



CENTRAL STAFF COMMITTEE

CCP –AK/CD

Note for the Attention of Ms Gertrud INGESTAD, Director-General Human Resources and Security

Subject: Junior Professionals Programme

With the implementation of the seventh edition of the Junior Professionals Programme (JPP) in 2021, a programme has effectively become a permanent recruitment mechanism that is still referred to as a pilot project. And although the JPP outwardly aims to recruit temporary staff, it is de facto a tool for recruiting permanent staff, thereby undermining the legally enshrined rights of staff to participate equally in the selection of new colleagues.

While staff representatives have nevertheless participated from the beginning as observers in panel interviews, the denial of information about the candidates and the outcomes of other sessions with other observers makes it practically impossible to assess the fairness, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme – in contrast to EPSO competitions where staff representatives participate as both permanent and non-permanent members of the selection boards and thus are on an equal footing with selection board members appointed by the administration.

Against this background, we would like to invite you to the CSC Plenary meeting on **21-22 October** in order to inform us about the status of the pilot project. In particular, we would like you to address during this meeting the following points:

1. When is the *pilot* programme coming to an end?
2. Has there already been a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot programme and, if so, what results did your services come to?
3. If not, when can such an evaluation be expected?
4. How will it be ensured that the legally enshrined rights of staff to participate in the selection of new colleagues are not circumvented by the JPP or its successor?
5. What is the precise role of the JPP or its successor in the context of the new HR strategy in general and its modifications to the recruitment system in particular?

Please provide the CSC with concrete answers on these points, including milestones and a clear timeline where applicable. On this basis, the CSC will take a decision on its future involvement in the JPP.

Notwithstanding the issues raised above, we would like to share with you some observations, which the observers nominated by the CSC have made in the course of the panel interviews:

1. As highlighted above, the denial of information about the candidates and the outcomes of other sessions with other observers makes it practically impossible for the observers to assess the fairness, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme.
2. In the absence of comprehensive selection criteria and a fully-fledged methodology for aggregating the results comparable to the methodology used in open competitions organised by EPSO, there was no final ranking of candidates, but only three groups of candidates. The final decision was then based on criteria such as geographical balance and diversity, which were chosen ad hoc or poorly defined and implemented, e.g. based on the presumed origin of a surname.
3. Since a significant share of applicants are Blue Book trainees, which have not been through a formal selection procedure, there is considerable scope for favouritism. This undermines the statutory obligation to recruit only the highest qualified candidates.
4. Neither the names of the panel members nor of the observers are published anywhere, making it impossible for candidates to know them or to unintentionally contact them.
5. The design of the oral presentation has changed due to the intervention of staff asking candidates to base their presentation on a randomly chosen slide, but some candidates still seem to be favoured by the slides they received.
6. Despite the above criticism of admitting Blue Book trainees, our observations suggest there are inherent biases against Blue Book trainees:
 - a. CA/permanent staff have prior experience which Blue Book trainees have not;
 - b. JRC candidates have prior experience largely unrelated to Commission policies at large;
 - c. There were apparently no candidates from non-policy DGs;
 - d. In the absence of detailed information on the candidates, these points are difficult to verify, but clearly deserve further consideration.
7. Last but not least, there are no formal rules on how the interviews are conducted from a technical point of view and how problems, e.g. lack of connectivity, are dealt with.

The observed issues are bound to have non-negligible consequences for a fair and transparent implementation of the JPP. The CSC therefore expects that the highlighted problems shall be resolved prior to any new edition of the JPP. As before, the CSC reserves the right to withdraw observers in light of the actions taken by your services.

(signed)
Athanasios KATSOGIANNIS
President

Cc: Mr Christian LEVASSEUR (DG HR)
Ms Blandine PELLISTRANDI, Mr Augusto GONZALEZ (CDP-OSP)