



Title: Internal Procedure on Recruitment and Selection of Contract Agents	
Number ECDC/IP/92 rev. 2	
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to define process for recruiting and selecting Contract Agents at ECDC within the general framework of the Staff Regulations and Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities (hereinafter CEOS).

2. Scope

The procedure is applicable to the recruitment and selection of Contract Agents at ECDC (hereinafter Staff Members). The Description in Article 4 of the procedure applies to recruitments further to Annex I, Article 3 of the Implementing Rule n°22 on the general provisions for implementing Article 79(2) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union, governing the conditions of employment of contract staff employed under the terms of Article 3a thereof (IR n°22).

The engagement of Temporary Agents, Seconded National Experts, trainees, consultants and interim staff is not covered by the provisions laid down in this document.

3. Background/legal base

The legal framework for the recruitment and selection of Contract Agents at ECDC is defined in:

- Title IV 'Contract staff' in the CEOS which governs the conditions of recruitment of contract staff.

Furthermore, the following implementing rule adopted by the Centre is applicable:

- Implementing Rule n°22 on the general provisions for implementing Article 79(2) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union, governing the conditions of employment of contract staff employed under the terms of Article 3a thereof.

4. Description

ECDC applies the provisions laid out in Article 82 of the CEOS stating that 'Contract staff shall be selected on the broadest possible geographical basis from among nationals of Member States and without distinction as to racial or ethnic origin, political, philosophical or religious beliefs, age or disability, gender or sexual orientation and without reference to their marital status or family situation.'

ECDC conducts a structured recruitment process that aims at selecting candidates that best match the requirements of the vacant post.

4.1. General principles

The various parties involved in the recruitment process shall act independently, in a transparent manner and above all respect the principles of equality and equity between the candidates.

These principles involve a consideration of the differences in educational systems, mutual recognition of degrees, and a clear understanding of the intrinsic value of professional experience.

Candidates are assessed on the basis of their relative merits to the vacant post. The final selection decisions, made by the Director of ECDC in his/her capacity as the authority authorised to conclude contracts, will be taken following a recommendation of the Selection Committee and may take into account the geographic equilibrium of staff members among the Member States, the gender balance at ECDC and/or the organisational requirements of the Centre.

Selection procedures are organised to select candidates for specific vacant posts and to constitute a reserve of suitable candidates that may be used for future recruitments..

4.2. Selection Committee

4.2.1. Appointment and composition

The Selection Committee shall be composed of at least three members consisting of one Chairperson, one member from the Human Resources Section and one member designated by the Staff Committee.

The Director shall nominate a minimum of two members, i.e. the Chairperson and the member from the Human Resources Section. One member is nominated by the Staff Committee from among its members or other staff members invited to act on its behalf. The Staff Committee representative is a full member of the Selection Committee.

Experts, or other additional members, either internal or, very exceptionally, external to ECDC, may also be nominated by the Director should such expertise be needed to properly assess the candidates' competencies in relation to the vacant post. In such cases they can be either fully appointed members of the Selection Committee or, exceptionally, only be asked to provide independent expertise without formally being part of the Selection Committee.

The appointment of the Selection Committee members follows a set of requirements: the function group of the committee members cannot be lower than the function group of the vacant position¹, there should be an as broad as possible geographical representation amongst the Selection Committee members and gender balance should be maintained.

¹ In cases of Temporary Agents being part of Selection Committees for Contract Agents, AST or AD staff can be Selection Committee members for positions in FG I, II, III, and only AD staff can be Selection Committee members for positions in FG IV.

A Selection Committee is appointed for each recruitment procedure. It is essential that all members of the Selection Committee are available for the entire selection process until final recommendations are made to the Director and that a change of Committee members is avoided if possible. If a designated member of the Selection Committee is prevented from taking part, Human Resources (hereafter referred to as HR) must be informed immediately stating the reason for withdrawal. A replacement member may be proposed and an amendment to the appointment of the Selection Committee shall be signed.

4.2.2. Role and responsibility of Selection Committee

The main task of the Selection Committee is to assess the applicants in order to determine their suitability for the vacant post according to the criteria outlined in the published vacancy notice. The deliberations of the Selection Committee are strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to anyone outside of the Committee and HR staff involved in the recruitment.

Throughout the entire selection process members of the Selection Committee should refrain from any kind of behaviour that could be interpreted as partiality vis-à-vis candidates.

The Selection Committee must sign a 'declaration of interest and confidentiality' prior to being given access to the applications. In cases of any personal/professional links, or financial interests with a candidate, the Selection Committee member should – as soon as the name of the candidate has come to his/her attention - immediately inform HR and the other Selection Committee members to discuss whether the potential conflict of interest may affect their participation in the selection process and/or if specific mitigating controls can be considered (e.g. that they provide their assessment of the candidate(s) after the rest of Committee has made their assessment). If, after discussions, it is evident that the potential conflict of interest may affect an objective assessment, the concerned member of the Selection Committee should withdraw from participation in the remainder of the selection process.

Upon invitation for an interview the candidate is informed of the names of the Selection Committee members

The Selection Committee is involved in the following steps of recruitment proceedings:

1. The preparation of the interview and written test questions
2. Screening the applications
3. Conducting the interviews and evaluating the written tests
4. The recommendation of a short list/reserve list

4.2.3. Role of the Recruitment Coordinator

HR assigns a Recruitment Coordinator who is responsible for ensuring that the current rules and procedures are respected throughout the entire selection process and that the evaluations of each candidate are carried out with the principle of equality and equity in mind. HR may also,

through its expertise, support the Selection Committee in their assessment of the candidates' suitability for the vacant post.

The Recruitment Coordinator (a member of the HR Section) is responsible for coordinating the recruitment process and for enabling the Selection Committee to perform its duties. This includes the publication of the vacancy notice, managing the applications and all correspondence with the candidates, the coordination of the interviews, conducting the written tests and managing the paperwork to support the process.

4.3. Vacancy notice

The content of the vacancy notice is crucial since it defines the requirements for the post and serves as the basis for the evaluations during the interviews and written test.

The unit in which the vacant post is located prepares a draft job description and selection criteria, which should be provided to HR for proofreading and aligning the formal requirements and selection criteria. The Heads of Unit are consulted on the job description and selection criteria. The vacancy notice is prepared by HR, following which the Director approves the final version of the vacancy notice before it is published by HR.

Vacancy notices are posted externally on the ECDC website, the EPSO website and via the ECDC social media channels. In justified cases, and in order to widen the audience or to target a specific group, vacancy notices may also be published via additional sources. Examples of this could be: the web sites of collaborating institutions in Member States, reputable journals/magazines or specific job boards. In addition, published vacancies are brought to the attention of staff (using several means such as Intranet link to the job pages of the ECDC website, internal newsletter, emails to staff).

4.3.1. Formal requirements

The formal requirements comprise a set of eligibility criteria which applicants need to fulfil in order to qualify for a specific selection procedure.

In order to be eligible applicants need to have the required level of education and, if applicable, a specific duration of professional experience as defined in the vacancy notice. These requirements need to be fulfilled on the closing date of the vacancy notice.

The duration of professional experience is counted from the date on which the applicant acquired the minimum education qualification required for that vacant post. When calculating professional experience, only duly documented professional activities can be taken into account.

For education requirements, only certificates issued by EU Member State authorities and certificates recognised as equivalent by the relevant EU Member State bodies are accepted. If studies took place outside the European Union, the applicant's qualification must have been recognised by a body officially delegated for this purpose by one of the EU Member States.

There is also a set of criteria defined in the vacancy notice as formal requirements which are identical for all selection procedures². The applicants must:

- Be nationals of a Member State of the European Union or a national of Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein³;
- Enjoy their full rights as a citizen⁴;
- Have fulfilled any obligations imposed by the laws concerning military service (if applicable);
- Produce the appropriate character references as to their suitability for the performance of their duties;
- Be physically fit to perform their duties⁵;
- Have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the European Union⁶ and a satisfactory knowledge of another official language of the European Union to the extent necessary for the performance of their duties.⁷

Candidates who fail to comply with one or more of the formal requirements are deemed ineligible and cannot be considered for further steps of the selection process.

4.3.2. Selection criteria

As the language of day-to-day operations in the Centre is generally English, the ability to communicate in this language is a requirement in all profiles.

The vacancy notice specifies the experience, knowledge and competences that are essential to the vacant post. These selection criteria shall form the basis for the screening process and the selection cannot be based on any criteria other than those listed in the vacancy notice. Criteria cannot be added or removed during the selection process once the vacancy notice has been published.

² In accordance with Article 82 of the CEOS

³ The Member States of the European Union are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

⁴ Prior to appointment, successful applicants will be required to provide a police certificate confirming the absence of any criminal record.

⁵ Before the appointment, successful applicants will be required to be medically examined by one of the institution's medical officers in order to ensure that they fulfil the requirements of article 12 (2) (d) of the Staff Regulations of the Officials of the European Communities.

⁶ Official EU languages are: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, and Swedish.

⁷ In addition, in order to be eligible for a renewal of contract for an indefinite period staff members in function group IV have to have a working knowledge of a third EU language, as described in Article 85 (3) of the CEOS.

The vacancy notice may also specify any advantageous criteria which are considered as assets for the selection.

4.4. Preparation of the evaluation grid and the written test

Following the publication of the vacancy notice the Selection Committee shall agree on the questions that shall be used during the interview and written test, as well as the weighting for each of the criteria. The questions must be based solely on the advertised selection criteria and this stage must be finalised prior to the Selection Committee being given access to the applications.

4.5. Screening of applications

Prior to the screening meeting HR pre-screens and determines the eligibility of all applications based on the formal requirements stated in the vacancy notice.

All eligible applications are then screened by the Selection Committee in an objective, impartial and transparent manner based on the specific selection criteria listed in the vacancy notice. Depending on the number of applications received the Selection Committee may decide to apply stricter parameters within the aforementioned criteria. Those candidates who are deemed to best meet the requirements of the vacant post shall be invited to the next stage of the recruitment process.

4.6. Interviews

The Selection Committee can decide to first conduct telephone interviews with the candidates, during which time the Selection Committee will have the opportunity to screen the candidates further, to assess their ability to communicate and to assess their motivations. This is particularly recommended in cases when there are many candidates who meet the selection criteria or to gain more clarity on the extent to which the criteria are met. These interviews are used to determine which candidates should be invited to take part in a more in-depth face to face interview. In some cases it may be more beneficial to invite candidates directly to a face to face interview.

The face to face interview, which constitutes the main oral part of the testing carried out as part of the selection⁸, covers and assesses the candidate's motivation, relevant experience, the specific competencies required for the post and general competencies required for European Union staff⁹. The standard duration of a face to face interview is approximately 45 minutes. In justified cases, for example if the post requirements are deemed to be complex in nature, the duration of the interview may be extended provided that each candidate is afforded an equal amount of time. All candidates should be asked the same set of pre-defined questions, follow up or probing questions can be asked providing that they remain within the remit of the original

⁸ In accordance with Article 3 (6) of Annex III of IR n°22.

⁹ Such as interpersonal competencies, communication and organisational skills.

questions/criteria. The interview may also include a presentation, which is prepared by the candidate in advance of the interview.

Questions regarding one's personal life, religion, sexual orientation, etc. are not permitted as this could lead to discrimination. Should candidates disclose such information during the interview it cannot be taken into consideration during the evaluation of their suitability for the vacant post.

All correspondence with candidates shall be managed by HR which includes the invitations to the interviews¹⁰. Should any candidate be hindered from attending an interview, HR will seek the Chairperson's advice on how to proceed (possible solutions being either to reschedule the interview, to exceptionally conduct a videoconference interview, or to exclude the candidate from the selection).

Following the final interviews an 'Evaluation grid' shall be completed with comments on each candidate's suitability for the post prepared by the Chairperson and signed by all Selection Committee members. This comprises the conclusion of the interviews listing all recommended candidates in order of preference. The minimum score required for candidates to be considered for short-listing is 70% of the maximum interview score. Candidates who obtain 70% and above of the total interview score are placed on the short-list and the reserve-list.

4.7. Written tests

At ECDC, the written test is an integral part of the selection procedure and all candidates are therefore required to take an anonymous written test¹¹. It covers and assesses English language proficiency and professional expertise.

The minimum required pass rate for candidates to be considered for short-listing is 50% of the total test score. The total written test score is 20 points (5 points for English language proficiency and 15 points for professional expertise) therefore the minimum pass rate is 10 points. Candidates who obtain lower scores in the written test cannot be considered for the short-list. On exceptional basis, should the post rely heavily on application of specific practical skills, it could be decided to allocate more weighting to the test by allocating more than 20 points to the written test; e.g. in the case of posts such as editor, graphic designer, etc.

In order to ensure the objectivity of the assessment, completed tests are scored blindly by each member of the Selection Committee which is followed by the consensus decision regarding final scores obtained by each candidate in the written test. Only after the Selection Committee agrees on the final scores can the identities of candidates be disclosed.

¹⁰ For making travel arrangements, candidates will liaise with the Missions and Meetings Group.

¹¹ In accordance with Article 3 (6) of Annex III of IR n°22.

The standard duration of the written test is 30 minutes. If the Selection Committee deems it necessary due to the post requirements, the duration of the written test may be extended provided that each candidate is allowed the same amount of time. Late submission of tests by candidates will result in reduction of points.¹² The test should be completed by the candidate on their own without consulting any additional resources. In case of doubt, additional testing of candidates may be conducted as a matter of quality control.

The Director may choose other types of assessment tools (such as assessment centres, psychometric testing, etc.) if deemed necessary for the post. This will be indicated in the vacancy notice if applicable.

4.8. Recommendation of candidates

After the interview stage is concluded the Selection Committee draws up a recommendation for the Director who is accountable for the final appointment of new staff members. The conclusive ranking of candidates put forward by the Selection Committee is the result of the combined scores obtained by candidates in the interview and the written test.

The recommendation, constituting the document 'Evaluation Grid', consists of:

- Title of the post(s) to be filled;
- Detailed scores obtained by each interviewed candidate;
- List of candidates called for interview (with indication of candidates' nationality and gender);
- Names of candidates who were evaluated as suitable for the short-list;
- Names of candidates who were evaluated as unsuitable for the short-list;
- Recommendation of preferred candidates in descending order of achieved scores. In case of equal scores, the selection committee will recommend the order based on the best suited profile of the candidate in relation to the vacancy.

The recommendations should be taken by consensus. All members of the Selection Committee should be given the opportunity to present their views.

On rare occasions when a discussion does not lead to consensus and the Selection Committee is not unanimous, the Chairperson may make the final recommendation to the Director. In such cases it shall be clearly indicated that the committee could not reach a consensus on the matter and the independent opinions of the members of the Selection Committee who are not in agreement with the Chairperson, shall be annexed to the recommendation. In such a case, the recommendation should only be signed by the Chairperson and those members agreeing to the recommendation.

¹² As an indication, following a grace period of five minutes, a deduction of one point per minute will be applied. However, depending on external factors such as technical problems etc the Selection Committee may decide to apply a different deduction

The recommendation should be drawn up carefully. Any information that might be perceived as prejudiced or discriminatory vis-à-vis one candidate or specific group of candidates is strictly forbidden.

HR shall present the Evaluation Grid and final recommendations to the Director for the appointment decision.

4.9. Appointment

The Director of ECDC as the authority authorised to conclude contracts makes the final selection and appointment based on the recommendations of the Selection Committee.

Prior to taking a decision, the Director may hold individual meetings with all or some of the short-listed candidates proposed by the Selection Committee. A representative from HR shall be present during such meetings and the Director may request the presence of other staff members in order to take a considered, well-informed appointment decision.

Apart from fulfilling the requirements of the post, other factors, such as gender balance, geographical equilibrium, business requirements, etc. may be taken into account. The validity of the appointment and subsequent offer is subject to necessary documentation being submitted by the successful candidate(s).

4.10. Reserve list

Candidates who are put on the short-list of recommended candidates are also placed in alphabetical order on the reserve list for similar posts available in the future. The reserve list is approved by the Director.

The validity of the reserve list is indicated in the vacancy notices and its duration might be extended by the Director if deemed necessary. The established list may be used later when recruiting for similar positions. In such a case, the Director makes an appointment decision based on the specificities of the particular vacancy and the availability, experience and skills of the candidates placed on the reserve list.

5. Appeal procedure

A candidate who feels that he/she has been treated incorrectly in any way may ask to have his/her application reconsidered by sending, within 20 calendar days of the date of notification, a request for review via email to: recruitment@ecdc.europa.eu. The candidate should quote the number of the selection procedure concerned and address the request to the Chairperson of the Selection Committee. Candidates who are not selected for interview will normally not be notified by ECDC. Should such candidates wish to request a review, they are requested to ascertain that they have not been selected for interview by writing to

recruitment@ecdc.europa.eu. The date of the ECDC response to this email will be considered as the date of notification.

The Committee will reconsider the application and notify the candidate of its decision within 45 calendar days of receipt of the request.

If a candidate considers that he/she has been adversely affected by a particular decision, he/she can lodge a complaint under Article 90(2) of the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union (which applies according to Article 117 of the CEOS), at the following address:

Director of ECDC
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
Gustav III:s Boulevard 40
16 973 Solna
Sweden

Email: Director@ecdc.europa.eu

The complaint must be lodged within 3 months from the notification of the decision (i.e. from the time the candidate is first informed of the outcome of the recruitment procedure).

If the complaint is rejected the candidate may bring a case under Article 236 of the EC Treaty and Article 91 of the Staff Regulations (which applies according to Article 117 of the CEOS) before:

The European Union Civil Service Tribunal
Postal Address:
L-2925 Luxembourg

The Director as Appointing Authority does not have the power to amend the assessment decisions of a Selection Committee. The Court has consistently held that the wide discretion enjoyed by Selection Committees is not subject to review by the Court unless rules which govern the proceedings of Selection Committees have been infringed.

It is also possible to complain to the European Ombudsman pursuant to Article 195(1) of the Treaty establishing the European Community and in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Decision of the European Parliament of 9 March 1994 on the Staff Regulations and the general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties, published in Official Journal of the European Union L 113 of 4 May 1994.:

European Ombudsman
1 Avenue du Président Robert Schuman – BP 403
F-67001 Strasbourg Cedex

Complaints made to the Ombudsman have no suspensive effect on the period laid down in Articles 90(2) and 91 of the Staff Regulations for lodging, respectively, a complaint or an appeal with the European Union Civil Service Tribunal under Article 236 of the EC Treaty.

6. Data protection

The personal information requested from applicants is processed in line with REGULATION (EU) 2018/1725 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC