

24 March 2017

DPE196-001-2017

Circular 09/2017: Confined competition for appointment to the post of Maritime Affairs Attaché based in the Permanent Representation, Brussels

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to seek applications from officers currently serving in the grade of Assistant Principal Officer or equivalent grades (See paragraphs 9 and 10 below) for the post of Maritime Affairs Attaché based in the Permanent Representation, Brussels. The appointment to the post of Maritime Affairs Attaché will begin on 15 August 2017 and terminate on 31 July 2021. At the end of the assignment as Maritime Affairs Attaché the officer will return to his/her parent Department in his/her current grade or may be redeployed in accordance with redeployment arrangements then in place for the Civil Service.
2. A panel will be established and will remain in force for two years from the date of the first appointment from the panel. The successful candidate will be called from the panel in order of merit. The successful candidate for the post will be seconded to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the period of the assignment and will be based in the Permanent Representation. The Maritime Affairs Attaché will report to Deputy Permanent Representatives as required.
3. The successful candidate will be expected to take up duty in Brussels with effect from 15 August 2017.

Job Description

4. 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 Maritime Affairs 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 Maritime Affairs Attaché will

participate in, monitor and report on such developments and liaise with the European Commission, Member States, the European Parliament and relevant agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations while keeping in close contact with relevant Government Departments and Agencies in Ireland, and so will help shape Ireland's contribution to EU developments in this area.

5. The Maritime Affairs Attaché will brief the Marine Coordination Group (see Appendix I) in Dublin as appropriate.

6. The main duties of the post of Maritime Affairs Attaché will include:
 - i. representing Ireland in the Friends of the Presidency Group and other relevant Working Groups dealing with Integrated Maritime Policy/marine issues
 - ii. attendance at various expert meetings convened by the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and other relevant international bodies
 - iii. regular reporting and information exchange with officials of the relevant Departments and agencies in Ireland
 - iv. Cross-Departmental liaison within the Permanent Representation with attachés from other Departments as required.
 - v. liaison with the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and other relevant international bodies on relevant issues
 - vi. 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
 - vii. preparation as required of clear and precise briefs, overview papers and associated material, including speech 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
 - viii. the maintenance of on-going relations, including receipt of and follow-up on correspondence, with the principal institutions of the Community; mainly the Council Secretariat and the European Commission and its relevant Directorates

- ix. 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;
 - x. keeping abreast of EU developments generally and of developments internationally and in other international institutions relevant to marine-related work;
 - xi. as required, contact and meetings with Irish groups represented in and/or visiting Brussels
 - xii. as required, meetings, correspondence, and requests for information from non-Irish interests - e.g. press, lobbyists and international political/economic consultants.
 - xiii. Attendance at and, where appropriate, speaking at conferences on maritime affairs.
7. The Maritime Affairs Attaché may be required to travel outside Belgium on occasion, such as attendance at meetings of the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg, informal sessions of the Council in other member States and attendance at working groups or other meetings and conferences. The Maritime Affairs Attaché will also be required to return to Ireland from time to time for meetings and consultations and to participate by video conference at the meetings of the Marine Coordination Group.

Person Specification - Maritime Affairs Attaché

8. Candidates for the post of Maritime Affairs 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.

Eligibility - Maritime Affairs Attaché

9. Applicants expressing interest in the post of Maritime Affairs Attaché must, on Thursday April 13 2017 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 - Senior Auditor
 - Courts Service - Any grade at Assistant Principal Officer level in the Courts Service
 - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - First Secretary
 - Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas - Assistant Principal Officer Committee Clerk
 - Office of the Ombudsman / Information Commissioner - Investigator
10. 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 Maritime Affairs Attaché.

11. **Eligibility**

- i. Eligibility is restricted to officers serving in the Civil Service in the grade of Assistant Principal Officer or equivalent (see above) on Thursday April 13 2017 including staff on temporary secondment elsewhere, special leave or career breaks.
- ii. Candidates must, on the date of this announcement, have completed a minimum of two years' aggregate service in the civil service.
- iii. Candidates' 2016 PMDS Annual Review must have a rating of "satisfactory".
- iv. A successful candidate must be a citizen of Ireland.
- v. It should be noted that (i) eligibility for the competition and (ii) attendance and sick leave records will be checked immediately before any offer of appointment is made. Admission to the competition does not imply that any officer meets the eligibility or the health and sick leave criteria. In considering an officer's suitability

from the point of view of health and sick leave, the Department will have regard to relevant D/PER circulars.

12. Allowances

Foreign Service Allowance:

Married Officer (Accompanied)	€31,271
Married Officer (Unaccompanied)	€26,143
Single Officer	€23,578

Children's Allowance: €3,770

Payable per child under the age of 18 and continues to be payable until a child turns 21 if s/he is still in full time third level education.

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.

Rent Allowance:

A Rent Reimbursement Ceiling is payable in accordance with ceilings set by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In setting the rent ceiling, Human Resources Section in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade takes account of the officer's grade, family circumstances and current trends in the local property market. The set ceiling will be confirmed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Schooling:

An officer assigned to PR Brussels who is accompanied at post by children of school-going age will be required to enrol his/her children at one of the non-fee paying European Schools, subject to the capacity of these schools to accept new pupils.

Conditions of Appointment

13. Appointment to the post of Maritime Affairs Attaché will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. The appointment to the post of Maritime Affairs Attaché will begin on 15 August 2017 and terminate on 31 July 2021. The Maritime Affairs Attaché will be based at Ireland's Permanent Representation in Brussels and the successful candidate will be required to be resident in Brussels. The appointment will be subject to normal PMDS procedures in relation to on-going

performance monitoring and to probationary reviews. Unless alternative arrangements are made, the Deputy Head of Mission at the Permanent Representation will be the supervisor for this purpose.

14. On appointment, the officer will serve a one-year probationary period in the post of Maritime Affairs 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 confirming that the appointment will run until 31 July 2021.
15. During the probationary period, the appointee will be assessed to determine whether s/he has:
 - i. demonstrated the capacity to undertake the duties of Maritime Affairs Attaché, and
 - ii. performed the duties in a satisfactory manner, and
 - iii. been satisfactory in general conduct.
16. An officer whose performance during the probationary period is deemed 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 Maritime Affairs Attaché, the Personnel Officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade may be asked by the appointee to request that the Civil Service Disciplinary Code Appeal Board review the decision.
[\[Ref Guidelines on Probation.\]](#)

Selection Process

17. The Marine Coordination Group Bureau in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is administering this selection process. 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.

- iv. A competitive interview which may include a presentation by the candidate and may be carried out by video conference.
18. Where it is decided that short-listing is necessary, applications will be assessed against predetermined 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.
19. The onus is on applicants to make themselves available on the date(s) specified for interview at their own cost 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

20. The Closing Date for Applications is 13 April 2017 at 12.00hrs.

- Applications **will not** be accepted after this date and time and the onus is on applicants to ensure that they have correctly submitted their applications. All sections of the form must be fully completed.
- Applications should be made **online**, using the attached application form to MarineCoordinationGroupBureau@agriculture.gov.ie.
- If candidates do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their application within two working days of applying, please contact the **Marine Coordination Group Bureau** at **(01) 607 2797**. Candidates should note that support will be available during office hours until the closing date.
- Admission to the competition does not imply acceptance that a candidate is eligible to compete in the competition.
 - Feedback will be provided on written request.

Circulation

- 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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David Cagney

Civil Service Chief Human Resources Officer



Appendix I:

Marine Coordination Group

The Marine Coordination Group is chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the following Departments are members of the Group:

- Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs
- Communications, Climate Action & Environment
- Defence
- Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
- Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Public Expenditure and Reform
- Taoiseach
- Transport, Tourism and Sport

The Attorney General's Office and the Marine Institute also participate in the Group.

The Marine Coordination Group Bureau provides support to the Group and can be contacted as follows:

Corporate Affairs Division
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.
DO2 WK12

(01) 607 2797

MarineCoordinationGroupBureau@agriculture.gov.ie.

<http://www.ouroceanwealth.ie/>