

Evaluation of the application of federal personnel policy

Summary of a Report by the Parliamentary Control of the Administration for the National Council Control Committee

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Six years after the Federal Personnel Act (FedPerA) came into force it is now time to examine the degree to which the main aims of the Act have been achieved. Accordingly, on 31 March 2008 the National Council Control Committee mandated the Parliamentary Control of the Administration (PCA) to examine how the policy concerning federal personnel is being applied.

In order to do this the PCA carried out around fifty interviews with secretary generals of federal departments, directors of federal offices and heads of human resources at departments and offices, and with various senior staff at the Federal Office of Personnel as well as external experts. Moreover, the PCA based its investigations on various existing analyses and documents in federal files. In addition, it mandated two organisations: one to carry out a benchmarking of federal personnel policy with four external organisations and the other to carry out an additional analysis of the 2007 survey of federal personnel. The data obtained from the 2009 survey of federal personnel were not available when this present report was drawn up and have therefore not been taken into consideration. Nonetheless, the present assessment does not aim to report on the precise situation with regard to each department. On the contrary, its aim is notably to determine whether there are differences between the departments and whether any differences that exist have been addressed by or have been the object of measures taken by the Federal Council. Any changes that have occurred in individual departments between the personnel surveys carried out in 2007 and 2009 do not therefore affect the conclusions, since they are more general.

The present report is a summary of the PCA's findings. For an overall picture of the results of all the analyses, on which the conclusions are based, we recommend interested parties refer to the full report.

The investigation revealed that the employment conditions (salaries, work-life balance, training) offered by the Confederation are relatively good, at least for non-managerial or non-specialised staff. The main problem with the federal personnel policy therefore does not lie in the employment conditions but essentially in the shortcomings regarding management, a defined strategy concerning human resources including aims, a clear distribution of responsibilities, communication and recognition on the part of the highest echelons of the Confederation.

In its message relating to the FedPerA, the Federal Council stated that the broad margin for manoeuvre granted to employers demanded that the Federal Council be reinforced as a steering unit for policy on federal personnel. Various things noted during the evaluation show that the Federal Council has not fulfilled its role in this respect; these concern the normative bases (Chapter 3), strategy (Chapter 4), organisation (Chapter 5) and aims of personnel policy (Chapter 6).