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COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMISSION

**Shaping the Future of Europe: Attracting, Retaining and Developing the Best Talents to
Work in the European Public Administration**

Shaping the Future of Europe: Attracting, Retaining and Developing the Best Talents to Work in the European Public Administration

INTRODUCTION

On coming into office, President Juncker announced that he would develop a European Commission with a stronger political role that would focus on things that matter to citizens, and deliver concrete, tangible results.

Any organisation is only as good as its people and the EU institutions' ability to deliver depends on the quality of their staff. It is therefore crucial that the European public administration, including all EU institutions, agencies and bodies – and in particular, the Commission as the largest among them – can attract the most qualified people from across Europe and keep them motivated to work for the EU throughout their entire career.

Member States have called on 'Europe' to do more in areas such as migration, defence, security, financial stability and youth, and to foster social and territorial cohesion, research and investment, food security and quality, and pan-European infrastructures. This will all require adequately qualified human resources. These priorities and this level of ambition are reflected in the Commission's recent proposal for a seven-year EU budget 2021-2027 (Multiannual financial framework, MFF) – the first for the post-Brexit.

The challenges of attracting, retaining and developing highly qualified staff are becoming more and more acute. In recent years, after a period of expansion, the EU's public administration has had to cope with a period of restraint and a need to do more with less in demanding conditions. Competition among employers seeking to attract highly trained, multilingual and geographically mobile professionals is increasing, especially with the return to economic growth and new generations of 'knowledge workers' with different expectations. In addition, a growing number of EU civil servants will be retiring in the coming years and will have to be replaced with highly qualified recruits.

The Commission must also secure the right mix of staff, reflecting the geographical diversity of its citizens and Member States. Working for the Commission must remain an attractive career option by domestic standards in all Member States. To attract new candidates (but also to retain and develop current staff), the institution must offer the right career and working conditions, and invest in its people, recognising the strategic importance of their advanced skills in driving innovation and competitiveness, and developing its ability to adapt to change¹. Career development should be based clearly on performance and merit, and allow individuals to develop according to their talents. The image of EU careers and the EU project as a whole will also play a part in their attractiveness.

This Communication presents a comprehensive approach and set of actions that the current Commission would like to adopt and implement. These should be credible and durable,

¹ See *A new skills agenda for Europe – working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness*, COM(2016) 381.

making the Commission an employer of choice and equipping it with the best people to address future challenges and achieve its strategic objectives

Applied in the framework of the 2014 Staff Regulations, these measures will be implemented under the principle of budget neutrality: any additional cost will have to be compensated by cost savings (including with efficiency gains). They will thus be fully in line with the current EU budget and with the Commission's proposal for the Multiannual Framework 2021-2027.

I – COMPETING FOR TALENTS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE EU

The EU institutions work in increasingly diverse policy areas to develop and implement legislation that has an impact on some 500 million European citizens across 28 Member States and (thanks to its policies for external action) millions more around the world.

The EU budget accounts for around 1 % of the Member States' total GDP. Only a small part (around 6 %) is spent on administration, with salaries accounting for just half of that amount. The current 2021-2027 MFF proposal does not alter this proportion. In other international organisations, such as the United Nations, the European Patent Office and the OECD, such spending accounts for 30-90 % of the budget.

The European Commission² plays a unique role in the EU's institutional architecture – it is a central political body, responsible for initiating legislation, but also a permanent administration, responsible for managing policies and the EU budget, and for ensuring their correct implementation in the Member States. To deliver on its responsibilities, the Commission relies on the professionalism of a staff of some 32 000, made up of permanent officials, temporary agents, contract agents and local agents. Given the range and scale of its tasks, the Commission is not a large administration; it is no bigger than the council of a major European city.

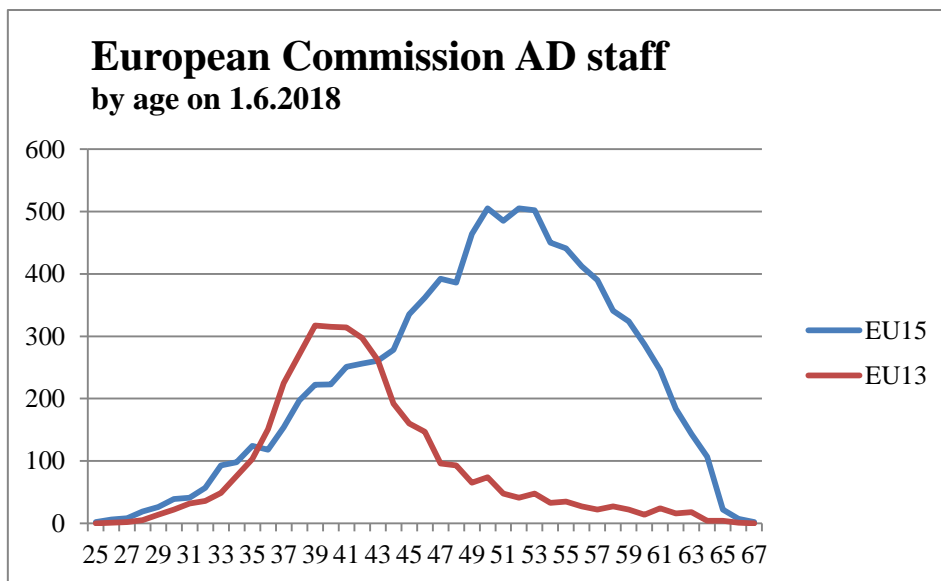
Careers in the Commission are organised according to group functions (administrators and assistants) and grades. At the heart of its functioning are the administrators who represent some 56 % of its staff. There are around 1 100 middle managers, around 400 senior managers and around 600 senior experts. 65 % of the staff work in the headquarters in Brussels.

1. The Commission's specific recruitment needs

The European Commission is facing a series of challenges in the recruitment, retention and development of staff.

First of all, the European Commission staff are getting older. The average age of an official is 46; over 20 % are 55+ and fewer than 9 % are under 35. In the next 10 years, about 3 000 staff (about half of whom are administrators) will reach retirement age and will have to be replaced to ensure continuity in the EU public service. These retirement trends differ according to officials' geographical origins.

² This Communication focuses on the challenges facing the Commission, but many of the issues also apply to the other institutions.



Source: SYSPER, List XIII

Secondly, the Commission must maintain a geographical balance in its staffing³ if it is to be representative of European society and reflect the diversity of citizens and Member States in its policy development and enforcement role. A recently published Commission report looks at geographical balance among administrators (AD staff) in non-management roles⁴, examining separately the following grade brackets:

- AD9-AD12 (appointments to which cannot exceed 20 % of all AD appointments in any given year); and
- AD5-AD8 (the most common grades for new appointments).

The report shows an uneven distribution of EU nationalities within these groups. In the entry level grades (AD5-AD8), there is significant under representation of countries that were Member States before 2004 (the ‘EU-15’)⁵ – this will have to be addressed through new recruitment. In the AD9-AD12 grades, it is the countries that joined after 2004 (the ‘EU-13’) that are under-represented – this will have to be addressed through career management.

Thirdly, the Commission has constantly to maintain its talent pool and expertise, adapt to policy developments and deliver on new priorities (e.g. digital technology, migration, security, defence). EU staff, in particular at AD level, have very specific profiles: they are highly qualified, multilingual and geographically mobile professionals with expert knowledge of the legal and political systems, economies and societies of the Member States. The majority have to operate for the most part in a language other than their own. On average, AD

³ Report from the European 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.

⁴ The report does not cover language services or UK staff.

⁵ The Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden have reacted to the report in a non-paper. They call for corrective measures to redress national imbalances. The Commission should in particular 1) identify quantified target numbers for recruiting staff from underrepresented Member States from reserve lists, 2) offer higher entrance level grades where appropriate, 3) consider national competitions and use more temporary agents. All this should happen in a budgetary neutral manner.

officials declare on selection that they master three or four languages at working level⁶. About two thirds have a postgraduate degree⁷. About 80 % have decided to leave their country of origin to work for the European Commission.

Some AD officials are experts in particular technical areas and have specialised knowledge. This is important, as the EU is often at the forefront of new policy debates and a fair proportion of national parliaments' law making involves transposing work undertaken at EU level. Other officials develop EU-specific policy and have project management skills.

In addition to having knowledge and expertise, Commission staff have to be committed to:

- moving (in many cases, with their families) to a different country (mostly Belgium or Luxembourg);
- adjusting to a unique multicultural working environment and specific competency framework; and
- contributing to the European project.

2. The attractiveness of EU careers is declining

Not only is the Commission facing significant recruitment needs, in particular for nationals of certain Member States, but there are also clear signs that it has become less attractive as a place to work.

Results from open recruitment competitions in recent years reveal a worrying trend. Data seem to suggest that the EU careers now on offer for young professionals (AD5 entry level administrators) are less attractive for nationals of some Member States than for those of others.

Also, the average age of new recruits from AD5 competitions is 34, which indicates difficulties in recruiting younger people, even where limited professional experience is required.

The Commission's staff survey shows that career and mobility development are key concerns: only 26 % of staff consider that it is reasonably easy to move to another suitable job and only 36 % that they can manage their own career⁸. The institution must therefore pay attention to maintaining staff's motivation and efficiency over the length of their careers.

A series of challenges to remain a competitive employer

Securing the services of talented professionals is getting increasingly difficult. The labour market for highly qualified, mobile and multilingual staff is subject to fierce competition: the Commission is up against international organisations, national diplomatic services, multinational companies and professional services firms.

⁶ To be recruited to work in the EU institutions, candidates have to master at least two official EU languages and to progress in their career they have to succeed in a language test for a third language.

⁷ According to EPSO data for the 2014 and 2015 AD competition cycles, 86 % and 66 % of candidates respectively held a master's degree, and 11 % and 8 % a PhD.

⁸ Staff survey 2016, DG Human Resources and Security, European Commission.

A number of factors may discourage high calibre candidates from applying for a job in the Commission; these include:

- the need to move to Brussels, Luxembourg or elsewhere;
- insufficient opportunities offered by the new place of work, including for a partner's career and for other family members;
- lost opportunities in existing careers;
- comparatively slow promotion to management functions;
- limited 'revolving door' openings outside the Commission; and
- a relatively complex and long recruitment process.

Furthermore, young people have different expectations from their work and careers. Those born after the 1990s and now accessing the job market (and soon 'millennials') no longer necessarily expect to stay with a single employer for a long period. They are technologically literate, value opportunities for creativity, innovation. They demand a stimulating work environment, autonomy, rapid progression in terms of personal and professional development and sufficient respect for their own needs, and may be tempted to leave (or worse: become demotivated) if their expectations are not met.

While it can offer a motivating and secure job for life, with a range of benefits, as a public body the European Commission is constrained in its recruitment activities by a set of regulations. The Staff Regulations determine the nature of the contracts it can offer: recruitment, roles and responsibilities, pay, promotion, career development and pension rights. They are susceptible to litigation and judicial review.

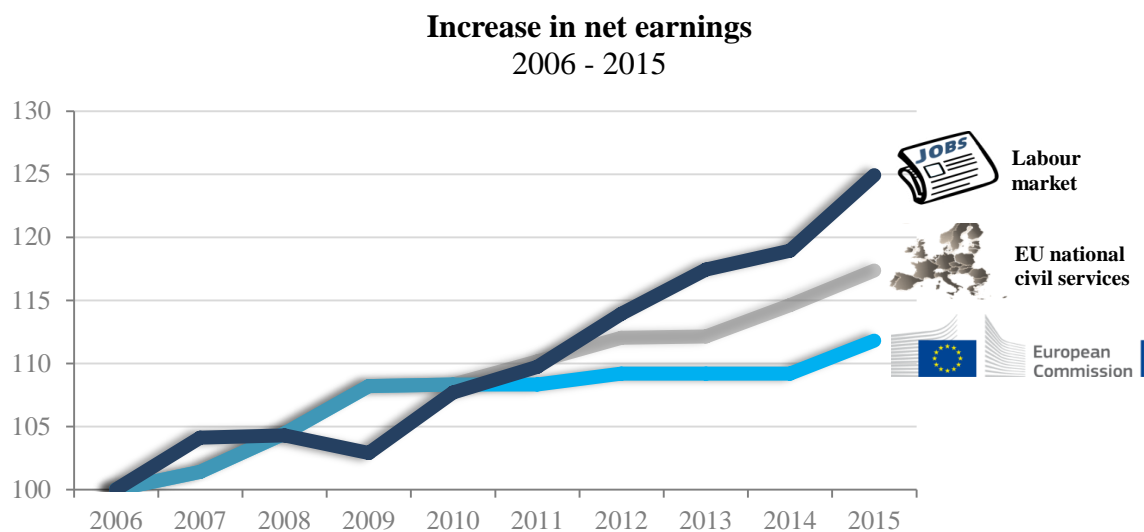
Most importantly, the working conditions that the EU public service can offer have deteriorated. As far back as 2004, the institutions committed themselves to achieving greater efficiency and introduced reforms that have generated substantial savings. In 2014, the European Commission introduced additional cost saving measures, in particular with regard to pension rights. Cost-driven measures such as a salary freeze, a revision of the salary system (lower starting and end-of-career salaries), longer working hours for the same pay, a lower pension accrual rate, a higher pensionable age, slower career progression and cuts to allowances and leave (in particular for expatriate staff) have all been implemented in order to achieve savings. A key objective of the reforms was to bring about long-term change and free up precious resources through greater synergies, efficiencies and innovation. The 2004 reform led to savings of EUR 8 billion by 2020, while the subsequent reform brought savings of EUR 4.3 billion and annual economies of EUR 1.8 billion⁹. In addition, the Commission reduced posts by 5 % over a five year period (2013-2017) and has applied a nominal freeze in non-personnel costs.

The reforms have also had an impact on the composition of the workforce. Since 2004, it has been possible under the Staff Regulations to recruit contract staff on salary conditions that are less attractive than officials'. This has cut costs and provided short term flexibility, but also

⁹ Expressed in 2011 prices.

exacerbated the imbalances in the geographical mix of the staff¹⁰, while making the terms that the Commission can offer less competitive, in particular for nationals of some Member States.

In 2006-2015, net earnings at the Commission grew more slowly than in Member States' public services and the EU labour market in general (by 12 % vs. 17 % and 25 % respectively). Wage growth was higher in 23 Member States' labour markets, e.g. 13 % in Italy, 18 % in France, 22 % in Spain, 23 % in Austria, 27 % in Germany, 41 % in Denmark. As shown in the graph, the three-year salary freeze from 2011 kept wage growth in the Commission below that of national public services and EU labour markets¹¹.



Source: Annual update of remuneration of EU officials and other servants; OECD and Eurostat data on net earnings in the labour market. 2015 is the most recent year for which data are available.

Commission administrators have also seen their career structure affected. Since 2004, starting and end-of-career salaries for AD staff have fallen by 6 % and 11 % respectively. Also, a number of posts have been made into contract agent positions, with lower remuneration (23 % less than the AD salary before the reforms).

II – PROPOSED MEASURES

This Communication proposes a comprehensive approach to address the concerns highlighted above. The Commission needs both to attract the best talent and to make the best use of its existing staff. This and the actions proposed should apply, to the extent possible, to all categories: administrators, assistants (AST and AST/SC) and staff engaged under limited duration contracts (contract agents, temporary agents). It must also address the geographical




¹⁰ Imbalances are particularly typical among contract staff, where the best represented nationalities are (in descending order) Italian, Belgian, French, Spanish and Greek, followed by Romanian and Polish. The proportion accounted for by the first four has been the same since 2005 (around 60 %). Poles, Dutch and Germans are underrepresented in relation to their population. Commission report on Use of contract staff 2016, COM(2018) 578.

¹¹ In the 2013 reform of the Staff Regulations, it was agreed that the salary adjustment would be frozen for two years. In addition, the 2011 salary update was frozen retroactively and the 2013 update was +0.8 %.

imbalances at entry level and among higher grades, as observed among the AD officials in particular.

The proposed measures aim to preserve and enhance the employment and working conditions on offer at the Commission, combining ongoing efforts to improve synergies and efficiencies with new proposals for modernisation to make careers and working practices as motivating and efficient as possible. The measures are in line with the current MFF and the proposal for the 2021-2027 MFF, i.e. they are budget neutral and any additional costs will have to be offset by cost savings (including efficiency gains). This also means that the budget for administration must not be reduced for the measures to be effective.

The Commission has held a roundtable discussion¹² and a workshop¹³ to consult staff and human resources experts from EU institutions, national administrations, international organisations, international recruitment services, the private sector and academia. Their views and the main outcome of the discussions were taken into account in the formulation of the proposals, which cover three main areas:

	selection and recruitment, in the context of a revamped talent acquisition strategy
	attractive job offer and career perspectives
	effective communication, to enhance the visibility of the European Commission as an employer

While the action set out below is to be taken mainly by the Commission, other EU institutions could consider following suit to enhance the attractiveness of the European public service more generally. Also, the Commission is keen to work with Member States on the implementation of some of the measures.

1. A revamped talent acquisition strategy

The Commission offers a range of jobs, from traineeships to secondments for national civil servants, and from time limited engagement (for contract or temporary agents) to the permanent employment of officials recruited through competitions¹⁴.

The use of the various available forms of employment for workforce planning should reflect the institution's needs and strategic objectives. It should take account not only of budgetary implications and cost-saving opportunities, but also the potential impact on the attractiveness

¹² *The European Commission as an attractive place to work*, Brussels, 10 October 2017.

¹³ *How to make the European Commission an even more attractive place to work?*, Brussels, 24 April 2018.

¹⁴ Under Article 28(1)(d) of the Staff Regulations, officials may be appointed only if they have passed a competition. Competitions can take several forms (external, internal) and be for recruitment at different grades. Candidates may have previously worked for the Union in various forms of employment

of the employment on offer in terms of quality and mix of staff, including overall geographical balance.

The Commission should diversify and modernise the means of attracting new candidates, going beyond pre-conceived ideas to inspire new recruits who will help it to respond to specific needs and changing priorities. It should also improve selection criteria so as to target candidates who are strongly motivated to work for the EU.

ACTION

a) Make it easier to engage temporary agents

- Revise the general implementing provisions on temporary agents (NEW – 2018);
- revise the rules on fixed-term engagement, in particular excluding time spent as a ‘Seconded national expert’ (SNE) from the calculation of the seven-year limit (ongoing)

b) Develop an attractive package for junior professionals and/or recent graduates to bring in new, modern competences and skills

- Pilot a ‘junior professionals’ programme at AD level(NEW – 2018); and
- raise the annual number of ‘Blue book’ trainees¹⁵ (NEW – 2019).

c) Organise more regular internal competitions for temporary agents and officials at different grades – this should offer mid-career (AD7-8) officials, including those from the EU 13 countries, faster access to higher grades and help to address the geographical imbalances at AD9-12 level.

- Design and implement a new workforce plan (NEW – 2018); and
- produce a plan for internal competitions (NEW – 2018).

d) Create more possibilities for recruitment at higher grades in the AD function group – this should make Commission jobs more attractive in terms of career prospects and remuneration, in particular for candidates with previous experience or expertise in a given field

- Propose a wider range of grades in EPSO competitions. (ongoing)

e) Continue improving the current EPSO selection process

- using the most appropriate tools to shorten the duration and improve efficiency of selection procedures; (ongoing)
- developing a new test to assess candidates' motivation for EU careers; (NEW – 2018)
- launching a reflection on how to adapt competitions (AD5, AD7) and the selection method to attract candidates possessing skills for the future and reflect candidates' specificities and expectations. (NEW - 2019)

¹⁵ The so called 'Blue book traineeship' is the European Commission's official traineeship scheme. Each year, it offers 2 five month, paid traineeships, for 1,300 trainees to gain hands-on experience of EU policy making in a multicultural environment.

Specific actions to address geographical imbalances in entry level grades in the AD function group

When adopting measures in this area, the Commission should take account of the impact on the geographical balance of staff. Possible measures to address imbalances are listed below and range from 'soft' to 'hard'. Any 'hard' action is subject to the prerequisite to adopt general implementing provisions to give effect to Article 27, second paragraph of the Staff Regulations.

In addition, the Commission will need active support from the underrepresented Member States to reach potential candidates. Specific communication efforts have already started to deliver results: in the most recent general AD5 competitions, the number of candidates from five of EPSO's eight 'focus countries'¹⁶ increased as compared with the previous year.

ACTION

- a) work with under-represented Member States to **promote communication and career guidance** for identified groups of potential candidates (ongoing);**
- b) deepen cooperation with under-represented Member States on **exchanges and mobility to and from the EU institutions** (NEW – 2019);**
- c) organise **training and information sessions to boost the recruitment of successful EPSO candidates from underrepresented Member States** (NEW – 2019);**
- d) without prejudice to equal merit, **consider geographical balance in appointments to different staff categories** (e.g. SNEs, temporary agents) (NEW – 2018); and**
- e) **Consider the adoption of general implementing provisions on the possibility of holding competitions for nationals from significantly under-represented Member States** (NEW – 2019)**

2. Offering attractive jobs and career prospects

In a tight labour market, the Commission's ability to attract and retain high calibre staff depends even more on what it can offer that its competitors cannot. Measures should focus on:

- protecting the existing employment package and career prospects from further cuts; and
- improving and modernising the terms and prospects on offer, where possible.

Looking ahead to the next 10-15 years, it is important to appeal to the new generations who will provide the EU staff of tomorrow, and to work on a combination of factors: job content, a modern workplace and culture, attractive remuneration, career and development opportunities, etc.

Four areas for action have been identified in this respect.

¹⁶ Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden.

2.1. Non-pecuniary rights

For the Commission to persuade highly qualified individuals to leave their country of origin, often with a family, and relocate to Brussels, Luxembourg or elsewhere, the employment conditions and career opportunities should remain competitive (not only in terms of salary) and provide a framework that helps them to balance professional and private needs.

ACTION

- a) Continue to promote and, where necessary, improve **measures to support a good work/life balance and staff's relocation**, so that the Commission stands out against, or is at least comparable, with its competitors
 - Continue to develop the offer for European schools, nurseries, study and after-school care. (ongoing)
- b) Increase **coordination with the Member States to which new staff relocate to improve services for families and accompanying spouses/partners and the image and 'branding' of the host cities (i.e. Brussels, Luxembourg)**
 - services for expatriates delivered with the support of host Member States could include: legal and administrative counselling (recognition of diplomas), career services and better access to job opportunities in the EU institutions and elsewhere, translation services, housing services (to help newcomers in the first few months), etc. (NEW – 2019)

2.2. Pecuniary rights

Commission salaries and pensions are still attractive, but not to the same extent for all candidates across the EU. An appealing financial package is key to an attractive offer of employment.

ACTION

- a) **Monitor and assess the requirements of competitive working conditions** on the basis of reports on pensionable age (Article 77(6) of the Staff Regulations) and the functioning of the Staff Regulations (Article 113) (NEW – 2019)
- b) **Consider a wider scale of recruitment grades in the AD function group** for a more diversified and attractive offers of employment. (ongoing)

2.3. Attractive working environment and workplace

The Commission is by definition a multicultural organisation and should preserve this aspect of its identity by making the right efforts to foster diversity and inclusiveness, and to continue to provide an attractive, motivating working environment for all.

Specific steps are being taken to promote a versatile, engaging, cooperative working culture that fosters creativity and initiative, to bridge silos and further improve the quality of policy making.

ACTION

- a) Continue to promote specific initiatives and opportunities for gender balance and diversity.**
 - Monitor and ensure full implementation of the 2017 strategy and the 2018 action plan for diversity and inclusion¹⁷;
- b) Provide staff with the best combination of IT tools, office space and working methods needed by a modern public administration to deliver the expected results, increase efficiency, save money and reduce the environmental footprint.**
 - Implement the findings of the 2016 ‘synergies and efficiencies’ review¹⁸ and the 2016 Communication on Data, information and knowledge management to promote effectiveness, efficiency and attractiveness (ongoing);
 - develop and implement the 2016 ‘digital workplace’ strategy¹⁹ and the ‘workplace of the future’ project through programmes to modernise infrastructure. This should go hand in hand with the promotion of modern IT tools for seamless collaboration (ongoing).
- c) Promote an active policy on work/life balance and a more results-oriented management culture, based on more empowerment, transparency and trust towards staff**
 - Implement the ‘fit@work’ strategy and action plan to respond to staff concerns on work/life balance challenges, i.e. time management and leave entitlements; physical and mental health; staff engagement and integration at work and outside work, etc. (ongoing)

2.4. Attractive career prospects

The Staff Regulations provide for a number of options for long term and short-term career opportunities, which the Commission intends to promote in the employment package it offers.

The existence of a single framework of rules and single career system shared by various institutions means that EU officials can develop professionally and change jobs within or between Directorates General, and between institutions, while keeping the same status, the same pay scale, the same promotion opportunities and similar working conditions.

Officials have meaningful options for a life-long career in a framework that helps them manage their careers more proactively. It is important that staff feel enabled to take advantage of these options.

¹⁷ *A better workplace for all: from equal opportunities towards diversity and inclusion*, C(2017) 5300. *Diversity and gender equality report 2018 and Action plan*, Brussels 19 July 2018

¹⁸ *Synergies and Efficiencies in the Commission - New Ways of Working*, SEC(2016) 170. *Data, Information and Knowledge Management at the European Commission*, C(2016) 6626.

¹⁹ *Digital Workplace strategy (2017)*<https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/digitalworkplacestrategy2017.pdf>

ACTION

a) Provide better opportunities for career development (management and non-management)

- implement the 2016 Commission Decision on middle management to improve new recruits' access to management posts²⁰; (ongoing)
- take measures to achieve the 40 % target of women in management by the end of this Commission's mandate, support women interested in management and improve the work/life balance of staff with family; (ongoing)
- promote opportunities for fulfilling careers outside management (NEW - 2019)
- implement the 2016 learning and development strategy and action plan, including professionalisation programmes, lifelong learning and staff training²¹ (ongoing)

b) Develop stronger HR services for career management

- Improve job market screening at central and local level, and develop new headhunting services; (NEW – 2018/2019)
- provide career guidance for staff who have been in the same post for more than four years, i.e. four year career talk; (NEW – 2018)
- career management IT tools for staff, i.e. eCV aspiration tab, vacancy alert tool (NEW – 2018)

c) Improve cooperation with national administrations to promote external mobility and offer schemes for work exchanges

- Relaunch implementation of the 2013 Commission guidelines on external mobility, including a mix of short- and long term posting²² (NEW – 2019)

3. Effective Communication

Private- and public sector experts in human resources management consulted by the Commission all agree that young people are strongly purpose-driven: they look for a sense of purpose in what they do and want to have an impact on society through their job.

In this respect, the EU institutions are uniquely positioned vis-à-vis their competitors: they offer young people an opportunity to 'shape Europe together' by contributing to policies and projects that can improve the lives of 500 million citizens.

A range of communication activities (mostly run by EPSO) are already raising awareness of job opportunities in the Commission; these include online career fairs, seminars, personalised action and communication plans for the 'focus countries', ad hoc events in schools and universities, and more student and staff ambassadors.

²⁰ Commission decision on middle management staff, C(2016) 3288

²¹ Learning and Development Strategy of the European Commission, C(2016) 3829

²² Guidelines on external mobility, C(2013) 5554

The Commission will step up efforts to attract candidates committed to the European project. This should generate a ‘virtuous circle’ by allowing the recruitment of committed officials, who in turn will be best placed to project a positive image of the organisation and become EU career ambassadors themselves.

ACTION

a) Leverage existing Commission programmes (e.g. Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps) and networks to reach out to a wider audience

- Develop a new communication strategy and central coordination to raise the Commission’s profile as an employer among ‘traditional’ and new audiences (NEW - 2019)
- In the framework of the new strategy:
 - leverage existing national and European networks (Commission representations, Europe Direct information and contact centres, Commission visitors centres, etc.);
 - identify the right mix of channels to reach out to different target audiences (social media, print media, advertisements, etc.); and
 - involve staff more in existing programmes (e.g. ‘staff ambassadors’, ‘back to school’) and develop new activities (e.g. ‘back to university’) to present and promote career opportunities at the Commission, paying special attention to under-represented countries. Specific information toolkits and training should be developed for staff’s participation in external events.

b) Establish structured partnerships with Member States and other key multipliers (e.g. universities, schools, etc.) to raise awareness of opportunities in the European public administration.

- Establish partnerships with selected universities and offer end of study internships/appointment prospects for the best candidates (NEW - 2019); and
- strengthen partnerships with Member States to publicise career opportunities in the EU public service and help prepare candidates for selection procedures (ongoing)

CONCLUSIONS

This Communication outlines action to be taken by the end of the current Commission’s mandate, in the framework of the Staff Regulations. These measures should not lead to additional costs but will require that the budget for administration is not reduced.

Some of the action builds on ongoing initiatives, in particular on efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the European public administration. Nonetheless, the Commission’s continued effectiveness is stretched by the need to address new and more complex priorities and areas of action with an unchanged level of resources.

To have the right people to address the challenges and continue to attract and retain the most qualified candidates from different (academic and national) backgrounds, new action is proposed to:

- modernise selection and recruitment with a view to attracting the right candidates. This will entail reviewing some of the current constraints (e.g. as regards taking on temporary agents), more regular internal competitions and new initiatives to enable the

Commission to make the most of internal talent, while acknowledging external competitions as the main channel for recruitment. EPSO selection processes and methods will also be reviewed to improve their effectiveness and the quality of the results;

- address specific challenges, such as the demand for specialised profiles and the need for a balanced distribution of nationalities among staff, by working more closely with target Member States and considering the adoption of appropriate rules in the framework of the Staff Regulations; and
- attract and retain staff in the long term by offering challenging jobs and fulfilling careers, with measures designed to empower them to develop through learning and development, professionalisation, career guidance and mobility.

Implementation of the action will be regularly monitored and, where necessary, updated on the basis of feedback from candidates and staff.

The Commission will work in coordination with its staff and Member States to ensure that it remains one of the world's most vibrant and exciting places to work and that it can continue to serve European citizens with the support of the most qualified civil servants.