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Erfurt School of Public Policy

Careers in a non-career organization

A study on recruitment strategies and qualification
requirements at the OSCE



Professional Education for International Organizations

A research project of the Erfurt School of Public Policy funded by the
German Federal Ministry for Education and Research

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Erfurt, March 2005

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Executive Summary (English and German)

The following report gives an overview of the results that were obtained in the PROFIO study on recruitment strategies and qualification requirements at the OSCE. By conducting an online survey among contracted employees in the professional category at the OSCE, it was possible to identify law, political science, and business administration as the groups of subjects that were studied most often. These subjects – and especially a combination of them – were mentioned as being a very good preparation for careers in an international organization such as the OSCE. Furthermore, we found that the employees rated their university education quite well in preparing them with skills necessary for their current work, especially analytical skills. Solely leadership and management skills were mentioned as lacking from university education, and this is also the reason why many took part in training measures on these skills. We found a need for universities as well as employers to expand their offers of these courses. The survey as well as the conversations with human resources personnel also showed that the concept of the OSCE being a non-career organization is not always compatible with the expectations of employees and thus also presents challenges in its realization.

Dieser Bericht gibt einen Überblick über die Ergebnisse der PROFIO-Studie über Rekrutierungsstrategien und Qualifikationsanforderungen bei der OSZE. In einer Onlinebefragung unter kontraktierten Mitarbeitern des höheren Dienstes stellten sich die Fächer Recht, Politikwissenschaft und Business Administration als die am häufigsten studierten Fächer heraus. Diese Fächer – und vor allem eine Kombination aus ihnen – wurden als sehr gute Vorbereitung auf Karrieren in internationalen Organisationen wie der OSZE genannt. Außerdem fanden wir heraus, dass die Mitarbeiter ihre Universitätsausbildung recht gut in der Vorbereitung auf ihre aktuelle Tätigkeit bewertet haben, insbesondere im Bereich der analytischen Fähigkeiten. Allerdings wurde ein Mangel in der Ausbildung im Bereich der Management- und Führungsfähigkeiten offenbar und dies führte auch zu einer hohen Teilnahme an Weiterbildungskursen in diesen Bereichen. Hier stellte sich heraus, dass sowohl Universitäten als auch Arbeitgeber ihr Angebot an solchen Kursen erweitern sollten. Außerdem zeigten Gespräche mit Personalverantwortlichen, dass das Konzept der OSZE als ‚Nicht-Karriere-Organisation‘ nicht immer mit den Erwartungen der Mitarbeiter übereinstimmt und somit eine Herausforderung in der Umsetzung darstellt.

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1. Introduction

Since July 2004, the Erfurt School of Public Policy has been carrying out a research project called “Professional Education for International Organizations,” or PROFIO for short. This project aims to find out which skills and competences are necessary for careers at international organizations and how these can be acquired in one’s university education.

Taking into consideration the continual increase in international integration and Germany’s great responsibility in foreign political affairs, the question arises as to what extent Germany is prepared to become involved in international cooperation. A prerequisite for effective involvement is not only the budgetary contribution, but also the ability to send qualified personnel to international organizations that is prepared for the most challenging tasks and leadership positions. However, relative to its high budgetary contributions, Germany remains under-represented in terms of the number of its professional personnel at many international organizations. The research project PROFIO will examine success determinants and educational programs for careers with international organizations. The main goals of the project are as follows:

- an analysis of the recruiting techniques of a sample of international organizations with regard to the qualification profiles and factors determining the success of applicants and staff
- an analysis of the educational and professional backgrounds of employees in the professional category at these international organizations
- an examination of German and foreign educational opportunities that are classified as being especially helpful for one’s career
- the creation of a model for the ideal educational offerings, including extracurricular activities

To attain these diverse goals, PROFIO applies different methods. One central tool is the carrying out of qualitative interviews with human resources directors and staff responsible for recruitment. Second, quantitative surveys aim to shed light on the educational and professional backgrounds of people that are working in international organizations. Finally, the success and evaluation of programs that claim to prepare young Germans for a career in an international organization will be carried out through interviews as well as a survey among people taking part in these programs.

The study of the OSCE aimed to find out by which procedures the selection process of contracted employees in the professional categories takes place and which educational background most employees have. The main focus was placed on the contracted employees as they – unlike seconded staff – apply directly to the OSCE and there is no mediating institution such as a foreign ministry involved in the recruiting process. Furthermore, a large-scale research project on seconded staff in the OSCE was carried out last year by the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) at the University of Hamburg. In various places in this report, the results of this study will be mentioned as they correspond to our results.

After a short introduction to the OSCE and its personnel structures, the following report will give a detailed description on the OSCE recruiting procedures and the results of the online survey carried out by the PROFIO research team.

2. OSCE

2.1. Background

Throughout its 30-year history, the CSCE/OSCE has experienced a great deal of change and development. First and foremost, it went from being a process, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, to being an organization with its own institutions and decision-making bodies. The number of participating States has increased from 35 in 1975 to today's 55. The budget grew from 12 million EUR before it became an organization to 185.7 million EUR in 2003. Its staff has increased in size almost exponentially over the years to now total more than 3,000. Its goals, tasks, and instruments have evolved as well to create the so-called "comprehensive approach to security."

According to the OSCE Handbook, its basic priorities are currently as follows:

- "to consolidate the participating States' common values and help in building fully democratic civil societies based on the rule of law;
- to prevent local conflicts, restore stability and bring peace to war-torn areas;
- to overcome real and perceived security deficits and to avoid the creation of new political, economic or social divisions by promoting a co-operative system of security."¹

¹ URL: <http://www.osce.org/publications/handbook/files/handbook.pdf>, p. 17

In order to achieve these goals, the OSCE has five decision-making councils and five institutions that deal with various issues of security and democracy. Besides these activities, it currently runs 18 Missions and Field Operations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. By far the largest of the long-term missions is that in Kosovo, as it employs over 2,000 staff and has a budget of more than 42 million Euros. The longest-standing missions are those in Skopje and Georgia, which were set up in 1992 and have been renewed each year since then. Previously, the OSCE had missions in Estonia and Latvia, the mandates for which expired in 2001 as they were considered to have been fulfilled.

The OSCE is truly a unique organization. It was founded during the Cold War and later rose to meet the challenges posed by the fall of Communism in its participating States. With members 'from Vancouver to Vladivostok' and partners for cooperation in the Mediterranean and East Asia, it lays claim to being the largest regional security organization. However, decisions are made on the basis of consensus among 55 nations of equal status, which means that the ability of the OSCE to deal with any given situation depends entirely on the willingness of all its members to take action (Tudyka 2002: p. 17). Therefore, in its current form, it mainly administers decisions already made elsewhere, such as the UN Security Council. With its wide variety of tasks in security-related issues – election monitoring, early warning of ethnic conflicts, border patrol, and arms control, among others – the OSCE will likely continue to play a role in conflict prevention and crisis management in Europe and Central Asia for years to come.

2.2. Personnel Structures

To describe the personnel structures and policies of the OSCE, it is first of all necessary to understand the differences between the post categories.

Table 1: Overview of post categories:

Grade	Posts	Category	Typical title	Status
SG	n/a	professional	Secretary General	contracted
D	1, 2	professional	Director	contracted
P	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	professional	Officer, Manager, Adviser	contracted
G	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	general services	Secretary, Assistant	contracted
HOM	n/a	professional	Head of Mission	seconded
DHOM	n/a	professional	Deputy Head of Mission	seconded
NP	1, 2, 3	professional	National professional	seconded
S	[no number], 1, 2, 3, 4	general services	various	seconded

Most contracted positions are in the OSCE secretariat and institutions; however, a few administrative positions in the Missions are contracted as well. The maximum length of service in one position is as follows: P1-P4, seven years; P5, five years; D1-D2, four years. The total number of years a single person can be employed by the OSCE is limited to ten years. This policy exists to ensure the “full involvement of all participating States and a continuous influx of fresh knowledge and experience.”² It also, however, gives the OSCE the label of a non-career organization. This coincides with the fact that there is no official system by which staff members are promoted, neither for length of service nor for outstanding performance. The only possibility for meritocratic rewards at the OSCE is to fulfill the “exceptional step criteria.” At most once every five years, employees with extremely high evaluations from their superiors can receive a “Reward for Outstanding Performance” in the form of a small raise in their salary. Besides this, however, there are no vertical or horizontal promotion schemes within the OSCE. Employees are free to apply for other posts that become available but are reportedly selected according to the same criteria as external candidates.

² URL: http://www.osce.org/employment/contracts_o.php3

If one counts all contracted and seconded employees at the professional and general services levels at the institutions as well as the missions, the total number of employees at the OSCE is close to 3,400: "The OSCE employs close to 370 persons in its various Institutions. In the field, the Organization has about 1,000 international and 2,000 local staff. The staffing of field operations is based on secondments, where the responsibility for the salaries of personnel remains that of the seconding national administrations."³

As of December 31, 2003, 105 German employees represented 9,7% of all internationally recruited contracted and seconded staff members in the OSCE's missions, secretariat, and institutions. Only the US and the UK had more nationals employed there at the time (118 and 125, respectively). In the same year, Germany contributed 10,43% of the total budget of the OSCE. According to the criterion of representation based on budgetary contributions, Germany is slightly underrepresented in contracted positions: with 6,58% of the contracted staff members being German while Germany contributes 10,43% of the total budget, there is a difference of -3,85%, or that much room for improvement (Auswärtiges Amt 2003). In 2004 the difference increased slightly with Germany contributing 10,62% of the budget and only employing 5,43% of the staff with at least a one-year contract (Auswärtiges Amt 2004).

Moreover, the criterion of representation based on budgetary contribution is only one possible way of calculating the over- or underrepresentation of a member state and is especially promoted by the wealthier nations. Unlike the UN, the OSCE does not have an objective means of calculation. This must be kept in mind when using this method (the percent of employees from country X of all employees minus the percent of country X's contribution to the total OSCE budget) to determine which countries are over- and underrepresented. Finally, some of the participating States do not have any of their nationals employed by the OSCE at all.

³ URL: <http://www.osce.org/general/budget/index.php3>

2.3. Recruitment Procedures

The recruitment process for contracted positions is different than the one for seconded positions⁴. For the latter, it is the responsibility of the participating States to nominate candidates. There is no formal way in which this is done. Some countries, for example, have built up a roster or pool of suitable candidates for when vacancies arise. Nevertheless, to help the participating States in the recruitment process and to increase transparency, the OSCE has developed guidelines for the selection criteria. After being selected by the participating State, the candidates' applications are again screened by a board of representatives in the Secretariat and a recommendation or ranking is generated. All applications are then sent to the missions, and the final decision is made here on the basis of the existing documents.

The applicants for contracted posts must also go through a rigorous selection procedure. It is not unusual for 200 to 300 people to apply for jobs in the "P" categories. From these, the Recruitment Section creates a 'long list' of candidates meeting the formal requirements (normally between 20 and 30 candidates). As no more than three or four candidates are normally invited to interviews, the long list must be cut down to a 'short list'. In this process, many different criteria are taken into consideration. As one representative of the OSCE said, even political considerations such as nationality can play a role. If, for example, two candidates are equally qualified but one comes from an overrepresented and the other from an underrepresented country, the latter will most likely be favored. Furthermore, overqualified candidates are less likely to make it onto the short list.

The few candidates on the short list are invited to take part in a formal test and an interview. The written knowledge-based test counts as 30% of the overall decision. The interview is held by a panel of at least three OSCE representatives. These have gone through training on the methods of personnel interviewing⁵, and they base the structure of the interview and the final decision on a pre-defined catalogue of criteria. The panel chooses one candidate, who is then suggested to the Secretary General, whose task it is to make the final decision. In the event of two or more equally qualified candidates, it is his or her task to select one.

Through this process, which was introduced approximately two years ago, the OSCE attempts to make the application and recruitment procedures as transparent as possible. A few years ago, the OSCE faced criticism of their selection procedures as being not only based on merit principles but also guided by personal contacts. One of the goals in developing this regulated recruitment strategy was to eliminate the basis for such complaints. The extent to which the

⁴ For a detailed description and analysis of the recruitment for seconded positions see: Legutke 2003.

⁵ They attend courses in „Recruitment und Selection Skills“ and in „competency-based interviewing“

OSCE has actually reached the goal of a transparent recruitment process based on merit principles cannot be evaluated in this project.

3. Online Survey: Research Design

Besides speaking to representatives within the organization, a quantitative study was conducted to find out more about the educational background of OSCE employees and to try to identify patterns that seem to enhance one's chances of being hired by the OSCE. Furthermore, to pursue the further goals of the PROFIO research project, it is necessary to gain insight on how the employees evaluate their university education with regard to how well it prepared them for their current field of work.

An online questionnaire⁶ was developed, which contained about 80 questions. The questions were divided into units such as 'Educational Background,' 'Internships,' 'Experience Abroad,' 'Professional Experience,' 'Additional Skills' (e.g. language skills and soft skills), and 'Work at the OSCE'. The questionnaire was pre-tested among researchers and within the OSCE and, after final adjustments were made, the link to the questionnaire was distributed by e-mail⁷ to all contracted employees at the OSCE. The survey was online for three weeks, and two reminders were sent (one and two weeks after the initial contact).

No sample was drawn from the population, but rather we tried to cover *all* members of the group of interest. The response rate was 43,4 % and was calculated in the following way:

Table 2: Calculation of response rate:

Population (contracted employees in the professional category)	286
E-mail undelivered	27
'Out of office' during entire duration of survey	3
Non-contactable members of population	30
Adjusted numbers	256
Completed questionnaires	111
Did not participate in survey	145
Response rate	43,4%

⁶ The software 'Rogator' was used for implementing the questionnaire and hosting the data while the survey was online.

⁷ The OSCE provided us with a list of names and instructions on how to create their e-mail addresses.

This is a relatively high number of participants and, as we were told by a representative, it is a very high rate for the OSCE, as other surveys of the employees have reached lower response rates (with the exception of the CORE study, which had a response rate of nearly 60%).

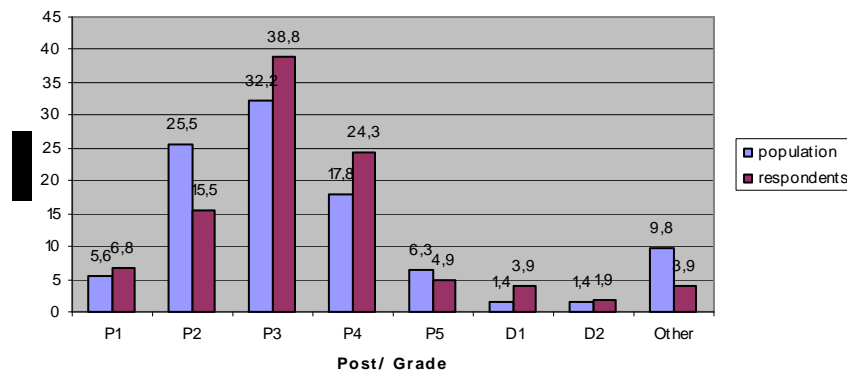
Nevertheless, with less than 50% of the questionnaires completed, there might be a systematic difference between those who participated and those who did not. To estimate the quality of the data, some parameters of the respondents and the population were compared.

Gender:

The distribution between male and female survey participants (72,7% and 27,3%) respectively equaled that of the population (71% and 29%). This means that there is no gender bias in the data.

Post/ Grade:

Figure 1: Distribution of post categories



There is an overrepresentation of P3 and P4 positions in the collected data, while P2 remains underrepresented. All other categories are close to the distributions within the organization. T-Tests and Chi²-Tests have shown that there are no systematic differences between the P2, P3, and P4 post categories, and this means there is no bias in the reported results.

4. Results

4.1. Sociodemographics

As mentioned above, 27,3% of the survey participants were female while 72,7% were male. The age distribution was as follows:

Table 3: Distribution of age

25 – 35 years	36,4%
36 – 45 years	33,3%
46 – 55 years	21,2%
56 – 65 years	9,1%
n= 99	100%

Altogether 31 different nationalities were mentioned. The ones mentioned most often – nine times each – were Austrian, Canadian, and German. American, British, and Polish were each mentioned six to eight times. Although Austrians and Germans are quite well represented in contracted positions, the small numbers do not allow further detailed statistical analysis based on nationality.

Concerning language skills, more than 15 different languages were mentioned. The languages that were mostly spoken as a native language or on a professional or working knowledge level were English (103), German (44), Russian (42), and French (40). Most of the employees speak three languages, as the following overview shows:

Table 4: Number of languages spoken

1 Language	7,8%
2 Languages	25,2%
3 Languages	39,8%
4 Languages	17,5%
5 Languages	7,8%
6 or 7 Languages	2%
n= 103	100%

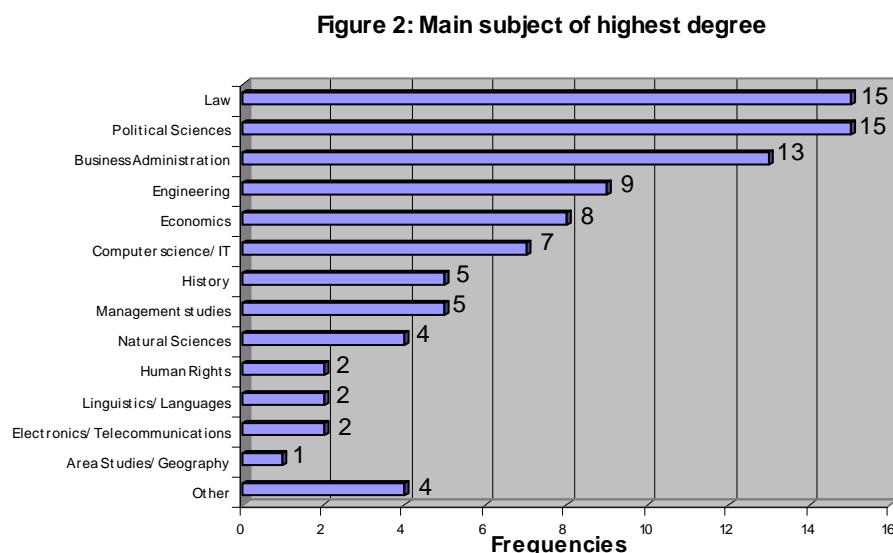
4.2. Educational Background and Skills

Most of the survey participants have an academic background. Only 5,5% have not earned a university degree. The majority or 61,5% have a Master (or comparable) degree, while 16,5% have a Bachelor and 13,8% a PhD as their highest degree. Only 16,2% have completed a consecutive university education (meaning a Bachelor followed by a Master), and 6,3% have earned two Master (or comparable) degrees. As the focus was placed on employees in the professional category, this result is not surprising. However, when considering the types of degrees earned, one must take into account the diversity of degrees that exist across the 55 participating States and the challenges this creates in comparing them. In our survey, we relied on the survey participants' knowledge of classifications of degrees in higher education. Furthermore, there are many different educational paths that one person can follow, which might not be obvious when looking at quantitative data. For example, one survey participant mentioned in the space available for general comments:

"I have two MSc degrees, and plan to take another one in parallel with my work. I find it very useful to undergo a formal education program every 10 years or so with a good university."

The data presented here reduces the complexity of different paths, and this should be taken into account when drawing conclusions from it.

With regard to the distribution of subjects, the following results were found⁸:



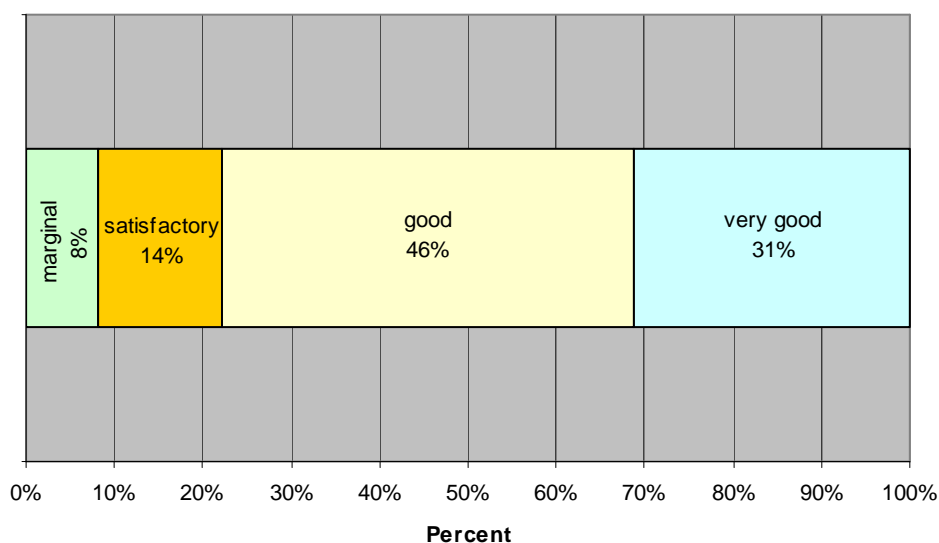
The subjects studied most frequently in the highest degree were law, political science, and business administration. The relatively high number of people who studied business admini-

⁸ The subject groups are based on recoding of the open question on subjects studied.

stration can most likely be explained by the specific demands of some posts in administration and support. Seven of the thirteen participants who studied business administration studied something different prior to earning their business degree. Often, this subject was not at all business-related, as in the case of a first degree in natural sciences and engineering. The combination of political sciences and business administration was mentioned by a representative of the OSCE as being a very good means of preparing oneself for a contracted position in the OSCE, in that it equips the graduate with the important background knowledge and the necessary skills for working at the OSCE.

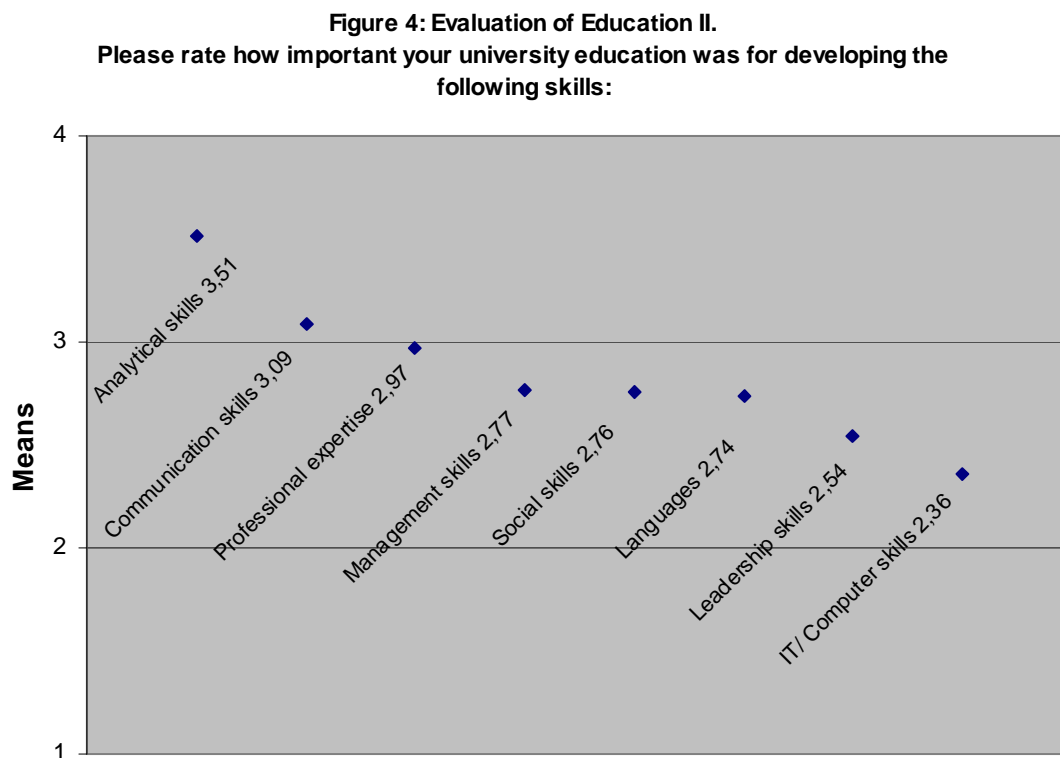
One very important issue in the context of the PROFIO project is the employees' evaluation of their university education in preparing them for their current field of work. Overall, the survey participants were quite content with what they learned at university, as 77% rate it as being 'very good' or 'good':

Figure 3: Evaluation of Education I.
When you look back at your university education, how would you rate how well it prepared you for your current field of work?



5-point scale (1 'insufficient' - 5 'very good'; 'insufficient' not mentioned), Mean: 4,01 n= 100

To create a more detailed picture, the survey also contained a matrix question in which the survey participants were asked to rate how important their university education was for developing certain skills.⁹ The means were as follows:



4-point scale (4 'very important' to 1 'not important'), n= 96 -98

While analytical skills and communication skills are rated quite highly as being taught well in university, management, social, and leadership skills are rated lower but are still in the upper area between less important and important. With a mean of nearly 3, the professional expertise needed for working with the OSCE was said to have been provided by one's university education, yet this still leaves room for improvement. One must keep in mind that many survey participants already had several years of professional experience and the answer to the retrospective question about one's university education can only be answered in terms of these experiences (Butz et al. 1997: p.10). This is, however, precisely what the PROFIO survey hoped to obtain: a subjective evaluation in light of professional experience rather than an 'objective' picture of what universities do¹⁰.

⁹ The skills were defined as follows: Communication skills (presentation skills, rhetoric, writing skills); Leadership skills (Assertiveness, Task delegation, ability to motivate others); Analytical skills (ability to identify and solve a problem, critical thinking); Management skills (administrative abilities; organization skills, time management); Social skills (intercultural competence, ability to deal with conflicts, interpersonal skills); Professional expertise (Background knowledge for your current occupation).

¹⁰ This will be evaluated more closely in the second part of the PROFIO study, when currently offered study programs that prepare people for careers in international organizations will be examined.

When comparing the three largest categories of subjects studied for the participants' highest degree, some differences were found between the evaluations on how well the university prepared them for 'social skills' and 'managerial skills': Compared to law graduates, the political science graduates evaluated their education better in equipping them with 'social skills' (such as intercultural competence, ability to deal with conflicts, interpersonal skills).¹¹ Also, compared to law graduates and political science graduates, the graduates of business administration evaluated their education better in providing them with 'managerial skills'.¹²

When asked in an open question what was lacking from their university education that they need in their current positions, most answers referred to management skills (19,8% of all answers), followed by IT/ computer skills (15,3% of all answers), communication skills (including writing and presentation skills; 10,8%), languages (10,8%), and leadership skills (9,9%).

The CORE study found that skills in leadership and management are particularly important and that not everyone – especially those in leading positions – possesses them to a satisfying extent. These results are supported by comments made at the end of our survey:

"People in leadership positions at international organizations should be trained in leadership, administration, management, task organization, budget and motivating personnel."

and

"More emphasis should be put on managerial capabilities for people rated P."

In the PROFIO survey the participants were also asked to assess their own 'soft skills' and the mean values were equally high (four-point-scale, 1 'very low' – 4 'very high'): Leadership skills: 3,28; Management skills: 3,28; Communication skills: 3,29; Social skills: 3,28. This means that even if the survey participants were not equally happy with how their universities provided them with certain skills, they believe that by now they have acquired the skills mentioned above. This might also have to do with courses they took:

Table 5: Participation in training measures for 'soft-skills' (Frequencies):

Training Measure	At school/ university	Provided by employer	Extra-curricular/ Other	Total
Management Skills	1	7	69	77
Communication Skills	1	9	63	73
Leadership Skills	2	8	48	58
Social Skills	6	9	3	49

¹¹ T-test. Means: Political science 3,23 towards Law 2,31; sig. 0,015.

¹² T-tests. Means: Political science 2,71 and Law 2,23 towards Business Administration 3,38; sig. 0,029 and sig. 0,002.

The overview shows that a need for additional training in certain skills exists and that the survey participants voluntarily take part in them. It also shows that universities as well as employers fail to provide these courses.

In another open question, the survey participants were asked to list further certificates they have earned or courses they have taken. Here, 52 survey participants mentioned having earned additional qualifications aside from their university education; these were mainly in the areas of 'IT & technical certificates' (19) and 'Business Administration and Management' (19).

In conclusion, for reforms in university education, the results show that universities already do a great deal to prepare the students for their future field of work, but especially with regard to teaching them soft skills, there is more that can be done.

4.3. Experiences before working with the OSCE

Besides their university education, it also depends on what employees did before working with the OSCE as to whether they are qualified for working in an international organization. Therefore, the survey contained questions on internships, experience abroad, and professional experience before working with the OSCE.

Contrary to our expectations, internships were neither rated as being very important for being hired by the OSCE nor did many employees claim to have done them. Only 35% had done one or more internships at all – in total, 55 internships were done (one person could mention up to three internships). Most of these internships lasted between one and three months (72,7% of the internships). 10,9% of the internships were done at the OSCE and 16,4% at other international organizations – so altogether, 27,3% of the internships were done at international organizations. For the other fields, the categories in the survey were less detailed: Another 27,3% of the internships were done in the public sector and 25,5% in the private sector. All in all, although internships were not rated as being centrally important, quite many still took place in the same field of work as one sought later on. Furthermore, as not many survey participants were entry-level employees, the importance of internships compared to prior professional experience for being hired was naturally much lower. Age might also be a factor, as a Chi²-Test indicated that the younger survey participants tended to be more likely to have done an internship than the older ones¹³. Our conclusion is that with tightening labor markets and a de-

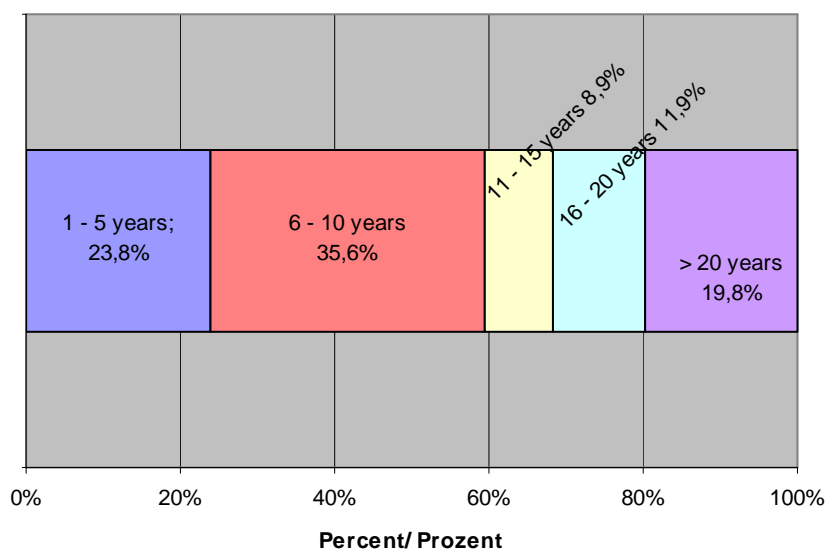
¹³ Chi: 8,132 / df: 3 / sig. 0.043

crease in the number of free posts for which those with a university degree can apply (at least in many European countries), internships are becoming a means to gain further qualifications.

For experience abroad, the picture is different than for internships. Altogether, 78,8% of the survey participants had gained experience abroad before working in their current position at the OSCE. Most of these experiences were gained in the context of employment (50,3% of experiences abroad mentioned) or education (22,1%). Also, most of the experience was gained at international organizations (38,5%; of these: 8,4% at the OSCE).

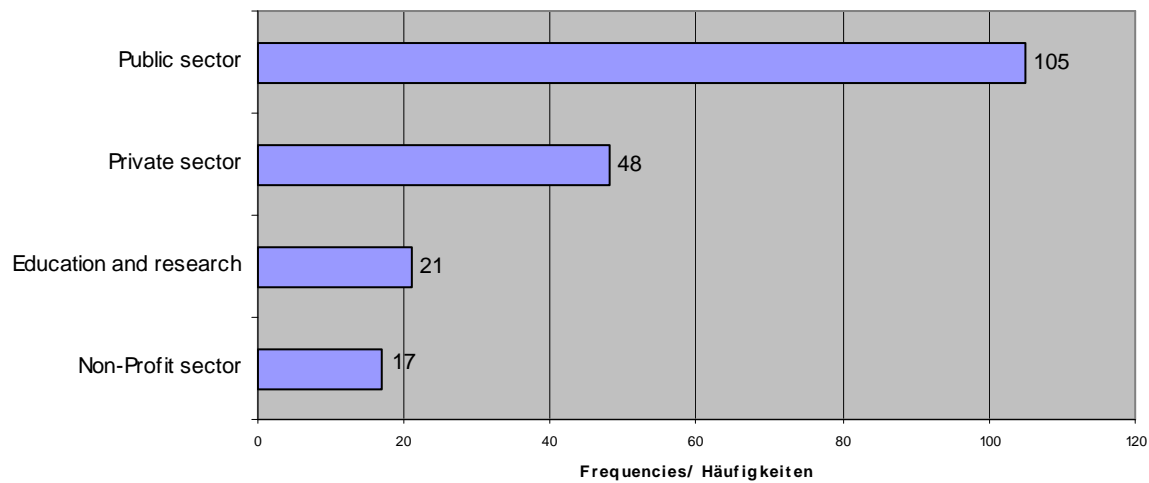
One very important qualification for working in the OSCE is probably the experience that was gained in employment prior to one's current job. Many positions offered by the OSCE, especially in the upper P-categories, require previous professional experience. The survey results reflect this, because 97,1% of all participants had previously gained professional experience. This chart shows for how many years:

Figure 5: Years of professional experience before working with the OSCE



n=101; mean: 11,36 years

35,6% had worked for about six to ten years and about 40% have working experience for more than 11 years. The average was approximately eleven years of professional experience. According to this result, the OSCE does not seem to be an organization which hires many entrants into the work force, which might be due to the demands involved in many jobs in the contracted positions. The area in which most employees had professional experience was in the public sector.

Figure 6: Fields of professional experience before working with the OSCE

n= 100, 191 responses

The answers given for the public sector were further subdivided in the questionnaire. Within the public sector, the following areas were mentioned:

Table 6: Professional experience in Public Sector

Areas of Public Sector	Frequencies
Political/ strategic matters	27
Administrative activities	25
Technical matters	12
Legal affairs/ jurisprudence	10
Cultural and social affairs	3
Elections	6
Other	22
Total	105

4.4. Work at the OSCE

In the section on their work at the OSCE, we were first of all interested in how they heard about the job offer of their first position at the OSCE:

Table 7: Information about job offer

Job ad on OSCE Homepage	43,3%
Referral from friends in the OSCE	21,2%
Referral from friends outside of OSCE	11,5%
Job ad at national ministry	8,7%
Blind application	5,8%
Job ad in newspaper/ magazine	5,8%
Job ad in employment agency	1%
Sign posted at university	1%
Other	11,5%
multiple responses possible n= 104; 114 responses	109,8%

It shows that the website of the OSCE, which informs people about job offers and where applications can be filled in online, is the main source of information. Secondly, referrals from within the organization are mentioned, which is a relatively high number considering that the question referred to the employees' *first* position. At later stages in a person's career, this might be a typical source of information because the OSCE does not have a promotion system. The employees can officially apply for another post in a higher category or a different section, and they might often be made aware of these offers by someone they know. But in this case, the high number shows that some survey participants already had contacts in the OSCE before working there. This might be due to the nature of working in international organization: the flux of employees is quite high and people with whom one worked a couple of years ago might now be working in various organizations worldwide and pass job offers on to their former colleagues.

The survey participants currently work in the following fields at the OSCE:

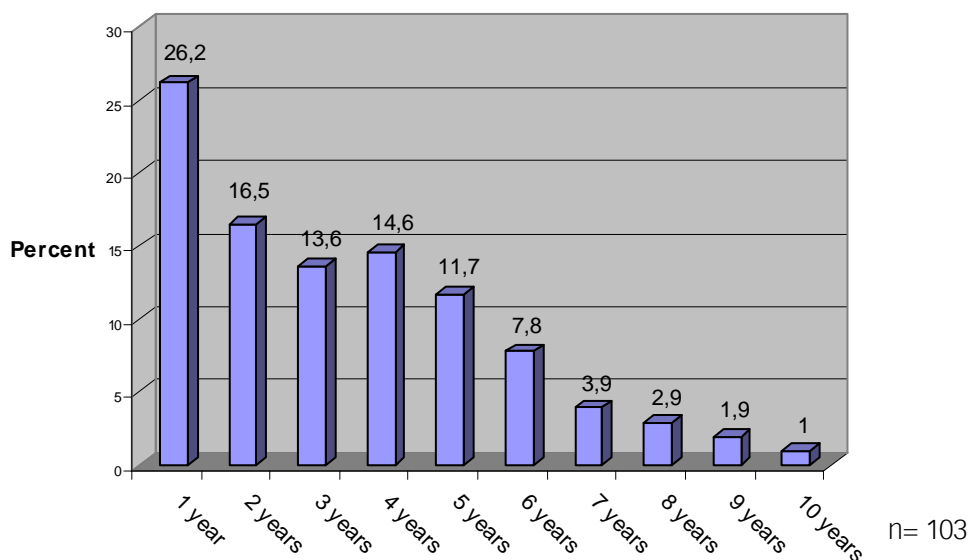
Table 8: Current fields of work

Fields of Work			
Administration and Support	51,5%	→	Within Administration and Support:
Political Affairs	9,7%		IT and management 24,4%
Human Rights	7,8%		Budget and finance 17,8%
Elections	5,8%		Supply and Logistics 13,3 %
Media Affairs	4,9%		General administration 11,1%
Democratization	2,9%		Communications 6,7%
General Staff/ Monitoring Functions	2,9%		Security 6,7%
Military Affairs	2,9%		Buildings management 6,7%
Economic and Environmental issues	1,9%		Human resources 6,7%
Civilian Police	1,9%		Training 4,4%
Education	1%		Procurement 2,2%
Other	6,8%		n = 45 100%
n= 103	100%		

The high number of people working in Administration and Support can be explained by the focus of the study on contracted employees. Within the missions, the only contracted posts exist in this section. The right side of the table gives an overview on the areas of Administration and Support in which the survey participants work.

Concerning the length of employment, the following results were obtained:

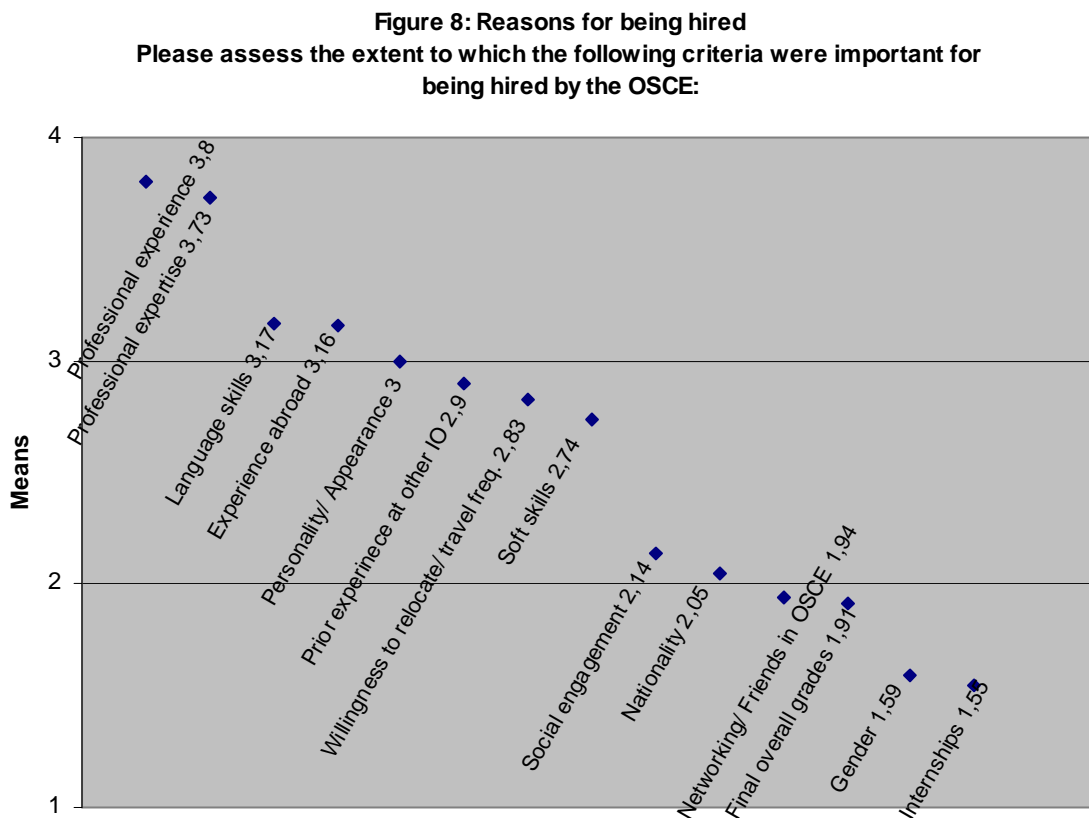
Figure 7: Length of Employment



Nearly one-third have only been employed for about one year. These numbers thus reflect the idea of the OSCE being a non-career organization in which the duration of employment within the organization is not very long. However, besides years of employment, which are regulated in the staff's contracts, there are other dimensions of the concept of a non-career organization that are less easily carried out. The difficulties involved with such an employment policy will be discussed on the following pages.

One central part of the survey dealt with the participants' self-evaluation of their 'success' in being hired by the OSCE as well as their 'success' within the organization.

The following means were found for the evaluation of reasons for being hired (four-point scale; 1 'not important' – 4 'very important'):



n= 29 – 45

Professional experience and professional expertise are rated as being the most important reasons for being hired. Here again, it is clear that many jobs at the OSCE require background knowledge and skills that can not solely be gained at universities and that the OSCE therefore does not hire many employees at the entry level. If the employees' self-evaluation truly reflects the recruitment principles of the OSCE, it would mean that recruitment is centrally based on

merit principles. The second most important items have to do with the dimension of 'internationality': Language skills and experience abroad are rated as being important as well. The items that were judged rather unimportant for being hired are 'ascribed' factors such as nationality and gender, but also having contacts within the organization. Furthermore, final overall grades and internships were mentioned as not being very important at all – this probably relates to the more significant experiences that were gained at prior places of employment and other criteria than the university degrees. Altogether, the gap that is found here between 'merit items' and items such as gender and nationality or networking is quite wide, but some of the comments that were made at the end of the survey do not support this outcome. Here, people wrote:

"The OSCE states that it is a non-career organization which reflects the truth for the regular employee. If a person has the right contacts within the organization or with one of the stakeholders the person would not only get a job whether qualified or not but would also be promoted within the organization."

and

"Nationality, gender and personal contacts play a great role in this organization. You might be simply discriminated by these factors."

and

"I would hope the OSCE will take more notice of the professional background including education of applicants."

These comments reflect what was discussed earlier: In the eyes of some employees, the recruitment process is not based simply on merit, but rather on patronage. However, one must keep in mind that these comments were made about other people being hired, while in their self-evaluation all survey participants were convinced that they had been hired for their qualifications and not because of their nationalities. The statistics and the comments contrast and to some extent even contradict each other. Yet, to refute the type of criticism found in these comments, the OSCE has introduced more transparent procedures in the recruitment process, which was discussed earlier in this paper.

Although the OSCE does not have a promotion system, about 56,7 % of the survey participants claimed that they had been promoted since the beginning of their employment with the OSCE. 'Promotion' within the OSCE can thus only refer to three possible options:

1. a 'formal' upgrading of categories which took place some time ago, but did not actually change anything for the employees except the label of the categories they are working in,
2. the only rarely awarded "Reward for Outstanding Performance," which was described earlier,

3. the employees' successful application for a higher post within the organization.

As reasons why they had been promoted, again 'merit items' such as professional expertise and achievements were rated as being very important (means: 3,44 and 3,32); yet, 'soft' factors such as personality/ appearance, commitment to the organization and soft skills were said to be important as well. One comment suggested that prior experience at the OSCE can be an advantage over applicants from outside the organization when applying for a higher post:

"Due to the fact that the OSCE has got very specific policies in certain areas, for example in Administration and Finance, prior experience within the organization is more important than formal education."

A representative of the OSCE confirmed this and mentioned that for certain posts, applicants from within the organization are better equipped than those from outside – no matter what their educational background might be. This contradicts the idea of a non-career organization, because although there is no official promotion system, an upward mobility of staff in the organization does take place indirectly. Our data support this view, as more than half of the survey participants 'feel' promoted in one way or another.

Some survey participants even question the entire idea of a non-career organization:

"The overall rule of the OSCE not being a career organization has some serious drawbacks, one of them being the loss of quality staff."

and

"The OSCE in my opinion needs to maintain a core of professional contracted staff particularly in the area of administration. In this area, experience and a proven track record combined with an ability to embrace and manage change processes is of more value than mere academic qualifications."

As it was shown, the concept of a non-career organization presents various challenges and, at this point in time, does not seem to be evaluated equally by all employees at the OSCE.

5. Conclusion

By conducting an online survey and talking to representatives of the OSCE, we were able to gain an insight into the OSCE's recruitment policies and processes. It was reported that the OSCE has already introduced a standardized process of selecting staff, which includes formal testing as well as a personal interview led by a trained board of examiners.

Furthermore, we were able to collect detailed information on the educational and professional background of contracted employees in the OSCE. The subjects studied most often for employees' highest degrees were law, political science, and business administration – and a combination of these is supposed to be a particularly strong means of preparation for working with an international organization.

With regard to the skills necessary for working with an international organization, this study as well as the CORE study found that above all else, leadership and managerial skills are very important. Our results have shown that there is a need for training measures for such skills, and that universities and employers should do their part to help people improve their skills in these areas by offering more courses and workshops.

The main information source on free posts still is the OSCE's website, but applicants should also seek information in other ways. One survey participant gives the following advice to people applying at the OSCE:

“My suggestion to applicants to the OSCE or other international organizations is to make personal contact with the people in your preferred Mission. To send out many applications to get a job is normal. It is usual to apply for a job up to six months to a year. The easiest entry into an IO is through Elections Monitoring or an Internship.”

In this survey internships were not rated as being centrally important for being hired and it was said that this is due to the many years of professional experience people had before working with the OSCE. Yet for recent graduates who strive for a career in international organizations, internships – in the best case within an international organization – are a must.

Finally, the principles of a non-career organization and the challenges of putting it into practice were discussed.

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