



PO21

Proposal for PO Entry Requirements and Professional Profile

WP3 - Output 5



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Contents

Credits	3
Presentation	5
Professional Profile	10
Description	10
PO21 – Professional Profile	14
Entry Requirements	17
Conclusion – establishing entry requirements for the European PO	24

Credits

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Presentation

01

Presentation

This document was produced in the scope of PO21_Prison Officers for the 21st Century (PO21). The Project is funded by the Erasmus + programme and implemented by a partnership of nine institutions from five countries, coordinated by the BSAFE Lab Law Enforcement, Justice and Public Safety of the University of Beira Interior (Portugal)¹, also including sectoral representatives (prison administrations, trade unions, VET and research organisations, and representatives of correctional private and public sector members).

The PO21 Project intends to develop a transnational Vocational Education and Training (VET) curriculum – a prison officer’s initial training course and learning resources. It aims to promote sectoral qualifications and ease professional mobility by adapting and developing new VET provisions according to current and foreseen skills needs. It seeks to provide innovative solutions and different skills for prison officers to be better equipped to face their everyday challenges. The results will also benefit public VET providers and decision-makers and the project partners, who represent a partnership for sustainable cooperation between prison administrations and correctional academies, trade unions, and other sectoral representatives.

¹ The Project, with the ID number 612529-EPP-1-2019-1-PT--EPPKA2-SSA, is financed under the Erasmus + KA2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices – Sector Skills Alliances, by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The contract foreseen 36 months (01.11.2019 – 31.10.2022) and was signed between the coordinator UBI/BSAFE Lab and has the following partners: IPS_Innovative Prison Systems (Qualify Just IT solutions and Consulting), PT; Direção-Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais (DGRSP), PT; Sindicato Nacional Do Corpo Da Guarda Prisional, PT; Bremen Senate of Justice and Constitution, DE; De Federale Overheidsdienst Justitie – Le Service Public Feder, BE; Sindicatul Național al Polițiștilor de Penitenciare, RO; Stichting Foundation ICPA Office in Europe, NL

To achieve the objectives above, the PO21 Project researched to produce a needs analysis that could provide the framework to support the development of the proposed outputs. Data collection was carried out at various levels, including:

- National Level - **National Reports** - national report of each country present in the partnership (Portugal, Romania, Germany and Belgium) considering: i) the jurisdiction of the training; (ii) admission requirements for the profession; iii) characterisation of the course or initial training courses and iv) characterisation of the course or course of continuous training.
- European Level - **European Report** - analysis of 21 EU countries considering: i) the jurisdiction of training; (ii) admission requirements for the profession; iii) characterisation of the course or initial training courses and iv) characterisation of the course or course of continuous training.
- Auscultation of key actors:
 - **DACUM workshops** - to survey current and future needs and challenges, considering the duties inherent to the prison officer profession.
 - **Advisory Board Meetings** - the Advisory Board was created under the Project and involved experts and critical stakeholders in the sector. These meetings have produced records integrated in minutes, which were analysed. The inputs relating to topics such as (i) the challenges correctional officers face and their impacts on their daily work, (ii) requirements to be considered for the admission of correctional officers, iii) elements to be included in the initial and continuing training plan, iv) the importance of collaboration between agencies and iv) future challenges.

- Auscultation of correctional officers - **PO21 survey** - through a questionnaire applied and distributed by the partners, which intended to collect data on i) the professional posture of correctional officers; (ii) the perception of the inclusion of training elements in their initial formation; (iii) interest in each of the training topics submitted; (iii) the teaching-learning methods of initial and continuing education; (iv) the skills considered to be essential to develop; v) and also on the perceived importance of emerging areas of knowledge.

The results obtained in each activity were subjected to comparative analysis and generated two outputs.

The first is a report that culminated in the proposal of recommendations on the elements to be considered for preparing a proposal for vocational training that may be nationally appropriate (**0.3.4 Recommendation Paper for re-thinking prison officers' training**) and internationally recognised. It should be noted that, despite the specificities of each country, correctional officers share common duties and tasks and, consequently, common needs and challenges.

The second is a proposal for a VET training course, which design was mainly based on the current and future needs expressed by the PO on the DACUM workshops and the survey data regarding training themes perceived as very important by the target audience and the competencies they elected as essential to developing. Its structure was based on the Council of the European Union Guidelines². It also considers the recommendation regarding European prison rules.

The second stage of this process has begun with a series of workshops, which will finetune the VET training course. The first was in Lisbon, from 28th March to 1st April.

² COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020/C 417/01)

During the workshop in Lisbon, 28 participants from Belgium, Germany, Portugal and Romania were gathered to analyse this proposal and to put forward the training features for each set of duties and specific duties.

Also, at this workshop, participants were divided into groups, and each group reorganised the definitions of PO profile.

During the second workshop in Ghent, 25 participants from Belgium, Germany, Portugal and Romania were gathered to discuss the modules and the training features of the VET course that resulted from the first workshop. The participants were divided into eight groups, and each was assigned some professional competencies with the respective training features. The essential competencies were also contemplated.

This workshop also gave the first steps to set the entry requirements for the established PO21 Profile. The European and national reports evidenced various entry requirements to be a PO. Each group submitted a form with their choices for entry requirements, and the results are presented in this report.

The present document opens with some definitions of the PO profile, gathered from different sources and its similarities and differences. It is followed by the entry requirements established by the Ghent Workshop participants and concludes with a summary of these requirements.

Professional Profile

02

Professional Profile

There are several definitions of the corrections officers' Profile. The EPTA, ESCO, and PO21 project descriptions were mobilised to aggregate all concepts that such a role involves. The inputs of the Lisbon Workshop were also considered.

Description

Correctional officers watch over and maintain order among inmates of prisons, reformatories or penitentiaries.

Prison officers supervise inmates in a correctional facility and ensure security and peace-keeping. They perform checks and searches to ensure compliance with regulations, monitor visitations and the activities of inmates, participate in rehabilitation programs, and ensure records maintenance. (ESCO)³

Juvenile correctional officers monitor and provide security to juvenile offenders. They ensure the facility's safety is compliant with rules and regulations, compile reports on the daily activities and in the case of incidents, and report unusual activity. They also supervise the rehabilitation procedures of the offenders.

EPTA defines a correctional officer as responsible for safety, security, and prisoner rehabilitation. Promote social behaviour and address the offending behaviour of inmates. A prison officer belongs to a public service body⁴.

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/occupation?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fdata.europa.eu%2Fesco%2Foccupation%2F3327a087-cd36-4b02-ac1b-6455f59f9312&conceptLanguage=en&full=true#&uri=http://data.europa.eu/esco/occupation/3327a087-cd36-4b02-ac1b-6455f59f9312#&uri=http://data.europa.eu/esco/isco/C5413>

⁴ EPTA - European Penitentiary Training Academies Network

ESCO

- (a) searching new inmates, putting their valuables in safekeeping, escorting inmates to cells and locking them in;
- (b) making periodic inspection tours of cells and inspecting and maintaining the security of locks, windows, doors and gates;
- (c) supervising inmates at work and meals, and during recreation periods
- d) observing the conduct and behaviour of inmates to prevent disturbances and escapes;
- (e) patrolling prison areas to prevent escapes;
- (f) assisting with the implementation of rehabilitation programmes;
- (g) escorting inmates in transit and during temporary leave.

PO21 - National Reports⁵

- Protect the prisons and other facilities
- Observe inmates at the workplace, facilities and habitational zones, as discreetly as possible, to detect situations that may be against order and security of the services or the moral and physical integrity of those in the facilities;
- To prevent and fight criminality inside prisons, in coordination with security forces
- To prevent all other acts against law and rules;
- Pay attention and keep vigilant and secure during visits to inmates, inspecting visitors, verifying and checking products and articles that belong to or that will be given to inmates,
- Accompany inmates that may be transferred or, for other reasons, need to move outside the prison facility;
- Guarantee the security conditions that allow rights, freedom and respect for citizens guarantees;
- Maintain a relationship with inmates marked by justice, compliance with the rules, trying, at the same time, to be a positive influence through example;
- Collaborate with other services and workers in common interest activities, sharing information that is adequate to the execution of the sentence, pre-trial detention and security measures without impairing their normal functions;

⁵ Based on Project partners' descriptions - Final - O3.2 - National Reports - Portuguese National Report

PO21 - National Reports

- Immediately transmit to the hierarchies petitions and complaints from the inmates;
 - Share with the hierarchies, as soon as possible, any disciplinary infractions,
 - Capture and lead back to the prison facility any inmate that escaped or is found outside the prison facility with no authorisation;
 - Develop the necessary activities for inmates and visitors intake, clarifying legal and regular dispositions at the facility;
 - Guarantee that the entry and exit of persons and goods in prison facilities is controlled.
-

Lisbon workshop inputs – PO21 Profile

- Guarantee the security conditions that allow rights, freedom and respect for citizens guarantees;
 - Maintain a professional relationship with inmates marked by justice, compliance with the rules, and trying, at the same time, to be a positive influence through example
 - Observe inmates at the workplace, facilities and habitational zones to detect situations that may be against order and security of the services or the moral and physical integrity of those in the facilities;
 - Share with the hierarchies, as soon as possible, any disciplinary infractions
 - To prevent and fight criminality inside prisons, in coordination with security forces
 - Guarantee that the entry and exit of persons and goods in prison facilities are controlled.
 - Pay attention and keep vigilant and secure during visits to inmates, inspecting visitors, verifying and checking products and articles that belong to or that will be given to inmates,
 - Protect the prisons and people who work in the facilities, inmates and visitors
 - To prevent all other acts against law and rules;
 - Observing the conduct and behaviour of inmates to prevent disturbances and escapes;
 - Supervising inmates at work and meals and during recreation periods;
-

Lisbon workshop inputs – PO21 Profile

- Making periodic inspection tours of cells and inspecting and maintaining the security of locks, windows, doors and gates
 - Searching new inmates, putting their valuables in safekeeping, escorting inmates to cells and locking them in
 - Patrolling prison areas to prevent escapes
 - Assisting with the implementation of rehabilitation programmes
 - Collaborate with other services and workers in common interest activities, sharing information that is adequate for the execution of the sentence, pre-trial detention and security measures without impairing their normal functions
-

Ghent workshop inputs – PO21 Profile

- Guarantee the security and life conditions that allow rights, freedom, autonomy, respect and dignity for citizens guarantees;
 - Being aware of inmates' rights and personal responsibility
 - Maintain a professional relationship with inmates marked by integrity, justice, compliance with the rules, trying, at the same time, to be a positive influence through example
 - Inform inmates and visitors about rules and regulations within the prison and assisting new inmates to adapt to life conditions in prison
 - Observe inmates at the workplace, facilities, visits and habitational zones to detect situations that may be against order and security of the services or the moral and physical integrity of those in the facilities and share with the hierarchies, as soon as possible, any disciplinary infractions
 - Writing relevant reports for managers
 - Reporting any risks of bullying and suicide
 - Guarantee that the entry and exit of persons and goods in prison facilities are controlled.
 - Protect the prisons and people who work in the facilities, inmates and visitors to prevent all other acts against law and rules; in coordination with security forces
 - Observing and supervising the conduct and behaviour of inmates at work, meals and recreation to prevent disturbances and escapes;
 - Patrolling prison areas and making periodic inspection tours of cells and searching new inmates to prevent violence, infractions and escapes.
-

Ghent workshop inputs – PO21 Profile

- Assisting with the implementation of rehabilitation programmes and take an active role in it, including workshops, and motivate inmates to participate
 - Collaborate with other services and workers in common interest activities, sharing information that is adequate for the execution of the sentence, pre-trial detention and security measures without impairing their normal functions
 - Intervene together with colleagues in all situations of risk and crisis
-

PO21 – Professional Profile

Given its European scope, this Professional Profile integrates the common perspectives from European prison officers, disregarding the specificities of each national system to define a European Prison Officer for the 21st century.

PO21 Professional Profile

- Guarantee the security and life conditions within the prison that allow rights, freedom, autonomy, respect and dignity for prison staff, inmates and visitors.
 - Perform the job ethically, considering inmates' rights and personal responsibility.
 - Maintain a professional relationship with inmates marked by integrity, justice, and compliance with the rules, and at the same time, be a positive influence through example.
 - Inform inmates and visitors about rules and regulations within the prison.
 - Assist new inmates in adapting to living conditions in prison.
 - Observe inmates at the workplace, facilities, visits and habitational zones to detect situations that may be against the order and security of the services or the moral and physical integrity of those in the facilities.
 - Inform the hierarchies, as soon as possible, about any disciplinary infractions:
 - Write relevant reports for managers;
 - Report any risks of bullying and suicide.
 - Guarantee the control of the entry and exit of persons and goods in prison facilities.
-

PO21 Professional Profile

- Prevent, detect and report any acts against the law and regulations.
 - Guarantee the security and observance of the law within the prison with prison staff, inmates and visitors.
 - Collaborate with other law enforcement agencies, when necessary, to maintain security and prevent any actions against the law.
 - Observe and supervise inmates' conduct and behaviour at work, during meals and during recreation to prevent disturbances and escapes.
 - Patrol prison areas, observing security.
 - Make periodic inspection tours of cells
 - Perform searches of inmates, when necessary, to prevent violence, infractions and escapes.
 - Assist in implementing rehabilitation programmes, assuming an active role, and motivating inmates to participate.
 - Collaborate with other services and workers in common interest activities, and share adequate and relevant information for the execution of the sentence, pre-trial detention and security measures without impairing normal functions
 - Act as a part of a team in risk situations and crises.
-

Entry Requirements

03

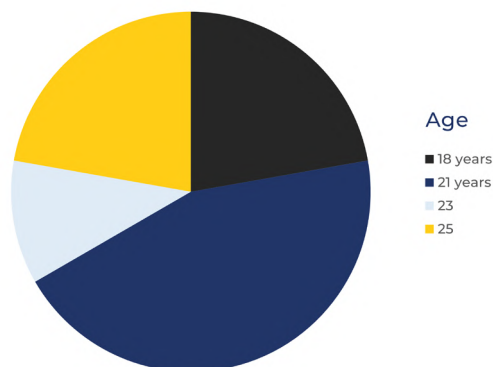
Entry Requirements

One of the PO21 Project's main objectives is to develop a European VET curriculum for the initial training of the PO. Defining a European PO professional profile was crucial to accomplish this task. After this step, considering the differences between professional profiles across the countries and the respective entry requirements, it was necessary to agree on these requirements for the newly developed Profile.

The entry requirements were proposed as an activity for the participants of the Ghent workshop. The IPS team built a form from which the participants could choose their options from the information gathered in the national and EU reports. The results were the following.

1. Age

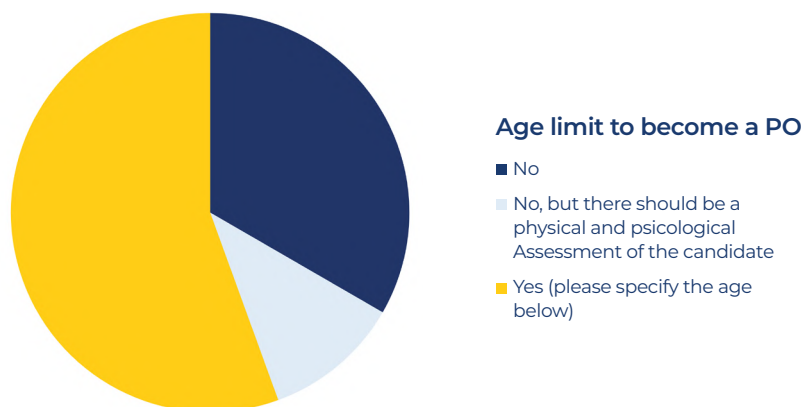
The European reports show different ranges regarding age, namely between 16 and 21. The most voted answer was 21 years due to issues of maturity. However, considering the time required for a candidate to complete the initial training course (a year or more), the set age was 20. The graph below depicts these choices.



Graphic 1 – What should be the minimum age for an individual to apply for PO?

2. Age limit to become a PO

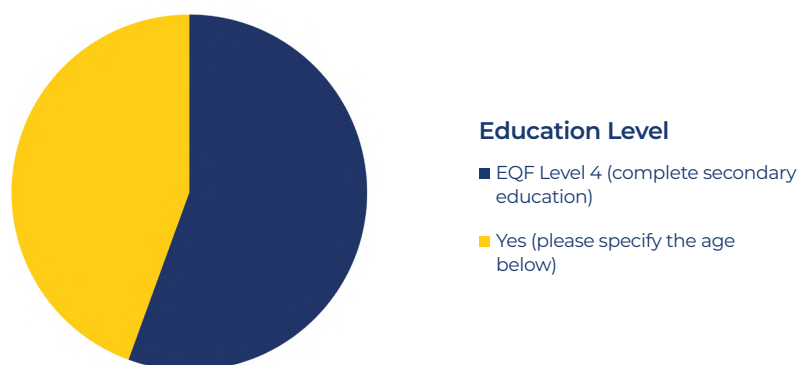
All over Europe, a few countries set the age limit at 30, 45, 58, 65 or do not surpass the retirement age, and most countries do not establish an age limit. As shown in the graph below, most participants considered that an age limit should be set, and the conclusion was 45 years.



Graphic 2 – Do you think an age limit to become a PO should exist?

3. Education Level

Most European countries (from a 25 countries sample) set EQF level 4 or 5 as an entry requirement. Accordingly, the participants were divided between levels 4 and 5, although level 4 gathered more answers, as depicted below.



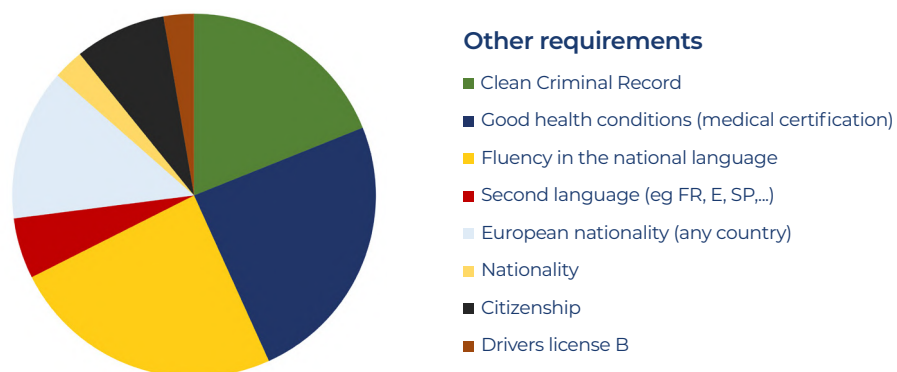
Graphic 3 – What should be the minimum educational level of a candidate for PO?

4. Other requirements

In Europe, most countries demand that PO candidates display a clean criminal record, present good health conditions, and undergo physical and psychological tests. Germany, Ireland, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland specify inherent personal skills needed for the job, such as stress resistance, mental balance, resilience, teamwork, self-control and social competencies. Most countries demand fluency in the national language, and some require other tests (e.g. general knowledge).

All participants chose good health conditions and fluency in the national language. Although the answers vary regarding citizenship, when considering the goals of the PO21 Project, the European nationality (any country) was considered the entry requirement. The graph below shows the results.

The entry requirements were established on European nationality, fluency in the national language and good health conditions.



Graphic 4 - What requirements do you think the candidate should have? (you can choose as many as you see fit)

5. Personal/social skills

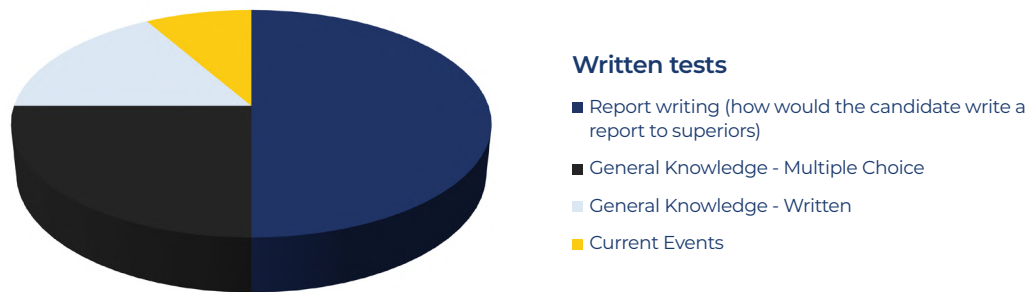
As aforementioned, some countries specify personal skills for the candidates. The participants were asked to choose as many skills as they saw fit. Since it is difficult to assess such skills in a candidate, the skills that gathered 100% choices were considered – Mental balance; likes teamwork and availability to shiftwork. The graph below shows the results.



Graphic 5 - What are the personal/social skills a candidate must have to become a PO? (you can choose as many as you see fit)

6. Written tests

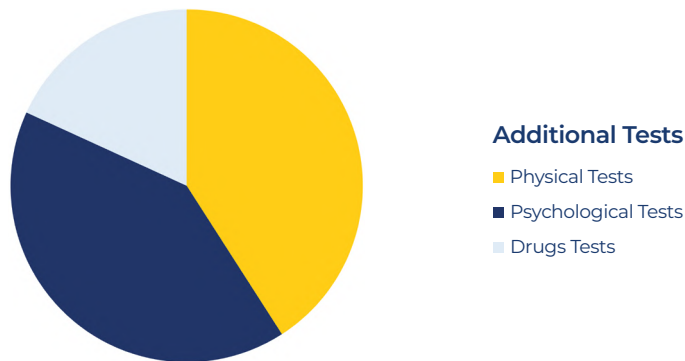
In some countries, the PO candidates undergo written tests. Their complexity varies by country (general knowledge to multiple-choice tests, a wide range of subjects (history, geography, current events) and written reports to assess how the candidate would report to superiors). Almost all participants considered candidates should undergo these tests, mainly written reports, set as an entry requirement. The graph below illustrates the answers.



Graphic 6 - Do you think the candidate should undergo written tests? If so, which tests? (you can choose as many as you see fit)

7. Additional tests

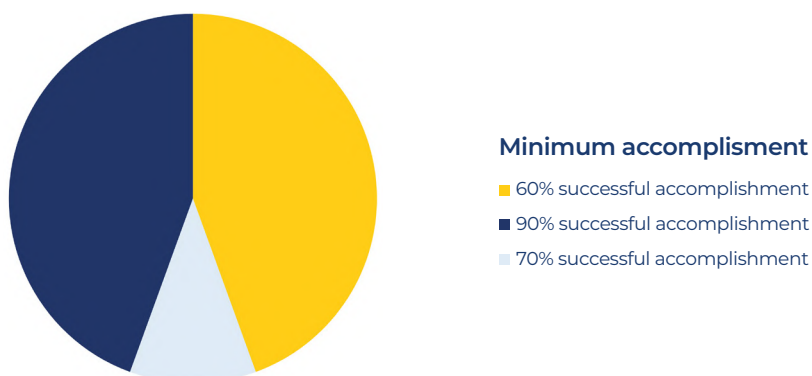
Considering the variety across Europe, participants were asked to choose if other additional tests were required, namely physical and psychological tests and drug tests. The physical and psychological tests were set as entry requirements.



Graphic 7 - Do you think the candidates should undergo additional tests?

8. Minimum grades for candidates to enter

The results of the tests matter to enter on the job. The participants were asked to establish a minimum percentage of test accomplishment so the candidates would be approved. The choices were mostly between 70% and 60%, as depicted below. The requirement was set on 70% successful accomplishment.



Graphic 8 - what is the minimum grade candidates must have on all these tests to be able to enter?

9. Interviews

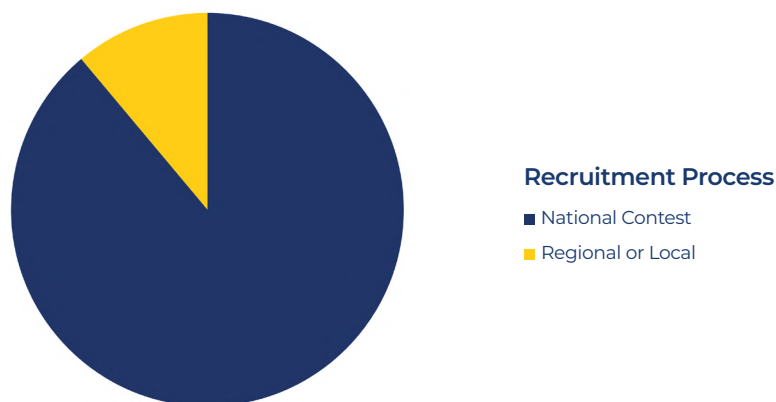
All participants agreed that the candidates should be subject to an interview. As for the elements that the interview should focus on, the answers were varied, although the most chosen were motivation, integrity and communication skills.



Graphic 9 - Aspects considered important to focus on a job interview

10. Recruitment

Regarding the question of how the candidates should be hired, the participants mostly agreed on the national contest. One participant chose the regional/local level. Hence, the choice was the National contest.



Graphic 10 - How should the candidates be hired?

Conclusion – establishing entry requirements for the European PO

From the Profile established and the answers to the form, the PO21 Project establishes the following entry requirements:

1. Age – minimum 20 years
2. Age limit – 45 years
3. Education level – EQF level 4 – complete secondary education
4. Other requirements – European nationality (any country), fluency in the national language and good health conditions.
5. Personal/social skills – Mental balance; likes teamwork and availability to shiftwork.
6. Written tests – Report writing – how a candidate reports to superiors.
7. Additional tests – Physical and psychological tests
8. Minimum accomplishment in the tests – 70% successful accomplishment.
9. Interview – should focus on the candidates' motivation, integrity and communication skills without disregarding any other aspects the interviewer considers relevant.
10. Recruitment process – the candidate should be hired by a national contest.



Proposal for PO Entry Requirements and Professional Profile

WP3 - Output 5

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