



## ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR 2/2008

### *RULES FOR RECRUITMENT*

#### **I. PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this Administrative Circular is to outline the general principles and the procedures to be followed with regard to recruitment for vacancies that need to be filled for more than 12 months. Its aims are to ensure that the recruitment is based on the principles of professional qualification, transparency, equal access and non-discrimination, as laid down in the Article 20.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank.

The Directorate General Human Resources, Budget and Organisation (hereinafter “DG/H”) shall be responsible for and oversee the sound and consistent application of the recruitment procedures laid down by this Administrative Circular and is authorised to give instructions to those participating in the recruitment process to ensure compliance.

#### **II. PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION**

The selection process shall be non-discriminatory and shall be based upon a comparison of the merits of all candidates. The most suitable candidate shall be selected in line with the criteria outlined in the vacancy notice. The selection process shall be directed towards recruiting individuals with the highest levels of ability, efficiency and integrity.

The selection process shall be directed towards achieving the broadest possible range of nationalities from among the Member States of the European Union. No nationality quota shall apply and no vacancy shall be reserved for a specific nationality. However, on account of specific business-related needs, vacancies may be advertised which require professional qualifications and experience related to a particular Member State or acceding country. A balanced representation of men and women among the ECB staff is considered to be desirable.

In the event that candidates have equal qualifications, gender and/or nationality may be used as additional criteria for the selection decision.

Applicants and selected candidates who may have special requirements, e.g. for reasons of

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disability, shall be reasonably accommodated.

The ECB fosters mobility among its staff and aims to attract flexible candidates with profiles that can be used in various business areas.

The ECB is neutral with regard to the recruitment of close relatives, spouses, recognised partners or close acquaintances of members of staff or of members of the Executive Board and other decision-making bodies of the ECB. However, the latter shall not seek to influence the selection process involving such candidates. Should DG/H have any doubts with regard to the recruitment of a close relative, spouse, recognised partner or close acquaintance of a member of staff, it shall submit the case to the Executive Board for a decision. Close relatives, spouses, recognised partners or close acquaintances of members of staff or of members of the Executive Board and other decision-making bodies of the ECB shall not be recruited as subordinates of the ECB member of staff or of the Executive Board to whom they are related or known.

To identify and avoid possible conflicts of interests in the recruitment procedure, applicants shall declare in their application if they are close relatives, spouses, recognised partners or close acquaintances of any member of staff or members of the Executive Board and other decision-making bodies of the ECB.

### **III. ADVERTISING OF VACANCY NOTICES**

#### ***3.1 Internal mobility not requiring a recruitment procedure***

In order to create opportunities for mobility, all vacancies shall initially be considered for mobility by means of horizontal transfers within a business area. In the case of vacant positions at salary band I and above (management or adviser positions), the Executive Board may decide on horizontal transfers across business areas.

#### ***3.2 Advertising of vacancy notices***

If a vacancy is not filled by a horizontal transfer, it shall initially be advertised only internally.

A vacancy shall be advertised simultaneously both internally and externally

- if the vacancy is for a position at salary band I or above, unless the Executive Board decides on a different procedure;
- if the vacancy to be filled is for the Graduate Programme;

- if, on the advice of the business area concerned, the Director General DG/H agrees that it is unlikely that there will be suitable internal candidates, that there is an urgent need to fill a particular vacancy or that multiple staff changes are concentrated in one area and cause undue pressures on the business.

If a similar vacancy has been advertised (internally or externally) within the past six months and a suitable candidate identified as part of that previous procedure retained on the reserve list is proposed for recruitment, it shall not be necessary to re-advertise the vacancy.

## **IV. CONDITIONS OF RECRUITMENT**

### ***4.1 Conditions of internal recruitment***

Only members of staff as defined in Article 1 of the Conditions of Employment are eligible to apply for internal vacancies. Members of staff employed under the Conditions of Short-term Employment are excluded from applying for vacancies advertised only internally.

Only members of staff who have completed at least one year of service from the date of their appointment to the ECB or a transfer to a new position are eligible to apply for a vacancy, unless in the latter case they apply for a position in a higher salary band. Except during the probationary period, the Director General DG/H can grant exceptions to the one year rule on a case-by-case basis in view of business needs.

### ***4.2 Conditions of external recruitment***

Applicants from outside the ECB shall fulfil all of the following conditions in order to be considered for recruitment.

#### ***4.2.1 Nationality***

The applicant shall be a national of one of the Member States of the European Union or an acceding country, and shall enjoy his/her full rights as a citizen.

#### ***4.2.2 Degrees and language skills***

The applicant shall produce, upon request, appropriate evidence and references to demonstrate his/her suitability to perform the duties required, including the originals of relevant degrees and other certificates. He/she shall have a thorough knowledge of English

and a satisfactory knowledge of at least a second official Community language. In some specific cases, positions may require particular additional language skills.

#### ***4.2.3 Medical clearance***

The appointment of successful applicants shall be subject to medical clearance by the ECB's Medical Adviser. Absence of medical clearance may delay the agreed starting date for the appointment. If, in exceptional cases, appointments have been taken up before medical clearance has been obtained, the rejection of clearance leads to the automatic dissolution of the employment relationship with the ECB, effective as of the date of the decision rejecting the clearance without any compensation or notice.

#### ***4.2.4 Security clearance***

The appointment of successful applicants shall be subject to security clearance in line with the ECB's Security Clearance Policy. Absence of security clearance may delay the agreed starting date for the appointment. If, in exceptional cases, appointments have been taken up before security clearance has been obtained, the rejection of clearance leads to the automatic dissolution of the employment relationship with the ECB, effective as of the date of the decision rejecting the clearance without any compensation or notice.

## **V. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE**

### ***5.1. Vacancy notices***

All vacancy notices shall be posted in the ECB's electronic recruitment system and may also be advertised in other ways when deemed appropriate. Vacancy notices shall set out the main responsibilities of the position and a general description of the educational and other qualifications, competencies and experience required or desired. The vacancy notice shall also indicate the nature and duration of the contract. The vacancy notice shall also indicate, where relevant, that a test, a written exercise or another selection tool may be part of the recruitment procedure. Vacancy notices shall clearly define the closing date for the submission of applications. The minimum duration of publication shall be three weeks.

### ***5.2 Submission of applications***

Applications shall be submitted via the ECB's electronic recruitment system. Candidates shall ensure that they complete and submit their application online prior to the closing date specified in the vacancy notice. Candidates bear full responsibility for the timely submission

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of their application and for providing complete information. Applications received after the deadline shall not be considered, unless the delay is caused by the unavailability of the electronic recruitment system at the ECB. Upon successful submission of their electronic application, applicants shall receive an automatic acknowledgement of receipt.

### ***5.3 Establishment of the selection committee***

A selection committee shall be formed for each selection procedure following a vacancy notice on the basis of a proposal made by the management of the business area where the vacancy occurs, who shall also provide the chairperson.

A selection committee shall be composed of one to three representatives of the business area where the vacancy occurs, including the direct manager for the vacant position and a representative of another business area.

For positions at salary band I and above, the selection committee shall be composed of up to three representatives of the business area where the vacancy arises, and one representative each from two other business areas.

Any selection committee shall include a representative from DG/H.

With the exception of the representative of DG/H, members of the selection committee shall hold a position at least one band higher than the vacant position, subject to the authority of the Director General DG/H to grant an exception.

Selection committees shall reflect diversity to the extent possible. Their composition shall be endorsed by DG/H, who shall pay particular attention to diversity and variation in composition.

The selection committee is responsible for conducting the recruitment procedure for the vacant position in line with the general principles outlined in this Administrative Circular. The selection committee shall take decisions by agreement among its members. If no agreement can be reached on a particular issue in the selection committee, the issue shall be submitted to the next hierarchical level above that of the selection committee for guidance. Ultimately, the Executive Board member responsible for DG/H shall take the decision, after seeking the views of the Executive Board member(s) responsible for the business areas represented in the selection committee.

### ***5.4 Avoidance of conflict of interests***

Members of staff shall not be part of a recruitment procedure that involves an applicant with whom they have a close personal relationship. As a general rule, he/she shall withdraw from

the selection process if his/her objectivity could be impaired. DG/H may decide to ask a member of staff to withdraw from the selection process where his/her objectivity may appear to be impaired.

### ***5.5 Confidentiality***

A strict obligation of secrecy rests on those taking part in the selection process.

### ***5.6 Tests and interviews***

The selection committee shall decide whether tests, written exercises or other selection tools will form part of the selection procedure. Such selection tools shall help to assess whether the applicant fulfils the requirements of the position as laid down in the vacancy notice. DG/H shall inform candidates invited to take part in the selection procedure in advance if tests, written exercises and/or other selection tools are to be used. If such tools are used, they shall be filed by DG/H together with the results. All recruitment procedures shall include at least one interview with the selection committee members.

### ***5.7 Shortlisting of candidates***

Following the deadline for applications, the selection committee shall agree on the shortlisting of applicants to be invited to participate further in the selection procedure.

The progress of the recruitment campaign should not be unduly delayed by the unavailability of candidates. Candidates would normally be expected to respond and/or to make themselves available for interviews no later than one week after being contacted.

### ***5.8 References***

The selection committee may consider references relevant to the position from the candidate's previous employers as well as from relevant current or past supervisors within the ECB. Affected candidates will be duly informed before the reference is obtained.

### ***5.9 Selection decision***

After completion of the selection procedure, the selection committee shall draw up its conclusions on the shortlisted candidates ranked in order of suitability and seek the endorsement of the head of the business area in which the vacancy has arisen. The selection shall be based on the qualification and experience-related requirements as set out in the vacancy notice.

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If the head of the business area would want to endorse a candidate that was not ranked first by the selection committee, he/she shall seek the advice of the Director General DG/H. The selection committee shall subsequently communicate the result of the selection process and the endorsement of the head of the business area to DG/H which shall make the appointment decision.

Where the vacancy is for a position at salary band I or above, the conclusions of the selection committee shall be addressed via the head of the business area to the Executive Board, which shall make the appointment decision.

Only candidates deemed suitable by the selection committee can be appointed.

In an internal campaign, the selection committee may refrain from finalising its conclusions and propose to the head of the business area where the vacancy has arisen to keep one or more internal candidates on hold during a subsequent external campaign.

If, after the selection process has been finalised, no suitable candidate out of the short-list has been identified, the selection committee may decide to re-open the short-list and to invite additional applicants to participate further in the recruitment procedure.

There is no obligation to fill the position if no suitable candidate can be found. The position may be re-advertised.

The business area where the vacancy occurs may, at the recommendation of the selection committee, indicate that it wishes to keep a candidate on hold for a similar vacancy in future. Applications may be kept on hold for a maximum period of six months from the date of completion of the selection procedure as documented in the selection memorandum.

### ***5.10 Communication of the decision***

The chairperson of the selection committee shall inform the selected candidate of the outcome of the selection procedure. The unsuccessful internal applicants shall also be informed of the outcome of their application by the chairperson or a delegate. DG/H shall inform unsuccessful external candidates.

### ***5.11 Recruitment file***

With the exception of security clearance documents, DG/H shall keep the relevant documentation with regard to the selection of candidates for a period of 24 months from the date of completion of the selection procedure. The applications and the correspondence with applicants shall form part of the documentation. However, the vacancy notice, the assessment of candidates who participated in the selection procedure and the recommendation for selection shall be kept for a period of five years. Candidates shall not have access to the

assessment and recommendations which relate to the comparative elements of the selection procedure but may request access to the part of the memorandum relating to their individual assessment and to tests or written exercises as produced by them or other selection tools which were part of the procedure.

## **VI. GRADUATE PROGRAMME RECRUITMENT**

In addition to the eligibility criteria listed in Section 4.2, the following conditions need to be fulfilled with regard to recruitment for the Graduate Programme:

- (1) External applicants must be recent graduates holding at least an advanced university degree (the degree must have been obtained no more than two years prior to the time of the application) with an outstanding academic record, or be finalising their studies with final exams to be taken and passed before the start of the appointment.
- (2) External applicants must have no relevant work experience or, in exceptional cases, a maximum of two years' relevant work experience following their advanced university degree.
- (3) Applicants must have complied with the requirements for mandatory military service or alternative service or be in a position to obtain a waiver from such obligation for the duration of their appointment to the Graduate Programme.
- (4) For internal applicants to the Graduate Programme, the requirement that the advanced university degree must have been obtained not more than two years prior to the time of the application is waived, as well as the requirement of a maximum of two years' relevant work experience.

Candidates shall be selected for the Graduate Programme by the selection committee for the Graduate Programme. The selection committee shall be composed of a chairperson (at the level of salary band K or above), a vice-chairperson (at the level of salary band J or above) and three other members from different business areas at the level salary band H or above, plus a representative of DG/H. The selection committee for the Graduate Programme may include additional members depending on the profiles of the candidates. The additional members of the selection committee will not have a final vote in the selection decision, but their views will be taken into consideration.

The participants in the Graduate Programme may not apply for advertised positions until six months before the expiry date of their initial employment contract.



## VII. EXCEPTIONS

The Executive Board may decide on different rules and/or procedures if the application of the provisions of this Administrative Circular would not be conducive to the achievement of the aim of the Administrative Circular.

## VIII. ENTRY INTO FORCE AND REPLACEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR 05/2004

This Administrative Circular shall enter into force on 1 April 2008. It shall repeal and replace Administrative Circular 05/2004.

Done at Frankfurt am Main, 25 March 2008.

*The President of the ECB*  
Jean-Claude TRICHET