



# Contract agents

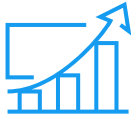


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[www.ushu.eu](http://www.ushu.eu)

# Issues that we address for contract agents

Improved access to internal competitions and a better selection methodology



Addressing the lack of equality in allowance payments



Enhancing the current mobility scheme and ensure sufficient flexibility during its implementation



Ensuring extensions of contracts are in line with the procedures



Close follow up of the annual appraisal and reclassification exercises



Acceleration of reclassification of contract agents



Ensure contract agents gain access to career development (internal concours, specialist concours, access to TA posts, Senior Professional programme)



Establishing a joint mobility scheme between EEAS, Commission and EU Agencies



Review of the current installation allowance in favour of a scheme based on equality between staff categories





## BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

# CONTRACT AGENTS CAREER PATH

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The long-awaited new HR strategy has been disappointing for Contract Agents. USHU fully engaged with the Social Dialogue process and made specific proposals in relation to Contract Agents (at HQ and in EU DEL) and the need to provide a career paths that meets legitimate expectations. HQ is clearly reluctant to introduce the changes that CAs need and demand.

We know that EU Delegations add to the attractiveness of the Commission and offer enviable posts to staff who are willing to bring the EU to the globe yet the aspirations of the majority of their staff (Local Agents and Contract Agents) are simply absent from the current proposal. This sends the message that certain staff categories are not a priority even if it is evident that they are critical to the success of the EU institutions on the ground, in third countries.

USHU is lobbying for a **more ambitious and inclusive HR Strategy**. A strategy that indeed attracts talent from the outside and is also mindful of the talent that already exists within its services.

**Now is the time for our managers and political leaders to take the leap and offer more career pathways for Contract Agents – this is a win-win!**

### USHU PROPOSALS FOR CA CAREER OPPORTUNITIES:

1. **New Special Senior Expert Program (SSEP):** the eligibility criteria and the nuts and bolts of how to implement this need to be fully discussed but USHU's proposal is to organise an annual internal selection procedure providing access to TA/AD posts. This could complement or even replace expensive external specialist programmes and fully harness the substantial internal CA talent that exists within the institution. Highly qualified CAs with proven skills and enviable expertise together with sound institutional knowledge **must be provided** with a pathway to permanent posts.

2. **Better organised Internal Competitions accessible to CAs.** USHU is insisting that the **Talent Screener be assessed at an earlier stage** to avoid highly qualified CAs with strong professional records being eliminated unnecessarily by verbal (V), numerical (N) and abstract reasoning (A) computer based tests (CBT). A change in the preselection procedure is necessary to ensure equal treatment and to account fully for qualifications and expertise.

3. **Certification procedure for CAs:** USHU believes DG HR must find a way to allow and encourage CAs with strong and proven performance **to access a certification process** to be reclassified as AST/AD. This is a win-win scenario and both rewards performance and motivates staff.

# OUR PRIORITY ISSUES FOR CONTRACT AGENTS

## ➔ Acceleration of reclassification of contract agents

USHU was successful in lobbying for increased CA reclassification quotas. DG HR has finally recognised our legitimate request and significantly increased quotas in 2024. USHU will continue to lobby for a more agile and rewarding promotion system for CAs. This current slow progression is demotivating staff who have performed well.



## IMPROVED ACCESS TO INTERNAL COMPETITIONS AND A BETTER SELECTION METHODOLOGY

Contract Agents have been deprived of opportunities in spite of their decades in the institution and there are still only few opportunities for career progress. Equal access to internal competitions under the same rules and without additional CBT tests is important and would put contract agents on an equal footing with temporary agents and junior professionals, the latter having far less experience.

The institution has been playing a game of divide and conquer with increasing structural inequalities since 2004. However, USHU has chosen to focus on the future and to emphasise that internal competitions among people that have proven their worth to the institution **should be organised in an equal manner**. It is not acceptable that temporary agents and junior experts get preferential access to competitive procedures that allow them to obtain better working conditions when CAs are left behind.

CAs who have been in the service for more than 15 years are faced with reaching the end of the CA career ladder with nowhere to go. **Their experience and knowledge of EU institutions and development cooperation is invaluable and should be maximised through internal talent procedures.**

Everyone recognises there is a problem, but HR has not yet found a lasting solution.

The methodology of tests should be adapted to consider knowledge, experience, communication skills at a similar level and avoid procedures that only aim to eliminate and demoralise CAs. EPSO needs a total overhaul and USHU will engage with DG HR to find the best possible testing methods and to ensure access for CAs working in EU DEL.

## ➔ Addressing the lack of equality in allowance payments

Contract agents not only receive much lower basic salaries while often performing similar duties as Officials, but they also receive much lower allowances. We are encouraging greater equity and asking COM/EEAS to look at a combination of lump sum and percentages payments instead of applying percentages only.





## SALARY INCREASES

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# ACCELERATION OF RECLASSIFICATION OF CONTRACT AGENTS

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Contract agents are important and committed colleagues in EU Delegations. Yet, the reclassification scheme for contract agents leads to **a slower transition in grades in comparison to the speed of promotion for officials** – basic salaries are lower and promotion is a protracted procedure.

Contract Agents largely outnumber officials in EU so clearly there is an need to introduce changes and incentives for CAs to prevent them from becoming increasingly increasingly frustrated over time.

There are too many cases where CA colleagues have been overlooked and have remained longer in their grade than the normal period and similarly there are Team Leaders who have taken on additional responsibilities but there is no fast track to reclassification for them either!

**The current reclassification policy provides little incentive and is unsustainable in the long run. It will lead to a regular outflow of CAs who move to other organisations that value them more and offer better working conditions. The investment in human capital will be lost.**

Fundamental changes are needed – we need a merit-based appraisal system based on a wider set of criteria, and faster reclassification.

**WE SUPPORT AND REPRESENT  
STAFF IN EU DELEGATIONS**

# **Contract Agents make an important contribution to Delegations around the world.**

**WE CONVEY YOUR  
MESSAGE IN A SIMPLE  
YET POWERFUL WAY.**

**As members of the CLP HU, the  
EEAS Staff Committee and the  
Central Staff Committee we miss  
no opportunity to voice your  
concerns.**



**Unity and Solidarity Outside the EU**

# MANAGEMENT BASED ON TRUST AND UNDERSTANDING

our members in the  
the CLP HU.



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