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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1)/Council

Subject: Draft Council conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 23/2020 entitled "The European Personnel Selection Office: Time to adapt the selection process to changing recruitment needs"
- Adoption

1. On 29 October 2020, the European Court of Auditors published its Special Report Number 23/2020 entitled "The European Personnel Selection Office: Time to adapt the selection process to changing recruitment needs"¹.
2. In accordance with the arrangements defined in the Council conclusions on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the European Court of Auditors², the Permanent Representatives' Committee instructed the Working Party on the Staff Regulations³ to examine the aforementioned report.

¹ See Document 12411/20. The [Special Report](#) is available in 23 EU languages on the Court's website: www.eca.europa.eu.

² See Document 7515/00 + COR 1.

³ See Document 12412/20.

3. The report was presented to delegations on 20 November 2020. The Working Party on the Staff Regulations proceeded to examine the Presidency proposals for draft Council conclusions on this report in its successive meetings on 4 and 16 December 2020 as well as those on 18 March, 14 April and 14 June 2021. The Working Party in the last meeting confirmed its agreement on the final Presidency compromise as set out in the Annex.
4. The Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to approve the text in the Annex to this note and to submit it to the Council for adoption as an "A" item at a forthcoming meeting.

**Draft Council conclusions on the
European Court of Auditors Special Report 23/2020
'The European Personnel Selection Office:
Time to adapt the selection process to changing recruitment needs'**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

1. WELCOMES the Special Report (hereinafter: "report") of the European Court of Auditors (hereinafter: "ECA") which assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of the European Personnel Selection Office (hereinafter "EPSO") in attracting and selecting highly qualified laureates and SUPPORTS the observations and recommendations made in the report in order to strengthen the selection process;
2. SUPPORTS EPSO's vital role in enabling the EU institutions to meet their recruitment needs by successfully selecting a large number of laureates with a broad range of skills for a long and varied career; UNDERLINES that attractiveness of the EU civil service is of utmost importance for the good functioning of the EU institutions;
3. RECALLS that selection must be merit-based and be directed at securing for the institutions, bodies and agencies the services of officials of the highest standard of ability, efficiency and integrity, selected on the broadest possible geographical basis from among nationals of Member States of the Union;
4. EMPHASISES the paramount importance of transparency and equal treatment in any selection procedure and ACKNOWLEDGES EPSO as guarantor thereof in the conduct of both generalist and specialist competitions;

5. ENCOURAGES EPSO to proceed with its efforts to improve its working methods and the selection procedures; UNDERLINES in particular the need for a faster and cost-efficient framework for specialist competitions, while NOTING the need to continue working on the adequacy of the selection methodology for all competitions;
6. NOTES the planned review of the examination arrangements by EPSO in 2021, including with respect to a new language regime following the recent case law of the European Court of Justice;
7. STRESSES its preference for selection by means of open competitions and ACKNOWLEDGES that a successful conduct of open competitions requires the collaboration of all actors involved, in particular with regard to a precise agreement between the requesting institutions and EPSO on planning arrangements;
8. OBSERVES that communication with candidates and Member States before, during and after the selection process as well as communication aimed at attracting recent graduates is of great importance and deserves constant attention;
9. ENCOURAGES EPSO to implement the recommendations set out in the report and pay special attention to:
 - enhancing the promotion of EU careers in order to attract a higher number of graduates and potential candidates, including those living outside the traditional centres of interest for a position in the EU institutions;
 - in that context, a further reflection on the possibility of taking specific measures, considering the progress made in line with previous discussions with the focus-countries;
 - improving its communication with candidates and Member States both before, during and after the selection process, with respect for the linguistic diversity in the Union;
 - a further adaption to a fast-changing recruitment environment, while considering the latest technological developments for the conduct of open competitions in all official EU languages;
 - the reduction of the length of competitions to the target of up to 10 months as set out in the EPSO Development Plan, and monitoring the costs of competitions;

10. ASKS the EU institutions to encourage their staff to serve as member of a selection board, and to acknowledge this as an integral part of their career, and ASKS EPSO to vouch for the necessary training;
 11. INVITES the Commission to act upon previous recommendations made by ECA on drawing up an action plan to attract, develop and retain people from a broad range of professional experience and nationalities.
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