

## External recruitment 2025

What is the GSC policy on recruiting permanent staff and staff on fixed term contracts? Is the current situation where many teams have colleagues on fixed term contracts the result of the lack of EPSO competitions? Have the internal competitions provided a solution?

**Union Syndicale** analysed the GSC's external recruitment figures for 2025, and the data reveal a significant imbalance: the number of colleagues hired on temporary contracts exceeds permanent recruitment figures by around five times.

### **Why do we have staff on temporary contracts?**

The GSC recruits temporary staff in cases where a selection procedure to recruit an official has been unsuccessful, for temporary replacement of an official or to meet an urgent need under exceptional circumstances.

It is vital for services to be able to fill posts quickly to maintain service and preserve the wellbeing of the other members of the team. Recruiting temporary agents for positions currently needed in one service – in cases where there will be reassignment of posts to other parts of the institution a few years later owing, for instance, the wish to adapt to advances in technology - is a human resources management tool used by the institution.

The current reliance of the institution on temporary and contract agents is partly a symptom of the difficulties faced by EPSO to provide sufficient lists of laureates.

Staff Representatives have pushed for internal competitions to allow services to hold on to their temporary and contract agents and avoid losing their expertise and experience, because there was no immediate possibility for them to sit an EPSO competition. We welcome the fact that our institution has invested the resources in holding internal competitions, which partly make up for the lack of EPSO lists.

Now that the GSC has built up some expertise in running internal competitions, **Union Syndicale** advocates further internal competitions for generalist and specific/specialised profiles for the foreseeable future. Internal competitions will give the best chance for services to hold on to these colleagues in whom they have already invested. These competitions will also help reduce the number of staff on precarious contracts. Losing specialised expertise and experience places a constant burden on services.

### **How did we get here?**

Before the creation of EPSO, each institution organised their own open competitions. This required expertise, precision, time, manpower and budget. One benefit was that this also enabled institutions to recruit staff for very specialised profiles.

The institutions then pooled resources for the creation of EPSO to meet their recruitment needs. The objective was to create a more professional and efficient recruitment process. EPSO has since faced significant challenges including: the need to run competitions in all of the EU languages; the move to computer-based tests in test centres; the shift to online tests; the pandemic; under-staffing. The search for an external proctoring service has also been challenging. The long awaited AD5 Generalist competition was postponed to 2026 so a smaller (buildings) competition could be tried out on the latest platform.

Internal competitions at the GSC, which entail the investment of time, personnel and financial resources, have become necessary to enable colleagues on temporary contracts to become permanent staff and for permanent staff to change category.

### **The return to grace**

EPSO now appears to be back on track with a normal schedule of competitions including the long-awaited AD 5 Generalist, some specialist profiles, an AST competition and an AST/SC competition. EPSO has a new competition model that promises to generate longer lists of laureates and requires the recruiting institution to filter the profiles of the laureates to check that they match the job vacancy notices and their job descriptions. Until the deployment of the IT tool enabling HR to filter the applications, filtering will need to be carried out manually. Selection Panel work has become even more critical in assessing the knowledge, linguistic and soft skills of the applicants and ensuring that the applications of internal staff are given priority.

### **Why is it important?**

The over-reliance on staff on fixed-term contracts has several consequences. First, these colleagues work for years without the possibility of career advancement, which leads to frustration. Even when they do become civil servants, they may be recruited to a lower grade than the one they held as a temporary agent. Faced with pressure from their hierarchy or the presidency, they do not have the job security which allows civil servants to remind their hierarchical superiors of the ethical and procedural rules which we are all called to uphold.

The role of a civil service is to be a guardian of the rules and to provide unbiased support for the rotating presidencies and the Member States. The civil service is there to guarantee for EU citizens that decisions are accurately recorded, translated into their language and preserved for future reference. A civil service should not face the threat of reprisals from a politician for the day for refusing to bend the truth. Its staff need to be loyal and not subject to personal, national or political affiliations.

For these reasons, temporary and contract agents will continue to need internal competitions, so they can have the job security and career progression they deserve.