

## **PSL HELPS TO IMPROVE THE SELECTION OF EUROPEAN UNION OFFICIALS**

The European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) - which organises the recruitment of European Union officials - is introducing computer-based testing as the first stage of the selection procedure for the large number of candidates who want to work at the heart of Europe.

Assessment specialist PSL has won a coveted three-year contract to provide multiple-choice verbal and non-verbal reasoning questions for the new computer-based tests.

Based in Brussels, EPSO organises 'open competitions' to find candidates who can fill posts within all institutions and bodies of the EU, such as the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Commission and the Court of Justice.

These posts are usually advertised on the EPSO website, in the national press of the countries concerned and on some internet job-boards. Candidates - who can number 25,000 or more, depending on the posts - apply online, via EPSO's website.

All applicants are currently invited to sit paper-based pre-selection tests which assess, among other things, their verbal and numerical reasoning ability. EPSO sends 'optical reader form' tests from Brussels to examination halls in each member state. The completed tests are returned to Brussels and then scanned.

To streamline this process, EPSO is introducing computer-based testing for the pre-selection of candidates. Candidates will sit the verbal and non-verbal reasoning tests on a computer, in a supervised environment at test centres across Europe. The number of test centres will vary but there will be at least one in each of the 25 European member states.

"This is something new for us," said Erik Halskov, Director of EPSO. "We're modernising our procedures and making the best use of technology to ensure we can deal efficiently with the high volume of applications we receive."

For those who successfully pass the pre-selection, the next stages in the process are written and oral tests. Each stage is eliminatory. The candidates who gain the highest overall marks are then considered for specific vacancies.

EPSO will initially translate PSL's multiple-choice questions into French and German, as all candidates need to sit a test in a second language.

"PSL will provide over 1,000 questions, of varying levels of difficulty," said Erik Halskov. "When candidates sit a test, they will each be presented with a random sample of questions, appropriate to the level of position they are applying for. These questions will be taken from a large database in order to reduce any possibility of cheating or of overexposure to the test."

The new tests will initially be used for the selection of contract agents (temporary staff), in the autumn. After that, there will be a phased implementation and the tests will soon be used for graduate and non-graduate roles, from nuclear research scientists to translators and administrators.

*For more information about PSL, please call 020-8585 2345 e-mail [info@psl.com](mailto:info@psl.com)*

**Weblink:** <http://www.psl.com>

**Background notes:** The European Personnel Selection Office was established in July 2002.

<http://europa.eu.int/epso>

PSL publishes personality questionnaires, ability tests and screening, selection and development tools. Founded in 1989, it also provides consultancy, training and bespoke product development.

For further information about PSL - or if you'd like to speak to Richard Alberg, Chief Executive of PSL, about psychometric testing - please call Michael Dawson (PR contact) on 020-8953 8863 or e-mail him at [michael@daws.com](mailto:michael@daws.com)