



**EPSO
ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2005**

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1. POLICY RESULTS IN 2005

1.1. Section – Political achievements

While meeting the objectives set out in its 2005 annual management plan, EPSO continued to initiate and develop policies and to build on earlier achievements, in order to improve the quality of service rendered to both Institutions and candidates or potential applicants. Key results included honouring the agreed timetable for publication of competitions, implementing new procedures for the selection of Contract Staff, launching computer based testing (CBT), using a more strategic information technology approach (which resulted i.a. in the improvement of EPSO's on-line registration and dialogue systems), continuing to implement best practices in selection.

For as far as **competitions** are concerned, in 2005 several enlargement competitions and a high number of EUR 15 competitions were either completed (25) or launched (42), thereby providing adequate results to cater for the Institutions needs. A total of 1.870 laureates were placed in reserve lists during the year. EPSO also launched competitions for translators and interpreters in the context of the planned enlargement of Bulgaria and Romania.

On other **selection procedures**, work has started on the selection dimensions following the adoption of Irish as an official working language of the EU from 1/1/2007. Several calls for expression of interest for contract staff were also carried out: for Bulgarian and Romanian speakers - mostly for administrators, linguists and secretaries -; for administrators for positions in Commission delegations outside the E.U.; and a very large one addressed to the citizen of all Member States in order to set up a database of potential contract staff to be recruited over the course of the next three years by the Institutions in all function groups. The first phase of testing using for the first time computer based testing has been concluded (16.000 candidates tested).

Pursuant to the internal rules established by the Commission during the transition period after the entry into force of the new Staff Regulations, EPSO has continued testing, at the request of the Institutions, potential contract agents in function groups I and II: this has been carried out via a 'light procedure' that involved nonetheless a Computer based testing tool developed internally. More than 2.000 persons have been tested in this manner.

EPSO is keen to exploit the potential of Computer Based Testing (CBT): in the future, this tool will be used for selected open competitions and will no doubt contribute to improve service delivery and quality, as well as granting to candidates an increased flexibility. In this context, EPSO has developed in 2005 a databank of questions that has been used for the contract staff tests, which will of course be improved and enlarged over the next months prior to its utilisation for open competitions.

On **technical aspects**, the on-line registration and communication with candidates has been consolidated improving accessibility, speeding up communications and providing real time statistics on the results at different stages of competitions and selections.

On **communication strategy**, EPSO has given greater access to available information to both internal and external users. Internally, staff has access to a wider range of strategic information, via the *EPSOonly* intranet web-site, while EPSO's Extranet web-site gives the Institutions timely and flexible access to a wider range of information on the activities of the Office. The publication of a Newsletter, *EPSO Facta*, has been initiated in 2005 and is carried out on regular basis. In addition, improvements are being implemented in EPSO's site for the

general public (<http://www.europa.eu.int/epso>). The significant increase (42%) in visitor traffic in 2005 is a proof of the importance and the usefulness of this tool.

In its continuous search for **best practices**, EPSO has established a Network of National Experts in Selection in 2004 and hosted the second meeting of the Network in June 2005. The themes of this meeting included the impact of new IT and Communication in selection, equality of treatment, diversity and national practices in selection.

Conclusion:

In spite of shortfalls in some areas, EPSO has reached its overall objectives, both for EUR10 competitions and non enlargement related competitions, as well as the first operations in the framework of the future EUR 2 (BG/RO) have been initiated.

1.2. Section – Key figures and significant developments

2005 saw the completion of several outstanding enlargement competitions and a high number of EUR 15 competitions along with the launch of several more EUR15 competitions.

EPSO’s priorities and main objectives for 2005, as reflected in the Management Plan, consisted in:

EPSO was able to complete on schedule most of its competitions launched in 2004, identifying 1870 laureates in total. In some instances the number of laureates fell short of the target set for the competitions - this was particularly the case for specialised competitions. Nevertheless, in most fields there were an amply sufficient number of laureates to meet the recruitment needs of the Institutions in 2005 and the overall figure represents a considerable achievement by EPSO. Shortfalls were addressed in the forward planning agreed by the EPSO Management Board on 20.10.2005. Those enlargement competitions published in the very end of 2004 are expected to be finalized in the first half of 2006, notably EPSO/AD/4/04 (EUR10 administrators AD7) and EPSO/AST/2-3/04 (EUR10 assistants AST3). This relative delay is mainly due to unavailability of correctors and selection board members.

a) Completion of enlargement competitions launched in 2004

Progress against this objective is measured in terms of timeliness, number of competitions completed and number of qualified laureates produced.

Competitions	Laureates	Date of availability of reserve lists	Laureate target
EPSO/A/20/04 – heads of unit (4 fields)	46	18.3.2005	90
EPSO/A/21/04 – heads of unit (4 fields)	47	18.3.2005	50
EPSO/A/22/04 – heads of unit	9	18.3.2005	10
EPSO/A/23/04 – heads of unit	10	18.3.2005	10

b) Completion of EUR-15 competitions launched in 2003 and 2004

The number of laureates identified (1870) was 65% of the targets set (2825). For some shortfalls identified, corrective actions have either been taken or will be taken by launching new selection procedures.

Competitions	Laureates	Date of availability of reserve lists	Laureate target
EPSO/A/11/03 assistant administrators in audit	105	25.1.05	150
EPSO/A/12/04 administrators in nuclear inspection	107	7.11.05	180
EPSO/A/13/04 administrators in FI Law of the FI/SV language	7	9.11.05	8
EPSO/A/14/04 administrators FI	10	9.11.05	16
EPSO/A/15/04 administrators FI	6	28.10.05	6
EPSO/A/16/04 administrators in information technology	203	22.12.05	200
EPSO/A/18/04 administrators in public health	274	28.10.05 + 18.11.05 (by field)	350
EPSO/A/19/04 administrators in engineering fields	170	25.7.05 + 28.10.05 (by field)	255
EPSO/AD/1/04 lawyer linguists FI	4	2.11.005	30
EPSO/AST/1/04 conference technicians	23	17.11.05	55
EPSO/B/21/04 assistants in nuclear research	27	4.7.05	190
EPSO/B/22/04 assistants in information technology	159	9.9.05	340
EPSO/B/23/04 technical agents/research	100	8.11.05	145
EPSO/C/11/03 secretaries EN	350	11.4.05	350
EPSO/C/12/04 laboratory technicians	43	28.10.05	70
EPSO/LA/13/04 lawyer linguists DA	6	16.2.05	20
EPSO/LA/14/04 lawyer linguists EL	12	9.6.05	30
EPSO/LA/15/04 lawyer linguists EN	6	16.2.05	30
EPSO/LA/16/04 assistant translators DA	37	9.9.05	80
EPSO/LA/17/04 assistant translators DE	39	9.9.05	90
EPSO/LA/18/04 assistant translators IT	70	9.9.05	70

c) Organisation of new competitions to meet the priority needs of the Institutions

In 2005 EPSO launched a number of competitions reflecting the priorities agreed by the EPSO Working Group and endorsed by the EPSO Management Board. Again prioritisation has been necessary in order to draw up a realistic work programme. A large number of competitions were launched which reflect the needs expressed by the Institutions and which can be laid out as follows:

EUR10

Competitions	Publication	Closing date	Candidates	Laureates target	Indicative date of reserve list
EPSO/AD/42/05 (AD 7) Lawyer linguist PL	08/12/2005 C310A	11-jan-06	317	35	Dec-06
EPSO/AD/30/05 (AD 6) Lawyer linguist CZ	28/07/2005 C185A	22-sept-05	74	35	Apr-06
EPSO/AD/24/05 (A*9) Administrators Senior Audit Officers	02/06/2005 C135A	28-juil-05	180	25	Jul-06
EPSO/AD/23/05 (A*5) Administrators Juniors auditors	02/06/2005 C135A	28-juil-05	3.217	90	Jul-06
EPSO/AD/22/05 (A*12) Head of units 5 fields	02/06/2005 C135A	28-juil-05	556	56	Jul-06
EPSO/AD/21/05 (A*9) Head of units 5 fields	02/06/2005 C135A	28-juil-05	973	123	June-06
EPSO/AD/8-16/05 (A*9) Linguistic Administrators Senior conference Interpreters Re-opening	19/05/2005 C117A 22/12/05	25-juil-05 31-jan-06	289 491	15 par langue	Sept-Oct 06
EPSO/AD/7/05 (A*12) Linguistic Administrators Head of units in the field of translation	19/05/2005 C117A	22-juin-05	157	51	June-06
EPSO/AD/6/05 (A*9) Linguistic Administrators Head of units in the field of translation	19/05/2005 C117A	22-juin-05	291	11 par langue	June-06
EPSO/AD/5/05 (A*5) Linguistic Administrators Field of translation	19/05/2005 C117A	22-juin-05	6.942	125 par langue	June-Oct-06

Competitions	Publication	Closing date	Candidates	Laureates target	Indicative date of reserve list
EPSO/AD/4/04 (A*7) Administrators European Public Admin.	22/12/2004 C317A	03-févr-05	5.543	360	Apr-Jul-06
EPSO/AD/24/04 (A*6) Administrators Field of Research 4 fields	22/07/2004 C187A	23-sept-04	2.762	90	Feb-06
EPSO/AST/3/04 (B*3) Assistants Information Technologies	22/12/2004 C317A	03-févr-05	1.418	300	Apr-06
EPSO/AST/2/04 (B*3) Assistants Field 1 Publ. Eur. Adm. /Human resources Field 2 Fin. Management	22/12/2004 C317A	03-févr-05	2.405 827	235 420	Field 1: Jul 06 Field 2: Apr 06

EUR2

Competitions	Publication	Closing date	Candidates	Laureates target	Indicative date of reserve list
EPSO/AD/36/05 (AD 5) Linguistic Administrators Field of translation RO	15/11/2005 C282A	15-déc-05	3.483	150	Apr-07
EPSO/AD/35/05 (AD 5) Linguistic Administrators Field of translation BG	15/11/2005 C282A	15-déc-05	4.047	150	Apr-07
EPSO/AD/34/05 (AD 5) Linguistic Administrators conference interpreters RO	04/11/2005 C273A	06-déc-05	485	100	Sept-06
EPSO/AD/33/05 (AD 5) Linguistic Administrators conference interpreters BG	04/11/2005 C273A	06-déc-05	355	100	Sept-06

EUR11

Competitions	Publication	Closing date	Candidates	Laureates target	Indicative date of reserve list
EPSO/AD/41/05 (AD 7) Lawyer-linguists FR	07/12/2005 C309A	11-jan-06	706	45	Dec-06
EPSO/AD/40/05 (AD 7) Lawyer-linguists DA	07/12/2005 C309A	11-jan-06	43	35	Dec-06
EPSO/AD/39/05 (AD 5) Linguistic administrators FR	23/11/2005 C290A	21-déc-05	909	45	Nov-Dec-06
EPSO/AD/38/05 (AD 5) Linguistic administrators EN	23/11/2005 C290A	21-déc-05	795	40	Nov-Dec-06
EPSO/AD/37/05 (AD 5) Linguistic administrators DE	23/11/2005 C290A	21-déc-05	821	35	Nov-Dec-06
EPSO/AD/32/05 (AD 6) Lawyer- linguists PT	27/07/2005 C184A	22-sept-05	243	34	Apr-06
EPSO/AD/31/05 (AD 6) Lawyer- linguists EN	27/07/2005 C184A	22-sept-05	93	35	Apr-06
EPSO/AD/29/05 (AD 5) Administrators Economics/Statistics	20/07/2005 C178A	29-sept-05	4.795	135	Dec-06
EPSO/AD/28/05 (AD 5) Administrators Financial resource Mgt	20/07/2005 C178A	29-sept-05	2.700	100	Dec-06-Feb-07
EPSO/AD/27/05 (AD 5) Administrators Audit	20/07/2005 C178A	29-sept-05	2.475	125	Dec-06
EPSO/AD/26/05 (AD 5) Administrators Law	20/07/2005 C178A	29-sept-05	11.635	180	Mar-07
EPSO/AD/25/05 (AD 5) Administrators European Public Admin. /Human Resources	20/07/2005 C178A	29-sept-05	25.580	210	Mar-07
EPSO/AD/3/04 (A*6) Lawyer-linguists SV	28/12/04 C321A	22-fév-05	324	30	Jan-06

Competitions	Publication	Closing date	Candidates	Laureates target	Indicative date of reserve list
EPSO/AD/2/04 (A*6) Lawyer-linguists NL	28/12/04 C321A	22-fév-05	1.050	30	Feb-Mar-06
EPSO/A/17/04 (A7/A6) Administrators Research 4 fields	31/03/2004 C81A	30-avr-04	7.184	180	Apr-06
EPSO/AST/7/05 (AST 3) Assistants Fin. Mgt./Accountancy Project/contract Mgt	20/07/2005 C178A	29-sept-05	5.645	200 110	Dec-06-Feb-07
EPSO/AST/6/05 (C*1) Building technicians	02/02/2005 C26A	03-mar-05	1.211	30	Apr-06
EPSO/AST/5/05 (B*3) Building assistants	02/02/2005 C26A	03-mar-05	1.491	30	Apr-06
EPSO/AST/4/05 (C*1) Secretaries FR	18/01/2005 C12A	23-févr-05	11.798	350	June-06

d) Aid to Institutions in the organisation of specialised competitions to meet specific needs

In conformity with its mandate, EPSO has continued to provide throughout 2005 technical and administrative support to individual institutions with specific competition requests, particularly the European Parliament for 4 competitions (A*9 and A*12) for Swedish and Finnish language Administrators.

1.3. Section – Main policy and core business results

1.3.1. *Presentation to the EPSO Management Board of the second 3-year forward planning of competitions, prepared in consultation with the Institutions.*

Following inter-institutional consultations within the framework of the EPSO Working Group, on 20 October 2005 the EPSO Management Board endorsed the second 3-year EPSO Forward Plan covering the period 2005 – 2007.

1.3.2. *Setting up of a database for contract agent staff (Function groups I-IV) for the Council and the Commission (CAST 25)*

In June, EPSO launched a Call for expression of interest to establish a database of potential contract agents to be recruited over the course of the next three years by the Council and by the Commission. On the basis of information provided by the two Institutions on their future staff needs, EPSO published a Call (named CAST 25) addressed to the citizens of all 25 Member States attracting candidatures of potential contract agents in over one hundred different fields of activities spanning the four Function groups.

Pursuant to the General Implementing Provisions of the Council and the Commission, EPSO has been asked to administer to all candidates a series of tests of both a general and a job specific nature, so that the Institutions may have the guarantee that those successful candidates they might wish to interview will have proved to possess the aptitudes and competencies to fill positions in their ranks.

To do so EPSO has had recourse, for the first time, to Computer based testing (see pt; 1.2. § a) below): candidates were asked to sit verbal, numerical and EU knowledge tests (Function group specific) in 33 different test centres spread all over the Member States between the end of November 2005 and the beginning of January 2006. Competency tests (job profile specific) will be administered during 2006, so that the final results will be available to the Institutions, profile by profile, from March to November 2006.

In terms of participation, EPSO registered more than 32.000 applications and validated close to 29.000 of them, inviting the candidates to register for the tests. Nearly 19.000 candidates did so and 16.000 were actually tested.

In line with the internal rules established by the Commission during the transition period after the entry into force of the new Staff Regulations, EPSO has continued testing, at the request of the Institutions, potential contract agents in function groups I and II: this has been carried out via a 'light procedure' that involved nonetheless a Computer based testing tool developed internally. More than 2.000 persons have been tested in this manner.

1.3.3. Assistance to the Institutions in the selection of candidates for specialist contract agent posts

- At the request of the European Parliament, EPSO launched in February a Call for expression of interest to establish a database of potential contract agents having Bulgarian or Romanian as main languages: the Call (named CAST RO-BG) was addressed in particular to potential staff in Function group IV, in the fields of General administration, Communication, Parliamentary and Legal affairs, and Translation, and in Function groups III and II, in the fields of Personnel management, Documentation, Paralegal affairs and Secretariat. Once the European Parliament made its initial choices from among the 12.000 candidates, access to the database was given to all the other interested Institutions.
- At the request of the Commission, EPSO launched in September a Call for expression of interest (CAST RELEX) to establish a database of potential contractual agents to fill Function group IV positions in Commission offices outside of European Union territory. Approximately 11.500 candidatures, out of the 14.000 received by EPSO, were validated. This Call was also addressed to citizens of all the Member States.

1.3.4. Training assistance to Agencies

In autumn 2005, EPSO provided a two-day training course on the premises of the EMEA in Canary Wharf London for Agencies aimed at helping them organise their own selection procedures: how to launch a selection procedure and manage it online, legal questions, selection board composition, running of tests etc.

1.3.5. Assistance to the Office of Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM)

A service level agreement between OHIM and EPSO, approved by the Management Board and signed in November 2004, provided technical support from EPSO in organising internal selections for temporary agents for that Office.

1.3.6. Develop selection methods and techniques on the basis of best practice

1.3.6.1. Preparatory studies for the introduction of computer-based pre-selection tests

Two contracts were awarded in the Spring of 2005 to implement computer-based testing: one contract provided the supply of test items suitable for computer-based delivery; the other covered the delivery of computer-based tests to designated candidates at test centres across Europe. EPSO used computer-based tests for the first time towards the end of 2005 for the testing of contract agents (CAST 25) on behalf of the European Institutions. In the future, this tool will be used for selected open competitions and will no doubt contribute to improve service delivery and quality, as well as granting to candidates an increased flexibility. In this context, EPSO has developed in 2005 a databank of questions that has been used for the contract staff tests, which will of course be improved and enlarged over the next months prior to its utilisation for open competitions.

1.3.6.2. Consolidation of on-line registration and communication with candidates

Following the introduction of the on-line system and communication with candidates via candidate profiles, competition management has become more efficient, improving accessibility, communication and providing real-time statistics on the number of applications received. The system is more personalised, as candidates may now visualise their online details, change their personal data (when these changes do not conflict with the running of the competition at that stage) such as languages chosen, preferred test centre etc. An electronic – searchable - Curriculum Vitae has been developed: candidates are required to fill it in if successful in the pre-selection tests for access to the written tests (5,008 completed CVs in the calendar year 2005). The system now also includes a compulsory self-evaluation element, with a view to enabling candidates to make a more informed choice at the point of registration (78,448 confirmations in the calendar year 2005) and an online system (activated at the end of December 2005 - 306 candidates have completed these online forms) whose aim is to collate all necessary data on those candidates concerned by possible reimbursement of travel costs. Further development of the website will be undertaken over the coming twelve months.

EPSO has again benefited from ever an increased use of IT in terms of data and statistics made available in 2005. Priority was given to standardising procedures to ensure that such information was used, inter alia, in the interests of transparency and better policy development.

Throughout 2005 EPSO has also provided technological support to other European Institutions and services of the Commission, e.g. Parliament Nac and Pe-RL, OLAF selection procedures, intranet, Syslog EAS.

1.3.6.3. EPSO Study Group

A Study Group on competition procedures and requirements (e.g. candidates' profiles, length/type of professional experience, planning of competitions against the background of state of play of recruitment, selection boards duties /composition, etc.) was initiated at the

EPSO Management Board meeting of 20 October 2005. The group is made up of the Directors of Human Resources from the various Institutions and chaired by Director of EPSO. The aim is to open up discussions and stimulate ideas on all aspects of competition management which could lead to possible improvements and/or simplification in current procedures. The group will report back on its activities to the EPSO Management Board in the summer of 2006.

1.3.6.4. Further development of the EPSO communication strategy

EPSO Extranet/local Intranet: in February 2005, EPSO put at the disposal of all institutions an Extranet site, as well as creating a local Intranet site restricted to EPSO staff only. These sites have been updated on a regular basis and include useful documentation for all Institutions and for members of EPSO. Important information regarding EPSO staff, planning, the triennial report and the EPSO newsletter (*EPSO facta*) are now available immediately in e-format.

EPSOonly includes information such as minutes of EPSO Directorate meetings, the vade mecum for Selection boards, speeches and service-level agreements.

The EPSO Extranet platform has been used by the IRM team in order to facilitate for EPSO end-users the utilisation of the Online helpdesk (called NICS). The same platform serves as a basis for the Operational support team to improve the organisation of invigilation; competition secretaries may now, inter alia, verify if a candidate has opened his/her letter of invitation to tests or confirmed his/her intention to participate in the tests.

EPSO also participates in other forms of interinstitutional communication, for example by contributing to and being part of two sub-sites, Intracomm and Administration & Personnel, which are elements of the EU Institution's Intranets.

External Communication

The EPSO web site and web management/restructure is still being built up. The contents have been updated regularly throughout 2005 and comments from the general public as well as from other bodies - Institutions, national authorities – taken into consideration.

For the year 2005, improvements to the site, still ongoing, resulted in, , an average of 243 689 visitors per month (187 464 in 2004), 641 830 active visits (451 520 in 2004) or 3 406 261 successful requests for pages (2 620 552 in 2004).

In 2005, EPSO updated all its procedures to take full account of Regulation (CE) 45/2001 on data protection and on notification procedures as required by the European Data Protection Controller. The EPSO sites and tools (static pages, e-registration, EPSO profile and EPSO porta) are now in full compliance with the norms laid down by this body.

Last, but not least, it should be highlighted that, in line with the principle of multilingualism, all primary level information is now available in 20 languages via a brochure in PDF format (2005 edition) available on-line – see below.

Publications

The new edition of the brochure "Careers@ the European Institutions" has been successfully launched and has been available since March 2005 in 20 languages. Alongside this, a smaller pamphlet constituting a shorter guide to careers within the EU institutions has been published

in English and a publication in 23 languages is underway. 2005 also hailed the birth of the EPSO newsletter, *EPSO facta*, in printed version and in e-format.

Information draft paper on Publicity policy

The Publicity policy paper is currently under examination and has been used to help answer questions put by the Internal Audit Service regarding the efficiency of EPSO's advertising activities.

In 2005 two new framework contracts on publicity for open competitions were concluded, one concerning publicity in the daily press the other concerning publicity in the specialised press.

1.3.6.5. Network of experts in selection and recruitment techniques across the member states

A second meeting of this network was organised by EPSO and held in Brussels on 14 June 2005. All Member States but one were present and presentations on national practice were made by Slovakia, France, Denmark and Belgium. Subjects covered were, on the one hand, new information technology and communication in the framework of organising selection procedures and, on the other hand ensuring equal opportunities and diversity in the workplace.

1.3.6.6. Identification and implementation of measures to improve forecasts on attendance levels at test centres

In line with its commitment to best practices, it is EPSO's policy to routinely survey the reasons for non-attendance at all pre-selection tests. The results of each survey are evaluated and compiled to produce regular Reports for the Management Board of EPSO. To date, two comprehensive reports have been produced, containing findings and recommendations on possible developments and improvements of EPSO practices in this domain.

These reports show a high level of consistency in the reasons for non attendance at tests. A number of specific reasons outside the candidate's own control (non-availability due to work, illness or being abroad on the day of the tests) consistently account for in excess of 50% of all non-attendance. Preliminary results of ongoing surveys show the same trend.

The successful introduction of CBT, offering flexibility regarding test dates to candidates, is expected to reverse this trend. Encouragingly, results from CAST 25, which hailed the launch of CBT, show a remarkable reduction in non-attendance levels. EPSO will be adapting its surveys to take account of the flexibilities offered by CBT and ensure it captures relevant and timely information, so as to have better forecasts on attendance levels at tests.

1.3.6.7. Ongoing rationalisation of test procedures to ensure that they are realistic and effective in the context of the enlarged Union

The EPSO Management Board decided in April 2005 to extend by one year the linguistic arrangements for EPSO competitions: pre-selection tests for enlargement competitions would continue to be organised in the candidates' second language to be chosen among EN/DE/FR, while for EUR15 competitions the second language could be chosen among the 11. These arrangements continue to be crucial to EPSO's ability to process the very heavy competition workload generated by the requirements of the Institutions, also bearing in mind the planned enlargement of Bulgaria and Romania.

Testing in the second language (EN/DE/FR) has been the principle adopted by EPSO in the CAST 25 selection procedure: in fact, this approach will entail obvious simplifications of procedures on future recruitment of contract agents. Moreover, the decision to restrict tests to three languages allowed EPSO to set up quite rapidly a database of CBT questions that was reasonable and manageable in size and, consequently, less prone to the errors that might occur in translation.

1.3.7. Administer and check reserve lists

By the end of 2004 EPSO had developed an IT tool which is now known as “e-RL” to manage reserve lists: e-RL is an interactive tool which permits consultation of the lists of laureates of the different competitions and which searches through the lists by using pre-established key words or criteria. Access to e-RL was given to all Institutions (in particular to the central Administration services and HR managers) in February 2005 and it has currently nearly 400 regular established users. Throughout 2005 EPSO sought to maximise the benefits of this tool by:

- entering all new reserve lists into e-RL
- as far as possible entering all existing EPSO reserve lists into the system, to ensure a uniform approach to reserve list management
- carrying out fine-tuning to the system in the light of experience

During the year, EPSO has also worked at finding the best ways to improve the quality and transparency of the information on recruitment procedures made available to laureates, and at exploring the feasibility of creating links to e-RL with other databases used by the Institutions.

2. MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS IN 2005

2.1. Characteristics and nature of the activities

The main task of EPSO is to organise open competitions at the request of institutions with a view to drawing up reserve lists of suitable applicants for appointment as officials. Competitions are organised in compliance with the Staff Regulations, on the basis of harmonised criteria laid down in accordance with Article 6(c) of the decision of the Secretaries general of the Institutions concerning the organisation and the running of the Office and in compliance with the work programme approved by the Management Board.

In this framework EPSO cooperates closely with the institutions in order to assess the future staff needs indicated by them and to prepare and implement a programme of competitions to meet those needs in a timely manner. The work programme of competitions for the period 2004-2006 (see above) has been established and approved by the management board on 11 November 2004.

EPSO also administers and checks the use of the reserve lists established at the issue of all competitions.

Moreover, the Staff Regulations of 2004, have entrusted EPSO with responsibilities in the following fields:

- the definition and organisation of the assessment of linguistic abilities of officials prior their first promotion after recruitment¹;
- the determination of the content of the tests organised in the context of the training programmes in the framework of certification procedures²;
- on demand, the assistance to institutions, their offices and agencies, in the selection of candidates for temporary and contract staff posts³.

2.2. Management and internal control systems

Internal Control environment, performance management and reporting:

The annual management plan after endorsement by the management board has been communicated to all EPSO staff. Its implementation has been undertaken as a whole by units. Nevertheless due to the interinstitutional character of the Office the work programme has been prepared according to the needs and requirements of the Institutions (multi-annual competitions planning).

In 2005 progress in the implementation of the internal control system has continued.

Most of the Baseline requirements 31 December 2005 are implemented: out of a total of 75 baseline requirements, 71 are fully implemented, 3 partially so and 1 is not applicable.

¹ Art 45 § 2, Art 7 § 2.d) Annex III

² Art 45bis §1.c) and Art 7 § 2.c) Annex III

³ Art 7 § 4 Annex III and Art 12 points 3 and 4, and Art 82 point 5 of the Conditions of employment of other servants of the European Communities

On staff competence: EPSO/EAS have designated a common local career guidance officer (this has become effective in February 2006).

On recording and correction of internal control weaknesses:

Although documentation about procedures does exist at unit's level, there is no single operational manual. This issue will undergo a review during 2006.

On evaluation and performance management:

EPSO has mainly concentrated on a series of rationalisation and modernisation measures in order to make its processes more efficient than in the past. Obviously, EPSO will be in a position to evaluate this new measures and procedures only after having gained the first experiences with them. EPSO has indeed already established a number of performance indicators, related to the management of a substantially larger number of procedures/selection boards and applicants.

In this context, and in the light of the preliminary draft report of the audit exercise (limited review) run by IAS at the end of 2005, an internal evaluation function has been created and is in place since February 2006.

Control activities:

The future control strategy of EPSO shall be to focus on a systematic and thorough ex-post evaluation of completed competitions and so as to develop a set of reliable performance indicators to be applied to future competitions and other selection procedures.

On financial issues, a reinforcement of staff is planned to allow more systematically controls, both ex-ante and ex-post.

Audit, evaluation, follow-up of action plans:

As previously stated an Audit (limited review) of EPSO by IAS is ongoing.

The "critical" recommendation of the audit on "The management of access rights" was followed up in the bi-annual review report of the IAS on IAC audits and was declared as "completed" by EPSO in March 2005.

A validation of the local systems has been accomplished by DG BUDG/C4. This report will be sent to the Court of Auditors in order to facilitate its work on the 2005 DAS exercise.

In a high level assessment made in December 2004, DG BUDG/C4 concluded that, for EPSO, there were two risks related to the introduction of the ABAC project in 2005. Firstly, it was unclear where the responsibility to manage fixed assets as from 1 January 2005, would lie, with EPSO or with a selected management centre. (However, as EPSO only has a limited value of fixed assets, this was considered to be a minor problem). The second issue relates to the introduction of a new local IT system, not yet finalised to date. This assessment was based on an analysis of the replies to a questionnaire issued on 1 September 2004, and was supported by an on-site visit of the Office.

In DG BUDGET/C4 appreciation, these two problems justified an additional investigation of the Office, which took place between 16 September 2005 and 3 October 2005. During this investigation, it was noted that, in general, EPSO has correctly adopted appropriate measures, as those taken by the Commission, to promote a sound control environment, in accordance with the financial regulations. Moreover, and despite the inter-institutional status of EPSO,

its assets are managed either by DIGIT or by OIB, as it is the case for most DGs and Services. Hence, EPSO does not use the ABAC Assets tool.

EPSO will implement a New Internal Control System (NICS) that will transfer legal entity and bank account data automatically from the candidate profile to the central system.

With the aim to improve the quality of the control procedures, DG BUDG/C4 recommended that EPSO make use of control checklists, in order to ensure the completeness of pre-defined control procedures.

Advances paid by EPSO for the rent of premises are now immediately recorded as a cost. (According to the Financial Regulations all advance payments should be recorded as a pre-financing and cleared with the final payment, i.e. when the service has been delivered.)

Delays in the implementation of ABAC Contracts have occurred mainly due to the significant changes made to the tool during the first months of 2005. EPSO is committed to complete all encoding of open contracts signed in 2005 in ABAC Contracts by the end of January 2006.

At the end of the in-depth investigation, DG BUDG/C4 concluded that the local systems in EPSO have met the validation criteria for the period from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005: they indicated that significant progress was made to rectify the issues identified in their 2004 assessment, and that no additional issues of a fundamental nature could be identified that would indicate non-compliance with the validation criteria during the reference period.

3. RESERVATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE DECLARATION

3.1. Materiality criteria used

Criteria used for materiality were the nature of activities, the risk environment, the context and expectations of the stakeholders.

3.2. 2005 Reservations

There is no reservation in the Annual Activity Report 2005.

3.3. Overall conclusion on combined impact on the reservations on the declaration as a whole

There is no indication of any material deficiency in the internal control of EPSO that should lead to a reservation in the annual Activity Report

4. DECLARATION OF THE AUTHORISING OFFICER BY DELEGATION



European Personnel Selection Office

Director

I, the undersigned, Erik HALSKOV, Director of EPSO

In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view¹.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, the work of the internal audit capability, the observations of the Internal Audit Service² and Financial Control² and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors² for years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the institution.

Brussels, 27 February 2006

Signed
Erik HALSKOV

¹ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the service.

² Delete if not applicable.



EUROPEAN ADMINISTRATIVE SCHOOL
ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2005

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1. POLICY RESULTS IN 2005

1.1. Section - Summary of achievements

1.1.1. Setting up the School

The EAS was established on 10 February 2005 with the publication in the Official Journal of the founding decision of the participating institutions.⁴ Simultaneously, the Secretaries-General of the same institutions set out the initial three-year mandate of the School and the way in which it was to be organised.⁵

The Secretaries-General decided that the School should initially be given responsibility for

- Management courses for staff who are, or may be, called upon to perform management functions;
- Induction courses for new members of staff;
- The compulsory training for the "certification" process whereby officials may transfer from the assistant to the administrator function group.⁶

During a period of three years the EAS is administratively attached to the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), although in practice is operationally independent.

The first priority for 2005 was therefore to get the School up and running as soon as possible.

1.1.2. The certification training programme

The School had to be operational quickly so as to be able to deliver the first certification training programme. Initial forecasts were that this would have to begin in December 2005 at the latest. In the event, at the time of writing this report, institutions are only now in the process of finalising their lists of selected candidates and the training cycle is now scheduled to start in May 2006.

In 2005, the School signed contracts with a consortium of external training providers for the delivery of the general part of the training programme, which represents about 70% of the total, and began work on the remaining, thematic modules. It could therefore have met its original deadline for launching the programme but the delay in the selection process means that it has more time to develop a programme tailored to the needs of the candidates.

⁴ Decision 2005/118/EC of 26 January (OJ L37/14). The following signed this decision : European Parliament, Council, Commission, Court of Justice, Court of Auditors, European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions, European Ombudsman

² Decision 2005/119/EC of 26 January 2005 (OJ L37/17).

³ Article 45a of the Staff Regulations

1.1.3. Induction and management training

Given the overriding priority of certification training, the EAS decided to continue with the existing induction training course that had, in any case, been open to new members of staff from all institutions since the summer of 2004. As for management training, it decided to concentrate its efforts on middle management and develop the Commission's Management Training Programme (MTP) on an inter-institutional basis. This course was opened up to staff from all institutions in May 2005.

The priority for the EAS in these two areas was therefore to ensure continuity of operations, maintain quality and make certain that the courses were adapted where necessary to take account of the presence of staff from all institutions. Judging from stakeholder and participant feedback, it has achieved these objectives.

1.1.4. Establishing the School's identity

All institutions have a department responsible for staff training and development. It was therefore important for the School to

- take early contact with these departments in order to explain its mission and role, avoid duplication of effort, and to build up mutual trust.
- create an identity distinct from EPSO, not to distance itself from its administrative guardian but to underline the fact that although attached to EPSO, its *raison d'être* and the nature of its tasks are fundamentally different.

The School believes it has been successful in both these ambitions.

1.1.5. Looking to the future

The Board has approved the School's robust management plan for 2006. Amongst its ongoing activities, the top priority is the delivery of a successful training programme for certification. In addition, it will examine how it can broaden the scope of its management development programmes and look at how to make use of blended learning approaches. It will also look to strengthen its evaluation techniques.

Any longer term planning will depend on the School's mandate. As already mentioned, the initial mandate is for a period of three years. Although it is clearly too soon to speculate about how it might develop, discussions must start in little more than a year's time. A strategic and political choice beckons as briefly discussed at the end of part 1 of this report.

1.2. Section - Key figures for 2005

The EAS became operational progressively from February onward. The Head of School was appointed on 1 February and by early autumn all but one of the School's 18 posts had been filled. Taking account of this gradual arrival of staff, the School's human resources were **10,4 person/years**.

This vigorous staffing policy meant that the School was able to take full responsibility for running the inter-institutional induction and management training courses (MTP) from 1 August in both Brussels and Luxembourg. From then until the end of the year it ran **19 4-day induction courses and 10 8-day MTP** for a total of **156 days of training**. Nearly **1000 people** attended EAS courses and a total of **4400 participant days** were delivered.

The inter-institutional dimension is very evident. **37%** of participants in the **induction** courses were **non-Commission staff**, as were **20%** for the **MTP**.

Satisfaction rates were good but can be improved. **78%** of participants in the **induction** courses were **satisfied or very satisfied**. For the **MTP** this figure was **75%**.

Waiting lists at the end of the year were negligible.

The School committed 99.86% of its operational appropriations of €3.333,200 during 2005. It ran a major open call for tenders (for the certification training) and launched another (for training rooms), as well as 4 restricted calls for tenders. It paid bills 12-18 days after receipt, well within regulatory requirements.

1.3. Section - Detail of main policy results

1.3.1. Background

From the founding texts (see footnote n°1), the reasons for setting up the School can be summarised as follows:

- To harmonise training opportunities in those areas where the needs of the institutions and their staff are the same or similar.
- To promote inter-institutional cooperation and the values and principles that underpin the way in which the EU institutions work.
- To ensure the best use of resources both in terms of reducing unit costs and offering a wider range of training opportunities.

Against this background, and the decision to confer responsibility on the School for induction, management and certification training, the 2005 annual management plan⁷ set out the following objectives for 2005:

⁷ Because the School is attached administratively to EPSO its annual management plan, annual activity report, internal control self-assessment etc., form part of EPSO's overall document. For simplicity's sake, reference is made merely to the School throughout the present report.

1. establish the EAS as a functioning entity as quickly as possible, including the recruitment of staff, drawing up a work programme and finding premises
2. reach agreement with the Commission on transitional arrangements to ensure continuity of supply of induction and management training courses and take over responsibility by the second semester
3. push ahead with the design of the content of the certification training programme and launch any calls for tenders so as to ensure delivery from December
4. organise a call for tenders for a management training programme with a view to delivery by the end of the year
5. organise a call for tenders for the provision of training rooms and ancillary services by June
6. put in place a computerised course management tool by March

As indicated in the summary of its achievements under section 1.1 above, the School also considered it was important to establish its identity and develop a strategy of mutual cooperation and confidence building with training departments in the institutions. Nor did it wish to neglect other, less immediately important aspects of its mandate such as providing access to its courses for staff of the EU agencies and other bodies and, on request, giving training advice to institutions and agencies and providing them with tailor-made training courses, as well as developing contacts with other schools and institutes of public administration.

The remainder of this section will examine the extent to which these objectives were achieved and for the small number that were not, will indicate the reasons.

1.3.2. Establish the EAS as a functioning entity

This objective was achieved rapidly.

The Head of School was appointed on 1 February and an initial intake of 8 further staff took place in mid-March. Additional recruitments followed rapidly so that by early autumn all but one of the School's 18 posts had been filled.

The School established its mission statement and detailed objectives for 2005 in June, although it had already submitted an extensive progress report for the management board's meeting of 7 April. This was accompanied by detailed proposals in relation to the certification training programme which received the board's in-principle agreement.

Thanks to the OIB, excellently-located premises were made available to the School in Brussels and training rooms were constructed there during the summer. The situation was slightly less satisfactory in Luxembourg where the School's antenna still occupies provisional premises only, on account of unforeseen infrastructure developments on the Kirchberg plateau. The European Parliament has however reiterated its commitment to find a permanent solution for the School, hopefully from September 2006.

1.3.3. *Agree on transitional arrangements with the Commission and take over full responsibility for existing courses from the second semester*

This objective was achieved.

The School reached early agreement with the Commission's training unit providing for this unit to carry on running induction courses and the MTP until 31 July, subject to a reimbursement of costs by the EAS.

This agreement also provided for the MTP to be opened up to staff of all institutions from May and this took place as planned. From this point in time the School jointly opened courses with the Commission and began participating in the evaluation process. It contributed in the same way to the induction courses. It organised a number of briefings with the training providers, including several by the institutions themselves, in order to ensure a successful transition of this programme from a purely Commission course to one open to all institutions. Participant and stakeholder feedback show that this has been achieved.

The School took over full responsibility for the running and evaluation of all these courses from 1 August. Between then and the end of the year it ran

- 19 4-day induction courses for a total of 850 participants (3400 participant days).
- 10 8-day MTP for 127 participants (1000 participant days)

The School achieved this quantitative output with human resources amounting to 10,4 person/years.

The inter-institutional dimension is very evident. 37% of participants in the induction courses were non-Commission staff, as were 20% for the MTP. Waiting lists at the end of the year were negligible. More detailed statistics on the breakdown per institution can be found in annex 1 to this part of the report. These statistics also show that cancellations remain a significant problem – rates are just over 10% for the MTP and over 11% for the induction training. Part of the explanation may lie in the lack of an integrated management system for registrations accessible to all institutions but it is clear that tighter discipline is required in the interest of the sound use of resources. Each place on an MTP course costs just over 3700 EUR so empty spaces are costly.

Participant satisfaction rates were good but can be improved. 78% of participants in the induction courses were satisfied or very satisfied. For the MTP this figure was 75%. The School will watch trends carefully, particularly to ascertain whether there are certain recurrent features in the evaluations that need attention. What is clear is that one set of premises used during 2005 lowered satisfaction rates – this problem will be solved with effect from March as a result of a new call for tenders (see point 1.3.6 below).

1.3.4. *Design certification training programme and deliver it from December 2005*

This objective was achieved in the sense that the School could have begun delivering the certification training in time but delays in the selection of candidates in all institutions means that the timetable has changed significantly. For information, the programme is divided into two main blocks: a common core of essentially skills-based modules that all candidates will follow; and seven specific modules, one of which must be taken by candidates after

agreement of their head of unit.⁸ The first block of the 5 weeks' common core training will now be delivered from the end of May 2006 by an external contractor.

That the School would have been in a position to meet the original deadline was due to two factors:

- the rapid agreement reached in the EAS inter-institutional working party (IWP) on the content of the common core modules
- the speedy launch and completion of the call for tenders by the EAS. In full respect of the applicable rules, this procedure was completed in the space of under 5 months from publication in the Official Journal to the signing of contracts.

The School is also on schedule with the design of the various specific modules which will be organised during October 2006.

1.3.5. Organise a call for tenders for management training and deliver by end of 2005

This objective was subsequently dropped for the following reasons.

Given its limited resources and the absolute priority that was needed for the certification training programme, the School decided that for the medium term it would take over the existing MTP run by the Commission, adapt it as necessary and open it to staff from all institutions. This was done from May onwards. The current contract can run until September 2008, so in these circumstances it was decided not to launch a call for tenders.

As described elsewhere in this report, the School continues to monitor the success of this course and has introduced a number of changes to take account of the new participant base. It has also taken measures to put greater emphasis on issues of increasing importance such as managing diversity and equal opportunities, and dealing with sexual and psychological harassment. In response to customer feedback, the School will also offer more flexible forms of delivery from the second half of 2006 and will build in follow-up courses with the same groups of participants and facilitators. This will ensure more ongoing support to participants and enable them and the School to monitor learning patterns and impacts more easily.

1.3.6. Organise a call for tenders for training rooms by June

This objective was achieved but in two stages.

When the School came into existence it faced an acute rooms' problem. Existing provisions were unsatisfactory and its own rooms would not be sufficient to meet all its needs. In addition, some training activities benefit from being run off-site. Finally, it became clear that institutions were not generally in a position to make rooms available to the School on a long-term basis, a prerequisite for sound training management.⁹

⁸ The 7 modules are: administration and human resource management, political secretariat work, financial and contract management, law, audit, communication policy and project management.

⁹ The Council does however make a large room available on a virtually permanent, annual basis which enables the EAS to hold most of its Brussels-based induction courses there.

The School therefore immediately launched a number of restricted calls for tenders to give it the option of running courses off-site either inside or outside Brussels and inside Luxembourg city, as well as on its own premises. This approach had the advantage of allowing the School to assess which formula worked best whilst it moved ahead with preparations for an open call for tenders later in the year.

In an attempt to promote economies of scale, the EAS invited all institutions to participate in this call for tender to cover their own needs and three responded positively. The estimated savings in terms of staff time from this inter-institutional approach can be estimated at about 20.000 EUR per institution. The call for tenders was published in the Official Journal in November 2005 and contracts should be signed shortly.

1.3.7. Put in place a computerised course management tool by March

This objective has only been partially achieved.

The ideal scenario for the School and its customers would be a system that allowed participants to register electronically, irrespective of the institution for which they work. Unfortunately, lack of interoperability of IT systems among the institutions rules that out for the foreseeable future. However, thanks to the active assistance of DG DIGIT, ad hoc arrangements have enabled a satisfactory solution to be found for the time being and work is ongoing to see whether commercially available software or even open source software solutions might be viable options for the future.

The School has however established a clearly identifiable presence on Syslog, which it uses to handle registrations direct from Commission participants. Syslog is also being tested by the training departments of two other institutions to see whether there is any advantage in their using it, albeit as an interface between their staff and the School.

1.3.8. Build mutual trust and ensure coherence with the institutions' training departments

The EAS believes this objective has been largely achieved.

In order to build mutual confidence with training departments in all the institutions and avoid overlapping, the School took a number of measures during the course of the year. From the outset it set up, at all levels, ongoing personal contacts with all stakeholders and maintained in force the EAS inter-institutional working party (IWP) that had been set up in 2003 to prepare for the establishment of the School. The IWP is chaired by the Head of the School and composed of representatives from the training departments of all institutions. It met 8 times in 2005, always in a spirit of consensus. Not only does the IWP allow all institutions to express their points of view on specific issues such as the certification training programme, it also provides a permanent forum for the exchange of ideas, thus enabling the EAS to anticipate its stakeholders' needs.

Regular bilateral and multilateral meetings are also held between all interested parties, in order to ensure as far as possible that there is no overlapping between EAS activities and those of the institutions' training departments. A good example of the usefulness of this approach was the discussions about induction training in the IWP during the second half of the year. As a result, the EAS course will undergo some significant changes in both substance

and form of delivery from the beginning of 2007 and will be better integrated with the efforts of the individual institutions.

The EAS will however work on a more systematic strategy of communication with its stakeholders, particularly to ensure that it keeps abreast of key developments in the areas of human resource management and training and development policy.

1.3.9. Provide services to agencies and tailor-made courses on request

This objective has been achieved.

Although not one of its main activities, the School believed it was important to advertise its availability to meet, where possible and without compromising its primary obligations to the institutions, requests for assistance from EU agencies and other bodies and from any institutions that had specific needs they could not satisfy themselves. These services are provided against payment and in October the Board approved the School's proposals in this respect.

The EAS contacted all the agencies and bodies to establish whether they were interested in concluding a service-level agreement. As a result, 5 such agreements have been signed. In the same vein, the School responded positively to a request from the Committee of the Regions to help it implement its strategy of sending all its management on a development programme during the second half of 2005. It provided a customised version of the MTP in close cooperation with the CoR's training department, a member of which co-facilitated the programme. Participant reaction was very favourable and the School and the CoR are monitoring the impact of this initiative in the workplace.

1.3.10. Develop contacts with other schools and institutes of public administration

This objective has been achieved.

The Head of the School plays an active part in the network of Directors of Schools and Institutes of Public administration. He was also invited to present the EAS at the occasion of the meeting of the Directors-general for public administration in the EU in June 2005. He has also established contact with a number of Schools on a bilateral basis including the European Institute for Public Administration in Maastricht and the College of Europe in Brugge.

1.3.11. Establish a clear identity for the School

This objective has been achieved.

The School felt this was important for two reasons. Firstly, as a newcomer on a training scene already filled by a large number of efficient players, it needed to demonstrate how it could add value in the fulfilment of the mandate and mission conferred on it. Secondly, its administrative attachment to EPSO, whilst providing a number of advantages, also ran the risk of obscuring the very distinctive role to be played by the School: its *raison d'être* and the nature of its tasks are fundamentally different.¹⁰

¹⁰ The rather curious administrative framework of the founding decision compounds this. These decisions were drafted in the expectation that the post of Head of School would be filled at Head of unit level and that the EPSO Director would be the School's Principal. In fact, the "Head of School" is a Director, put at EPSO's disposal for an initial period of 3 years. The legal texts and day-to-day reality are not therefore in tune with each other.

In addition to the various measures described elsewhere in this report, the School developed a strategy aimed at giving itself a distinctive character. It adopted its own logo within a few weeks of its creation. It opened its own website on IntraComm in the early autumn. And by February of this year its site on Europa was operational. It has also produced a brochure and video of its activities which will be used in its training courses.

The main element of this strategy however was its plans for an official inauguration on 10 February 2006. Timed to coincide with the first anniversary of the School's establishment, this event involved extensive planning and preparation during the last quarter of the year. It will be reported on in more detail in the 2006 AAR but suffice it to say that it has been acclaimed a resounding success and was attended by about 190 people from all levels of all institutions as well as from the outside world.

1.4. Overall assessment of 2005 and perspectives

1.4.1. Overall review of 2005

The EAS has achieved the vast majority of the objectives set out in its annual management plan and where it has not done so, there are clear reasons that are explained in the preceding part of this report.

Looking to the wider reasons for the creation of the School, enumerated at the beginning of Part 1.3 above, many of these do not lend themselves to easy objective analysis. For example, whereas it is axiomatic that the presence of participants from all institutions on its courses ensures harmonisation, it is less easy to demonstrate how successful the School has been in promoting a common culture and common values. In a similar vein, although participant feedback is frequently very positive about the inter-institutional dimension of the courses, to what extent this improves inter-institutional cooperation in a wider sense is difficult to say.

However the School believes that it has contributed to the improvement of management skills across the institutions and offered opportunities for mutual learning and exchange of good practice amongst participants. It also helped new entrants to integrate more smoothly and successfully into their new jobs.

But the organisational impact of such benefits can only be observed over a period of time and with sophisticated evaluation techniques. Much evidence will probably be anecdotal and empirical. But the School will of course endeavour to extend its evaluation activities beyond the short-term ones conducted at present, without wishing to raise false hopes for early or decisive results.

On the other hand, in terms of synergies in the use of resources and the offer of wider training opportunities, the contribution that the School can make is undeniable. Reference has already been made to the gains in terms of handling procurement procedures. An integrated approach between the School and the institutions' training departments where there is shared responsibility will also contribute in this respect. Indeed, the philosophy underlying the School's creation is that it will cover areas of general application whilst individual institutions concentrate on their specific needs. And for the smaller institutions at least, the range of training possibilities on offer has already increased, a good example being that quoted above of a management programme for the Committee of the Regions.

1.4.2. Future perspectives

In 2006, the School's aim is to consolidate its very satisfactory running-in phase, particularly through the delivery of a successful certification training programme. In its other areas of responsibility, it has identified scope for development, in cooperation with all the institutions, of learning opportunities for managers at various levels; the need to exploit alternative forms of learning to the traditional course-based approach; and the need to strengthen its evaluation techniques.

As noted elsewhere, the School's initial mandate is for a period of three years. Although it is too soon to speculate about the future, the reflection process will have to begin at the beginning of next year if decisions are going to be taken on time at the start of 2008. There are several possible scenarios. Does the School develop as an inter-institutional service provider, taking on responsibility for training activities where the needs of staff are the same or similar across the institutions? Should the School become a more specialist body, concentrating on developing a specific and common culture, particularly at management level, throughout the institutions? Or should the status quo be maintained?

The last option would seem to be inconsistent with the decision to create the School, unless an extremely minimalist view were to be taken of the reasons for its establishment. The two other approaches are however radically different from each other and it would be mere conjecture to speculate which, if either, might be followed.

Annex 1

Management Training Programme (MTP)

GENERAL STATISTICS 2005				REGISTRATION BY INSTITUTION (on the basis of requested registrations)			
Total number of EAS courses	10	(80 days)		All institutions	140	100,00%	
Total number registered participants at EAS courses	140			EP	13	9,29	
Percentage of courses by site				Council	0	0,00	
Brussels	70%	(7)		Commission	110	78,57	
Luxembourg	30%	(3)		CdJ	0	0,00	
Percentage of registered participants by site				CoA	3	2,14	
Brussels	70%	(98)		EESC	9	6,43	
Luxembourg	30%	(42)		CoR	4	2,86	
Average number of registered participants				EO	0	0,00	
Both sites	14,0			Other	1	0,71	
Brussels	14,0						
Luxembourg	14,0						
Participation rate							
Both sites	90,71%	(127)					
Brussels	91,84%	(90)					
Luxembourg	88,10%	(37)					

DROP-OUT BY INSTITUTION (actual participation compared to registrations for carried out courses)					ACTUAL PARTICIPATION BY INSTITUTION (on the basis of actual participations)		
	registered	actual	absences	drop-out rate			
All institutions	140	127	13	9,29%	All institutions	127	100,00%
EP	13	11	2	15,38	EP	11	8,66
Council	0	0	0	0,00	Council	0	0,00
Commission	110	100	10	9,09	Commission	100	78,74
CdJ	0	0	0	0,00	CdJ	0	0,00
CoA	3	3	0	0,00	CoA	3	2,36
EESC	9	9	0	0,00	EESC	9	7,09
CoR	4	3	1	25,00	CoR	3	2,36
EO	0	0	0	0,00	EO	0	0,00
Other	1	1	0	0,00	Other	1	0,79

MTP courses in Brussels																				
Course information	Number of registered participants										Number of actual participants									
	EP	COUNCIL	COM	CdJ	CoA	EESC	CoR	EO	OTHER	TOTAL	EP	COUNCIL	COM	CdJ	CoA	EESC	CoR	EO	OTHER	TOTAL
	6	0	77	0	1	9	4	0	1	98	5	0	71	0	1	9	3	0	1	90
Total number of courses EAS	7																			
Total number of registered participants EAS	98																			
MTP courses in Luxembourg																				
Course information	Number of registered participants										Number of actual participants									
	EP	COUNCIL	COM	CdJ	CoA	EESC	CoR	EO	OTHER	TOTAL	EP	COUNCIL	COM	CdJ	CoA	EESC	CoR	EO	OTHER	TOTAL
	7	0	33	0	2	0	0	0	0	42	6	0	29	0	2	0	0	0	0	37
Total number of courses	3																			
Total number of registered participants	42																			

Induction training programme

GENERAL STATISTICS 2005				REGISTRATION BY INSTITUTION (on the basis of requested registrations)		
Total number of EAS courses	19					
in EN	14					
in FR	5					
Total number registered participants at EAS courses	963			All institutions	963	100,00%
in EN	746	77,47%				
in FR	217	22,53%				
Percentage of courses by site						
Brussels	58%	(11)		EP	151	15,68
Luxembourg	42%	(8)		Council	105	10,90
Percentage of registered participants by site				Commission	578	60,02
Brussels	65%	(624)		CdJ	46	4,78
Luxembourg	35%	(339)		CoA	24	2,49
Average number of registered participants				EESC	24	2,49
Both sites	50,7			CoR	27	2,80
Brussels	56,7			EDPS	6	0,62
Luxembourg	42,4			CPVO	2	0,21
Participation rate						
Both sites	88,27%	(850)				
Brussels	87,34%	(545)				
Luxembourg	89,97%	(305)				

DROP-OUT BY INSTITUTION (actual participation compared to registrations for carried out courses)					ACTUAL PARTICIPATION BY INSTITUTION (on the basis of actual participations)		
	registered	actual	absences	drop-out rate			
All institutions	963	850	113	11,73%	All institutions	850	100,00%
EP	151	124	27	17,88	EP	124	14,59
Council	105	80	25	23,81	Council	80	9,41
Commission	578	541	37	6,40	Commission	541	63,65
CdJ	46	45	1	2,17	CdJ	45	5,29
CoA	24	19	5	20,83	CoA	19	2,24
EESC	24	14	10	41,67	EESC	14	1,65
CoR	27	19	8	29,63	CoR	19	2,24
EDPS	6	6	0	0,00	EDPS	6	0,71
CPVO	2	2	0	0,00	CPVO	2	0,24

INDUCTION courses in Brussels																		
Course information		Number of registered participants								Number of actual participants								
		EP	COUNCIL	COM	EESC	CoR	EDPS	CPVO	TOTAL	EP	COUNCIL	COM	CoR	EESC	CoR	EDPS	CPVO	TOTAL
		67	105	392	24	27	6	2	624	51	80	372	1	14	19	6	2	545
		EN	FR															
Total number of courses (carried out)	11	8	3															
Total number of registered participants	624	478	146															
INDUCTION courses in Luxembourg																		
Course information		Number of registered participants					Number of actual participants											
		EP	COM	CdJ	CoA	EO	TOTAL	EP	COM	CdJ	CoA	TOTAL						
		84	186	46	23	0	339	73	169	45	18	305						
		EN	FR															
Total number of courses (carried out)	8	6	2															
Total number of registered participants	339	268	71															

2. MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

2.1. Section - Inherent nature and characteristics

2.1.1. Preliminary considerations

The EAS is attached administratively to EPSO. In order to avoid duplication, this section will concentrate on those areas of management and internal control that are specific to the School. For the same reasons, EPSO drew up the overall assessment of the state of internal control with input from the self-assessment exercise carried out by the School. The same approach was taken to a recent risk management exercise conducted in cooperation with DG Budget.

2.1.2. The inter-institutional environment: a SWOT analysis

If one were to undertake a SWOT analysis, as the School has done, of its inter-institutional character, a number of easily-identifiable features would emerge.

The strengths and opportunities are illustrated in the School's founding texts and are at the heart of much that is contained in Part 1 of this report. They include harmonising training activities where needs are the same or similar; extending the range of learning opportunities on offer; the promotion of inter-institutional cooperation and the spread of common values; and the gains and synergies that should be possible in the use of human and financial resources. This non-exhaustive but already impressive list is a striking illustration of the contribution to School can make.

If one looks at the weaknesses and threats, some must be mentioned to enable the reader to understand the environment in which the School operates. The need to improve inter-institutional cooperation is a recurrent theme, usually associated with a call to use resources more economically and the need to present a common face to the world beyond the institutions' walls. Translating that into reality has frequently proved difficult for a raft of reasons, which this report is not the place to analyse. But the fact that the level of desire for inter-institutional cooperation often depends on the views of a particular moment or the commitment of a particular group of people, does mean that any body with an inter-institutional mandate is probably more exposed to unexpected changes of direction than a department in an individual institution.

The second major "threat" is that in endeavouring to transpose the principle of inter-institutional cooperation into practical application, the result may well be that of the lowest common denominator. This can mean not only that progress is less than expected but that any progress at all requires a disproportionately high investment in time and effort.

It is too soon to come to firm conclusions about how these broad considerations will impact on the School's activities. Early signs are that their effect has been minimal, for several reasons. Firstly, there was general agreement that there were valid reasons for creating the School, the immediate catalyst being the need for an inter-institutional body to deliver the certification training programme. Secondly, the School operates in an area which is not inherently conflictual and where win-win situations are often available. Thirdly, the School has deliberately pursued a policy of openness and dialogue with its stakeholders whose own training departments may have been tempted to see it as a threat. Fourthly, the institutions do perceive the added value that the School can bring in terms of inter-institutional cooperation and the broadening of experience of their personnel. And finally, it may be that there is something of the "honeymoon" syndrome at work.

But the environment within which the EAS operates and the future direction it is to take, however pro-active it be and whatever the quality of its work, is ultimately beyond its control.

2.1.3. An original administrative structure: two umbilical cords

The School is part of EPSO and EPSO is part of the Commission but both EPSO and the EAS are inter-institutional.

One of the risks facing the EAS was therefore that it would be regarded as "Commission" and perhaps even "Brussels Commission". It has made considerable efforts to prove its inter-institutional credentials and its sensitivities to the specific needs of all institutions. It has also devoted much time to establishing and maintaining contacts in Luxembourg and created its antenna there for that specific purpose.

However, the fact remains that for whatever reason – and despite its best efforts – all but one of its staff come from the Commission and the majority of participants on its courses come, inevitably, from the Commission as the largest institution. Because of the lack of an inter-institutional learning management system (see point 1.3.7 above), it is more difficult for the School to communicate directly with participants from institutions other than the Commission. In itself, this does not cause insurmountable management problems but psychologically it aligns the EAS with the Commission. So to mitigate these risks, the School will continue its efforts to operate in an institutionally balanced way in the hope that in so doing it does not, in its attempt to satisfy as many of its stakeholders and customers as much of the time as possible, end up satisfying none of them any of the time.

As regards the School's attachment to EPSO, there are clearly sound reasons for this, given its small size. The operational aspects of this are examined under point 1.3.11 and footnote 7 above in relation to the School's efforts to create a distinct identity. This is important for reasons of clarity so that staff of the institutions can understand the difference in missions and tasks between the two. The School has received a number of enquiries from people who thought it was the training arm of EPSO designed to help people prepare for competitions! And there is also a risk that in sharing the same management board, however justified that may be from a resources point of view, School business may not receive as much attention as it needs.

This attachment also has consequences in terms of internal control systems which will be examined in more detail in the next section.

2.2. Section - Management and control systems

2.2.1. Internal control environment and performance management

As a result of being attached to EPSO, the EAS receives a good deal of day-to-day support in respect of the administration of procedures and management systems that EPSO has set up for itself. This is particularly true for procedures in the field of staff management, general administration, and IT support. As regards budgets and financial management, responsibilities are shared. The Head of the School is authorising officer by sub-delegation and he and School staff are responsible for running procurement procedures, issuing legal commitments and processing payment requests. On the other hand, EPSO staff provide the financial agents in the circuits that have been designed to take account of the special relationship with the School.

As a matter of general policy and in order to ensure effective, as opposed to formal compliance, the School has grouped the internal control standards in a number of "quality clusters". These have been the subject of debate among all EAS staff and the next stage is to draw up and implement an action plan per cluster to ensure that quality is at the heart of all the School's operations. The School has also taken account of its small size so that the measures it has or will put in place are proportionate to the risk factors. For example, it does not need such elaborate supervisory or reporting procedures, as might be necessary in a larger department. Nor does it require complex arrangements for ensuring information flows.

During its setting up year, the EAS has concentrated its efforts on the standards in the following areas: developing a clear strategy with staff commitment; ensuring this was reflected in the School's mission statement, objectives and annual management plan for 2006; putting in place a system of ongoing dialogue with staff about their own tasks and objectives; putting in place a staff development strategy; establishing financial circuits and ensuring sound financial management; examining potential risks and dealing with them; and setting up a rigorous filing and archiving system. All this of course was undertaken against a background of successful delivery of training activities and a permanent awareness of the importance of providing a quality service to stakeholders and customers alike.

Overall, the EAS believes it has been successful in defining a clear mission and in setting out objectives and activities with clear outputs and indicators. At the individual level, flexibility has been required of staff in this initial phase so objectives were already looked at on two occasions before the start of the formal career development review. These will need to be re-examined further and progress needs to be made in establishing satisfactory benchmarks for individual objectives. The School's main area of risk in terms of human resources is the shortage of staff with experience either as trainers or of training and development techniques. In an attempt to mitigate this to an extent it will arrange for existing staff to further develop their competencies as a matter of urgency and has requested a group IV contract agent post in the 2007 budget in the hope that this will increase its chances of a successful recruitment.

The EAS also believes it has been successful in terms of its accountability to the Board, reporting to its stakeholders and informing its customers. Documents have been produced on time for the Board and always been approved. Regular meetings and bilateral contacts have been put in place with stakeholders at various levels. And information to customers has been ensured by the speedy opening of a website together with regular communication on emerging issues.

The School has also identified a number of risks it faces, ranging from those common to all services (e.g. loss of IT data) to very specific ones (e.g. last-minute unavailability of trainers) and concluded that the only critical risk in the near future would be the failure to deliver a successful certification training programme. Its response is to ensure that adequate resources with reserves are devoted to this; that responsibilities among the various actors at different stages of the certification process are clear; that clear information is made available to stakeholders and candidates; and that permanent monitoring procedures will be put in place.

2.2.2. Control activities

The area of training and development is no more inherently risky than any area which is subject to outsourcing through public procurement procedures. The main feature is that training delivery involves people, so perceptions about its usefulness may well be subjective. Individual learning and its transfer to the work place, which is where the true effectiveness of training should ultimately be measured, is also affected by many influences and constraints beyond the School's control. What the School can and does do is to make sure that relevant knowledge and experience of issues pertinent to staff in the institutions feature as important award criteria in its tender specifications and that it then provides adequate briefings to trainers. As a matter of policy it has regular meetings with the management teams of its external trainers and holds at least an annual meeting with the trainers themselves. It involves all institutions in the tendering process and invites them to briefing with trainers. These ex ante and ongoing measures should ensure that as far as possible the training activities delivered by the School are relevant and of high quality.

In terms of specific control standards, the School has put in place with EPSO a system of financial circuits that fully respects the principles of segregation of duties. The sharing of responsibilities between EPSO and EAS staff has not so far caused any problems and there is no sign of any danger that each may regard the other as ultimately responsible. On the other hand the School does face a problem of back up (and would face a similar problem of continuity in the event of staff departures) on account of its small size. It will review its procedures shortly in an attempt to overcome these dangers.

On the other hand, the small size of the School does mean that those involved in financial matters, and particularly the AOSD, are able to check all aspects of financial and legal operations in detail ex ante, thereby obviating the need for random sampling and extensive ex post mechanisms.

In these early stages the School has not been able to make significant progress in documenting procedures in general but has put in place a system of checklists for all financial and associated transactions. This will be a priority for 2006. A framework for the School's archiving and filing systems has been established and will be implemented during the first semester of 2006.

2.2.3. Audit, evaluation and follow-up

For 2005 this is of little relevance to the EAS. It should be noted however that an evaluation plan is attached to its 2006 Annual Management Plan. The main elements of this are

- the targets it has set itself in terms of qualitative and quantitative outputs
- ongoing analysis of customer and stakeholder satisfaction with the certification training programme as it unfolds
- elements of an impact analysis with the Committee of the Regions following the customised management training programme (see point 1.3.9 above)
- an analysis of the School's cost-effectiveness, insofar as this is possible to establish.

Twice-yearly reports will be made to the Management Board on these issues.

Otherwise, it is clear that as and when audit recommendations or reports are made the School will follow them up diligently.