



NEW CONDITIONS OF ACCESS TO THE JUNIOR PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMME:

A SUCCESS STORY FOR **UNION SYNDICALE**

[FR](#)

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IT IS TIME NOW TO THINK ABOUT A "SENIOR PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMME"

Thanks to the battle led by **Union Syndicale**, the criteria for admission of Contract and Temporary Agents to the Junior Professional Programme will change: our colleagues in precarious employment who have the required qualifications will be able to access it regardless of their category or function group.

It is now time to think about a similar programme for Temporary and Contract (3a) staff (Headquarters and Delegations) with adequate professional experience (10 years? The programme should give these colleagues a possibility to become officials in the appropriate grade in the AD or AST career, following a path similar to the one foreseen for their young colleagues of the JPP.

Union Syndicale will discuss with DG HR the possibilities of opening such a programme to both AST and AST-SC officials.

The new eligibility criteria for the JPP, announced by DG HR, represent a step forward for staff, achieved thanks to the coordinated and sustained efforts of **Union Syndicale** representatives in the various bodies for social dialogue with the Administration.

Union Syndicale opposed strongly the first version of the then-called "Young Professionals Programme" when this was first presented to Staff Representatives (see annexed leaflet).

It was then crystal-clear (explicitly acknowledged by DG HR representatives) that the pilot project was supported by a determined political will and the trade unions could not prevent it from launching. DG HR had received a clear mandate from Commissioner Oettinger, now confirmed by the new Commission.

While others were barricading themselves in maximalist and rigid positions, **Union Syndicale** took a more pragmatic approach, trying to get improvements to the initial proposal.

Two aspects appeared from the outset to be totally unacceptable:

- the programme, in its initial version, was exclusively reserved for "blue book" trainees while the rest of the "precarious" staff (in particular temporary and contract agents) had no access to it;
- the selection was to be carried out without the transparency that only the participation of the staff representation could guarantee.

In other words, Union Syndicale chose to call for the exercise to be opened to other colleagues, for a transparent process and for a review at the end of the pilot study.

Several meetings were necessary to persuade both DG HR and the political level of the well-founded reasons of our requests.

With regard to the opening of the programme to Temporary and Contract Agents, from the outset, **Union Syndicale** tried to ensure that participation was open to all colleagues with the required qualifications and skills, **regardless of their category and function group.**

Indeed, as we all, including DG HR, know, too many colleagues are graded at a level far below the responsibilities they are called upon to exercise, and this is solely and exclusively for reasons of economy. In other words, they were, and still are, under-graded (and underpaid), which is politically unworthy of an Institution like ours.

Until now, the Institution has pretended not to realise the aberration of penalizing these colleagues twice:

- disadvantaged with regard to the relationship between the responsibilities entrusted to them and their salary
and
- with no possibility of applying internally for a permanent job for which they have all the necessary qualifications.

Union Syndicale welcomes the fact that DG HR is finally putting an end to this situation and invites it to continue its efforts to make the JPP "less abnormal", "less scandalous", "less irritating" or perceived as a programme offering a "long-term job for a handful of people".

How can this be achieved?

- by making the selection procedure of the "Blue Book" trainees more transparent, as it remains the main source of supply for the JPP (in all its phases, including the choice by the DGs);
- by multiplying efforts so that the Institution can recruit young and well-trained civil servants through modern competitive examination procedures, without having to resort to such shortcuts.

Union Syndicale is preparing to negotiate the formalisation of a coherent and pertinent programme for all staff and for the Institution. DG HR has confirmed that, after the assessment of this pilot phase (six JPP cycles), negotiations will be launched. These negotiations will, if necessary, be conducted at the highest level, given the political will that supports this programme.

In a few weeks' time, **Union Syndicale** will present an articulated proposal for a similar programme: a "Senior Professional Programme" for colleagues who are Temporary Agents or Contract Agents (3a) at Headquarters and in Delegations, with a length of service to be defined and who have the required degrees.

The possibility of participation of AST and AST-SC officials is under consideration.

We will ask the Commission to define a career path similar to the one offered in the JPP framework: pre-selection by the DG/Service to which they belong, selection by a central panel, assignment to another DG/Service for a period of one year; then, as a Temporary Agent (art. 87.2 of the CEOS limits to 5% the number of CAs who may be appointed as officials following an internal competition) followed by the participation in an internal competition for the establishment in the appropriate grade of the AST or AD career.

Please do not hesitate to send us your ideas, proposals and criticism at the following email address: us@unionsyndicale.eu

We plan to hold a webinar on this subject in the coming weeks to discuss it with the colleagues directly interested.

The Executive Committee
Union Syndicale Bruxelles

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