

ENTITIES AND PUBLIC POLICIES

POSTING AND MOBILITY OF STATE OFFICIALS

For more active management in order to better meet users' needs

Public thematic report

Summary

July 2019



This summary is intended to facilitate the reading and use of the report of the Cour des comptes.

Only the report commits the Cour des comptes.

Only the response of the Prime Minister is provided at the end of the report.

Summary

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Introduction

The posting of state officials to open positions, upon initial recruitment or subsequent mobilities, is a key factor both in the quality of public services and the quality of life at work.

State administrations must at all times post their staff to where they are needed the most across the territory and to the various ministerial departments in order to meet the needs of the services. As well as concern for numbers – having enough public officials to provide essential services –, which has long been predominant, a more qualitative dimension has recently been added: posting staff with the most appropriate experience and profile to the most sensitive or difficult positions.

While the Court has a regular opportunity to review the way in which public officials are managed, this is the first time that it has published a summary of the rules and practices used to post State officials, whether upon their initial posting or subsequent mobilities. It has sought, through a combination of various approaches, to assess whether these rules and practices have proved effective in fulfilling the staffing needs of posts as defined by budgetary authorisations and central administrations.

However, it did not examine the adequacy of tools used by the central government to assess requirements at national level and by ministry or to distribute jobs across the territories. It is therefore not the purpose of this report to verify whether there is are sufficient numbers of public officials deployed throughout the territory and by ministry to meet users' needs.

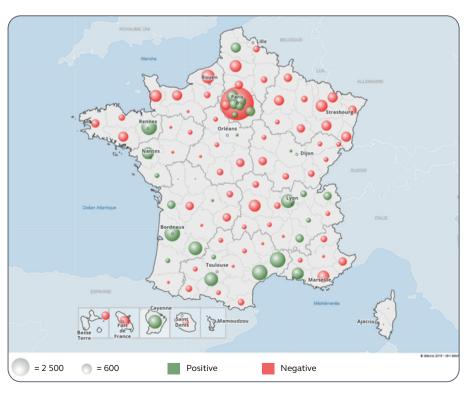
Similarly, the survey does not examine the specificities of the overseas $\emph{d\'epartements}$ and communities.



Due to changes in jobs to fill, the voluntary movements of public officials do not meet the needs of State departments

The last ten years have been marked by rapid changes in relation to jobs that need to be filled, in quantitative, structural and geographical terms.

Changes in the number of employees paid by the State between 2010 and 2016



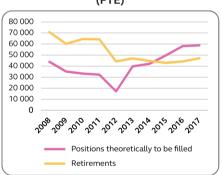
Source: DGAFP figures – restatement by the Cour des comptes

NB: data are not available for Mayotte.

Due to changes in jobs to fill, the voluntary movements of public officials do not meet the needs of State departments

Overall, central government have seen a significant fall in their job ceilings (-14.2% in ten years), although this has slowed in more recent times. The high number of retirements has enabled a significant level of recruitment to be maintained, but with marked differences between ministries. The structure of jobs to be filled has also changed according to the distribution of job losses between ministries and by category. Lastly, the distribution of central government jobs across the territory has also evolved in response to demographic changes and population movements.

Retirements and theoretical number of positions to be filled – all ministries (FTE)



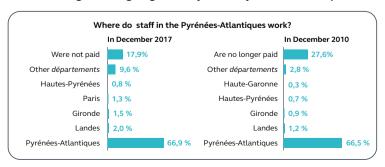
Source: Budget Department, annual performance report figures, restatement by the Cour des comptes

Due to these changes, the posting of public officials to available jobs, whether upon initial recruitment or subsequent movements, is not without its challenges.

As such, requests for geographical movement from public officials are aimed primarily at the most attractive areas and not those areas where the needs are greatest. Moreover, movement requests are considerable and often converge towards the most attractive areas, which means many of these requests cannot be met. Actual mobility is far lower than desired mobility.

As voluntary geographical movement does not fulfil the jobs needing to be filled in less attractive areas, adjustment is made primarily through the initial postings of new public officials. Consequently, some geographical areas are overfilled with young public officials, often wishing to leave an unwanted posting as soon as possible, thereby creating instability in employment; conversely, other regions, particularly the southern and western parts of the mainland, see few new public officials arriving, which has increased the average age of public officials in post.

Incoming and outgoing mobility in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques

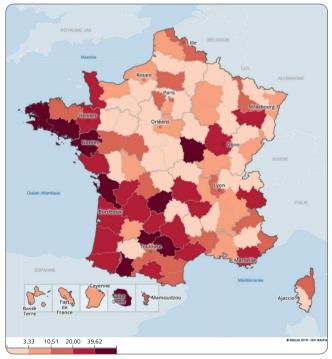




Overemphasis on seniority and classification in posting choices leads to poorly or slowly filled positions and creates dissatisfaction among staff

The imbalances observed largely stem from the fact that, although there is some diversity in practices between ministries, seniority and classification play a predominant role in posting and mobility procedures. Possibilities for derogation from these principles, such as using «profile positions» or forced movements, do exist but remain limited.

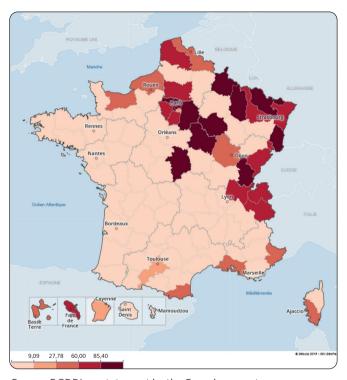
DGDDI – initial preferences for incoming mobilities relative to the previous year's workforce category B (2017)



Source: DGDDI data - restatement by the Cour des comptes

Overemphasis on seniority and classification in posting choices leads to poorly or slowly filled positions and creates dissatisfaction among staff

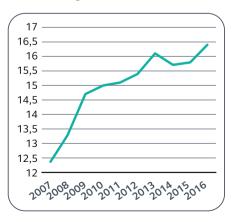
DGDDI – initial postings relative to all postings (%) category B (2017)



Source: DGDDI – restatement by the Cour des comptes

As a result, many positions remain unfilled or filled too slowly, which affects the quality of public service provided. This situation may be the result of persistent discrepancies between the organisational structures of services and budgetary authorisations. Similarly, positions authorised by the budget may not be filled following competitive examinations due to a lack of candidates. Lastly, in some regions and for some positions with low demand, very high turnover creates chronic instability affecting the quality of service provided to users. To fill these less attractive positions, the administration relies heavily on contract workers, whose numbers have increased by a third in ten years.

Share of non-permanent staff among central goverment officials (%)

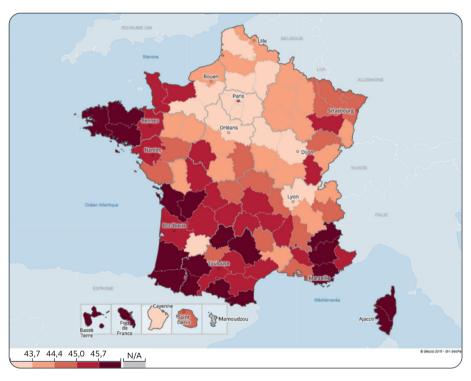


Sources: FGE, COLTER, DADS, SIASP, INSEE; SAE surveys, DREES. Data processed by DGAFP

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Another important consequence of these rules on posting is that officials are sometimes dissatisfied with the postings offered to them. Some initial postings, which are aimed at serving the least attractive areas, are not well received and are sometimes refused, with staff preferring to forgo the benefit of having been successful in the competitive examination. Subsequent mobility requests are difficult to meet and sometimes not valued enough when they involve difficult areas or positions.

Average age of public officials paid by the central governent as of 31 December 2017



Source: Ka File - data processed by the Cour des comptes



More active posting and movement management is required that better meets the needs of public service users

In view of the shortcomings observed, the Court recommends a rebalancing of individual posting decisions, which should give priority to users' needs rather than to the application of automatic rules based on seniority or classification. The recommendations it makes are in line with a more active management of the central government's human resources. They are built around three main axes.

Firstly, the Court stresses the need to tackle various areas' and jobs' lack of appeal.

To achieve this, various levers must be deployed.

The residence allowance, which is supposed to compensate for housing cost differentials, currently does little to meet this objective and may, moreover, act against it by favouring areas that are already attractive. It

must be transformed into a scheme that takes these areas' lack of appeal into account. The Court has formulated two scenarios in this respect.

Ministries have put other schemes in place to attract and stabilise public officials in difficult positions or unattractive locations which are affected by high turnover. These schemes must be better evaluated and implemented in a more individualised and formalised way.

Other means exist to facilitate the filling of positions in some areas: reducing uncertainty around geographical postings following national competitive examinations by making greater use of competitive examinations for local postings; extending posting areas to maintain a level of local flexibility; encouraging telework where possible to facilitate acceptance of certain postings.

More active posting and movement management is required that better meets the needs of public service users

Secondly, central government would benefit from being able to better anticipate changing jobs and skills needs.

Few ministries are truly engaged in forward-looking jobs and skills management. To encourage them, the Court recommends that consultations with staff representatives. using a forward-looking jobs and skills management system, made compulsory every four years and in each ministry. Similarly, forecasts of medium-term evolution of posts per central government mission should be published, for example under the public finance programming bill.

Determined efforts must also be made to make career paths more fluid. As such, the management of public officials per corps needs to be opened up to improve the movement of staff between the various positions available. Similarly, the movement of staff between ministries should be facilitated by an active policy of reducing the disparity in allowance systems between ministries.

Thirdly, posting and movement policies would benefit from being geared towards a more readable, less centralised and more individualised approach to human resource management.

In this regard, the link between interministerial management and the expertise of the ministries should be clarified, the devolution at regional level of certain management measures completed and local human resource management reinforced.

Furthermore, tools for supporting staff and transparency of processes, such as advertising job vacancies, which already exist in part, should be reinforced.

Lastly, some consultative formalities which slow down movements without really providing any added value to staff should be streamlined. In this respect, abolishing the compulsory consultation of Joint Administrative Committees, as set out in the bill on the transformation of the Civil Service, is a useful measure.

Recommendations

Combating certain areas' lack of appeal

- 1. Transform the residency allowance into a scheme which ensures the lack of appeal of certain areas is better taken into account:
 - a. either by extending the criteria to the local conditions under which duties are performed;
 - b. or by being based on attractiveness differentials, measured in terms of the ratio between posting preferences and the positions open.
- **2.** Generalise the practice of postings to «profile positions» to take into account the specificities of the positions to be filled.
- **3.** Make greater use of competitive examinations for local postings.
- **4.** Encourage the posting of staff over wider areas.
- 5. Promote the use of telework.
- **6.** Develop formalised arrangements with staff to encourage stability in less attractive areas.

Better anticipating jobs and skills needs

- **7.** Make compulsory every four years, in each ministry, to consult with staff representatives using a forward-looking jobs and skills management system.
- **8.** Incorporate the evolution of posts per central government mission into the public finance programming bill, in line with budget forecasts.
- **9.** Bring staffing tables in line with the reality of budgetary authorisations.

Implementing a more readable, less centralised and more individualised approach to human resource management

- **10.** In each administration, identify local contacts responsible for providing staff with individual advice on their careers and mobility.
- **11.** Roll out on-the-job training and mentoring for incoming mobilities.
- **12.** Abolish giving Joint Administrative Committees (CAP) prior notification of movements.