

## **APPENDIX 4 – Annual staff policy plan**

This Annual Staff Policy Plan (ASPP) is drafted within the context of the Office's 2024 Annual Work Programme. The plan details the expected staff policy initiatives and staff-related actions to help implement the Office's strategic objectives laid down in the SP2025 and to ensure the execution of the activities set out in the Office's Work Programme for 2024. Within this context, the ASPP is established taking into consideration the following elements:

- The estimated staff situation at the end of 2023, constituting the starting point (baseline) for the 2024 Workforce Plan (WFP);
- The activities to be carried out by the Office in 2024 as identified in the present Work Programme, including:
  - (i) operational (based on the expected EUTM and RCD volumes, new responsibilities and continuous improvement of efficiency and operational excellence),
  - (ii) strategic (in line with the strategic projects and priorities), and
  - (iii) other initiatives and projects, in particular those supporting the implementation of EU policies;
- The Office's workforce planning model as a reference for staff growth based on business volumes;
- The Office's staff policy principles outlined in the Multi-Annual Staff Policy Plan (MASPP) 2020-2025;
- The Office's Establishment Plan;
- Business continuity and succession planning, as well as any confirmed and estimated departures resulting from contract terminations, retirements and other operational replacements;
- External factors impacting the Office's activities and budgetary capacities such as the continuing volatile macroeconomic and geopolitical environment.

Within this context, the 2024 Staff Policy Plan seeks to support an agile workforce to adapt to rapidly changing needs, whilst continuing to support the Office as an innovative workplace of choice.

### ***Staff policy initiatives***

As in previous years, a heightened level of staff engagement will remain a focal point. Improved efficiency will continue to be pursued through further modernising and digitalising processes, accountability and performance, and promoting collaborative working methods.

New emerging job profiles and the constantly evolving tasks resulting from the Office's digital evolution, together with the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) solutions, have called for an increased focus on outcomes and competencies. In this sense, the refocused job mapping and competency framework, which will enter into force in 2024, will serve to prepare the Office for future challenges, as well as to support talent management and staff development, including reskilling/upskilling of staff, and career guidance.

Staff-related initiatives will seek to improve working conditions and wellbeing, notably in the established context of hybrid working.

The budgetary situation permitting, the Office will continue to improve career perspectives and contractual conditions, in particular of the contract agent (CA) population.

Factors that may have an impact on the main principles set out in the MASPP, namely, the three reference ratios for workforce distribution between *permanent/temporary, administrator (AD)/assistant (AST)* and *core/support* staff, will continue to be monitored and addressed through the various staff policy initiatives.

The reserve list of successful laureates resulting from the publication of the IP competition in 2023 will represent the most important mechanism to recruit permanent staff over the next years and on the basis of needs. As a complementary measure, the Office has allocated quotas in a number of EPSO competitions for non-IP profiles of interest to the Office.

Other staff initiatives such as the annual transfer exercise or temporary agent contract renewals for an indefinite period will also serve to manage the retention of talent.

With regards to the balance of workforce efforts dedicated to core/support areas, the Office ratio remains at 80/20 %. Furthermore, as every year, in compliance with the procedures laid down by the Staff Regulations and where relevant, the corresponding Implementing Rules, in 2024 the Office plans to carry out:

- a promotion and reclassification exercise for staff as per the rates established in Annex I.B to the Staff Regulations;
- a certification exercise for up to three AST officials;
- a call for expression of interest for 'Leave in the interest of the Service' in application of Article 42c of the Staff Regulations.

### **Workforce plan 2024**

Despite predictions for a moderate growth trend in EUTM and RCD filing volumes for the end of 2023 and for 2024, revenues will continue to be closely monitored, while keeping expenditure under control from a resources perspective.

Indeed, the moderate volumes growth trend, as per the Office Workforce Planning model, indicates that the Office should recruit up to 29 additional employees in 2024. Nevertheless, in view of the continuing volatile situation and in an attempt to keep the growing staff costs stemming from legally mandated salary adaptations under control, the Office will continue looking for efficiency gains and will not increase its headcount. The Office remains committed to delivering its services within appropriate levels of timeliness, accessibility, and quality of decisions, as set in the Office's Service Charter and will focus on optimising efficiency gains and, where possible, reallocate resources.

The prudent approach to the Office workforce goes beyond a no growth forecast: the baseline for the 2024 WFP also includes a reduction due to the unreplaced departures of 14 employees in 2023. As a result, the starting headcount for 2024 is 1 287.

The 1 287 headcount translates into 1 234.65 FTEs due to the application of statutory entitlements such as part-time work, parental and family leaves, unpaid leaves, and other partial absences representing 52.35 FTEs.

To increase budgetary accuracy, a correction element has been included to factor in the impact of the delayed entries from the previous exercise as well as the time to fill any vacant positions arising from unexpected departures in 2024, in particular those requiring a new external selection procedure. This turnover correction factor has been set at -25.09 FTEs.

To sum up, the Office 2024 WFP estimates a headcount of 1 287, corresponding to 1 209.56 FTEs. This estimation is 14 employees below the workforce approved for the Office in the 2023 Budget.

The use of interim staff in 2024 will continue to be closely monitored. In line with the overall situation of volumes and expected revenue, and in strict compliance with the recently adopted national legal framework, the use of interims is expected to be limited to the levels of 2023.

With regards to the use of consultancy services, the situation will be addressed in a similar manner limiting any budgetary impact to the forecasted revenues.

**Financial outlook 2025 – 2028**

The Office business volumes forecast for 2025 – 2028 predicts a gradual recovery and subsequent growth. As a result, the Office workforce planning model confirms annual additional staff growth for that period as per the below table:

YEAR/STATUTORY LINK	2025	2026	2027	2028
OFFICIAL	19	20	20	20
TEMPORARY AGENT	6	6	6	6
CONTRACT AGENT	1	2	2	1
SNE	1	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL STAFF GROWTH</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>

Despite such positive projections, the Office cannot ignore the continuing economic uncertainty. Consequently, it has decided to extend the prudent approach adopted for 2024 to the 2025-2028 period.

Therefore, in the present financial outlook, zero additional staff growth is considered for the years 2025 – 2028. To preserve the current operational capacity, the Office will strive for sustained efficiency gains.

**Establishment Plan 2024 – 2028**

The Office’s Establishment Plan currently comprises 1 172 posts.

In 2024, the Office will continue making cautious use of the budgetary space created with a multiannual perspective for the evolution of its workforce needs.

In this sense, and since no additional workforce growth is expected in 2024, the occupancy of the Establishment Plan is estimated to be at 86.3 % at the end of 2024.

Factors affecting the Establishment Plan occupancy include staff policy initiatives such as the ongoing IP competition, recruitment of CAs placed on Office reserve lists as TAs, as well as improving the contractual conditions of current AST staff (e.g. certification procedure).

Additionally, promotions will affect the occupancy of the posts within the different grades.

To anticipate the workforce composition needs, the Office wishes to gradually transform the posts comprised in the current Establishment Plan.

Considering the zero-workforce growth estimated in the Financial outlook 2025 – 2028 and following the principles for workforce distribution set out in the MASSP, the evolution of the Establishment plan is projected as follows:

	<b>Function Group</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>
<b>Permanent</b>	<b>AD</b>	284	322	382	429	474
	<b>AST</b>	334	323	303	281	256
	<b><i>Subtotal Perm</i></b>	<b>618</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>730</b>
<b>Temporary</b>	<b>AD</b>	416	389	349	324	304
	<b>AST</b>	138	138	138	138	138
	<b><i>Subtotal Temp.</i></b>	<b>554</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>442</b>
<b>Total Posts</b>		<b>1 172</b>	<b>1 172</b>	<b>1 172</b>	<b>1 172</b>	<b>1 172</b>