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TRANSCRIPT of the The 2023 New EPSO System Live Webinar

INTRODUCTION

Sound check, greetings and introduction (00:00-00:03:55)

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- Author of Europe's best selling prep book: The Ultimate EU Test Book
- Co-author of: The Ultimate EU Test Book - Assessment Centre edition
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Ticiana Tucci

- EU Training's senior EPSO coach
- Trained psychologist, with over 20 years experience in HR recruitment and selection, training and development.
- Extensive experience as a certified career and executive coach.

András Baneth: A warm welcome to everyone to this wonderful new EPSO competition system. I'm András Baneth and I've been dealing with EPSO exams and new careers for over a decade. It's my pleasure to introduce Ticiana Tucci who is joining us from Portugal today.

Ticiana Tucci: Hello, I am an HR specialist focused on recruitment, selection and career development. I also work as a professional coach. I'm very happy to be here with you today trying to help everyone better understand this new selection procedure within EPSO.

András Baneth: We're going to spend the next hour discussing the brand new 2023 EPSO system, which is one of the biggest overhauls of the existing selection system for future EU officials since 2010. I'm going to cover a lot of ground and highlight all the changes that have taken place as well as talk about what has remained relatively the same. Then we're going to talk about a few practical questions and many things related to your preparation and how you can make the most of the process to ensure you get an EU job.



ABOUT EU TRAINING (00:03:55)

A few words about our company for those of you who may not be familiar with our work and services. Over the many years we've been in business dealing with EU careers, we've built a really incredible community with people who succeeded in passing the selection test and ultimately landed a job within the EU. There is a very vibrant community as well on [Facebook](#), so if you are on that platform, please join us, not only on our main page (EU training) but also in the groups that are dedicated to specific competitions. We are present on social media: follow us and get in touch.

[We are happy to offer a huge number of practice tests in all fields](#) (which I'm going to cover today) that are relevant to the competition and are not only available in English but in the 24 official languages of the EU. Specifically, we offer tests in verbal reasoning, but we also have a large number of webinars available such as this free info session. We have many training sessions and [workshop-style webinars](#) on abstract reasoning and numerical reasoning and all the other elements of the EPSO exams. Many are free but many are premium because they include a deep dive into the nuts and bolts of those particular tests.

Disclaimer:

We are a private company. We are not affiliated to or have any connection with EPSO, and although we do our very best to offer you the most accurate and up-to-date information based on our understanding of the regulations, we're not the official representative. Whatever information I tell you, I'm doing my best to make sure it's accurate and precise and to share it with our community, but it is not official. If you want the official information, EPSO (The European Personnel Selection Office), the European institutions and the official websites are the authentic, go-to sources.

THE NEW EPSO SYSTEM (00:06:55)

Let's look at the new EPSO system and the new model that was adopted January 31st after long discussions and many attempts to reach agreement between the various EU institutions which have entrusted EPSO to help with the selection of their future civil servants. [Although they have made the decision about reforming the system](#), there are still some points that will be finalised in the coming days or weeks (as of February 15th, 2023). But the bulk of what is to change is already known.

Ongoing competitions: for those of you who are already enrolled in competitions right now, you are not going to be subjected to these changes. Those of you who are candidates in

ongoing competitions will follow the same rules and procedures that were communicated to you at the moment of your application.

For this reason, there's going to be a bit of duality in the system to the fact that existing competitions or ongoing competitions are running according to the current system, but the new ones that are to be announced, presumably from May onwards, are going to run according to the new system. That new system is going to be fine-tuned as we go along (this is our understanding) because it might need certain minor adjustments as EPSO and the selection board gather experience from candidates.

I'm going to take a deep dive and look at all the details of the new system, but by and large, it is very similar to the system that existed before 2010. Those of you who have been around that long may remember that there was no assessment centre prior to 2010, and there were [EU knowledge tests](#), which are also coming back in some competitions. I will get to that in a moment. It's also a bit similar to the way temporary agents are selected in that it entails a lot of classic selection methods you might be familiar with from the private sector. By this I mean your profile and background are extremely important factors, and certain interviews may play a role in the final stages of the selection. So, it's a bit of a mix. We're going to look at how EPSO has changed the system to streamline the process and benefit candidates in terms of timing, complexity, and the attractiveness of working for EU institutions.

THE MAIN ELEMENTS (00:10:20)

1. This is basically a **one phase competition**. What does it mean? That you're going to take the selection tests in one sitting. It doesn't mean that all candidates are going to be taking the exam at the same time. What it means is that after you book a date for your competition, you're basically going to go through different exams in a couple of hours in one go. So, it's not going to be fragmented into different parts; at least this is the plan. The idea is that you will not need to book different dates for different components of the exam, but not only that. There's no more pre-selection and no more assessment centres. There's one phase, so a single selection block that you need to succeed in.
2. There are **no more assessment centres**, but I hasten to add that there's a bit more to it than that. The term "assessment centre" is probably going to cease to exist because it's not part of that selection phase that I have just described. But I will pass the floor to Tiziana to say a few words on why there is a "sort of" assessment centre without it being an "assessment centre"

Tiziana Tucci: Yes, it's not really an assessment centre. However, you may face the oral tests that are currently usually used in the assessment centre at the recruitment phase. When I say recruitment phase, I mean after the selection procedure that András just mentioned. They will compile the reserve list and from that reserve list they will pull people for the recruitment phase that the DG's and institutions will do by themselves. And when you go for the recruitment phase, interviews might be involved there. The oral tests, that we know as

competency-based interviews, situational competency-based interviews as well motivational interviews (and maybe your own presentation), these might all be checked at the recruitment phase.

András Baneth: Thank you, that's a point we're going to come back to. First of all, I'd like to add two comments. We can still talk about a single selection process. The word selection is really important because that's what EPSO does – it's the European Personnel *Selection* Office. And Ticiana mentioned the other key point which is recruitment. Recruitment is different from selection because selection results in being put on a reserve list from which a person can be *recruited*. That's why the assessment centre is no longer part of the selection process. But there could be candidates (or laureates as they are called at that stage) who could be subjected to additional evaluation, and that's exactly what we just heard about. That might be very much modelled on the current assessment centre with the major difference being that these are going to be optional. The institutions and the Director General's are free to decide whether or not they want to do further evaluations of the successful laureates.

3. The competition itself is a single-phase competition—that's going to be the new normal. It's only going to be **based on written or computer-based tests**, so there are no interviews or presentations of that kind as part of the selection system. You can pass a competition without saying a single word. You will be required to sit various tests (we're going to look at what those are) but everything is in writing on a computer so you don't need to speak—at least not at the selection part of the process.
4. The **selection cycle is going to be much faster** and that's probably good news for many candidates. It was one of the number one goals or objectives that EPSO wanted to address by changing the system. They wanted to make sure that a candidate who was interested in an EU career would be able to pass these competitions and get into a job much faster. Given the way the world works today and how the job market operates, the process has to be quicker. The idea is to go from beginning to end in about four to six months from the moment the competition is announced until the reserve list is pulled up, or perhaps even the moment of actual recruitment when you are offered a job at one of the EU institutions.
5. In the regular competitions there's going to be more regularity in that they are going to be quite often. The idea is to have more **regular competitions**, though the emphasis is probably going to be on specialist competitions. But the idea is to have generalist competitions as well, mostly for administrators, AD kind of jobs. For AST, Assistants, that is still to be determined.
6. The point here is that, given the fast-moving pace of the competitions, it's going to be a more dynamic system that will correspond better to what needs the institutions have.
This way the institutions and the different DGs (Director's General) in the Parliamentary Commission or other institutions will have a bit **more flexibility** and a bit more autonomy in the end.
So, as we heard, the selection itself is standardised and centralised by EPSO, but then when it comes to picking candidates from the reserve list, there's going to be more flexibility in that the institution can decide that they want to subject you to another

competency-based interview or many competency-based interviews, because it's not a selection process anymore but an evaluation of sorts. It might be different for the Commission or even inside the Commission; one DG may require you to go through an additional mini exam while others may not. That's a positive and a negative from a candidate perspective. You may not fully know in advance what kind of additional exam you might be required to sit. Obviously, you would be told once you are on the reserve list what the requirement is, and we at EU training are very happy to assist you in that preparation.

We'll be gathering information as we go along, but it might be a bit more ad hoc and less predictable—at least at the beginning. This is our current understanding of things. We'll need to see whether more standardisation or guidelines will be brought in. But the institutional flexibility translates into candidates needing to inform themselves or learn more about what specific preparation they might need to undertake at the very end of the process.

7. The next consideration is that **EPSO is becoming more of a service centre**. Our understanding is that it's no longer the gatekeeper who proclaims who can and cannot enter; it's more of an intermediary now between the candidates and the institutions. This changes the position of EPSO a little, at least in the way we see it from the outside. It selects candidates or helps the institutions to decide whether someone has an overall or baseline suitability to become a civil servant with the European Union. Beyond that point, it's the institutions themselves that add their unique preferences, perspectives and requirements that they want the candidates to meet. It may be more of a theoretical change, but in practice it means that they are now serving the institutions, helping them evaluate the candidates.
8. Also very important for practical purposes is the point that remote testing is going to be the norm. Many of you may have seen or taken tests in centres, whether in Brussels or around the world, but that's going to be phased out and everything is going to happen on your computer. Do you have the equipment? Can you install the right software? Do you have a silent space that you can use? As a side note, in the very venue where I'm broadcasting from, we offer a fully equipped studio for candidates. So, if you need a silent space, [you are welcome to use our facilities](#).

Remote testing is going to be the norm and there will obviously need to be a lot of safeguards and testing to make sure that there is no parallel software running or someone helping you pass the tests by using certain tools that may not be permitted. So, there will be a lot of rules and safeguards involved, but you will no longer need to actually go to a certain place to take the tests.

Those are the core for elements but more importantly, we need to look in more detail at how the candidates are going to be tested.

Tiziana Tucci: What we could understand from EPSO is that now the process is different. It is quicker, leaner and more accessible because they will be sharing with the candidates the sources for the EU knowledge tests and also for the field tests, the MCQ in the field. That will help from the candidate's perspective because it will be super useful and helpful for you in really guiding your preparation and focusing your preparation on the content that you need for the tests. We know that they are preparing those tests at the moment, and the people who are preparing those tests are the people who already work for the institutions in those

specific fields. Once they have all those tests prepared, they will share the sources that candidates will need to focus on in their preparations. And consider the computer for the remote test: you should be doing the test from your personal computer and not from the company or from a corporate computer because there might be some firewalls which will prevent them from checking your computer.

BREAK FOR QUESTIONS

Andras Baneth: Thank you. I'll just pick two questions which I think are pretty important and relevant to answer.

Q: Is it possible to lose the laureate position if you do badly in the assessment centre?

A: The term assessment centre is probably going to cease to exist in that current form, but the question relates to those additional interviews, exams, tests or evaluations that will take place, and whether doing badly on those can cause you to lose your laureate position on the reserve list. The answer is no. Once you are on the reserve list, that's a given and no one can take that away from you.

Q: Do you think there will be more people accepted to the reserve list and less possibility to get hired?

A: I think that is a key concern. In all honesty, that is our key concern and also probably for many candidates.

There are two considerations here:

1. One is that the stated aim of the new system is to have more people on the reserve list, because the tests and exams you need to sit inevitably lead to a somewhat bigger reserve list. This is what's going to give more flexibility to the institutions, to still be able to select, choose or evaluate certain candidates from the list. So, that is one consideration.
2. But the other one, which is a very practical and mundane one, is that everybody works with budgets. EPSO works with budgets, and they cannot really afford to put so many people through the entire exam process and then ultimately have a reserve list which is so bloated that a huge number of candidates do not get hired. It's not just the budget, but also your own expectations. You are sitting through these tasks, preparing for them, and you're putting a lot of effort and time into the preparation and then sitting the exam. If you get on the reserve list, certainly you have a clear expectation to be hired in the end. Again, one of the stated goals of EPSO is to make EU jobs more attractive. Having a huge resource from which not many candidates get hired is certainly not going to achieve that. There needs to be a certain balance and I don't expect that they're going to do huge reserve lists with a large number of candidates not getting hired.

Perhaps the question is, when will you be hired and how you are going to convince an institution to hire you. That is why those additional tests are becoming more important, because even if they are not part of the actual selection, they will be quite important for you in landing a job. Number two is perhaps the [right motivation letter, the right CV](#) and the right kind of lobbying that might be necessary to be invited by the institutions from the

reserve list. So again, I can't give you any more specific answers than that. We need to see how it develops.

As a final point, it might take a bit more time for certain candidates to be hired from the reserve list because creating a reserve takes a lot of effort on all sides, both from the candidate's as well as EPSO's. So, once there are many candidates on the reserve list, it's in everyone's interest that ultimately a large number, perhaps a majority of those candidates, be hired at some point. Maybe that's going to happen quite early, maybe it will take a couple of months.

Then again, the candidate's expectation that it takes a year to be hired from the reserve list is probably not ideal for anyone. Not to mention that your life situation may change in that time and you may not even be available or willing to accept the job offer. So, you'll see that there are competing priorities here and we need to see the size of those reserve lists and how that's going to impact the actual recruitment process.

HOW CANDIDATES WILL BE TESTED

(00:27:55)

PRE-COMPETITION PHASE

Probably this is the most practical and actionable part of this presentation. We talked about the actual competition, but we need to speak about the pre-competition phase.

What happens before you sit in front of your computer screen and take those tests? There is this pre-competition phase of short-term planning of exams. It's a pretty agile, quick moving thing when the institutions announce they need new staff. When they are planning to hire people, they request EPSO to run a competition. It will be perhaps quicker planning for those competitions.

Secondly, it is demand driven. It's not that EPSO's Director General is going to wake up one morning and say, why don't we run a new competition? Obviously, it all comes via a demand from the institutions who map out their personnel needs. They look at retirement rates, employee turnover and a lot of factors like budget and explain what it is they're planning or who they'd like to have in terms of new staff, and then they submit that assignment in the form of a competition to EPSO.

COMPETITION PHASE

The actual competition phase is perhaps the most relevant to you. What kind of tests are required? Many of you may have already seen some of the material we put out there but let me give you a quick summary.

- Publication regarding the notice of competition. That's the official source of information.
- Self-assessment: you need to go on the EPSO website and self-evaluate; ensuring that you are suitable for the role, that you have the motivation. This is not really an eliminatory test, but perhaps it takes out a few candidates who are not too motivated or perhaps don't have the right profile, qualifications, background or citizenship.
- There will be this so-called "Experience profiling instrument." This is not a Talent Screener, it's more of an internal tool to gauge if the person matches the criteria based on the CV and profile information they provided. If you are obviously not qualified for a certain position or you don't have the right number of years of work experience that they require, that's an obvious red flag that you don't meet the objective, formal criteria.
- Selection ranking: which is going to happen on the basis of the tests that you'll be subjected to and I'll go into more detail on that in a moment, but that's where the true meaning of the word "competition" comes in as you compete with other candidates and sit certain tests.
- Eligibility checks: to make sure that those who have passed those tests meet the requirements
- Reserve list

This is all quite straightforward and streamlined. It is not radically different from the current system. But certain permutations were cut and channelled into making it a faster and more dynamic system.

SELECTION AND RANKING BASED ON...

The tests are quite classic with one or two exceptions.

1. They have kept the **abstract, verbal, numerical reasoning tests** or so-called psychometric tests often referred to as **CBT (computer-based tests)**. These CBTs (abstract, verbal and numerical reasoning tests) remain with an important change: they will only be **pass or fail**, and the pass/fail mark will probably be 50% . We haven't heard any other information, and it might be because it is yet to be decided whether you need to have 50% on each one of these tests. Or, as we have seen in past competitions, they might combine the abstract and the numerical scores and then the verbal would be calculated separately. This is something we need to watch out for. I'm working on the assumption that you need to pass 50% on each of these three tests, but we will see when the first notices of the competition come out.

2. **Digital literacy or digital skills test** – it goes by different names, at least at this point. This is a new test and as the name suggests, your competencies or knowledge of working with digital tools will be measured. I will come back to this with more information in a moment.

3. Knowledge Tests

Distinction between the generalist competitions (this typically means that you can apply with any kind of diploma) and the specialist ones (usually have a set kind of degree that they accept). Specialists could be nuclear scientists, for example, it could be competition lawyers, macroeconomists, or migration experts. There could be many types of specialists. The generalist, as the name suggests, is quite open and broad.

For Generalist competitions they will reintroduce the **EU knowledge** exam, which is why I said it's a bit similar to the pre 2010 era. You need to know how the EU works. They will disclose information about the sources from which they create the test, just as Ticiana mentioned earlier, which is good news. It is perhaps more limited in scope, so you don't have to learn about the EU in general as that's a vast topic. It is probably going to focus on procedures, decision-making, perhaps a bit of history, key EU policies and policy priorities, institutions and how they operate. Roughly, that's kind of subject matter, which is still a huge area, but once we see the sources from which they create those multiple-choice tests, that will make it more concrete so that you can study for it more easily.

Specialists will have **multiple-choice knowledge tests**. These will be closely **related to the field** of the given exam, whether that's economists, intellectual property experts, etc. These are going to be dedicated specialist knowledge-based multiple-choice tests and this is going to be ranked. So, you not only need to know your field, but you need to know it pretty well.

Depending on the number of candidates (which tend to be fairly large, especially for the generalist competitions) you need to know the EU material very well. It's not enough to get just 50% of the points, you need to be among the top candidates as results will be ranked.

4. **Written test / case study** This will be a written test in the form of a case study – at least that is our current understanding. It is going to be a written assignment. Again, this is where we are in a grey area of how exactly it will work. Our assumption is that it's going to be very similar to the existing case study component, meaning that there are background documents that you need to read and process. Then you draft perhaps a memo, an essay or a briefing based on that information.

Importantly, this is not a knowledge test, so it does not require you to demonstrate how much you know about a certain topic. This is about your skills and competencies. They have already specified that there are three or four competencies that are going to be tested through this particular exam, and this is also ranked. This is not automated and not a multiple choice, this is really about writing. Someone, usually two people, need to evaluate what you've written and then give you a certain number of points or a score, so that is going to be another ranking factor.

To recap, you have the abstract, verbal and numerical reasoning (pass or fail). Some competitions (and it's not yet decided which ones are based on which criteria) will have a digital literacy skills test (probably also pass or fail). That's somewhat of an easy hurdle to clear, but you want to be absolutely sure you pass.

After that there are the two ranked tests assessing either EU knowledge or field specific knowledge and the written test in the form of a case study.

Basically, you have these four components, depending on what kind of competition you're sitting, with some variations possible. But these are the building blocks of any EPSO competition as of May 2023.

Tiziana Tucci: I would like to mention about the written test, the case study that you just mentioned, because it is connected with the [behavioural competencies, the new framework](#) that they shared last year in October. It was clear that they still have **eight competencies, but with a different perspective.**

In that specific exam, the case study, as András mentioned, is not related to the field but to the behavioural competencies. They might be assessing you on four core competencies which are: 1. Critical Thinking, Analysis and Creative Problem Solving, 2. Decision-Making and Getting Results, 3. Intrapreneurship and 4. Communication. EPSO shared the information that the Case Study will mainly be assessing these four core competencies.

What I want to call your attention to is that there are more competencies for them to assess. From those eight competencies, one of them is called Information Management which is Digital and Data Literacy, which will most likely be assessed with this Digital Skills Test that András mentioned.

And the other ones: Learning as a Skill and Working Together, where are they? Probably in the oral tests. We have the recruiting phase where they will be doing interviews with the oral tests, as we previously mentioned, but our assumption is that those competencies (Working Together and Learning as a Skill) will be assessed there in those oral tests.



QUESTIONS

András Baneth: Thank you so much. That takes us to a question:

Q: What the hell is intrapreneurship?!

A: Intrapreneurship is broadly translated into leadership. Not in the sense of people management, but in terms of pro-activity, taking initiative, taking ownership and responsibility for something that you're doing inside the organisation. It's not about launching a business inside the Commission, but it's about again taking initiative and the lead on certain projects. The good news is that we have a very [comprehensive description of all these competencies on our website and you can find that with analysis and you are completely free to download it.](#) It's in the ebook section, so check it out.

Q: How much time does it take between the publication of the competition and the actual test?

A: As I just explained, there is an intention to speed up and streamline the process. It sometimes took quite a while between the publication and the actual test. The idea with the new system is that it will take perhaps even less than three months, perhaps even two months or a couple of weeks. But then, having seen over many years how new processes and new systems are put in place, I think that you shouldn't get your hopes up at the beginning, especially because of the complexities of remote testing. I think it's a very technically complex thing to make sure that there is equal access for all candidates to these tests. Obviously, if you don't have a computer that might be a tricky situation and you will need to borrow one from someone. Equal access to the test and equal opportunities for everyone and then technologically to make sure that the remote testing is secure, that the internet doesn't fail— what happens if there is a connection problem? So, until they put everything in place, it might take a while. But perhaps after a couple of months or when the system is already functioning smoothly, it will probably be a couple of weeks from when the application deadline passes until you are invited to sit an exam, or when you pick a date for your exam.

Q: Do you expect there will be implicit geographical/nationality limitations regarding who gets on the reserve list?

A: The answer is no because it's irrelevant for EPSO to a certain degree who gets on the reserve list from a nationality perspective. It's extremely important for all member states to encourage their citizens to apply to these exams and maximise the number of opportunities. But from EPSO's perspective, they're not going to pick and choose anyone on the basis of nationality.

When it does become more important is at the moment of recruitment, because the institutions need to observe by staff regulations a broad geographical balance among EU staff. It has to be somewhat proportionate to the size of the member state's population. That's a very tricky thing because they might have 500 people at the institutions as assistants and another country might not have any assistants but have two Directors Generals. How do you compare not just the number of citizens working for the institutions but the seniority level? But then again, that's at the recruitment phase, once you're on the reserve list. It doesn't concern the exams themselves.

Q: Do you think they will reuse certain knowledge questions that they were using for the CAST exams?

A: To clarify, this is referring to the Contract Agent Selection Tests. The contract agent exams already include this kind of field-related knowledge test that they're going to put forward in the new EPSO exams. Whether they reuse the same database, I have no idea. Whether that will be the level and how detailed it will be or how the complexity compares to that, and whether they take that database and use it, I really can't say. They might. There are certain other areas which do not exist in the contract agent selection tests, but those are going to be launched as EPSO competitions, such as Migration or Internal Security. As far as I can tell, there's no such path profile, so presumably they'll have success anyway. We need to see.

But when it comes to EU knowledge, there is already an EU knowledge requirement for internal competitions that are happening now at the European Commission. That database or that question batch may be re-used for the mainstream generalist EPSO competition.

WRITTEN TEST / CASE STUDY

Just a quick recap of what has been described with the written test:

- competency- based, NOT knowledge-based
- presumably there will be background documents so they can evaluate your analytical skills and your drafting skills,
- Competencies: Critical Thinking, Analysing and Creative Problem-Solving, Decision-Making and Getting Results, Intrapreneurship and certainly communication skills or written communication skills.
- It is computer-based and remotely run.

So that's a quick recap of the case study.

DIGITAL SKILLS TEST

A few words about the digital skills test or digital literacy test. We have some information about that already. Actually, there are five building blocks of knowledge, information, and competencies which these tests are supposed to cover.

1. **Information and data literacy:** How you understand information processing, more so in the digital world, and then data literacy. If you are presented with perhaps a complex set of data, how do you make sense of it or what tools could you use to decode that data? Certainly you don't need to be a programmer, and this is not numerical reasoning; this is really about applied digital skills.
2. **Communication and collaboration:** the various messaging apps for project management and any other tool that you are probably using to a large degree already in your day-to-day digital life. There will be questions about these and what the best practices are, what the caveats are and the dangers of it.
3. **Digital content creation:** when you are required to format a document or some creative piece, what is the software that you can use and their practical applications?
4. **IT security or computer security:** basic internet security and what to be aware of. What's malware, third party unauthorised access? Certain key concepts which you would most likely have heard of or be familiar with, But it's required that you pass this in a multiple-choice format—you pick the right answers to the questions.
5. **Problem solving:** this is not in any other context other than the digital world and digital literacy. If your computer doesn't boot up, what are you going to do? You call the help desk, but perhaps it's a bit more complex than that. How do you find your way around computer or digital-related issues?

These are the kind of building blocks and we are already looking at this very closely and we will be offering Digital Literacy practice tests as well. But EPSO themselves are currently waiting for those tests to be authored, so they may not be 100% familiar with what

these tests are going to include, although certainly they have far more specific ideas than what they have communicated publicly at this point.

Here's What We Know So Far

- This is all still brand new, does not exist yet
- This is not universal, so not every competition will include this kind of test. It will be known at the moment of notice of competition whether this particular test is required as part of that competition or not.
- Then you have the language part: English only. Given that all software in the institutions run in English, or at least that's the default language, the test will be in English.
- Different levels for administrators and assistants: For administrators some concepts may be asked about such as, what is the dark web and what are some digital trends, versus the assistant who may face more practical and hands-on questions.

NO MORE ASSESSMENT CENTRE

A few words about this non-existent assessment centre, although we have already covered a fair bit of ground there. But just to recap,

- No more oral tests in the selection phase. Oral tests, interviews, competency-based interview presentation, none of that is part of the actual selection block anymore.
- These oral tests have been pushed to the end and are somewhat optional because it's post-competition, after the reserve list has been drawn up. "Assessment centre" as a term may not even be used any longer.
- It could be specific or general depending on the institution's preference, but obviously they serve a purpose. They do select in or select out certain candidates. Even if they're not called "selecting," there are certain evaluations done where you want to demonstrate that you have those competencies and to demonstrate that effectively, you probably need preparation.

This is my very self-serving pitch to tell you about our services. If you are perhaps not as confident in an interview setting or you don't know how to structure what you want to present or are a bit unfamiliar with the way the institutions operate and the kind of corporate culture (if that's a term I could use for a public institution) found there and you want to speak the right language, that is something that requires preparation. We put a lot of resources out there: [ebooks](#), [webinars](#) and [all the rest](#), but certainly we are available and happy to help.

- Each institution may choose which kind of evaluation tests, if any, they want to apply. Perhaps they will say that there's a person on the reserve list who is the best expert in the field, and they're going to take that person and offer them a job. I think this is going to be the exception but legally speaking, there's no obligation to subject anyone on the reserve list to further tests. They probably will though, and there is a menu of evaluations or tasks that they may require and they may even involve EPSO in supporting these efforts. It may not be EPSO that actually runs these evaluations,

because they are only involved to the point of the reserve list, but they may offer professional guidance to help run the further evaluations. These could be personality tests or role plays, or a wide range of formats that they could apply.

- Generally speaking, because of everything we've discussed, written communication is probably the most important; that's where the real selection happens. Perhaps that's something you really want to focus on.

Tiziana Tucci: One concern that I see here in the questions is about the language; Language 1 and Language 2. Although you mentioned that the digital skill test would be in English (because all the digital tools are in English within the institutions), people are asking about Language 1 and Language 2. From EPSO's perspective, what I see is that there won't be any more Language 1 and Language 2 in terms of terminology, only in that they would be talking about the languages candidates are proficient in, that's how they would be calling Language 1 and Language 2. There is the language in which you are proficient and the language you are really good at.

András Baneth: That's a good point. The terms language one and language two will not be used any longer as they were before, but as a different way of describing (language competency). Now, regarding how the language of the competitions are going to be administered or in which language you will be able to take the competitions, there is a bit of uncertainty, at least on my side. So, I don't want to say anything more than that. I may have missed that information, but I'm not entirely sure how exactly they're going to tackle this very sensitive problem of language. Which language do you need to sit the verbal reasoning test, for example? My understanding is that this is still going to be possible in one of the 24 languages of the EU, so if you're one language is Romanian and the other one is French, you're not going to be obliged to sit those tests in English. I don't think that would be workable, and I don't think that would even be legal according to staff regulations and the equality of access. But the language is a delicate thing. English is rather dominant but at the same time, French and German are working languages of the institutions. And then there are the Spanish and Italian countries that have challenged many competitions over the years at the European Court of Justice for not having offered certain tests in those languages. It's a sensitive subject and we need to see exactly how they're going to approach this.

QUESTIONS

Q: Will all eight elements of the new competency framework be tested?

A: Three or four will be tested in the written test case study, so in the exam itself, but the others (the other four because there's an eight-element competency framework) may or may not be tested at the very end of the process. This is at the post-competition phase when institutions may decide to run those additional evaluations. There is no legal obligation for institutions or EPSO to test all eight competencies; it's preferable that they are encouraging the future employers to evaluate these, but legally speaking they don't need to.

Q: What's the best preparation strategy for the new competition?

A: Know the system and that's what you're doing right now by listening to this webinar or reading the transcript. Also, focus on the learning, preparation and then simulation. Making a slight distinction between learning about EU knowledge (if you're sitting a generalist competition) or the specialist knowledge that you have, that's a learning process. Those are knowledge-based tests and you need to know it as well as humanly possible. But then there are the psychometric tests, the abstract, verbal and numerical reasoning, and you want to make sure that you're very much at ease with those and that there is absolutely no risk that you might fail those tests. So, it's more about practice and learning about methodology.

When it comes to written communication, it is a bit trickier because you want to write, you want to express yourself, you want to practise and put some time pressure on yourself. So, that again is much more for skill-based exams. You need to focus, you need to understand what a given exam tests or evaluates to make sure that you are fully prepared.

Q: How many people will end up on the reserve list?

A: We spoke about that earlier. How many of them will be recruited is somewhat of an open question but I have described all of the considerations that go into it.

Q: Will the Court of Justice have any lawyer linguist tests?

A: That was one of the points that the Court of Justice raised because they want to have lawyer linguist tests. They want to have those linguistic tests to make sure that they can select the best candidates for those kinds of positions. Chances are yes, that might be kept and there might be a tiny bit of an exemption from the core rules.

Q: Can EU institutions still run internal competitions?

A: Those of you who may be working at the institutions already as contract agents or temporary agents would certainly be very keen to hear this and the answer is yes, they can run internal competitions because by default EPSO is not involved in those. EPSO might be called upon perhaps, but as a main rule, EPSO is not involved in the internal competition for the Commission, Parliament, Court of Justice, Court of Auditors etc.

Q: Will there be competitions that are kept for AD, AST, AST-SC?

A: Probably, yes. So administrative assistants, secretaries, those distinctions will probably be kept and dedicated competitions will be launched for these profiles.

That's perhaps a big philosophical question: is it a better system overall? I guess it is; I can argue easily for both sides like a good lawyer. The positive side is certainly that it is more streamlined. Presumably it's going to be faster. Fewer tests that you can do all in one sitting, that's probably a plus. The different phases are perhaps a bit clearer. And then eventually more people will end up on the reserve list.

But the argument against it is how many of them will really be recruited and how transparent, how standardised or how predictable are those additional evaluations or exams that you need to sit after you are on the reserve list? That's a big question at this stage perhaps for everyone and not just for us, to see exactly how that's going to play out in practice.

Overall, it is probably a better system and also the EU knowledge being brought back in, or specific knowledge, generally there is a positive aura around that so the people who end up in the institutions will know more about those institutions.

Q: What are the pros and cons?

A: I think this is what I just described. Certainly, you have views, opinions, impressions; share those with us, please. Send us a message or put it on social media. Pass it on to us because we're very interested to hear how you see this. Are you happy about this, do you see risks, are you unhappy? Share that because we're very interested in hearing that feedback. Presumably EPSO is also interested in that because they want to see how it's being received. Do channel it back to us and let us know if you see certain pain points or tricky elements in the system.

UPCOMING COMPETITIONS 2023

- Economists (AD6) - May 2023
- Administrators in the field of intellectual property (AD6) - May 2023
- Administrators in the fields of Crisis Management, Migration and Internal Security (AD7) - June 2023
- Administrators in the field of transport (AD) - July 2023
- Administrators - Generalists (AD5) - September 2023

These are all known and public. There are quite a few coming up. Most notably in September there is a generalist competition. This is a wonderful opportunity for all the reasons that I've stated. There hasn't been a generalist competition for probably four years, maybe even five. This is a great opportunity for anyone who is interested in an EU career. This is probably going to be a huge hit among many candidates and many interested people.

TIPS TO PREPARE AND SUCCEED

- EU knowledge test sources will be provided: create structured summaries
- Domain specific: find the relevant online sources
- Split your preparation into two parts:
 - Studying/learning phase: EU knowledge / domain specific
 - Exam simulation:
 - Verbal / Numerical / Abstract
 - Digital literacy
 - Written test / [case study](#)
- Keep in mind what's needed to pass + rank against others
- As the ranking will be based on only 2 tests, you need to get VERY high scores
- Keep in mind the evaluation criteria for the written test (3 or 4 competencies)
- Do lots of practice and test simulations focusing on scores, timing, accuracy

Take a look at our resources on the website: there are a lot of further ideas as to how to prepare and how to succeed. We make the material available as widely as possible. On eutraining.eu you can find a wealth of resources, preparation tools, [tons of free webinars](#).

[some paid webinars](#), digital literacy skills coming soon, and there's going to be a [dedicated generalist category](#) that we're putting out there. Also, check out those tests in 24 languages for the verbal reasoning, and [tips and tricks](#) and everything else.

Tiziana Tucci: I just want to say that we are also learning and adapting ourselves to this new way of selecting and adapting ourselves to the new terminologies as well. We are on this same journey together. Please count on us, we'll be happy to help you.

Andr s Baneth: I can absolutely reinforce the message that we are here to help you prepare. Certainly, we are a business, but beyond that we have a mission, and that mission is to help you achieve your dream, get an EU job and pursue an EU career. So, we're putting all those tools out there that help you realise that dream.

If you're really dedicated and want to start preparing already in February for an exam that's coming in May, June or September, you're more than welcome. I can only encourage you to do that because the competition is probably going to be rather fierce, and you need to be among the best to get on the reserve list and eventually earn the job.

We're really grateful for this amazing community and everyone who follows us online, anyone watching this as a recording. We did our very best to share everything that we know at this point in time, but the official information always comes from EPSO and other EU institutions. We're going to probably do a very similar live webinar in a few months when new information comes to the surface.

Typically I do a live event webinar with Q&A whenever a new competition is launched and now it's going to be even more exciting and interesting to see those notices of competition.



THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

Thank you so much!

Please share the recording and information with friends, colleagues and anyone who may be interested in an EU career.

Please get in touch with us: support@support.eustraining.eu

(PLEASE NOTE: The official source of information on EU competitions is the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO). We at EU Training, however, do everything in our power to provide you with the most accurate and up-to-date information possible based on the official documents from EPSO.)