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1. Introduction

This report fulfils the obligation arising from Article 79(3) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS), which provides that *‘the Commission shall provide a yearly report on the use of contract staff including numbers of staff, level and type of posts, geographical balance and budgetary resources per function group*’. It offers a detailed snapshot of the contract staff employed in the European institutions at 31 December 2015.

This report includes data for 55 different entities: a) 10 European institutions (including the European External Action Service (EEAS), in operation since 1 January 2011); and b) 45 agencies or Joint Undertakings as defined in Article 1(a) of the Staff Regulations. The data for the Commission are more detailed and include staff financed from operational and research lines, plus staff working in administrative offices, delegations, representations and the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

It is to be noted that the budgetary data (sent each year with the draft budget to the Budgetary Authority - Working Document, parts II and III) show contract staff numbers at the time when the draft budget is presented (including contract staff recruited using assigned revenue), i.e.: a statement of the position at 1 April of year N-1 (where N is the year of the draft budget), budgetary implementation in year N-2 and requests for appropriations with estimates of full-time equivalents (FTE) for year N. This is why some differences appear in the numbers for contract staff, depending on the data source. Since several budget lines include appropriations for external personnel without establishing a distinction between the diffferent categories of that personnel, the budget figures convey the best possible estimates based on the likely average costs and the repartition between categories.

The category of contract staff was created in 2004 as part of the reform of the Staff Regulations. Since then, contract staff have made a useful contribution to the work of the institutions by carrying out administrative support activities at a lower cost and by bringing in skills not always readily available within the institutions.

Articles 3a and 3b of the CEOS define the role of contract staff and functions that they may perform.

Contract staff 3a can be engaged, on either a part time or full-time basis in a post not included in the establishment plan:

* for the Institutions' services: to carry out exclusively manual or administrative support tasks in function group I,
* for the EU Representations and Delegations, the Agencies and other entities: to perform the functions specified in Article 80.2 of the CEOS in function groups I, II, III and IV.

This staff benefit from a contract that can be converted into a contract of indefinite duration, after a first renewal.

Contract staff 3b type are employed:

* to perform tasks other than those referred to in article 3a of the CEOS in a post not included in the establishment plan, or
* to replace an official or temporary staff member who is temporarily unable to perform his or her duties.

This staff are engaged for short periods, from a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of 6 years.

Article 80 of the CEOS establishes a link between each function group (FG) and the duties that contract staff may perform:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Function group** | **Grade** | **Tasks** |
| **IV** | 13 to 18 | Administrative, advisory, linguistic and equivalent technical tasks, performed under the supervision of officials or temporary staff |
| **III** | 8 to 12 | Executive tasks, drafting, accountancy and other equivalent technical tasks, performed under the supervision of officials or temporary staff |
| **II** | 4 to 7 | Clerical and secretarial tasks, office management and other equivalent tasks, performed under the supervision of officials or temporary staff |
| **I** | 1 to 3 | Manual and administrative support service tasks, performed under the supervision of officials or temporary staff. |

2. Trend in contract staff numbers in the Commission since 2004

On 31 december 2015, 45 Agencies or Joint undertakings and 10 Institutions were employing around 11 700 contract staff members. This total represents an increase of 5.6% compared to 2014. About 57 % of contract agents were employed by the Commission in 2015, against 58 % in 2014 and 2013. This relative decrease in the share of Commission's contract staff is attributable to the higher increase verified in other institutions and agencies: +8.9% against +3.3% for the Commission.

The breakdown between institutions and agencies is examined further down in this report.

The trend within the Commission since 2004 is as follows[[1]](#footnote-1):

**Table 1 Trend within the Commission**



The initial rise in contract staff numbers working at the Commission is due to a) the mere implementation of the 2004 statutory provisions, implying the gradual replacement of the former categories of auxiliary staff (nearly 3 000 in 2003) and D-level officials and temporary agents, and b) the conversion of permanent official posts into appropriations for contract staff in the administrative offices.

Furthermore, contract staff were also taken on as temporary replacements for permanent staff, as provided for in Article 3b of the CEOS, in order to ensure effective business continuity.

For the abovementioned reasons, contract staff numbers grew each year up to 2009.

From 2010 to 2013, the number of contract staff remained stable, with a slight decrease due to several concurrent reasons (e.g., delay in finalisation of the lists of suitable candidates in 2010, transfer of staff to the EEAS at the time of its creation, etc.)

As of 2014, with the entry into force of the new Staff Regulations, the term of employment of 3b contract staff has been extented to a maximum of six years. This implied that many contract staff who had already completed three years of service and were actually continuing to work for the Commission as agency staff were able to be re-engaged for a further contractual period, allowing the Commission to benefit from contract staff already trained and operational. This increased the number of contract staff, while reducing the number of interim agency staff[[2]](#footnote-2) (paid upon the same budgetary appropriations).

In 2015, the small increase of contract staff in the Commission is mainly due to a change in the Joint Research Center's policy for engagement of non-permanent scientific staff, from grant holders under national law contracts to contract agents FGIV.

3. Breakdown by gender and by function group of Commission's contract staff

The breakdown of contract staff by gender, function group and grade is shown in the table below.

**Table 2A Breakdown by gender, FG and grade in 2015[[3]](#footnote-3)**

**Table 2B**



On 31 December 2015, 6 652 contract staff were serving at the Commission. The largest function group is FGII, accounting for almost 37 % of contract staff in 2015 - a small decrease compared with the share attained in the previous year, 39%. Most staff in this group carry out secretarial or similar duties, while others are responsible for childcare.

The overall split between men and women has remained stable over the years. In 2015, gender balance was achieved in FGIV. The gender breakdown in the other FGs has been stable since 2011. We find a much larger proportion of women in FGII (83.5 % in 2015) and, to a lesser extent, in FGIII (60 % in 2015). In FGI, in contrast, men predominate (63.7 % in 2015).

4. Breakdown by nationality of Commission's contract staff

It is worth noting that, as per officials and temporary agents, engagement of contract staff is carried out on the basis of the required profile and the applicants' abilities and language knowledge, without any definition of national quotas.

In 2015, all Member States were represented in all function groups with the exception of Austrians in FGI. Nationalities most represented among contract staff are, in descending order, Belgians, Italians, French, Spaniards and Romanians, followed by Greeks and Poles. The share of the first four nationalities has been the same since 2005 (around 60%). The UK and Germany, like Poland and the Netherlands, are rather under-represented in relation to their population. Conversely, Belgium and Italy are over-represented in relation to their population.

Following the accession of Croatia to the European Union, on 1 July 2013, 42 Croatian contract staff worked at the Commission on 31 December 2015.

The breakdown by nationality is influenced by a combination of factors, in particular geographical proximity to the location of the European institution’s headquarters (for the Commission, mainly Brussels, Luxembourg and Ispra), salary levels and the duration of the proposed contracts. Candidates are more likely to accept a post with a fixed-term contract if they are resident at or near the site of the institution offering them a job. Indeed, it can be hard for candidates with families to leave their countries of origin and set up home at the institution’s headquarters for a relatively short period of time (on the basis of the general implementing provisions adopted on the basis of the article 79.2 of the CEOS, the duration of the first contract is of just one year). As reported in the tables below, this is in particular true for contract staff FGI and FGII, while contract staff FGIV have a less geographically imbalanced composition.

**Table 3A Breakdown by nationality and gender of Commission's contract staff in 2015[[4]](#footnote-4)**

**Table 3B**



Table 4 below gives an analytical breakdown by FG, nationality and gender.

**Table 4 Contract staff by gender, function group and nationality[[5]](#footnote-5)**

|  |
| --- |
| **FGIV** |



|  |
| --- |
| **FGIII** |



|  |
| --- |
| **FGII** |



|  |
| --- |
| **FGI** |



5. Breakdown by dg of Commission's contract staff

In the following section, the data on contract staff is presented by DG. There are significative differences between the DGs, largely because of the nature of their work. DG DEVCO, for example, employs mostly FGIV responsible for aid and international cooperation or working as programme managers, both at headquarters and in the Delegations[[6]](#footnote-6). OIB, on the other hand, employs mostly administrative assistants and childcare workers in FGII.

5.1. Breakdown by gender and by DG[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Table 5 Breakdown by gender, DG and two clusters of FGs**



5.2. Breakdown by contract type[[8]](#footnote-8)

5.2.1 Contract staff 3a

**Table 6 3a contract staff by FG, gender and DG**

 

5.2.2 Contract staff 3b

**Table 7 3b contract staff by FG, gender and DG**



6. Breakdown of contract staff between the other institutions and agencies

The number of contract staff in the other institutions and agencies increased by 8.9 % in 2015, from 4 624 in 2014 to 5 031 in 2015 (following an increase by 10.6% in 2014).

**Table 8 Trends in the breakdown of contract staff between the other institutions and agencies since 2010[[9]](#footnote-9)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

6.1. Breakdown of contract staff among the other institutions[[10]](#footnote-10)

The number of contract staff in the other institutions remained stable when compared to 2014.

**Table 9 Breakdown of contract staff among the other institutions in 2015**

6.1.1 Breakdown by gender and by function group in the other institutions[[11]](#footnote-11)

**Table 10**



6.1.2 Breakdown by nationality in the other institutions[[12]](#footnote-12)

**Table 11**



6.2. Breakdown of contract staff in the agencies

There has been a steady increase in the number of contract staff in the agencies. The numbers are as follows:

 

As regards decentralised agencies and joint undertakings, there has been a sharp increase of the number of contract staff in 2015 as compared to 2014 (14%). This follows the decisions of the budgetary authority to assign increased resources (thus financing increased staffing levels), in particular to those agencies and joint undertakings which have been recently created or have recently been assigned additional tasks.

As regards the executive agencies, this increase is mainly due to the engagement of contract staff to perform new tasks deriving from the extension of their mandate to cover the management of the new generation of spending programmes under the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework. This was made possible, among other factors, by the launching in 2015 of a dedicated selection procedure for contract agents FGIII and IV that covered the specific needs of the executive agencies (finances and project management profiles). In 2015, the Commission further delegated the implementation tasks to these agencies to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of programme management. The staffing levels in the agencies are in line with the Commission’s 'delegation package' approved for the 2014-2020 period.

**Table 12 Breakdown of contract staff by type of agency in 2015[[13]](#footnote-13)**

In 2015, 52 % of contract staff were employed by the executive agencies and 41 % by the decentralised agencies. The remainder (7 %) are employed by Joint undertakings and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

The increase in the number of contract staff between 2010 and 2015 reflects the increase in the number of agencies and, specifically for the executive agencies, increased tasks.

6.2.1 Breakdown by gender and by function group in the agencies

The breakdown by function group is relatively uniform between the decentralised and executive agencies and has remained stable since 2012. The Joint undertakings have slightly increased the number of contract agents in FGIV in order to manage a growing level of tasks assigned under Horizon 2020.

**Table 13 Breakdown by function group in the agencies and Joint undertakings in 2015[[14]](#footnote-14)**

 **Table 14 Breakdown by function group for each agency or Joint undertaking in 2015**



6.2.2 Breakdown by nationality in the agencies

As outlined above for the Commission, table 15 below confirms that the location of the agencies plays a major role in determining the nationalities of their contract staff.

The executive agencies, located on the same main sites of the Commission, present trends similar to those of the Commission: the most represented EU citizens being Belgians, Italians, Spaniards and French.

Similarly, the breakdown by nationality of contract staff in the decentralised agencies and Joint undertakings reflects their location.

**Table 15 Breakdown by nationality in the agencies and Joint undertakings in 2015[[15]](#footnote-15)**

**Table 16 Breakdown by nationality for each agency or Joint undertaking in 2015**



1. Source: Commission HR analytics platform. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In particular, the number of agency staff fell from 415 on 1 July 2013 to 171 on 1 July 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Source: Commission HR analytics platform. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Source: Commission HR analytics platform. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Source: Commission HR analytics platform. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. It is worth noting that following the creation of the DG NEAR in 2015, approx. 200 contract staff working in the neighbourhood policy was transferred from DG DEVCO to DG NEAR [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Source: Commission HR analytics platform. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Source: Commission HR analytics platform. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Source: Eurostat and EU institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Source: Eurostat and EU institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Source: Eurostat and EU institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Source: Eurostat and EU institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Source: Eurostat and Sysper. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Source: Eurostat and Sysper. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Source: Eurostat and Sysper, only EU28 countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)