

# EPSO – Overview of the new self-selection and self-assessment selection module in open competitions

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# TWO TOOLS

## Self-selection

EU Career, My Career?

## Self-Assessment

Cognitive ability tests + Situational  
Judgement test

# EU CAREER, MY CAREER?

## EPSO Self-Selection Tool

For the AD5 Generalist competition  
(EPSO/AD/276/14)



# OBJECTIVES

1. To maintain a positive employer image of the EU Institutions.
2. To encourage only the most suitable candidates to continue their applications.

## Self-Selection Tool:

- gives an opportunity to candidates to test if they have the right perception of what it is like to work in the EU Institutions.
- makes candidates aware of what it's like to work in the EU Institutions by emphasising not only the benefits, but also the challenges, which potential applicants may face in their future career.



Self-Selection tools are widely used among the world's leading private and public organisations.



I like to research subjects thoroughly

I feel comfortable pulling together information to form a persuasive argument

I have demonstrated the ability to analyse complex information and to put forward practical recommendations for action

I like to identify the different parts of a project and plan all the things that have to be done

I am extremely resilient and can cope when dealing with extremely challenging situations

I am good at establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with other people

I feel that I am persuasive and convincing in presenting a case

I have demonstrated the ability to deal effectively with people, even those in significant distress

I feel that I can contribute to the development of policies, understanding the implications of decisions

I want to perform at the highest standard throughout my career

I have excellent written skills

I can maintain my composure in a pressurised environment

I can persevere even when faced with obstacles or setbacks

I enjoy learning new skills that will enhance my work performance

I make it my business to keep up to date with current affairs issues both at home and abroad

I have a good understanding/ overview of the role and functions of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

I enjoy learning new languages and know that I will be required to pick them up quickly

I enjoy travel and am comfortable living away from home for long periods of time

I feel I have the high levels of emotional strength needed to provide assistance to individuals facing a range of issues including accidents, bereavements, imprisonment, hardship, crime etc.

I am interested in trade and economic markets and understanding the variables impacting on same

I have a strong interest in Irish public affairs and in international relations

I have a strong interest in other cultures and people

I have an excellent understanding of the current situation in Northern Ireland

I have an appreciation of all aspects of Ireland's role in the EU

I am aware of the Overseas Development Assistance pledged by Ireland

I know the countries that Ireland has most trade with and the approximate value to the Economy of exports across different sectors.

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# FOCUS ON 3 KEY AREAS

Items fall into 3 main categories, which are defined as:

## 1. Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

7 questions

- it is a multi-dimensional construct which consists of five key factors: selfless concern for the welfare of others, discretionary behaviours that aim at preventing work-related conflicts with others, employee's concerns and active interest in the life of the organization, acceptance of the rules of the organisation and the tolerance of less-than-ideal organisational circumstances.

## 2. EU Working Environment

13 questions

- specific features, which define working environment in the EU Institutions and which may be different from the private sector organisations.

## 3. Professional Skills/Attitudes

6 questions

- skills and attitudes which are required or which are beneficial for the EU officials to have in order to perform well in the EU Institutions' working environment.



# QUESTION ITEMS

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)	EU Working Environment	Professional Skills/Attitudes
6. EU goals and values	1. Place of work	5a. General competencies
8. Willingness to go the extra mile	2. Multicultural environment	5b. General competencies
13. Teamwork	3a. Multilingual environment	9. Negotiating skills
18. Recruitment	3b. Multilingual environment	10. Analysis and practical thinking
19. Interest in EU politics	3c. Multilingual environment	11. Dealing with challenging situations
20. Lack of mentoring - "sink or swim" environment	4. The EU Institutions as an employer	22. Experience abroad
21. Support for families	7. Internal mobility	
	12. Career advancement	
	14. Representing the EU Institutions	
	15. Dealing with sensitive issues	
	16. Dealing with stakeholders	
	17a. Working in Brussels or Luxembourg	
	17b. Working in Brussels or Luxembourg	

# EXAMPLES OF THE QUESTIONS

- A number of questions were drawn for each category, which resembled employees' experience of working in the EU Institutions.

1		RIGHT	WRONG
The likelihood of an EU civil servant being able to work in their home country is:		<b>That's right!</b> The likelihood of an EU civil servant working in their home country is very low. The vast majority of EU employees work in Brussels or Luxembourg, where most of the EU Institutions are located.	<b>That's wrong!</b> The likelihood for an EU civil servant to work in their home country is very low. The vast majority of EU employees work in Brussels or Luxembourg, where most of the EU Institutions are located.
1) High	WRONG		
2) Low	WRONG		
3) Very low	RIGHT		

7		RIGHT	WRONG
Many EU Institutions recommend that their employees move internally and change their work tasks:		<b>That's right!</b> Many EU Institutions encourage internal mobility. In the European Commission, for example, it is recommended that colleagues change duties every 3 – 5 years.	<b>That's wrong!</b> Many EU Institutions encourage internal mobility. In the European Commission, for example, it is recommended that colleagues change duties every 3 – 5 years.
1) Every year	WRONG		
2) Every 3 - 5 years	RIGHT		
3) Rarely	WRONG		





# QUESTIONNAIRE

- 26 questions, approximately 40 minutes
- Mandatory – must be filled in before the start of the application process.
- Non – Eliminatory, but contributes to raising candidates' self-awareness.
- Provided in 3 languages



# FEEDBACK TO CANDIDATES

1. Immediate feedback after each question (*RIGHT* or *WRONG*), which aims to make candidates aware if they have the right perception of working in the EU Institutions.
2. Final feedback

**Your responses suggest that there are many areas where your perception may not fit the reality of the EU working environment.**

**Your responses suggest that there are some areas where your perception may not fit the reality of the EU working environment.**

**Your responses suggest that you have the right perception of the reality of the EU working environment.**



# SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

- The Self-Selection Tool - a pilot project established for the 2014 AD5 Generalist competition fully endorsed by the European Institutions. Additional items may be added for other competitions.
- The Self-Selection Tool - used for the recent AD Translators competition and will soon be used for the upcoming AST Secretaries competition. Its effectiveness will later be analysed in order to measure the possibility to use this tool in all future competitions.

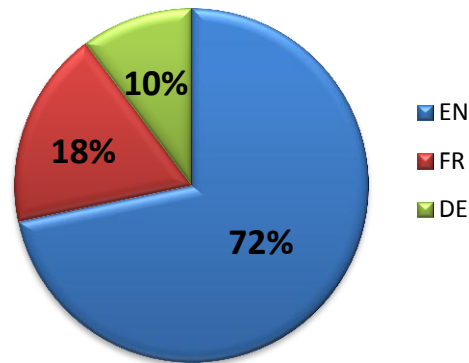


- "EU career, My Career?" was taken **50 708** times during the AD Generalist and AD Audit application processes

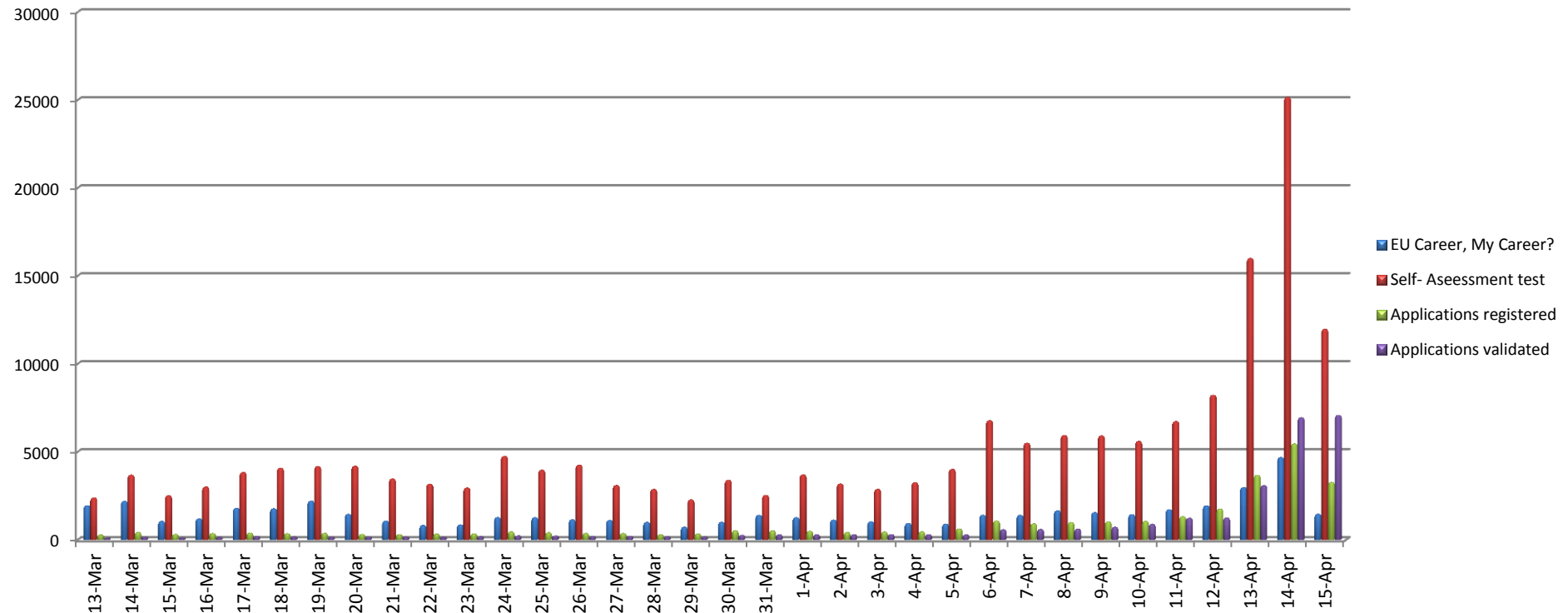
Failed	23971	47%
Passed	26737	53%

Average score	65.45%
EN	64.78%
FR	68.36%
DE	66.47%

Test language



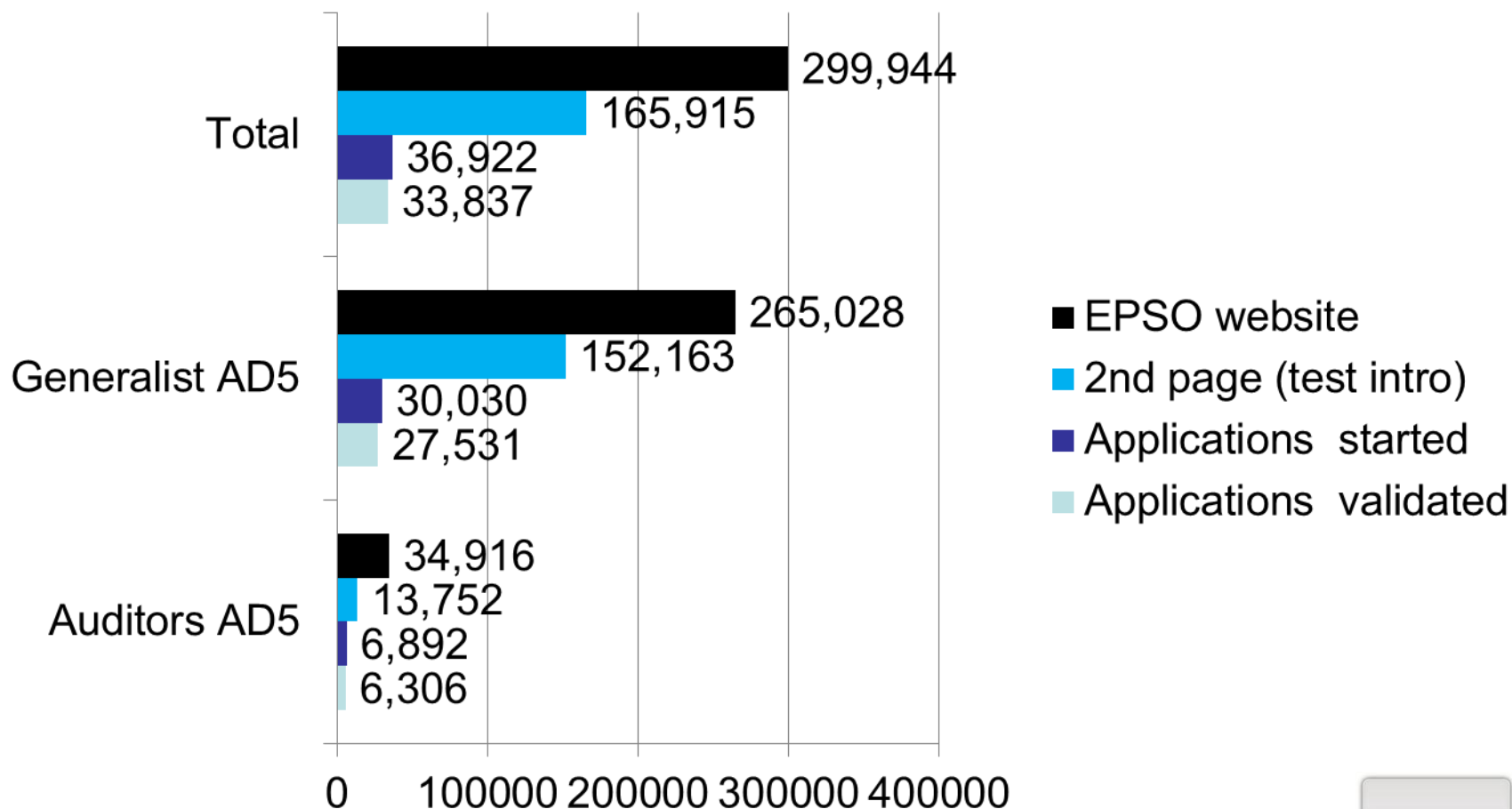
# Number of tests taken and applications registered/validated daily



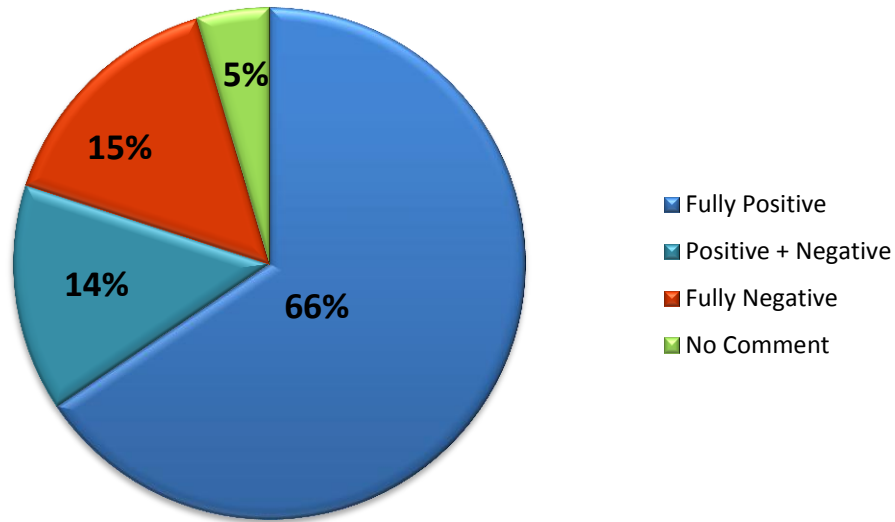
# Visits to website and subsequent applications

## Generalist AD5 / Audit AD5

### 2014



# CANDIDATE FEEDBACK



\*\*\* A sample of 3300 feedbacks was analysed out of 7000 received in total

# EXAMPLES OF FEEDBACK

## POSITIVE:

- Informative and clear
- Interesting
- Important questions
- Easy to use
- "Learned a lot"
- Nice experience
- Fun
- Surprising in a good way
- Good initiative
- Very well structured
- Very helpful
- It helps people to better understand the EU environment
- Should be mandatory
- Challenging
- Educational
- Nice
- Enough time given
- Practical
- ...

## NEGATIVE:

- Obvious answers, easy
- Too much time given
- Not accurate translations
- Repetitive questions
- Ambiguous
- "Show answer" button should be more visible
- ...



# SELF-ASSESSMENT TESTING



# What is Self-Assessment Testing?

- 2 consecutive online tests
- Half the number of questions presented at the test centres for Verbal and Numerical Reasoning (10 Verbal, 5 Numerical)
- Full set of questions for Abstract Reasoning (10) and Situational Judgement Test (20).
- The allocated time is adjusted accordingly.



# TEST 1

## Verbal, Numerical and Abstract Reasoning

- 10 Verbal Reasoning questions in 19 minutes
  - 5 Numerical Reasoning questions in 11 minutes
  - 10 Abstract Reasoning questions in 11 minutes
- Verbal Reasoning and Numerical Reasoning are available in all 24 languages

# VERBAL REASONING EXAMPLE

Compulsory self-assessment tests for the EPSO AD cycle 2014 – Part I

[Section: Verbal Reasoning - English]

00:40:11

Next

Summary End Test

Item 1 of 25

Section: Verbal Reasoning - English

Mark item for review

Barriers to trade in the form of differing and sometimes conflicting import/export rules and requirements from country to country can, and do, make it difficult for food businesses to get started in overseas markets. Food safety and public health concerns are frequently given by individual nations as the explanation for food legislation and for building trade barriers that restrict free trade in food. Unfortunately, in some cases, the science used to justify food-safety policymaking can be inconsistent or contradictory. This often means that governments can be accused of choosing to listen to the science which best suits their agenda of protecting local suppliers from foreign competition.

Which of the following statements is correct?

- ☐ A. Global free trade is often restricted by import and export legislation put in place under the pretext of protecting public health.
- ☐ B. Legislation assists food companies to expand into new markets by removing barriers to trade.
- ☐ C. Some nations can pass food-safety laws only based on clear scientific evidence that a law is necessary to benefit the health of the population.
- ☐ D. Food-safety legislation is only implemented if it is based on consistent scientific research.

Next

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# NUMERICAL REASONING EXAMPLE

Compulsory self-assessment tests for the EPSO AD cycle 2014 – Part I

[Section: Numerical Reasoning - English]

00:18:24

Next

Summary End Test

Item 11 of 25

Section: Numerical Reasoning - English

A calculator is available at the bottom of this page.

Mark item for review

Country	R&D expenditure (% of GDP)		% of R&D funded by government		Number of patent applications (per million inhabitants)	R&D expenditure (€ million)	GDP per head (€)
	2000	2003	2000	2003	2000	2000	2000
Belgium	1.97	1.89	22.9	23.5	145.6	3 900	19 330
Finland	3.34	3.43	26.2	25.7	350.8	3 725	21 582
France	2.15	2.17	38.7	39.0	139.5	24 075	18 874
Germany	2.45	2.52	31.4	31.2	307.0	41 100	20 261
Netherlands	1.82	1.76	34.2	36.2	246.3	6 075	21 003

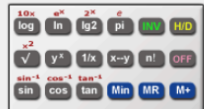
In 2000, approximately what was the ratio of GDP in Germany to that in France?

- ☐ A. 1:3
- ☐ B. 2:3
- ☐ C. 3:2
- ☐ D. 3:1
- ☐ E. None of the above

Next

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0.



# ABSTRACT REASONING EXAMPLE

Compulsory self-assessment tests for the EPSO AD cycle 2014 – Part I

88:37:17

Next

[Section: Abstract Reasoning - English]

Summary End Test

Item 16 of 25

Section: Abstract Reasoning - English

Mark item for review

○	△
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△	○
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A. 

○	●
△	

B. 

△	
○	●

C. 

●	
△	○

D. 

△	●
	○

E. 

△	○
●	

# TEST 2

## Situational Judgement

- 20 scenarios in 35 minutes.
- Candidates must choose "Most Effective" and "Least Effective" answer for each scenario.
- The Situational Judgement Test is available in English, French and German.

# SITUATIONAL JUDGEMENT EXAMPLE

https://prime.prometric.com/users/candidate/taketest/item.asp EPSO Intranet for all staff Prometric Online Testing

**Compulsory self-assessment tests for the EPSO AD cycle 2014 – Part II SJT**

00:34:49 [Section: Situational Judgment - English]

Next Summary End Test

**Item 1 of 40** Section: Situational Judgment - English Mark item for review

Please consider the situation, and then select what you feel is the most effective response or action from the four statements.

Next

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You will be moving to a new function soon. Therefore, you are writing several process documents concerning your current function. The documents need to be reviewed by your team before they are given to your replacement in one month's time. However your team are all busy with important projects so may be unable to complete the reviews before you leave.

- A** Finish the documents and ask if your manager can review them before you leave, instead of the team
- B** Email the completed documents to your team asking them to review them when they have time
- C** Speak to your team to arrange time in their work schedules to review your documents within the month
- D** Continue with the documents and hand them over to the new employee without your team's reviews

Most Effective



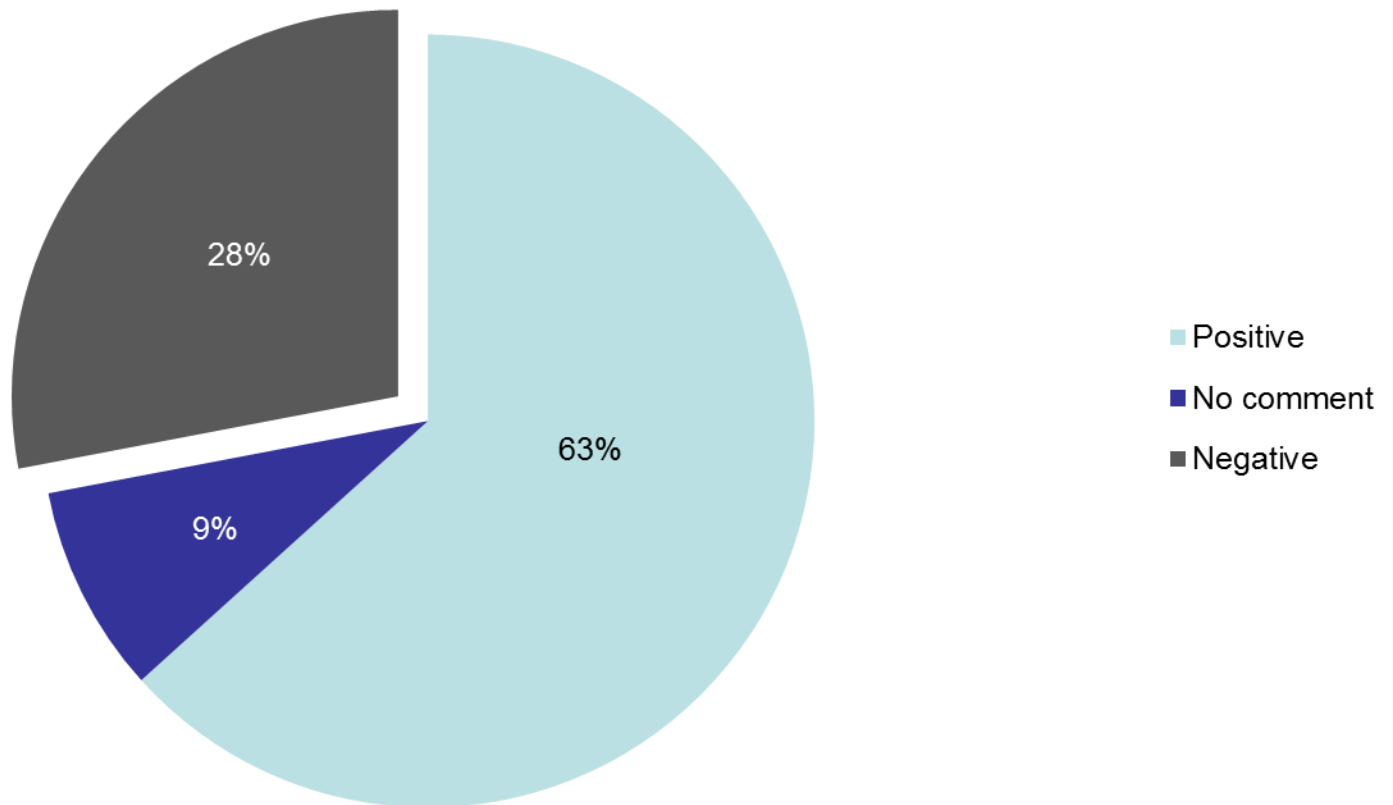
# Why Use the Self-Assessment Test?

- Give a realistic representation of CBT content.
- Manage expectations of potential candidates.
- Reduce number of candidates applying who are unlikely to pass CBT by providing indicative feedback.
- Increase transparency of CBT operations.
- Familiarise candidates with the CBT environment.

# OVERALL TESTS

- For the AD and AD Audit cycles (EPSO/AD/276-277/14) these tests were compulsory i.e. candidates could only proceed to the application form after having gone through the tests.

# FEEDBACK BASED ON SAMPLE 1000 ENTRIES



# COMMENTS

- **Positive:**
  - Interesting
  - Useful
  - Challenging
  - Good practice
  - Good indicator of future performance
- **Negative:**
  - Technical:
    - Graphs/images not available
    - Browser issues
    - Calculator issues
    - Clock continues to run whilst pages are loading
    - Clock does not time individual sections
  - Subjective views:
    - Unrelated to job role
    - Not enough time for questions
    - Waste of time

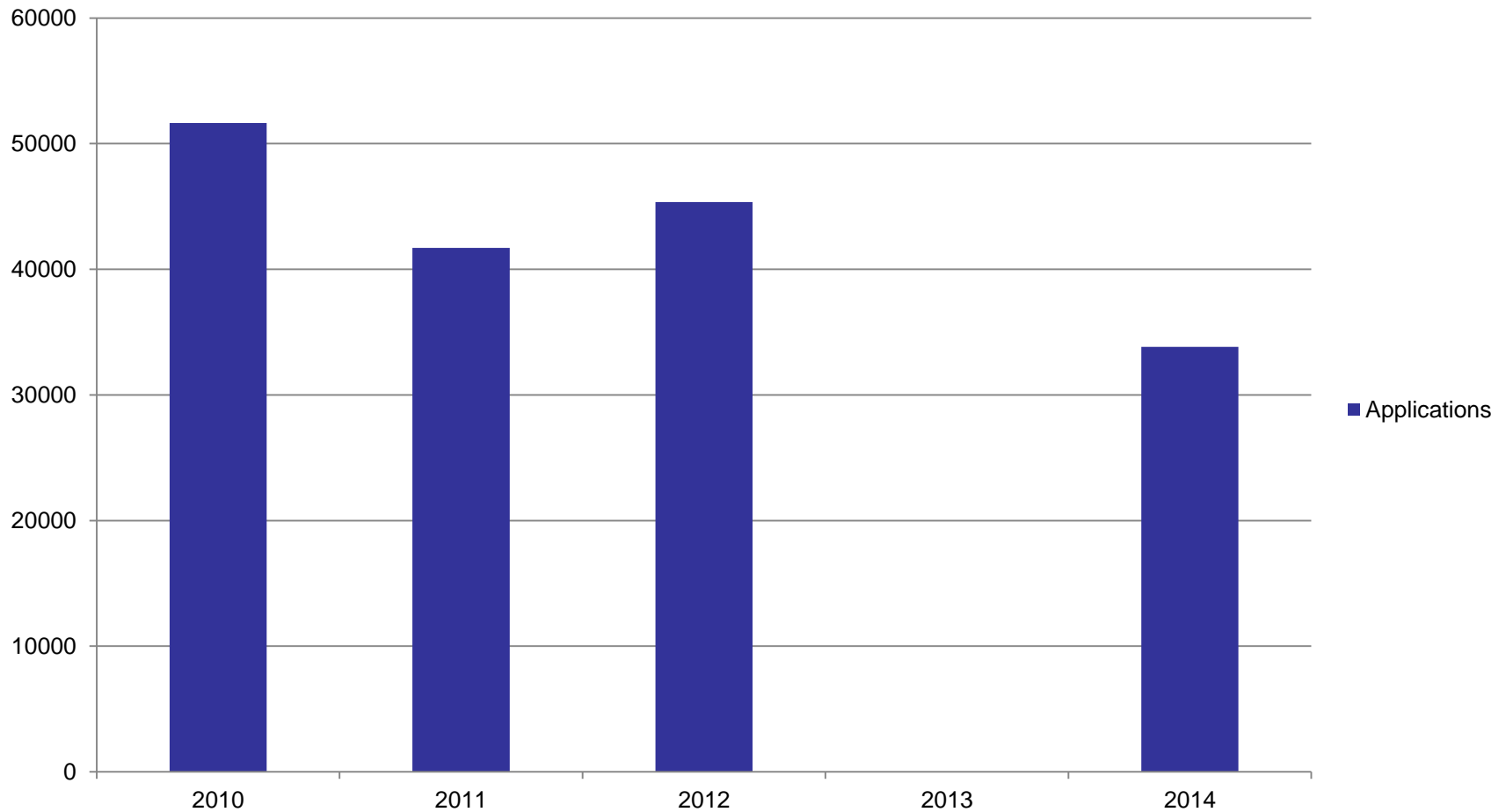
# OVERALL COMPLETED TESTS vs VALIDATED APPLICATIONS

- 50,708 Self-Selection Tool exercises completed
- 180,305 Self-Assessment Tests completed
- 33,837 applications validated:
  - 27,531 AD Generalist
  - 6,306 AD Audit

# EVOLUTION OF AD CYCLE APPLICATIONS SINCE 2010

- 2010 – AD177 (All fields): 51640
- 2011 – AD206-207: 41708
- 2012 – AD230-231: 45357
- 2013\* - Rerun
- 2014 – AD276-277: 33837

# EVOLUTION OF APPLICATIONS SINCE 2010



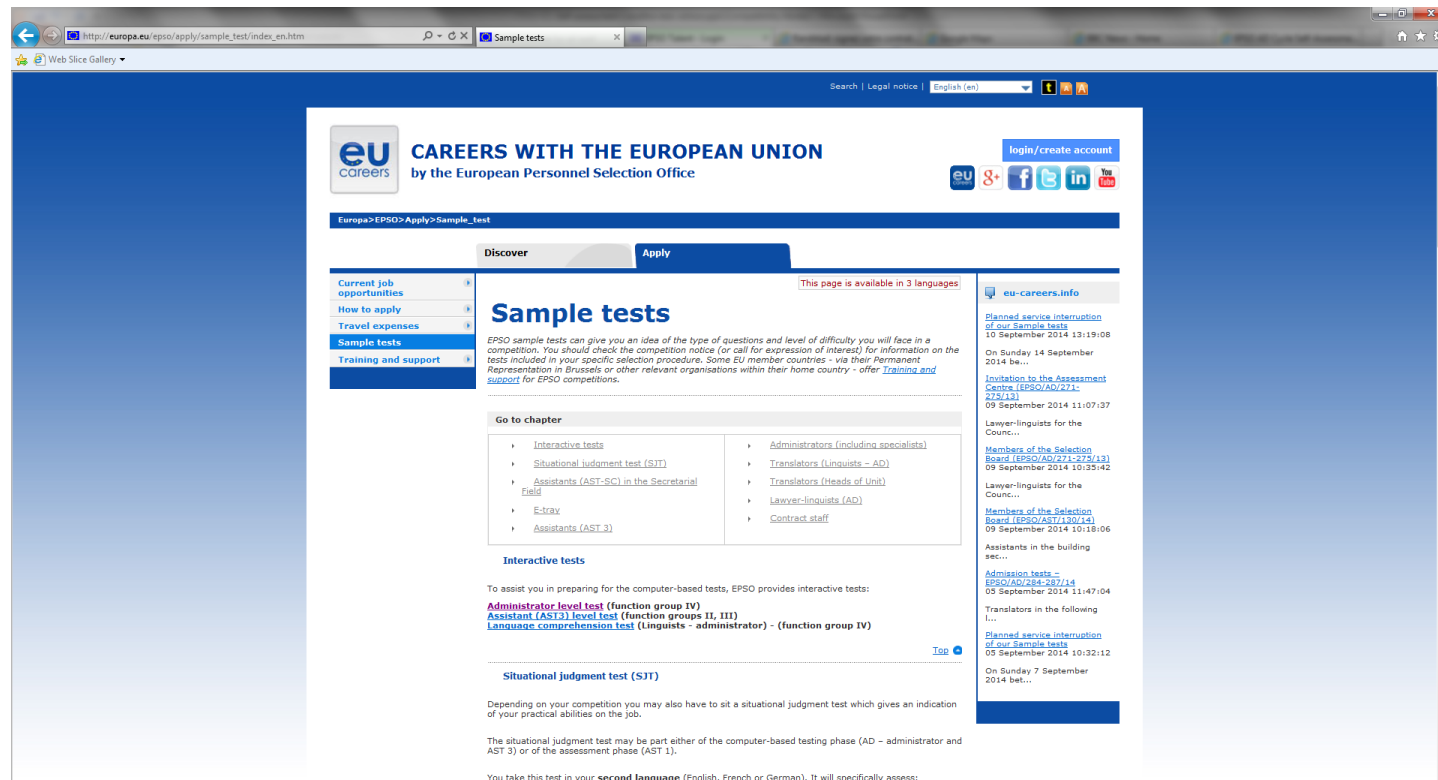
- **Self-Assessment Testing and the Self-Selection Tool were both used for:**
  - Administrators cycle 2014
  - AD Translators cycle 2014 (with
  - Upcoming AST Secretaries competition





# PRACTISE ONLINE

- Candidates can interactively practise:
  - Self-Assessment Test in 24 languages
- [http://europa.eu/epso/apply/sample\\_test/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/epso/apply/sample_test/index_en.htm)



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Sample tests' page on the EPPO website. The page has a blue header with the 'eu careers' logo and the text 'CAREERS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION by the European Personnel Selection Office'. A navigation menu on the left includes 'Current job opportunities', 'How to apply', 'Travel expenses', 'Sample tests' (highlighted), and 'Training and support'. The main content area is titled 'Sample tests' and includes a sub-header 'EPPO sample tests can give you an idea of the type of questions and level of difficulty you will face in a competition...'. Below this, there is a 'Go to chapter' section with a list of topics: 'Interactive tests', 'Situational judgment test (SJT)', 'Assistants (AST-SC) in the Secretariat Field', 'E-tray', 'Assistants (AST 3)', 'Administrators (including specialists)', 'Translators (Linguists - AD)', 'Translators (Heads of Unit)', 'Lawyer-linguists (AD)', and 'Contract staff'. The 'Interactive tests' section is expanded, showing details about the 'Administrator level test (function group IV)', 'Assistant (AST3) level test (function groups II, III)', and 'Language comprehension test (Linguists - administrator) - (function group IV)'. It also mentions 'Situational Judgment test (SJT)' and 'Assistants in the building sec...'. The right sidebar contains a 'eu-careers.info' section with 'Planned service interruption of our Sample tests' and 'On Sunday 14 September 2014 be...'. The bottom of the page has a 'Tip' icon and a note about taking the test in the second language.

# FEEDBACK

- On the basis of EPSO experience and feedback received, EPSO has identified a number of potential improvements to the tool for SST/SAT to be implemented in the future together with the service provider, including:
  - Instructions displayed in all 3 working languages (EN/FR/DE)
  - Improved accessibility
  - SST content adapted for specific roles for each competition
  - Feedback survey

# THE END

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