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vision RH

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.

The monthly focus of this 42nd issue is dedicated to **management of absenteeism** and more particularly to actions taken to reduce its effects. As usual, we present you the last trends in several countries on this theme and the inspiring ways in which they are implementing them.

Beyond the news, you will get acquainted with Nestlé's response to employees' **quest for meaning** and the talent database in the **Brazilian** public service.

We stay at your disposal for your opinions, remarks or suggestions. Do not hesitate to write to us:

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We wish you a very good reading!

The vision RH editorial team



How to manage absenteeism effectively and responsibly over the long term?

Absenteeism is a much **debated** issue that unfortunately tends to **divide** the public and private sectors. **Absenteeism rates** can vary widely depending on the data being collected or the population groups being analysed.

This is why it is important to continuously monitor absenteeism and **identify factors** where **corrective action** can be taken. Careful decision-making is vital since the **health** of employees is at stake.

Looking after employee wellbeing by ensuring **favourable working conditions** helps reduce the volume of absences. In **Germany**, the state of Brandenburg wants government departments to take up this torch. It has earmarked up to €50 per civil servant to **fund** a number of measures outlined in the federal psychosocial risk prevention plan.

Following a similar model and using financing from **social impact bonds**, **Finland** has undertaken a **project to improve** the quality of life in the workplace. Several local authorities in the south-western part of the country have had an **awareness programme** in place over the past five years. To date, the target decrease in the number of days of sick leave has been met, with each employee taking two less sick days on average.

Spain has opted to foster a **spirit of competition** between its civil servants on the work absence front. In agreement with professional organisations and since the **elimination of a measure under which the first three days of sick leave were unpaid** (a policy introduced in 2012 but that had no discernible impact on absenteeism), absentee **data** is published **online** (broken down by department and displayed in percentage and by reason).

Holding various tiers of management **accountable** has become **Italy's** priority. During performance reviews, an **abnormally high** rate of absenteeism is regarded as a **failure of management** and negatively impacts the career trajectory of the manager in question. It is a decision the Italian government **stands by**, expressing its view that a few **isolated cases** of bad management should not reflect poorly on all civil servants.

The **UK** has made major headway in reducing the number of days of sick leave taken. In addition to rolling out several procedures involving **regular and documented communication** between managers and civil servants put on sick leave by their doctor, the UK government has implemented an **attendance management policy** which exerts pressure on the doctor if an employee's sick leave lasts for more than eight working days

or if more than four absences are accumulated over a 12-month period.

Making arrangements and preparing for an employee's **return to work** is a key step that facilitates a smooth transition. In **Belgium**, civil servants who have been on sick leave for 30 days or more can participate in a **reintegration programme** (for a duration of up to three months) during which they progressively return to their normal workload after various periods of **reduced activity**.

To address the increase in sick leave related to **stress** or interpersonal relationships, **Switzerland** is offering its public employees the option of a **social consultation process**. Instead of involving their manager or doctor, the employee can opt for this process, which provides **personalised support** by coming up with workable solutions for making adjustments in the workplace.

In **Canada**, federal public service unions and the Canadian government **brokered** a deal on an Employee Wellness Support Program (EWSP). It provides **improved support** for employees with a long-term illness, thus helping to close the gaps in the current system, under which civil servants **accrue sick leave** based on seniority.

What if **adapting work schedules** to promote a better work-life balance were the answer? In a number of countries (1), local initiatives introducing a **four-day work week** have been put in place. Assessments of these initiatives **reported** lower rates of absenteeism, but to date the **United Arab Emirates** is the only country to have adopted this policy (as of December 2021) for all civil servants.

¹ Such as in Iceland (Reykjavik) and Sweden (Gothenburg). Additionally, the prime ministers of Ireland and New Zealand have expressed an interest in adopting it.

Notes

For more information: eurofound.europa.eu





NEWS CIVIL SERVICE, HR POLICY AND INNOVATION

France: first ever employer branding campaign for public service

The #choisirleservicepublic (“Choose Public Service”) campaign is part of an urgent effort to counter a growing lack of interest, especially on the part of young people, in pursuing a career in the French public sector, despite the opportunity it presents to engage with issues they care about. In a first, this new online platform is designed to provide a one-stop shop for job postings and information on occupations, recruitment exams, opportunities and careers within the three civil service branches.

Notes

For more information: transformation.gouv.fr (in French), *(machine translation into English)*



Belgium: a scientific advisory committee on HR issues

The Belgian federal government will create a scientific advisory committee focused on improving existing HR policies by contributing improvements that have been proven effective by academic studies and research. The committee’s 12 researchers will be tasked with formulating advice in three areas: tools, methods and strategies to facilitate recruitment, guidance and assessment; important trends and innovations; and ethics.

Notes

For more information: bosa.belgium.be (in French), *(machine translation into English)*



Canada: “HR Innovation” series

A series presenting various HR initiatives is in the works to showcase the Canadian federal public service’s culture of innovation. The team in charge of the project will invite HR professionals to speak about their journey and experience, including the challenges and opportunities they have encountered along the way. Each session of the series is a 60-minute online interactive experience taking the format of armchair discussions or presentations followed by Q&A sessions.

« *Highlight new ways of thinking and different mentalities to foster innovation in a ministry* »

Notes

For more information: gccollab.ca





NEWS RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND SKILLS

Sweden: generic onboarding for new civil servants

Given the wide latitude public employers have in hiring and training their staff, the Swedish government will implement a generic onboarding programme that all new civil servants will be required to complete as of 2023. It will cover legal fundamentals and the essential values, e.g. the public interest, that are key to maintaining citizens' trust.

Notes

For more information: regeringen.se (in Swedish), (*machine translation into English*)



Italy: “Pa 110 e lode”, an academic training programme for civil servants

As part of the national strategy on developing employees' professional qualifications under the Italian recovery plan, civil servants will be given easier, more direct access to an array of degree courses offered by numerous partner universities. The initiative aims to enable those who were unable to pursue higher education before they began working to do so, for the benefit of their career.

Notes

For more information: funzionepubblica.gov.it (in Italian), (*machine translation into English*)



United Kingdom: expanding career opportunities

British Civil Service's recently launched "Levelling Up" programme is working to make more career opportunities available for people across the UK. By increasing the number of second headquarters for departments, it will be possible for civil servants to grow their careers without having to be based in Greater London – a virtual requirement before the programme's inception.

« *We have ambitious plans to improve career opportunities across the country, including at the highest level* »

Notes

For more information: civilservice.gov.uk





NEWS SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP, DIGITALISATION

Ireland: video advertisement challenge for the public sector

The Irish recruitment website Publicjobs.ie has launched a competition that gives students the opportunity to create an engaging message aimed at sparking youth interest in public sector careers. Post-primary students are challenged to express their creative, digital and communication skills to create a 30-second video advertisement pitching the public sector as an attractive career pathway to their fellow students.

Notes

For more information: publicjobs.ie



Europe: additional countries pass whistleblower protection laws

Although all Member States were required to enact the EU Whistleblowing Directive into national law by 17 December 2021, three countries (Cyprus, France and Latvia) began complying with the Directive early this year. Five other Member States enacted such legislation in 2021 (in chronological order of adoption): Denmark, Sweden, Malta, Portugal and Lithuania.

Notes

For more information: whistleblowingmonitor.eu



Germany: towards more women in digital careers

On a mission to combat clichés and self-limiting beliefs, ITZBund, the German federal IT service provider, has launched a campaign with the goal of encouraging women to apply for the myriad jobs offered by the agency. Featuring women's career stories, the campaign stresses that the public sector – as an equal opportunity employer – is open to women, even those who may be hesitant to apply.

« *Today's IT professionals must know how to communicate and work in a team, two qualities particularly attributed to women* »

Notes

For more information: itzbund.de (in German), *(machine translation into English)*





NEWS SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND QUALITY OF WORKING ENVIRONMENT

France: an educational game and a podcast on teleworking

There are ways to help employees adjust to working from home that do not involve practical guides and factsheets. In France the University of Lorraine developed, for example, an educational game in which players become a manager. In addition, the podcast Télébox, produced by a multidisciplinary inter-ministerial team, hosts experts who provide useful insight and advice.

Notes

For more information: fonction-publique.gouv.fr (in French), *(machine translation into English)*



Spain: launch of wage negotiations

Unions and the Spanish government recently set a timetable for a new round of negotiations on pay rises. The decision to hold negotiations comes as consumer prices have been skyrocketing over the last few months. Such topics as digital transformation, internal promotion, mobility, career development and retirement will also factor into the agreement.

Notes

For more information: inap.es (in Spanish), *(machine translation into English)*



Australia: MPC, body with reviewing workplace actions and decisions

The primary remit of the Australian Merit Protection Commissioner, an independent statutory office holder, is to ensure that promotions and other workplace decisions comply with the legislation. The official conducts reviews in various public service departments, investigates complaints and assists HR professionals. A website provides resources such as case studies explaining the reasoning for their final recommendations.

« *Contribute to safe, efficient and harmonious workplaces through our review, complaint and investigation duties* »

Notes

For more information: mpc.gov.au



Responding to quest for meaning is guiding Nestlé’s new HR policy

Shifting the focus away from cultivating **career development opportunities** and a favourable working environment, a growing number of employees today want to join their employer in being **active, engaged members of their community** (1) and a force for good.

The food giant Nestlé has accordingly pledged to **balance** corporate social responsibility (CSR) and profit. After debuting a new **employer branding** campaign in France under the slogan “Place à l’action” (“Let’s Take Action”), the multinational company is supporting several **employee engagement communities**:

- “Nestlé C’est Vous” (“You Are Nestlé”) brings together employees and managers **committed** to such matters as diversity, disability, sexual orientation and social origin
- “Je te don[NES]” (“I Give Back”) is for employees wishing to **donate** either a portion of their wages by rounding up their pay slip or some of their time and skills to Nestlé-supported non-profits
- “InGenius” provides passionate innovators with the opportunity to **take part** in ideation challenges to develop new products, processes or services across the Nestlé company

The purpose of “Nestlé Thinks YOUth” is to involve employees in strategic decision-making in a **tangible** way by allowing them to serve as in-house representatives. The programme is made up of two groups: a **junior executive committee** which discusses CSR-related decisions and makes alternative suggestions, and **13 ambassadors** who keep company employees abreast of the initiative’s work.

¹ A survey conducted by EDHEC Business School in early 2021 found that 81% of young people view finding purpose through their work as an important factor in employee engagement.

Notes

For more information: [nestle.fr](https://www.nestle.fr) (in French), (*machine translation into English*)



Brazil introduces "talent database" to spur public service hiring

With slightly under 600,000 civil servants (a figure that has been **steadily declining** since 2011), the federal government (1) of South America's largest nation has launched a **skills management** portal to increase its organisational responsiveness.

SouGOV was created as part of the Brazilian government's human resource management **modernisation** programme. Active and retired civil servants can **interact** with the HR department through a dedicated website and mobile app. To date, 40 different **features** are available.

For example, the government has been touting its new talent database "**SIGEPE Banco de talentos**" as a way to **match** active civil servants with the right job offers and stimulate professional **mobility**, which has become a must in an increasingly competitive job market.



Active civil servants can **voluntarily** enter **details** about their education and work history. Other **useful information** (fields of expertise, external qualifications and geographic preferences) can be added as well.

After this information is submitted, the system generates a standardised **CV** that is saved in a dedicated **database**, which enables:

- recruitment offices to **efficiently narrow down** the **candidates** who meet the specific job requirements of the position and contact them
- registered users to be the first to receive **job announcements** (before they are posted on

the job board) as selected **by an algorithm** based on the **information** they provided

As of September 2021, three years after its launch, **100,000 accounts** had been created. Owing to the **COVID-19 pandemic**, the Secretariat for Personnel Management and Performance of the Ministry of Economy (which develops HR policy) has made **registration mandatory** for all job applicants.

The database has become the ultimate **point of contact** between departments looking for **talent** and civil servants seeking new **opportunities**. However, for the tool to remain effective, jobseekers must make sure to regularly **update** their online profile.

As evidenced by the numbers, the talent database has helped to **optimise the distribution of talent** within ministries, institutions and their satellites across Brazil by **advertising** civil servants' skills.

¹ *Represented by the Union, it exercises sovereign responsibilities and is also in charge of economic development.*

Notes

For more information: gov.br (in Portuguese), (*machine translation into English*)





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