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visionRH

HR Overview - Monitoring Human Resources news from France, Europe and around the world

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vision RH is a newsletter published by the French Directorate General for Administration and the Civil Service (DGAFP).

It draws on information sources and reports issued by public administrations, the private sector, international organisations and the press, in several different languages.

It aims to provide a broad view of current human resources and civil service initiatives.

Preventing conflicts of interest, what's new in best practices

Currently, French parliamentarians are debating the "[Career Choice](#)" bill, the goal of which is to build bridges between the public and private sectors. What are other countries doing to regulate the so-called "[revolving door phenomenon](#)", which is supposed to "contribute to the vitality of the job market and the development of qualifications and skills?"

Fifteen years after the [recommendation of the OECD Council on guidelines for managing conflict of interest in the public service](#), the subject remains one of the organisation's top priorities. The governments of its member states are overhauling their systems to cope with new challenges in terms of public integrity which, according to a [study conducted in 2017](#), is still of major concern for citizens.

Should all countries adopt the existing waiting period before civil servants can join the private sector, or even extend it? Should this apply equally to all public officials? What sort of control procedures and penalties should be put in place?

While almost all countries oblige civil servants to inform their administration of a move to the private sector and the activities that they will undertake there (or recommend them do so), [only two-thirds of them impose waiting and/or "cooling-off" periods](#) (from less than a year in Austria to five years in Germany).

In Spain, this measure concerns only senior officials, whereas [in the US](#) and the UK it is assessed according to seniority and/or the nature of the person's duties.

Some countries compensate civil staff. This is the case in [Finland](#), where a civil servant's salary is paid for one year.

Only a few countries, on the other hand, make decisions authorising a departure to the private sector public. The [UK](#) and, more recently, [Spain](#) published personal data on favourable opinions online.

According to the OECD, there is room for improvement in how governments provide actual – and above all effective – monitoring of compliance with rules for preventing conflicts of interest. It is often left to the initiative of the department in which the staff member has worked, which generally has relatively few resources.

In addition to the financial penalties imposed on offenders (as in [Poland](#) very recently), some countries have chosen other courses of action. In [Germany](#), a staff member involved in disciplinary proceedings automatically loses his or her pension rights as an official (these

are transferred to the general scheme) and in [Italy](#), the staff member is banned for life from being entered in a professional or commercial register.

Innovative measures include [guidelines for public officials in Norway](#) that require that a conflict of interest clause be included in the employment contract, with contractual damages in the event of breaches of ethical obligations. According to the OECD, this initiative makes all three stakeholders accountable and contributes to securing public-to-private career paths.

Notes

Fore more information: oecd.org





NEWS CIVIL SERVICE, HR POLICY AND INNOVATION

Progress of the OECD's efforts on engaging public employees

France is taking part in the OECD working group that was set up last year on engaging public employees. The goal is to create a standard questionnaire to measure civil servants' commitment. Most OECD member states – Canada, Germany, England and the Netherlands, among others – regularly distribute such questionnaires to their public employees.

Notes

For more information: oecd.org



An initial assessment of Italy's Madia Act

Nearly three years after its enactment, the Italian authorities have drawn up an initial assessment of the Madia Act, which introduced reforms of the country's public administration. In addition to ongoing reduction of the public wage bill due to streamlining efforts (7% of staff not replaced in ten years), one major finding is the marked decline in abusive absenteeism (40 dismissal procedures in this area are under way).

Notes

For more information: forumpa.it (in Italian)



A new consultation on the remuneration of Ireland's civil servants

Since 2010, in the wake of the financial crisis, the salaries of all newly-recruited public sector staff have been reduced by 10%. Today, these staff represent 19% of the workforce. Now that growth has returned, the government plans to eliminate this inequality – which has had an impact on recruitment – and return to the old pay scales in return for freezing part of the planned increases.

Notes

For more information: oireachtas.ie





NEWS RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND SKILLS

A unified HRIS to facilitate mobility within the US federal administration

A major new project, led by the US Office of Personnel Management, aims to replace the various HR information systems of federal agencies and departments with a single, unified system. The new tool, which will feature a single database for all government staff, should make it possible to increase inter-service mobility. The specifications stipulate that the prototype delivered by the contractor must use blockchain technology.

Notes

For more information: federaltimes.com



Training for high-potential staff in the Dutch public administration

For the Dutch administration, it is not enough to simply attract the best young talents – it is important to make them want to stay. The government has launched a training program for "high potentials", in a bid to help participants develop the personal skills (creativity, leadership) that will enable them to become agents of change in their various departments.

Notes

For more information: bestuursacademie.nl (in Dutch)



France Apprenante: a shared space for innovative training

Twenty-four stakeholders in the world of training – including School 42, Openclassrooms, Numa, and Lab Rh – have joined forces within France Apprenante, a collective to promote new training methods. They have set a target of 20% of companies' training budgets devoted to innovative offerings. The collective is also focused on helping local authorities develop public-private partnerships to finance their digital transformation.

Notes

For more information: franceapprenante.com (in French)





NEWS SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP, DIGITALISATION

New assessment tools for the Canadian government

The Public Service Commission is continuing to update its suite tools for assessing senior managers and executives – as well as for a number of HR staff, including guidance counsellors – by adding simulation exercises. This system is part of an approach to the evolution of managerial functions and should make it possible to better assess an individual's ability to find solutions to resolve real-world issues.

Notes

For more information: canada.ca



Addressing digital skills shortages in the UK

To cope with skills shortages in central government and to boost its appeal, the Government Digital Service (GDS) has launched several initiatives, including pairing up more experienced staff with newcomers, independent learning kits and specific retraining programmes to move people into digital professions.

Notes

For more information: ukauthority.com



Data protection: the Swiss federal administration launches its own instant messaging system

At a time when many data protection managers are addressing the sensitive issue of how instant messaging systems such as WhatsApp are using the information they collect (contacts, locations), the Swiss administration has decided to ban their use on government smartphones and to develop its own cross-platform app, which will be launched in the autumn.

Notes

For more information: aargauerzeitung.ch (in German)





NEWS SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND QUALITY OF WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Proposed European directive on work-life balance

The European Commission's [proposed directive](#) sets new or higher minimum standards to create more convergence between Member States, maintaining and extending the paternity leave rights, paid parental leave, carer's leave and flexible working arrangements to include carers and increase their level of protection.

Notes

For more information: consilium.europa.eu



Ban on German civil servants' right to strike upheld

Before the Federal Constitutional Court, four civil servant professors challenged the inequality in the fact that their non-civil servant colleagues were allowed to strike. In their ruling, the judges upheld the ban, arguing that "the right of public servants to strike would trigger a chain reaction that would affect the very structure and fundamental principles of the public service."

Notes

For more information: bundesverfassungsgericht.de (in German)



Lab-O: new ways of working at the government services lab in Occitanie

Lab-O, an initiative of the regional prefecture, helps civil servants find and experiment with new ways of working. To do so, the lab offers various activities in inspiring locations that are at the heart of the transformation ecosystem: visits to incubators, help in designing and organising creative and participatory workshops, and support in leading innovative projects.

Notes

For more information: prefectures-region.gouv.fr (in French)



Reverse mentoring and inspirational executive committees – intergenerational transmission is underway

Reverse mentoring was invented by Jack Welsh, former head of General Electric, and has been gaining ground ever since. Many CAC 40 companies have made it part of their practices, particularly Axa, which has deployed it on a wide scale.

With a goal of breaking down inter-generational barriers in order to successfully make the digital changeover, the concept has become a matter of course for the world's leading insurance firm. Every employee is invited to join the programme, based on his or her familiarity with digital tools.

Young people bring their expertise to more senior staff in monthly or bi-monthly training sessions, thus promoting interactions between employees of different generations.

Accor, another major French company, has set up the first “inspirational” executive committee, known as the “Shadow Comex”.

This consultative body is made up of young managers aged 25 to 35, representing the company's various professions.

They are entrusted with a wide range of subjects so that they can express their points of view and share the strategic decisions they would have taken. The objective is to compare experiences and pool skills, both experiential and visionary.

Notes

For more information: axa.com (in French)

For more information: accordhotels.group





Rolling out performance-based pay (PBP) for public servants

Civil servants' wages often represent the largest portion of government expenditure, and they are a key element in human resource management. The breakdown of the various components (fixed vs. variable), pay rise methods and what part individualisation plays are all indicators that allow governments to determine wages' policy and how much room for manoeuvre they have in public finances.

A recent OECD [study](#) presents the range of compensation policies and focuses on the share of wage linked to performance. This trend is growing and today concerns a [majority of countries](#) (80%).

The author notes the difficulties in comparing national systems, which are affected by public service models (career-based or position-based) and reflect the way in which governments transpose and adapt private-sector practices.

A [PBP implementation index](#)^[CM1] has been assembled. It takes several criteria into account, including whether such a mechanism exists and which categories of staff it concerns, the share of ancillary remuneration and the impact on career development.

Employing significant incentives that can reach 40% of compensation (combining one-off bonuses and salary increases) and that include most members of staff, both Denmark and Japan use PBP as a genuine management tool.

For several years after it was rolled out in Italy (on an individual basis), RFP met with strong resistance. In early 2018, the government decided to introduce a [hybrid model](#) that combines individual and collective performance.

In 2017, following the recommendations of the [Hutton report](#), the British government introduced a dual system of additional compensation, which is linked to an employee's performance of his or her duties on the one hand, and to one-off contributions on the other, which makes it possible to enhance the value of work done as part of projects.

In Switzerland, PBP is individualised but is not a bonus. Assessment-based [percentage increases](#) are granted, allowing staff to advance more quickly within the pay grid.

By 2017, only 11 out of 35 countries had permanently eliminated automatic seniority-based advancement.

Notes

For more information: oecd.org



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French Directorate-General for Administration and the Civil Service (DGAFP)

Publication Manager: Thierry LE GOFF

Managing Editor: Xavier MAIRE

Editor-in-chief: Jean-Marc CHNEIDER

Publication Coordinator and Autor: Jean-François ADRIAN

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