

Circular 15/2010: Confined competition for a three year appointment to the post of Marine Coordination Attaché based in the Permanent Representation, Brussels

File Reference: E109/87/10

20 October 2010

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to seek applications from officers currently serving in the grade of Assistant Principal Officer or equivalent APO grades (as set out at 4 below) for the post of Marine Attaché based in the Permanent Representation, Brussels. The appointment to the post of Marine Attaché will be for a period of 3 years with an option for a one year extension subject to commitments arising under Ireland's Presidency of the EU in 2013. At the end of the assignment as Marine Attaché the officer will return to his/her parent Department or may be redeployed in accordance with redeployment arrangements then in place for the Civil Service.

The successful candidate for the first filling of the post will be seconded to the Department of Foreign Affairs for the period of the assignment and will be based in the Permanent Representation. The Marine Attaché will report to Permanent and Deputy Permanent Representatives as required. It is intended that subsequent appointees to the post of Marine Attaché, while based in the Permanent Representation, will be assigned to one of the Departments that are members of the Inter-Departmental Marine Coordination Group (See Appendix A below).

The successful candidate will be expected to take up duty in Brussels as soon as possible after selection but at the latest within three months.

Job Description

2.1 The post for which applications are sought is at First Secretary level and is based at the Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union in Brussels. The purpose of the post of Marine Attaché is to ensure that there is a full-time resource in Brussels to represent Ireland in relation to EU developments in respect of the marine and integrated maritime policy. The Marine Attaché will participate in, monitor and report on such developments and liaise with the European Commission and with other Member State representatives while keeping in close contact with relevant Government Departments and Agencies in Ireland, and so will help shape Ireland's approach to EU developments in this area and indeed the developments themselves and also our approach to the Irish Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2013.

The main duties of the post of Marine Attaché will include:

- representing Ireland in the Friends of the Presidency Group and other relevant Working Groups dealing with Integrated Maritime Policy/marine issues
- attendance from time to time at various expert meetings convened by the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and other relevant international bodies
- regular reporting and information exchange with officials of the relevant Departments and agencies in Ireland
- cross-Departmental liaison within the Permanent Representation with attachés from other Departments as required.
- liaison with the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and other relevant international bodies on relevant issues
- advising and assisting in the assessment of Commission and other Member States' proposals in the marine area and the development of negotiating positions in relation to them
- preparation as required of clear and precise briefs, overview papers and associated material for relevant Ministers and Departments and for the Permanent and Deputy Permanent Representatives at the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER 1 and 2) and for meetings of the Council of Ministers or European Council, and oral briefings for Ministers/senior officials
- the maintenance of on-going relations, including receipt and follow-up on correspondence, with the principal institutions of the Community, mainly the Council Secretariat and the European Commission and its relevant Directorates
- relations with the European Parliament and other EU institutions including in particular the preparation of briefing material for Irish members of those institutions and liaison with key members of relevant European Parliament committees and their officials;
- keeping abreast of EU developments generally and of developments internationally and in other international institutions relevant to marine-related work;
- as required, contact and meetings with Irish groups represented in and/or visiting Brussels
- as required, meetings, correspondence, and requests for information from non-Irish interests – e.g. press, lobbyists and international political/economic consultants.

2.2 The Marine Attaché may be required to travel outside Belgium on occasion. The Marine Attaché will be required to attend meetings of the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg and informal sessions of the Council in other member States. In addition the Marine Attaché will be required to attend working groups or other meetings outside Belgium. The Marine Attaché will also be required to return to Ireland from time to time for meetings and consultations.

Person Specification - Marine Attaché

3. Candidates for the post of Marine Attaché should have the following competencies:

- A record of achievement in his/her career to date
- Sound judgement, analytical and decision-making skills
- Excellent communications skills with an ability to influence in a confident manner
- Experience of building networks and relating to the political process
- A reasonable knowledge of marine policy issues or the ability to acquire such knowledge quickly
- Excellent organisational skills with an ability to cope in a pressurised working environment
- A reasonable working knowledge of the EU institutions.
- The ability to communicate well in written and spoken French is desirable

Eligibility - Marine Attaché

4. Applicants expressing interest in the post of Marine Attaché must, on **10 November 2010** be serving in the grade of Assistant Principal Officer in the Civil Service or in one of the Departmental grades listed below:

- Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General - Deputy Director of Audit
- Courts Service - Any grade at Assistant Principal Officer level in the Courts Service
- Department of Foreign Affairs - First Secretary
- Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas - Assistant Principal Officer Committee Clerk
- Office of the Ombudsman / Information Commissioner - Investigator

Expressions of interest may be considered from suitably qualified officers serving at an equivalent level in a professional or technical grade that is considered relevant to the post of Marine Attaché.

Applicants must be certified by Personnel Officers as being suitable for consideration with regard to:

- i) eligibility - Personnel Officers should verify that a candidate is serving in one of the eligible grades set out above

- ii) performance of work in the present grade-
 - Personnel Officers should verify that the candidate has received an annual review rating of at least 3 under the integrated PMDS model (agreed in General Council Report 1452)
- iii) general conduct
- iv) suitability for promotion, and
- v) health, especially sick leave.

5. Allowances *

Foreign Service Allowance: Married (and accompanied) Officer rate	€1,481
Married (and not accompanied) Officer rate	€25,692
Single Officer rate	€2,798

Children's Allowance: €3,487 in respect of each child under 21 years of age who remains in full time education

Rent Allowance:

The Department of Foreign Affairs has sanction to pay 100% of officers' rent costs, subject to an agreed ceiling in each case. In setting the rent ceiling, the Human Resources Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs takes account of the officer's grade and family circumstances and of current trends in the local property market.

* Foreign Service allowances are reviewed regularly. It is important to note that the **allowances may increase or decrease** following these reviews as they take account of a number of factors including changes to salary rates and cost of living differences between Dublin and Brussels.

Conditions of Appointment

6.1 Appointment to the post of Marine Attaché will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. The Marine Attaché will be appointed for a period of three years (with an option for a one year extension subject to commitments arising under Ireland's Presidency of EU in 2013) and will be based at Ireland's Permanent Representation in Brussels. The successful candidate will be required to be resident in Brussels.

On appointment, the officer will serve a one-year probationary period in the post of Marine Attaché. Prior to the end of this probationary period and in consultation with the Permanent and Deputy Permanent Representatives as appropriate, a decision will be made to confirm the appointment for the three year period.

6.2 It is envisaged that the appointment will be subject to normal PMDS procedures in relation to ongoing performance monitoring and to probationary reviews. During the probationary period, the appointee will be assessed to determine whether s/he has:

- vi) demonstrated the capacity to undertake the duties of Marine Attaché, and
- vii) performed the duties in a satisfactory manner, and

viii) been satisfactory in general conduct.

6.3 An officer whose service is not satisfactory will be notified of the action to be taken. Where a decision is made not to confirm the appointee in the post of Marine Attaché, the Personnel Officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs may be asked by the appointee to request that the Civil Service Disciplinary Code Appeal Board review the decision. [Ref. Circular 14/2006 Civil Service Disciplinary Code paragraphs 11 and 50 (ii).]

Selection Process

7.1 The methods used to select the successful candidate for the post may include:

- i) Short-listing of candidates on the basis of the information contained in the application form.
- ii) A Preliminary Interview to reduce the numbers of candidates to a more manageable number to invite to main interview.
- iii) Other assessment tests/exercises designed to measure the competencies required as deemed necessary by the Public Appointments Service.
- iv) A competitive interview which may include a presentation by the candidate.

7.2 Where it is decided that short-listing is necessary, the Public Appointments Service will be guided by an expert board (which may include a representative of the Marine Coordination Group) which will examine the applications and assess them against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. It is therefore in a candidate's interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of his/her qualifications/experience on the application form.

7.3 The onus is on applicants to make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the Public Appointments Service and to make whatever arrangements are necessary to ensure that they receive communications sent to them at the contact details specified on their application form.

Applications

8.1 Applications should be made online. To do so you must log-on to www.publicjobs.ie . If you have not already registered you must "register as a member" before applying. Please do not confuse registering with applying. Once you have registered you must then access the application form, complete and submit it.

Applicants will receive an email confirming that their application has been successfully submitted. This message should be retained. In the event of difficulties in applying online or if the confirmation email is not received, please call Jenny Henry or Fiona Lambert in the Public Appointments Service at 01- 8587722 or 01-8587564.

Candidates should note the Closing Date of Wednesday 10th November 2010.

Applications **will not** be accepted after this date and the onus is on applicants to ensure that they have correctly submitted their applications.

8.2 Admission to the competition does not imply acceptance by the Public Appointments Service that a candidate is eligible to compete in the competition.

Code of Practice

9.1 The recruitment and selection process for appointment to these positions will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice entitled *Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service (No. 01/07)* published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

9.2 The Code of Practice reflects the following core principles:

- i) Probity*
- ii) Appointments Made on Merit*
- iii) An Appointments Process in Line with Best Practice*
- iv) A Fair Appointments Process Applied with Consistency*
- v) Appointments Made in an Open, Accountable and Transparent Manner.*

9.3 Candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code of Practice including, inter alia, the provisions in relation to the responsibilities placed on candidates who participate in the recruitment and selection process.

9.4 The Code of Practice may be accessed by visiting www.cpsa.ie or by contacting directly the Commission for Public Service Appointments, 18 Lower Leeson Street Dublin 2 at ☎: +353 1 6395750

Complaints and Requests for Review

10.1 Complaints/requests for review will be considered by the Public Appointments Service in accordance with the procedures set out in the Code of Practice.

10.2 Candidates' Rights and Review Procedures in relation to the Selection Process are set out at **Appendix B**.

Circulation

11 Please bring this circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in your Department and associated Offices without delay. Special care should be taken to ensure that eligible officers on maternity leave, career break or other relevant forms of leave are notified of the competition.

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Brendan Duffy
Assistant Secretary
Personnel and Remuneration Division

Appendix A:

Marine Coordination Group

The Departments that are members of the Group are the Departments of:

- Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
- Defence
- Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Transport
- Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Enterprise, Trade and Innovation
- Finance
- Tourism, Culture and Sport

Appendix B:

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH APPEALS/REQUESTS FOR REVIEW

The Public Appointments Service will consider requests for review in accordance with the provisions of the codes of practice published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA). Where a candidate is unhappy with an action or decision in relation to their application he/she can seek a review under **Section 7** of the code of practice governing the recruitment process by a person in the recruiting body (initial reviewer). Where a candidate remains dissatisfied following this initial review, he/she may seek to have the conduct of the initial review examined by a "decision arbitrator".

As an alternative to the above, it is open to a candidate to seek to have the matter resolved on an informal basis, as set out below. If a candidate remains dissatisfied following any such discussion it is open to him/her to seek a formal review.

Informal process:

- The candidate can avail of the informal review within 5 working days of notification of the initial decision, and should normally take place between the candidate and the person who communicated the decision (or relevant person).
- Where the decision being conveyed relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the request for informal review must be received within 2 working days of the date of receipt of the decision.
- Where a candidate remains dissatisfied following any such informal discussion, he/she may adopt the formal procedures set out below.
- If the candidate wishes the matter to be dealt with by way of a formal review, he/she must do so within 2 working days of the notification of the outcome of the informal review.

Formal process: Initial review:

- The candidate must address his/her concerns in relation to the process in writing to the Chief Executive, setting out those aspects of the action or decision in relation to his/her candidature that he/she wishes to have reviewed.
- A request for review must be made within 10 working days of the notification of the initial decision. Where the decision relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the request for review must be received within 4 working days.
- Any extension of these time limits will only be granted in the most exceptional of circumstances and will be at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive.

- The outcome must generally be notified to the candidate within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint or request for review. The candidate will receive the outcome of the review by means of a written report.
- Should a candidate be dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial review, he/she may request a review by a decision arbitrator of the conduct of the initial review.

Review by the decision arbitrator

The decision arbitrator is appointed by the Chief Executive. The decision arbitrator is unconnected with the selection process and he/she will adjudicate on requests for review in cases where a candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial review. The decision of the decision arbitrator in relation to such matters is final.

- A request made to the decision arbitrator must be received within 7 working days of the notification of the outcome of the initial review.
- The outcome of the investigation must be notified to the candidate in the form of a written report within 10 working days.

Where a candidate believes that an aspect of the process breached the CPSA Code of Practice, he/she can have it investigated under **Section 8** of the code of practice.

Informal process:

- The CPSA recommends that the candidate avail of the informal process to try to resolve the matter with the recruiting body. If the candidate is still dissatisfied he/she may resort to the formal process within 2 working days of receiving notification of the informal process.

Formal process:

- A candidate requesting a formal review must write to the licence holder (Chief Executive, Public Appointments Service), providing details of the breach of the code of practice and enclosing any relevant documentation that might support the allegation.
- The outcome must generally be notified to the candidate within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint or request for review. If a decision cannot be made within this timeframe, the reviewer will keep the candidate informed of the status of the review.
- Should a candidate be dissatisfied with the outcome of this review, he/she may request a further review by referring the matter to the Commission for Public Service Appointments in the form of an appeal of the review of the licence Holder. He/She must write to the Commission for Public Service Appointments within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of the licence Holder's review.

The codes of practice are available on the website of the Commission for Public Service Appointments, www.cpsa-online.ie.

Candidates' Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process.

Candidates must not:

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- canvass any person with or without inducements
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way

A third party must not personate a candidate at any stage of the process.

Any person who contravenes the above provisions or who assists another person in contravening the above provisions is guilty of an offence. A person who is found guilty of an offence is liable to a fine/or imprisonment.

In addition, where a person found guilty of an offence was or is a candidate at a recruitment process, then:

- where he/she has not been appointed to a post, he/she will be disqualified as a candidate; and
- where he/she has been appointed subsequently to the recruitment process in question, he/she shall forfeit that appointment.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test when and where required by the Public Appointments Service, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the Public Appointments Service require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

Quality Customer Service

The Public Appointments Service aims to provide an excellent quality service to all our customers. If, for whatever reason, you are unhappy with any aspect of the service you receive from us, we urge you to bring this to the attention of the unit or staff member concerned. This is important as it ensures that we are aware of the problem and can take the appropriate steps to resolve it.

Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003

When an application form is received, PAS creates a computer record in the candidate's name, which contains much of the personal information you have supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature.

Such information held on computer is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003. Candidates are entitled under these acts to obtain, at any time, copy of information about them, which is kept on computer. The Public Appointments Service charges a fee of €6.35 for each request. An applicant should enclose a cheque or postal order and address the request to:

**THE DATA PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR,
PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS SERVICE,
CHAPTER HOUSE,
26-30 ABBEY STREET UPPER,
DUBLIN 1.**

Candidates should note that certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.