

MODERNISATION OF THE COMMISSION'S HUMAN RESOURCES

SYNTHESIS OF PROPOSALS IN THE PAPERS BY THE GROUPS CHAIRED BY JÖRGEN HOLMQUIST, ROBERT MADELIN AND ROBERT VERRUE

DIRECTOR GENERALS MEETING ON 3 JULY 2008

Next Commission = actions to prepare now for implementation in the next Commission

By the end of the present Commission = actions to implement before the end of the present Commission

1. STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

Next Commission

- Develop a comprehensive and wide-ranging human resources policy based on people management (proposal 2).
- Develop a scenario for a Commission which would have a different balance in overall staff numbers: an equivalent, even lower overall headcount, but with fewer managers, more policy staff and a higher proportion of non-statutory temporary policy-makers. There would be fewer Assistants, and also a higher proportion of temporary staff in this function.
- Reduce the managerial headcount through a combination of de-layering, greater autonomy (delegation) and lighter internal procedures.
- Shift the ratio of temporary to permanent staff at desk level from the current 1:4 towards 3:1.
- Reduce the numbers of Assistants over 5-10 years from the current ratio of 4 Assistants: 3 policy-makers to well below parity with policy staff (statutory and other). Maintain roughly equal shares of posts for both "ex B" and "ex C".
- Shift towards greater relative use of temporary staff at AST level, especially Contract Agents, but mainly for the more basic data-base management tasks.
- DG ADMIN must give priority to work on strategic HR issues and personnel policy definition. This must include innovative working structures and methods (such as ad-hoc task forces) and examination of policy activities for DG families or clusters. DG ADMIN should prioritise anticipation and planning for future HR needs of the institution (summary recommendations).
- Work must continue on creating and refining more flexible work structures in parallel to actions on mobility (4.13).
- The introduction of new or modification of existing systems should be the subject of careful cost/benefit analysis at both central and operational level (3.10).
- Reduce the number of bureaucratic procedures and keep them stable (proposal 9).

By the end of the present Commission

- The respective roles of central and local services should be clearly defined (4.11).
- Each DG / Service should establish a "Strategic Human Resources Plan" to be discussed and developed by the management twice a year (proposal 18).

2. EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT

Next Commission

- Recruit officials through the filter of a new core competences profile for the grade/role identified through job analysis.
- These core competence profiles should be adopted after a broad consultation with staff, our interlocutors among other EU institutions, Member States and other external stakeholders.
- Develop an annual recruitment cycle for officials with an end to end timescale of 6 - 9 months, delivering a single annual intake of qualified laureates both for generalist and specialist tasks.
- The recruitment process should:
 - assist in sifting large volumes of candidates, with the aim of selecting *in* those who most closely match the desired profile;
 - be candidate-friendly, delivered electronically at the early stages, with sample tests on-line for candidate familiarization and individual feedback at each stage;
 - make use of an assessment centre model, with selection boards evaluating candidates;
 - More closely link the number of laureates to the recruitment possibilities in a given year.
 - From these, generalists could be allocated to DGs by the centre, in a way reflecting the preferences of the individuals and the forecast vacancies of DGs.
- Temporary staff would not pass through the same single filter but would be selected by DGs for a permitted term of 3+3 or 4+2 as opposed to current shorter periods. Any transfer to permanent staff would depend on meeting the core competence tests.

3. INTERNAL RECRUITMENT

Next Commission

- Ideas on the use of job-types and their relationship with the existing Commission grading structure need to be put on the table (4.5).

By the end of the present Commission

- Individual services need to make estimates of their needs (based on likely turnover) divided by specific areas of activity. Services should publish their profiles and anticipated medium-term needs on their websites (4.1).
- Officials should be encouraged to show their interest in working in other DGs by contacting those DGs if they are attracted by the general work profiles and future job opportunities elsewhere. Such contacts should be on a non-commitment basis outside the formal system of publication of individual posts (4.2).

4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Next Commission

- AD recruits, once recruited as a good match for the core competences, should pass through a defined career path.
- A clearer AD career-type, including broader experience, should become the requirement for all aspiring to senior jobs. For example: all policy staff who aspire to a senior career should be asked to work in:
 - at least 2 DGs or services;
 - at least one corporate service function (communications, finance, audit, HR...);
 - two or more work profiles (i. law making, monitoring and enforcement, ii. policy making and development, iii. programme management), and
 - one posting outside HQ (Representation, Delegations, national Administrations other than their own country, private sector, academe).
- Develop career profiles for AST level: even within the unified AST category, there seems to be a need for at least three distinct career profiles. There should be a career profile for permanent career staff aiming at faux B or secrétaire de direction functions.
- These career benchmarks should be introduced as soon as possible for internal and external stakeholder debate. They could be adopted at the outset of the next College as desirable selection criteria, and could become binding exclusion criteria for middle-to-senior management posts several years later.
- Progression to senior management level should, except in duly substantiated special circumstances, be conditional on a demonstration of management ability in different situations (4.3).
- Career paths for HOUs who will not be senior managers need to be developed in order to encourage mobility (summary recommendations).
- Design career paths for all officials (summary recommendations).

- Examine the possibilities for fast-track promotions, including to management positions / talent management (proposal 4).
- Alternative career paths / better use of advisers (proposal 5).
- Professional experience outside the institution / career breaks without negative effects (proposal 6).
- More structured career guidance (proposal 7).
- Short secondments to other DGs (proposal 8).

By the end of the present Commission

- Selection of middle managers based more on management skills and use of 360° evaluation also for them (proposal 17).
- Revisit the middle management decision: the low level of mobility between services at this level suggests that there is both a problem of incentives and of perception by senior managers (3.17).

5. TRAINING / SKILLS

Next Commission

- Develop a more rigorous learning and development strategy, linked to the new core competences, so that current personnel meet the new profile within the next decade and provide the necessary leadership for incomers. This implies a substantial further increase in funding.
- The content of training should be designed as a key management tool, to bridge the gap between current performance and the core competence package. Training should lead staff towards accepting more mobility, more flexibility in the definition of their tasks, more attention to personal development throughout their career, and more commitment to having the skills to dialogue with the outside world.
- More training should be provided in-house, with training and less reliance on external providers for basic core training, but also more widespread use of high quality outsourced training, particularly executive training packages for the ADs who are on their way to middle/senior management roles.
- Offer in-house certificates to reward the training effort of individuals, and to demonstrate the acquisition over time of additional skills among the set defined by the Institution as important for career development.
- Policy-makers will need a universal foundation course in economics, law, statistics, communications, financial and personnel management and the policy use of IT. To the extent we have more generalists overall, there may be other specialisms where training is needed. Examine various options for training policy-makers:

- a big foundation course in modules of several months at a time spread over the first few years,
- or shorter modules with a longer spread of the training package over the first 5 years.
- In either case, the training map of each official should flow from a professional HR assessment of needs, both of the Institution and of the individual, rather than being designed bottom-up as at present.
- Language training and requirements need to be better focused on real needs: all staff should be operational first and foremost in 2 of the languages most used in the Institution; each DG or policy area should be able to engage a policy debate in as many of the official languages as possible, implying that language skills should not be exclusively "client-driven" as at present.

By the end of the present Commission

- Promote personal and professional development through training (proposal 16).
- Training should be targeted at skills that can be useful in other jobs: staff will also be motivated to try new things or work in different environments if they are prepared for new challenges (4.9).

6. MOBILITY

Next Commission

- Mobility policy needs to be clearly articulated. The objectives have to be presented simply and in a rational way. Mobility policy must reconcile career development and resource management needs (4).
- Action is needed to address negative incentives to move between services. This concerns in particular the representations and agencies but also some DGs where a review is needed as a matter of urgency. The treatment of staff posted in representations and agencies should be such as to ensure no discrimination between staff in similar situations (4.8).
- More attention should be paid to the issue of mobility involving Commission staff moving out to the private sector and to public administrations, even for short periods (4.10).

By the end of the present Commission

- Central support is needed for redeployment exercises where complex situations requiring complex individual solutions may be required. For redeployments of any significance a working group of resource directors should be set up on an ad-hoc basis (4.12).

7. MOTIVATION

Next Commission

- Professionalize certain activities which give the official a specific status or recognize a specific expertise (4.6).

By the end of the present Commission

- Include a Gallup Q12 survey on motivation, by DG / service, in more regular staff surveys (proposal 1).
- More emphasis on feedback given to staff in training and awareness building about the new CDR system / improvement of feedback to staff (proposal 3).
- Grant staff visibility and empowerment, using different means (proposal 15).
- Define the roles of heads of sector and deputy heads of unit as a means of motivating staff to take on new responsibilities and face new challenges (4.7).
- Services should act promptly to treat cases where staff are demotivated or unsuited to their current assignment, both in the interests of the people concerned as well as for morale in general (3.18).

8. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND STAFF ENGAGEMENT

By the end of the present Commission

- Director Generals should ensure that their staff knows what their mission and overall tasks are (proposal 10).
- Full implementation of the "Internal Communication and Staff Engagement Strategy" - SEC(2007)912 (proposal 11).

9. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Next Commission

- Better organisation of work / survey on working culture and working arrangements (proposal 13).

By the end of the present Commission

- Ensure appropriate working conditions (proposal 12).
- Promote flexible working arrangements (proposal 14).

10. SPECIALISTS

Next Commission

- Needs for permanent specialists should be kept to a carefully reviewed level.
- Certain kinds of policy specialists, such as researcher, nuclear inspectors and research programme managers, may require continuity in professional practice in their field of specialisation and a separate career path. Such permanent specialists would have to satisfy the basic core competences by passing the proposed annual general recruitment process.
- Permanent specialists should be allowed, as an exception to the unitary AD career model, but should only transfer into the management structure if they meet the unitary model's requirements.
- In some specialized, non-policy, middle management tasks (e.g. auditing, accounting, veterinary inspection, etc.) seconded managers from national services should be able to exercise a temporary management role in the Institution, on a basis designed to avoid unmanageable conflict of interest.
- Central review should determine the need to have in-house permanent corporate service specialists, as opposed to permanent managers of corporate specialist teams (accounting, IT, etc.), staffed more heavily with outside expertise than may overall be the case today.
- Development of special training packages would enable more generalist permanent staff to function usefully in corporate specialist fields (e.g. Internal Audit or IT) as one stage of a multipolar career.
- Career paths for specialists need to be defined with a view to ensuring that reasonable and recognised career options exist for these staff (summary recommendations).
- On the assumption that the Commission will continue to need specialist officials, attempts should be made to map out possible career moves through different services which need the same profiles, and also to try to define related specialisations where movement between the two areas would be considered as natural (4.4).

By the end of the present Commission

- It should be made easier to recruit experienced specialists, especially policy specialists, on time-limited contracts and to give the Directorates General more freedom to make such recruitments within a "budget" allocated to them.