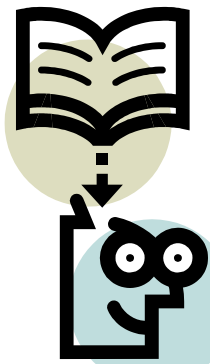
Introduction

- specific competition: checks specific abilities that will be useful for your duties
 - Can you organise a press conference?
 - Can you draft a press release?
 - Can you create a brochure or a poster?
 - Can you prepare a communication strategy?
 - Can you analyse public opinion?



Types of written tests

- **Essay**
 - usually possible to choose between several (3-7) topics;
- **Dossier:** less likely these days
 - linked to the actualities of EC communications policy;
 - usually no choice is possible;
 - several documents, sources are provided (i.e. legal acts, drafts, opinions);
 - task: summary or analysis from a specific point of view.



Aim of the written test

- to check general drafting and phrasing abilities;
- to check ability to prioritize – analytical approach;
- language skills:
 - important but not most important!
 - role of the “jargon” – avoid acronyms!
- time: usually two hours;
- not allowed: signature or distinctive marks.



Written test: possible question-types in the field of information, communication and the media

- You may be asked to:
 - Draft a press release on a predefined subject
 - Draft a short speech for a Commissioner or Director General on a predefined topic
 - Reply to a specific question from a Member of the European Parliament, a journalist or a citizen
 - Put forward a communications strategy for a specific event (such as a conference) or a Community action (such as a decision of the Commission to prohibit State aid to a company)
 - Prepare a note for your hierarchy on how a specific targeted audience (e.g. youth) could be reached.



Written test: example of an essay

- **Write a detailed analysis of one of the following three subjects:**

- Communications policy in light of the Commission's Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate;
- Communication Priorities for 2008;
- Means and methodology for "going local" in communications policy.

- **Methodology:**

- less strict than file from the content point of view;
- but: same principles (structure, conciseness, etc);



Written test: example of a dossier (1)

- **“The Commission adopted a decision finding that aid given by X Member State to a shipyard is not compatible with Community law”**
- **Using the attached file as a base:**
 - 1. Draft a press release of 400 words;**
 - 2. Draft 2 or 3 concise sentences to be pronounced by the Commissioner at a press conference;**



Written test: example of a dossier (2)

- In the dossier (app. 30-60 pages):;
- Commission Decision declaring the State aid incompatible with EC law;
- A note with the main messages to be delivered;
- Basic instructions on how to draft press releases;
- Methodology:
 - Draft answer on the basis of relevant parts.



Oral exam – an interview



The purpose and subject of the oral test: what does it test?

- the general abilities of the candidate:
- the knowledge in his/her professional field
- general EU knowledge: integration, institutions, law, policies and politics
- communication skills (the most important here!)
- capacity to work in a multicultural environment
- motivation, attitude

The selection board

- usually 5-6 persons;
 - at least one person from the most important institutions, such as the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council;
 - one “independent” person to supervise the procedure;
- its composition is usually known a few weeks before the oral test;
- it is prohibited to contact the members of the selection board;
- however, their special field of interest can be of help during the preparation: **SEARCH!**

Features of the oral test

- duration: about 45 minutes;
- there are no drafted/prepared questions
- the language of the oral test:
 - in principle, the chosen language of the written test
 - but questions are to be expected in the second language and other languages indicated in the CV

Questions in the oral test

- mixed nature: in 80% a classic exam, in 20% a job-interview;
- questions may relate to:
 - the subject of the competition: communication policy, media strategies, current issues of European integration, institutions, etc.;
 - previous/actual professional experience and CV which might be relevant for the competition;
 - general motivation questions (rarely, but not excluded);
 - questions repeatedly asked! (latecomers' advantage).

Communication-related questions in the oral test (1)

- **tends to measure:**
 - intelligent argumentation
 - capacity to react quickly and accurately
 - capacity to deliver short/structured answers
 - “professionalism””

- **questions may be:**
 - Let's suppose you are a spokesperson and a journalist asks you ... how do you react?
 - Name three effective means of reaching out to as many citizens as possible!
 - What type of surveys do you know?
 - What main messages would you include in a communication strategy on migration?

Communication-related questions in the oral test (2)

- **additional questions may be:**
 - Do you think communication should become an EU policy on its own right? Why or why not?
 - What kind of minimum standards would you introduce for consultations?
 - How would you improve and extend the visitors' programmes of the EU institutions?
 - Based on recent surveys, what do European citizens think about abortion, the role of the state in the economy, homosexual marriage, immigrants, etc?
 - What do you know about the European Transparency Initiative?

“Motivation-type” questions in the oral test

- **tends to measure:**
 - commitment of candidate
 - willingness to continue improving skills

- **questions may be:**
 - Present yourself!
 - Why would you like to work for the EU institutions?
 - Which EU institution would you like to work for?
 - What are your professional objectives?
 - Why should we recruit you? Why should we not?
 - Do you prefer working individually or in groups?
 - How would you react to threats or insults?

Reserve list

List of successful candidates

- Competition finalized by establishment of Reserve list;
- EPSO selects/ institutions recruit;
- Validity of the reserve: between years



Reserve list

- The list of successful candidates in the Official Journal;
- According to fields and (usually max 4) merit groups, in alphabetical order;
- Condition but not guarantee of recruitment (Notices of open competition: “Recruitment will depend on vacant posts and funds becoming available”);
- Lobbying!



The journey begins with EPSO...



..., but not only!

Non-permanent posts

- Traineeships;
- Temporary agents;
- Contract agents;
- Seconded national experts;



The participation of Bulgaria in the selection of EPSO

Open competitions - Bulgarian successful candidates

Open Competitions	F	M	Total
EPSO/AD/33/05	9	0	9
EPSO/AD/35/05	102	31	133
EPSO/AD/43/06 - CJ	10	4	14
EPSO/AD/43/06-OT	15	2	17
EPSO/AD/46/06	62	43	105
EPSO/AST/14/06	84	8	92
Total	282	88	370

Successful candidates - Recruited

Recruited		
F	M	Total
7		7
89	29	118
10	4	14
8	1	9
25	9	34
71	6	77
210	49	259

Thank you for your attention :)

Diana Dimova

Information specialist

Information Centre of the EU

Tel./ Fax: +359 933 52 58

E-mail: diana@evropa.bg

URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria>