

EUFTE

EPSO AD7 AUDIT

PREPARATION HANDBOOK

Written communication based on provided material
Managing climate risks in the European Union



PART 1: Introduction to the EUFTE: Writing, Correction and Assessment Methods

1. What is the EUFTE?

The **EUFTE – Free-Text Essay on EU Matters** is a free-text written exercise on a topic of European relevance. Its purpose is to assess the candidate's ability to process the material provided and produce a clear, concise, logically structured and appropriately adapted written response.

The EUFTE does **not primarily test the memorisation of information or the possession of specialised knowledge**. Candidates are expected to demonstrate that they can:

- quickly understand what the task requires;
- select the appropriate information from the material provided;
- distinguish essential information from secondary details;
- organise their ideas in a logical sequence;
- adapt their response to the intended audience and purpose;
- reach a clear and useful conclusion.

Official information for competition EPSO/AD/428/26

In this competition for **AD7 administrators in the field of audit**:

- the EUFTE is taken in the candidate's **Language 2**;
- the test lasts **40 minutes**;
- it is marked on a scale from **0 to 10**;
- the minimum required score is **5/10**;
- the response is based on material relating to European Union matters;
- the relevant material is published by EPSO before the test date and is made available again during the test.

According to the official Notice of Competition, the EUFTE is **neither a language test nor a test of factual knowledge**. It assesses written communication skills exclusively, on the basis of specific assessment indicators.

Important clarification

Success does not depend on how much the candidate already knows about the topic, but on **how effectively they use the information provided**.

2. What is officially assessed?

EPSO uses five main assessment indicators, referred to as **anchors**. These indicators describe the characteristics that an effective written response should demonstrate.

<i>Official assessment indicator</i>	<i>What the response should demonstrate</i>
<i>Logical organisation of written communication</i>	Ideas are presented in a clear sequence and are logically connected.
<i>Concise writing</i>	Repetition, unnecessary wording and sentences that serve no meaningful purpose are avoided.
<i>Clear and understandable presentation</i>	The reader can easily understand the problems, arguments, conclusions and proposed actions.
<i>Adaptation to the audience and purpose</i>	The tone, format, length and emphasis are appropriate to the intended reader and the requirements of the task.
<i>Effective use of the information provided</i>	Relevant information is selected, combined and used effectively to answer the task in full.

Therefore, a successful response is not simply a text without linguistic errors. It must constitute a **targeted response to a specific communication or professional need**.

What do the five indicators mean in practice?

A strong response should enable the reader to understand quickly:

1. what issue is being examined;

2. why it matters;
3. what the main problems or findings are;
4. what their possible consequences are;
5. what actions or priorities emerge from the material provided.

3. What is not assessed as a separate component?

The EUFTE does not require candidates to:

- demonstrate external or specialised knowledge;
- remember figures, legislation or facts that are not included in the material provided;
- express personal political views;
- use complex or impressive vocabulary;
- write long and complicated sentences;
- reproduce as much information as possible from the source document;
- reproduce a memorised model answer word for word.

Using external knowledge may distract the candidate from the actual task and consume valuable time. The safest approach is to work with the information contained in the material provided.

This does not mean that every general statement is prohibited. It means that the substantive arguments, data, conclusions and recommendations should be grounded in the examination material.

Safety rule

Do not add external facts simply to “impress” the assessor. **Select, synthesise and organise the information you are given effectively.**

4. The EUFTE is not necessarily limited to one type of written format

The name of the test includes the word *essay*. However, the substantive focus of the assessment is **effective written communication**.

EPSO does not publish an exhaustive list of professional formats that will be used in every competition. The precise format and requirements are determined by the wording of the task.

For preparation purposes, it is useful to study six main formats:

1. **Report**
2. **Briefing Note**
3. **Policy Note**
4. **Information Note**
5. **Memo**
6. **Essay**

These formats constitute an **educational classification**. They should not be interpreted as an official EPSO statement that one of these six formats will necessarily be requested under that specific name.

The role of the Report in preparation

The **Report** provides the safest basic framework for practice because it allows candidates to:

- present information in an organised manner;
- distinguish findings from weaknesses;
- explain consequences and implications;
- connect problems with specific priorities;
- formulate clear conclusions.

This does **not** mean that the Report is the only possible format or that EPSO guarantees that candidates will be asked to write a report.

Candidates must always adapt their response to the exact wording of the task.

What you should remember

Prepare using the logic of a Report as your basic framework, but change the structure, tone and emphasis according to the intended audience and purpose.

5. The Six Main Written Formats

Report

A **Report** is appropriate when the task requires a comprehensive and systematic presentation of an issue.

It will usually include:

- an introduction and purpose;
- presentation of the current situation;
- key findings;
- problems or weaknesses;
- implications;
- recommendations or priorities;
- a conclusion.

The tone should be **neutral, formal and analytical**. Headings should help the reader identify the key points quickly.

Typical task verbs

- present;
- analyse;
- examine;
- assess;
- prepare a report.

Briefing Note

A **Briefing Note** is usually addressed to a senior official who needs to understand an issue quickly.

The response should make clear from the outset:

- the purpose;
- the key message;
- the most important facts;
- the critical problems;
- the immediate priorities or required follow-up.

The style should be **concise, information-dense and decision-oriented**. Excessive theoretical detail should be avoided.

Typical task verbs

- brief;
- summarise;
- highlight;
- identify;
- present concisely.

Policy Note

A **Policy Note** links the analysis of a problem to a specific policy direction.

It should not merely describe the situation. It should explain:

- what the problem is;
- why the current situation is insufficient;
- what the main gaps are;
- what options or interventions are available;
- what course of action should be preferred.

The style should be analytical but **action-oriented**.

Typical task verbs

- propose;
- recommend;
- establish priorities;
- formulate policy options;
- propose a course of action.

Information Note

An **Information Note** provides a neutral and objective overview of a situation.

It may include:

- the general context;
- key facts and data;
- the current situation;
- the main gaps;
- expected developments or next steps.

The emphasis is on **clear and objective information**, rather than on strongly advocating a particular option.

Typical task verbs

- explain;
- describe;
- present concisely;
- inform;
- provide an overview of the situation.

Memo

A **Memo** is a form of practical internal communication.

It will typically contain:

To:

From:

Subject:

followed by:

- the purpose;
- a brief assessment of the situation;
- the immediate actions required;
- the recommended follow-up.

Actions should be formulated directly and specifically. Active, action-oriented wording is recommended, for example:

- define;
- examine;
- strengthen;
- establish;
- monitor;
- make use of.

Essay

An **Essay** develops a central argument in continuous and coherent prose.

It includes:

- a concise introduction;
- paragraphs containing distinct arguments;
- logical transitions;
- a final conclusion.

Unlike a Report, an Essay does not necessarily require professional or administrative headings. Nevertheless, **every paragraph must serve a clear purpose.**

Typical task verbs

- discuss;
- explain why;
- develop;
- comment on;
- justify.

Comparative Table of Written Formats

Format	Main purpose	Basic structure	Characteristic style
Report	Systematic presentation and assessment	Introduction → findings → analysis → recommendations → conclusion	Neutral and analytical
Briefing Note	Rapid briefing of a senior official	Purpose → key message → key points → follow-up	Concise and information-dense
Policy Note	Selection of a policy direction	Issue → current situation → gaps → options → recommendation	Action-oriented
Information Note	Objective provision of information	Context → facts → current situation → next steps	Neutral and explanatory

Memo	Internal administrative action	To/From/Subject → assessment → actions	Direct and functional
Essay	Development of a central argument	Introduction → arguments → conclusion	Coherent and flowing

How to identify the appropriate format

Before beginning to write, the candidate should identify **four essential elements**.

1. The audience

Who will read the text?

- a senior official;
- the European Commission;
- an internal department or service;
- policymakers;
- a non-specialist reader;
- a broader institutional audience?

The intended audience determines the **tone, length and level of detail**.

2. The purpose

Does the task require you to:

- inform?
- describe?
- analyse?
- assess?
- explain?
- make recommendations?

- prioritise actions?
- formulate a recommendation?

3. The task verbs

The verbs used in the instructions reveal both **what you must do and the required depth of your response**.

Task verb	What it requires
Present	An organised and comprehensive presentation of the key information
Describe	A clear account of the situation or its characteristics
Explain	Presentation of causes and logical relationships
Analyse	Identification of problems, implications and interactions
Assess	Examination of strengths, weaknesses, significance or effectiveness
Summarise	Selection of only the most important points
Propose	Formulation of specific and prioritised actions
Recommend	A clear recommendation addressed to a specific recipient

A response that correctly describes the source material but **fails to perform the action required by the task verb remains incomplete**.

A task may require more than one action.

For example:

“Present the main weaknesses and propose priorities for action.”

This contains two separate requirements:

1. present the weaknesses;
2. propose priorities for action.

Both must be clearly visible in the structure of the response.

The Basic Architecture of an Effective Response

Regardless of the final format, an effective answer can be built around a common core:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Main body**
3. **Conclusion**

Introduction

The introduction should be **short and functional**.

It should establish:

- the general context;
- the significance of the issue;
- the purpose of the document;
- optionally, the main sections that will follow.

It should **not** contain detailed arguments that will simply be repeated in the main body.

Example of a safe introduction

This note presents the main dimensions of the issue under consideration, identifies the most significant gaps in the current approach and highlights the priorities emerging from the material provided.

The introduction must be adapted to the specific task. Candidates should not reproduce exactly the same memorised introduction in every exercise.

Main Body

The main body should be organised according to the specific requirements of the task.

Each section or paragraph should contain:

1. **one clear central idea;**

2. the relevant evidence from the source material;
3. an explanation of its significance or implications;
4. where required, a specific priority for action.

A safe internal logic is:

Problem → Impact → Need → Proposed Action

For example:

Problem: Responsibilities are not clearly allocated.

Impact: This lack of clarity makes coordination more difficult.

Need: Clearer governance arrangements are therefore required.

Action: Responsibilities and cooperation mechanisms should be clearly defined.

Headings are useful when they help the reader locate key information quickly.

However, the response should not be fragmented into an excessive number of very short sections.

Conclusion

The conclusion should:

- answer the central question;
- summarise the most important priorities;
- end with a clear message or direction for action.

It should **not**:

- repeat the entire introduction;
- introduce new information;
- end with a vague statement that could apply to virtually any topic.

Example of a safe conclusion

Overall, effectively addressing the issue requires coordinated implementation of the proposed measures, a clear allocation of responsibilities and systematic monitoring of

progress. Priority should be given to interventions that address the most significant gaps and mitigate the most serious impacts in a timely manner.

Topic 5 - Priority Sectors for Action

Draft a briefing note for a senior official identifying the sectors most affected by climate risks and the main actions required in each of them.

The six sectors identified in the document are natural ecosystems, water, health, food, infrastructure and the built environment, and the economy.

Indicative Model Answer

To: Senior Official of the European Commission

Subject: Key Sectors Affected by Climate Risks and the Actions Required

Introduction

Climate risks are already affecting key sectors of European society and the economy and are expected to intensify. Their effects are interconnected and can spread from one sector to another. Based on the European Climate Risk Assessment, particular attention should be paid to natural ecosystems, water, health, food, infrastructure and the economy.

1. Natural Ecosystems

Climate change threatens biodiversity and the services provided by ecosystems, including food, freshwater, carbon sequestration and protection against floods, droughts and erosion.

The following actions are required:

- protecting and restoring ecosystems;
- ensuring the integrated management of land, water and forests;
- prioritising cost-effective nature-based solutions;
- strengthening wildfire prevention and preparedness;
- improving the health of marine ecosystems;
- developing resilient landscapes that limit the effects of droughts, floods, wildfires and erosion.

2. Water

Climate change is aggravating existing pressures on water resources. Droughts, floods, extreme rainfall, sea-level rise and saltwater intrusion threaten water supplies, agriculture, energy production and transport.

The principal actions required are:

- protecting and restoring the water cycle;
- implementing integrated water management;
- promoting a water-smart economy;
- adapting human demand to changing and increasingly limited water availability;
- ensuring access to high-quality, affordable and accessible freshwater;
- assessing river basin management plans and flood-risk management plans.

3. Health

Rising temperatures and extreme weather events increase mortality, aggravate non-communicable diseases and affect mental health. The risk of infectious, food-borne and water-borne diseases is also increasing, while healthcare systems are coming under additional pressure.

The following actions are required:

- protecting workers exposed to heat and other climate-related risks;
- strengthening monitoring, surveillance and early-warning systems;
- integrating climate risks into public-health planning;
- improving preparedness and cross-border cooperation.

4. Food

Climate risks affect all four pillars of food security: availability, access, use and stability. Poor harvests, soil degradation and changes in fish stocks can reduce supply and increase food prices.

The main priorities are:

- strengthening the resilience of agriculture and fisheries;
- protecting and restoring soil health;
- supporting adaptation across food-production systems;
- maintaining access to affordable food and sustainable incomes for producers.

5. Infrastructure and the Built Environment

Climate hazards threaten energy, transport and communications infrastructure, as well as buildings and other assets with long service lives. Ageing infrastructure and gaps in reliable risk assessment increase vulnerability.

Required action includes:

- using climate-resilient standards and Eurocodes;
- considering future risks in infrastructure with a service life of more than 30 years;
- strengthening the resilience of the Trans-European Transport Network;
- protecting energy security and supporting climate-resilient building renovation.

6. Economy and Financial Stability

Climate risks cause direct damage, reduce productivity and increase pressure on public budgets. They can affect debt sustainability, SMEs, supply chains, insurers, banks and financial markets. Low insurance coverage and rising premiums widen the protection gap.

The principal actions are:

- integrating climate risks into public budgets and debt-sustainability analysis;
- supporting the resilience of SMEs and supply chains;
- reducing the insurance protection gap;
- incorporating climate risks into banking and insurance supervision;
- mobilising public and private capital for resilience.

Conclusion

The six sectors are closely interconnected. Effective action therefore requires an integrated approach that combines ecosystem protection, resilient water and food systems, stronger health preparedness, climate-proof infrastructure and the systematic integration of climate risks into economic and financial decisions. Priority should be given to prevention, preparedness and timely implementation.

Model Introductions for the EUFTE

The following introductions can serve as a common basis for developing responses to different EUFTE topics concerning climate risk management. They are based exclusively on the official source document and summarise its central findings: the acceleration of climate risks, the interconnected nature of their impacts, and the need for preventive, proactive and coordinated action.

Candidates should select the introduction that best matches the specific assignment and adapt the final sentence to the subject of the question. These introductions do not need to be memorised word for word; they are intended as reliable models for drafting a brief, clear and appropriately focused opening.

Version 1 - Focus on the acceleration of risks

Climate change is advancing faster than anticipated and creating increasing risks for the citizens, ecosystems and economy of the European Union. Addressing these risks requires timely, coordinated and proactive action. This briefing note presents the main challenges in the area under consideration and the most important priorities for strengthening resilience.

Version 2 - Focus on prevention

Climate risks are already having significant effects on EU society, the environment, infrastructure and the economy. As delayed action increases both damage and costs, priority must be given to prevention, preparedness and proactive risk management. This briefing note examines the main risks and the necessary measures in the area concerned.

Version 3 - Focus on interdependence

Climate risks do not arise in isolation. They interact and can generate cascading consequences across different sectors and regions. Addressing them effectively requires an integrated approach, a clear allocation of responsibilities and coordination among the EU, the Member States and the relevant authorities. This briefing note outlines the principal impacts and the required priorities for action.

Version 4 - Focus on implementation

The European Union already has policies, knowledge and tools for managing climate risks. However, uneven implementation, unclear responsibilities and gaps in data, skills and funding limit the effectiveness of its action. This briefing note presents the main weaknesses and the measures required to strengthen resilience in the area under consideration.

Version 5 - Focus on decision-making

The increasing severity of climate risks makes it necessary to integrate them into all relevant public- and private-sector decisions. Despite uncertainty about the precise development of certain impacts, action must not be delayed. Reliable data, preventive planning and the timely implementation of measures are required. This briefing note identifies the principal challenges and priorities in the area concerned.

Important: candidates should adapt the wording and structure to the specific assignment. Verbatim memorisation may result in identical or substantially similar responses and should therefore be avoided.