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## The 62<sup>nd</sup> edition of Management Matters

### Premier exercice de certification à la Commission

Le bilan par **Claude Chêne**

**Une interview en exclusivité pour les lecteurs de *Management Matters*, avant publication dans *Commission en direct* : Claude Chêne, directeur général de la DG Personnel et administration, analyse l'exercice de certification 2005 et s'explique sur le lancement de celui de 2006. Coup d'envoi de ce nouvel exercice le 5 février.**

### **Pouvez-vous nous rappeler brièvement en quoi consiste la procédure de certification ?**

La certification est la procédure instaurée par le nouveau statut pour passer de la catégorie B – ou désormais du groupe de fonctions des Assistants – à la catégorie A, devenue le groupe de fonctions des Administrateurs. Elle se substitue donc aux concours de passage de catégorie.

Il ne s'agit pas simplement d'un changement d'appellation: c'est un vrai changement d'approche. Nous avons tenté un pari audacieux : donner de nouvelles perspectives de carrière à ceux qui ont démontré un réel potentiel dans leur travail de tous les jours et qui ont l'ambition et la volonté d'assumer des fonctions plus exigeantes ; valider les compétences, les « *soft skills* », et non plus exclusivement les connaissances, les « *hard skills* ». C'est une petite révolution pour la Commission.

Pour réussir ce pari, la Commission s'engage au côté de ses fonctionnaires, investit dans son personnel. C'est là l'autre différence que je veux souligner. Les collègues ne sont pas livrés à eux-mêmes dans la préparation d'un concours. Ils sont accompagnés par l'Ecole européenne d'administration (EAS) qui leur dispense, sur leur temps normal de travail, une formation solide axée justement sur ces « *soft skills* » : structurer une argumentation, convaincre un auditoire, synthétiser un problème, etc.

### **Cette nouvelle approche offre-t-elle pour un « recruteur » les mêmes garanties qu'un concours ?**

Si je voulais grossir le trait, un concours vous donne la garantie que le lauréat maîtrise un domaine, une technique... Est-ce déterminant pour ceux qui ont déjà dix ans d'expérience au sein des Institutions et dont on a pu vérifier, à de nombreuses occasions, le niveau de connaissance ?

La formation mise en place par l'EAS exige un investissement personnel important de la part du fonctionnaire, contrepartie de l'investissement consenti par l'Institution. Le titre de « certifié » n'est pas donné gratuitement. J'en veux pour preuve le taux d'échec de 30 % des 116 fonctionnaires de la Commission admis aux examens de fin de formation en 2006. Il s'agit donc d'une formation sérieuse. On peut être innovant et rigoureux à la fois.

Je vais d'ailleurs inviter personnellement les 84 lauréats de cette première promotion pour les féliciter. *Commission en direct* se fera l'écho de cette petite réception dans une prochaine édition.

### **Quid des collègues qui ont échoué ?**

Ces 32 fonctionnaires ont la possibilité de se représenter aux épreuves. Nous envisageons avec l'EAS de mettre en place des modules de rattrapage pour mettre ces collègues en situation de réussir leur nouvelle tentative. Tout cela procède de la même démarche: ne pas laisser les fonctionnaires sans soutien ; leur donner le maximum de chances.

### **Quel bilan tirez-vous de ce premier exercice de certification ?**

Il serait prétentieux de ma part de prétendre que tout a été parfait : ce ne peut pas être le cas dès le premier exercice alors que la méthode vient de changer radicalement. S'agissant de la formation, le taux de satisfaction de ceux qu'ils l'ont suivie est très élevé. Un collègue soulignait dans ces mêmes colonnes, il y a deux semaines, combien il avait apprécié le contenu de la formation et la nouvelle approche. Il nous faudra en tirer toutes les leçons, avec l'EAS (dont je salue par ailleurs le travail) et avec les autres Institutions puisqu'il s'agit d'une formation interinstitutionnelle. Je crois savoir qu'il y a un consensus pour renoncer aux modules spécialisés qui restaient focalisés sur l'acquisition de connaissances « dures ». (NDLR : Voir article suivant)

Là où j'aurais souhaité des changements, c'est dans le processus de sélection des fonctionnaires autorisés à suivre le cycle de formation. Pour au moins deux raisons :

- La mesure du potentiel ne peut pas se faire exclusivement au travers d'une addition de critères quantitatifs. Ce n'est pas un concept qui peut se résumer en une équation mathématique. Il faut prendre en considération des appréciations qualitatives.
- Nous avons constaté que la quasi-totalité des fonctionnaires sélectionnés étaient des diplômés universitaires. Cela ne reflète pas la réalité de la catégorie B\* : vous avez dans ce groupe de nombreux collègues qui n'ont pas eu la chance de suivre des études supérieures et qui ont pourtant le potentiel de devenir Administrateurs. Ce potentiel est reconnu par leur hiérarchie. Pourquoi leur fermer la porte de la certification ?

Suite au premier exercice, nous avons donc procédé à cette analyse critique de la procédure de sélection. Un projet de nouvelles dispositions générales d'exécution a fait l'objet d'une consultation interservices et de négociations avec les organisations syndicales professionnelles (OSP). Au terme de plusieurs concertations approfondies qui ont conduit à amender de manière substantielle notre projet initial, la majorité des OSP a marqué son accord sur une nouvelle procédure qui encadrerait l'introduction d'éléments qualitatifs, renforçait considérablement le rôle du comité paritaire et permettait à un nombre significatif de non-universitaires d'être retenus.

Une organisation syndicale a marqué son désaccord et a demandé la tenue d'une nouvelle concertation. Cette demande, en retardant le lancement de l'exercice, nous faisait courir le risque sérieux de mettre en cause la participation des fonctionnaires de la Commission au prochain cycle de formation. Et je ne veux pas prendre ce risque.

Je me vois donc contraint de lancer l'exercice de certification 2006 sur les mêmes bases imparfaites que le premier. Je le regrette car ceci ne répond manifestement pas aux attentes légitimes exprimées par la plupart des collègues concernés.

Propos recueillis par Caroline Schickel

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Certification

### Overview of training and tests

**On 17 January, the Director of the European Administrative School spoke to the Human resources' network about the training and tests of the first certification exercise and plans for the second.**

Of the 157 candidates from all Institutions, 109 passed all 4 exams and can therefore apply for AD jobs. The overall pass rate of just less than 70% was perhaps lower than some expected, but there were a number of factors at work. People had possibly underestimated the demanding nature of both the training programme and the exams, and for a number of candidates there were language problems. In addition, just the fact of concentrating on candidates' skills meant that many of them were faced with a type of exam with which they were unfamiliar. My view is that it is vital for the credibility of the procedure that it is as demanding as a competition, and that the exams though tough were fair.

Candidates who failed one or more exams can re-sit them without having to go through a new selection procedure or the training programme. Discussions will begin with all institutions before the end of January to decide on arrangements for implementing these provisions and the candidates concerned will be informed as soon as possible.

As regards the 2006/7 exercise, I underlined again that the key philosophy of certification is to equip candidates with the skills they need to succeed as administrators and then to verify that they possess them. It is not a test of their knowledge of specific areas: in agreement with all the institutions, we have therefore decided to drop the specific modules that featured in the first exercise. The new training programme will be divided into two blocks of about 4 weeks in June and 2 weeks in October with about 10 days of individual exercises and assignments between the two. During the training programme, candidates will have more opportunities to take part in simulations based on what they will face in the exams. We are also making a number of minor adjustments to take account of feedback from the first exercise.

We have just updated the information about certification on [our website](#). This includes details about the 2006/7 programme and an overview of the first exercise.

David Walker,  
EPSO / EAS (European Administrative School)

The list of the 84 successful Commission officials was published on 16 January 2007 – [Administrative Notice 6-2007](#).

*Commission en direct* interviewed one of them: [Cend 427](#)

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**From middle to senior management**

### Potential senior officials to attend Assessment Centres

**Building on what was already compulsory for candidates applying for external senior management procedures, the Commission has further strengthened its**

**focus on appointing high-calibre senior officials by introducing Assessment centres for candidates applying for internal procedures as of January 2007.**

### **How does this new measure affect you?**

If you are a middle manager and plan to apply for a Director's post, you are undoubtedly familiar with the eligibility criteria as laid down in the Compilation document (minimum grade, having the necessary experience and profile in a management position for 2 years at least...).

You will also know that the current **recruitment procedure** has **three phases** (pre-selection at DG level, interview with the Consultative Committee on Appointments (CCA) and interview with one or more Commissioners) From January onwards, this will change to **include a full day at the assessment centre**, prior to the CCA interviews.

Working with an external contractor, the Directorate dealing with CCA in DG ADMIN, headed by Emer Daly, will be responsible for extending Assessment centres to internal candidates.

During this full day, candidates are measured individually against a predefined set of criteria and do not compete against each other. There is a mix of individual and group exercises to assess the competencies i.e. in tray exercise, verbal and abstract reasoning tests and personality questionnaires. Consistent high standards of integrity and efficiency are identified and measured through a **specific competency framework for senior managers as used for the CDR for Senior management**. This was defined in 2002 and is based on 5 major competencies:

- Information management
- Task management
- People management
- Interpersonal management
- Personal management

Using Assessment centres is widely acknowledged as a sophisticated selection method, which **measures performance against key criteria** considered to be critical for a particular position. It is a professional evaluation tool with a **high predictable value**. It thus provides comprehensive information on the potential of the candidate available for the CCA members.

The results are available, on a confidential basis, for CCA selection panel members and remain valid for a period of 2 years. However, all participants can obtain oral feedback from the Centre once the selection procedure is finalised.

Are you curious to discover more about Assessment Centres and what you can expect from them? Please visit our [website](#). We held a **special open meeting** on 30th January to answer your questions; if you missed the meeting, [slides](#) of our presentation are available on our website.

Do you have any specific questions? Our **functional mailbox** is available at the following address: **[ADMIN ASSESSMENT CENTRE CCA](#)**.

Louise HEAD,  
ADMIN CCA (Consultative Committee on Appointments)

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## Career

### Types of post

The new career structure, introduced by the Staff Regulations, was a key element in the modernisation of the European Civil Service. The old career structure, classifying staff into a rigid structure of four categories (A, B, C and D grades), was long considered outdated, as it failed to take into account the changing nature of posts and new work patterns, spurred on by rapid technological change.

Since 1st May 2006, however, all posts covered by the Staff Regulations are divided up into an administrator's function group (AD) and an assistant's function group (AST), each comprising different types of posts, for which the Commission is required **to define appropriate powers and duties**.

The Personal and Administration DG has now prepared a draft Commission decision defining these, and **entered into consultations** with other competent services. Subsequently, the staff unions will also be consulted. For each type of post, the draft decision **identifies different functions, each corresponding** to a given range of grades, and the nature and importance of the relevant duties.

Under the old career structure, **officials were often blocked** at the top of their category. For example, a 'C 1' official in the old career structure had to change category by passing an internal competition, in order to progress and assume greater responsibilities. Without changing category, further career development was impossible.

By contrast, staff recruited after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 will **now find many realistic opportunities for career development** that previously did not exist. For example, officials in the AST function group will be able to progress up to grade AST 11 and carry out tasks previously considered as 'category B' tasks simply by virtue of being appointed to a post including the relevant duties. No additional condition needs to be fulfilled.

As a result, among others, **managers will find new ways to motivate** and reward their highly qualified staff currently recruited in the AST function group, who are capable of more than what their actual tasks permit them to achieve. For example, someone recruited at AST 1 level carrying out secretarial work and who should advance beyond these tasks could be offered to move on to a post where he or she carries out administrative or financial operations, once he or she reaches grade AST 3.

Needless to say, that these new career development perspectives require managers to provide for a sound career planning and to define appropriate training measures. Staff should be encouraged to consolidate competencies gained on the job or **discover other fields of responsibilities** in order to open up these new opportunities. In turn, at a central level appropriate training courses will be made available.

The Commission decision on types of posts will as well be of great interest for the purposes of the attestation procedure. It will **for the first time clearly identify the functions at 'administrative assistant' level**, applicants admitted to the attestation procedure must be appointed to and thereby facilitate the attestation of staff.

For your staff, the adoption of the decision on types of posts will be an important step forward towards a modern career structure that allows for a better personal career development throughout a lifelong career.

We will keep you informed of further developments.

Stefanie Hiesinger, ADMIN A6 (Career structure, evaluation and promotion)

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## Financial Regulation

### What's in the 2006's Revision?

**The revision of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities was adopted on 13/12/2006. Did you miss it? Relax and breathe: for the moment this does not imply any radical change.**

The amended articles that may affect your daily work are planned to enter into application **only on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2007**, once the Implementing Rules linked to them are adopted. Full briefing and Information sessions will be provided as from April.

Nevertheless, the revision of the Financial Regulation has an **immediate effect on you**, as from 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007, **if you work in the fields of agricultural and structural funds**. But even in this case, no need to start shaking: the amended articles mainly bring the Financial Regulation in line with the respective funds' regulations already in force and therefore imply just a few practical changes.

If you work in these fields, you might want to **take a look at the "Focus-on" section** on [BudgWeb's homepage](#) where you can find the Newsflash by the Central Financial Service, the text of the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006, an article by article summary of the changes and much more.

Of course, do not miss the next stage of the revision process: we'll be there!

With best wishes for the New Year and your future financial management on behalf of the Central Financial Service, DG BUDGET, Directorate D.

Silvia Mora, BUDG D4 (Internal Communication Officer and Trainer)

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## Selection & Recruitment

### Publication at grades AD9-12 for Head of Unit posts declared unlawful

**What started off as a rather classic case of a colleague contesting that he was not selected for a Head of Unit post, resulted in a rather unexpected judgment of the Civil Service Tribunal (case F-122/05, published on 14 December 2006).**

As is often the case, the complainant invoked the "erreur manifeste d'appréciation" of the Appointing Authority in the context of the selection procedure. This argument was rejected by the Tribunal.

However, the complainant also advanced that the selection procedure itself was to be considered illegal, claiming that the grade at which the post is filled is fixed only at the end of the selection procedure and therefore at a stage where the identity of the candidates for the post is known.

It is true that the Commission Decision on middle management staff foresees that the candidate selected for a Head of Unit post at level AD9-12 is appointed in his/her current grade. However, the level of the post is fixed clearly **before** the selection procedure is launched, either at level AD9-12 or AD13-14.

Much to the Commission's surprise, the Tribunal did nevertheless declare the procedure illegal.

The Tribunal apparently defines the "level" of a Head of Unit post by reference to annex I of the Staff Regulations concerning the types of posts ("emplois-types" – see related

article in this edition) in each function group, stating that this annex allows for the distinction between 3 groups of grades: AD9-10, AD11-12 and AD13-14. As a consequence, the Tribunal considers the publication of a Head of Unit post in grade band AD9-12 to be **illegal as this band includes 2 "levels"**, the final "level" at which the post is filled being fixed by the grade of the person selected (i.e. at the end of the procedure, the person selected being appointed in his/her current grade).

An **appeal** against this judgment is currently **under consideration**. In the meantime however, the Commission will have to **comply with the ruling**. As a consequence, vacant Head of Unit posts will have to be published either at level AD9-10, AD11-12 or AD13-14 (the latter being the case already today).

In addition, some 50 internal selection procedures which were underway will have to be **cancelled**.

Stefaan Ceuppens  
ADMIN A5 (Organisation Chart and Management Staff)

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## Rubrique pratique

### Séance de rattrapage

**Voici quelques brèves de ce début d'année qui vous auraient peut-être échappé : transports publics, congés, etc.**

### **Remboursement des abonnements de transports publics**

La participation – prévue initialement à partir de 2007 - de 50 % aux frais d'abonnement des transports publics, n'a pas été acceptée par les autorités budgétaires.

Le budget autorisé pour l'année 2007 ne permet pas de lancer le remboursement des abonnements tel que proposé. Il sera utilisé pour renforcer des actions existantes (vélos, infrastructures et autres mesures) - sur lesquelles, bien évidemment, nous reviendrons.

### **Simplification administrative : ce qui est prévu pour 2007**

La Task Force "Simplifions nos procédures administratives" a présenté au vice-président Kallas un premier rapport des améliorations en cours et celles qui sont en projet (dont une charte de qualité de service). Vous pouvez lire le résumé sur le site web de la [Task Force](#) ou dans [Commission en plus du 12 janvier](#). C'est une preuve de plus que l'utilisateur a de bonnes idées et que l'administration les prend en compte.

### **Comment demander un congé ?**

Mode d'emploi de la nouvelle application de Sysper2 appelée *Gestion du temps* ("Time Management") pour remplacer le *SIC Congés* : une conférence pour le personnel était organisée le 17 janvier pour expliquer les avantages de ce nouvel outil et répondre à vos questions. Ce fut un succès : une salle pleine à Bruxelles et des questions/réponses depuis tous les autres sites en vidéoconférence (dont Ispra et Grange), une ambiance constructive et des réponses concrètes à des petits soucis de jeunesse du module.

Vous pouvez regarder sur votre PC l'enregistrement de la présentation et lire la **présentation**, depuis le site web de la [Task Force](#).

Une foire aux questions a aussi été élaborée par la DIGIT pour **les thèmes les plus récurrents** (délégations à donner par le chef d'unité à sa/son secrétaire pour la saisie de absences, etc.) sur le [site de Sysper2](#).

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