Public sector HR challenges in France

Recent achievements and upcoming projects of the Directorate General for Public Administration and Civil Service

SUMMARY

1. Overview of the French administrative system
2. Civil service in France
3. The Directorate General for Public Administration and Civil Service
4. Current challenges
5. Recent achievements
6. Main upcoming projects
1. Overview of the French administrative system

1.1. Basic principles

- France is a unitary State

- Territorial authorities benefit from the principle of free administration within the limits set by law

- Processes of decentralization and devolution were initiated in the 1980's
1. Overview of the French administrative system

President of the Republic

Prime Minister

Government Secretariat

Ministry X

Ministry Y

Directorates

EU Affairs Secretariat
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2. The French civil service

2.1. Key figures (1/2)

-- France has 66 million inhabitants

-- Active population: around 29 million

-- 5.4m civil servants: a little less than 20% of the active population
2. The French civil service

2.1. Key figures (2/2)

Civil service has **three branches**:

- **State civil service**: 2.4 million, of which:
  - Ministries: 1,9 million
  - Local State administrations: 60%
  - Middle and high schools: 30%
  - National public entities: 500,000

- **Local civil service**: 1.9 million, of which:
  - Municipalities: 1 million
  - “Départements”: 300,000
  - Regions: 80,000
  - Local public entities: 500,000

- **Hospital civil service**: 1.1 million

2.2. Permanent and contractual staff in the civil service

- **Permanent** civil servants: **3,8 million** (excluding military and private schools staff)
  - **3 categories**:
    - “A” category: policy-making, management & supervision
    - “B” category: application, middle-ranked staff
    - “C” category: execution, unskilled and semi-skilled staff

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“A” category</th>
<th>“B” category</th>
<th>“C” category</th>
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<td>Hospital</td>
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- **Contractual** staff: **around 900,000**
  - For a specific task or to fill a vacancy for a fixed period of time, rights and duties fixed by contract
2. The French civil service

2.3. Rights and obligations of civil servants (1/2)

- Choice of a career-based civil service to ensure:
  - a permanent qualified staff
  - committed to the public interest
  - and independent from political variations

- **Common set** of rights and obligations: Law of 13 July 1983

- **Each** of the 3 branches has its **particular statutory framework**:
  - State civil service: 11 January 1984
  - Local civil service: 26 January 1984
  - Hospital civil service: 9 January 1986

2. The French civil service

2.3. Rights and obligations of civil servants (2/2)

- Among common **obligations**:
  - Dignity, impartiality, integrity, prohibition of conflicts of interests
  - Professional activity **entirely dedicated** to the tasks assigned
  - Hierarchical obedience
  - Professional secrecy, duty of reserve, neutrality and secularism
  - Information of the Public

- Among common **rights**:
  - Freedom of opinion on philosophical, political, belief or trade union matters
  - Non-discrimination, prohibition of sexual or moral harassment
  - Functional juridical protection
  - Participation rights – Right to strike
2. The French civil service

2.4. The statutory career of State civil servants (1/2)

In State civil service, permanent civil servants are clustered into corps

- A corps is a group a civil servants submitted to the same particular rules as to:
  - The type of competitive examination for their recruitment
  - The nature of the positions they are deemed to hold and the scheme of administrations they shall work for
  - The structure of their advancement process

- Each corps belongs to a category (A, B or C) and is structured in several grades divided into levels ("echelons" or notches) determining a level of remuneration
  - Advancement from one level or grade to another is based on seniority
  - Advancement to a higher grade can also be accomplished on the basis of being successful to a professional examination

2.4. The statutory career of State civil servants (2/2)

- Corps are since 2009 open clusters
  - Mobility is a statutory right: civil servants can change corps to take up a different job and/or move to a different ministerial department
  - To foster mobility, an ongoing policy aims at:
    - reducing the number of corps
    - broadening: - their missions
      - their potential ministerial department
  - Almost all corps are still ministry specific but some are now inter-ministerial

- Promotion to a higher corps is accessible through either:
  - examination (internal competitive exams)
  - or experience and expertise (capacity lists)
2. The French civil service

2.5. Recruitment of State civil servants (1/2)

- Recruitment is governed by the principle of equal access to public positions and jobs
  - Article 6 of the 1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

- Competitive examination ("concours"): the common mode of recruitment of civil servants (except for contractual staff, "discretionary positions" or non-competitive hiring)

- 90% out of 45 000 recruitments every year are based on competitive examination

- Since 2009, the number of State civil servants is decreasing: retirement increase ("oldies boom") and non-replacement policies

2.5. Recruitment of State civil servants (2/2)

- Different types of competitive examinations, e.g.:
  - External competition: nationality and degree criteria
  - Internal competition: for public-sector employees seeking promotion
  - Special competition: for people with private professional experience

- Civil servants start their career as trainees for 1 or 2 years

- Training generally takes place in a specialized service school or training institute for civil servants (close link between recruitment and training system)

- After this probation and on-the-job training period, they are granted confirmation ("titularisation") provided they properly fulfilled their duties
2. The French civil service

2.6. Training (1/2)

- Civil servants have the right to lifelong learning
- A developed network of training structures:
  - About 70 public service schools, overall about 400 training sites that specialize in civil servants training, e.g.:
    - ENA (National school of government)
    - 5 IRA (Regional schools of government)
    - Customs schools
    - Public finances school
    - Public Health school
    - National centre for local civil service
  - Dedicated ministerial training services

2.6. Training (2/2)

- These institutions and services have a twofold mission:
  - Ensuring induction training for the successful candidates: practical and professional skills and working methods needed for various positions
  - Organizing ongoing training and lifelong learning for civil servants
- Training expenditure: 2.7 billion euros (2013)
  - 2/3 of which spent for ongoing training and lifelong learning (6.7% of payroll)
- Around 45,000 people work in the public service training system
2. The French civil service

2.7. Remuneration

- Civil service remuneration encompasses 2 parts: a basic salary and an allowances/ bonuses part

- Basic/ index-related salary:
  - Defined by the level of entry and seniority, according to the grids of each corps
  - Each grid indicates a number of index points for each level within a grade

- Allowances/ bonuses part:
  - Bonuses part reflects the specific constraints of the job or overtime work
  - Also depends on the merit, the engagement and the expertise of each agent

- The average pay structure is 67% base salary – 33% bonus

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DGAFP was created in 1945 as part of a vast reform of State administration.

- Ordinance of 9 October 1945 establishes:
  - “Ecole nationale d’administration (ENA)” (National school of government)
  - and a Direction for civil service, which became DGAFP in 1959

### Staffing:

- **Head count**: around 150
- **Average age of staff**: 43
- **Percentage of women**: 59%
- **Percentage of staff belonging to A category**: 74%

### Mode of operations

- **DGAFP** is a “headquarters” unit, a small organization with highly qualified staff
  - It does not have its own local services
  - But relies since 2009 on “inter-ministerial regional platforms for HR management backing” to carry out and implement its policies and actions
- **Does no direct management**: formulates policies and monitors their implementation by ministerial departments
- **Positioning itself as “HR Directorate”** for the State as a whole
3. The Directorate General for Public Administration and Civil Service

3.2. Missions (1/2)

- Responsible for implementing and updating the legal framework of the State civil service, including integrity policy enforcement
  - Ensures policy coordination as regards Local and Hospital civil service branches

- Leading “social dialogue” with the trade unions at the national level, which includes interactions on:
  - Base salary (index point) and allowance (bonus), working time
  - Social action programs, social protection, health, safety and prevention

3.2. Missions (2/2)

- Overseeing general recruitment and training policies of the civil service
  - Supervisory authority over ENA and the 5 IRA

- Formulating and propagating HR management policy & professionalizing HR actors:
  - HR forward planning, jobs and skills directories, HR information systems, career paths

- Promoting employers’ responsibility through exemplarity, e.g.:
  - gender equality
  - diversity
  - quality of work life
3. The Directorate General for Public Administration and Civil Service

3.3. Organizational chart

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4. Current challenges

4.1. Structural issues in the public sector... (1/2)

• Demographic evolution
  – Retirement increasing and non-replacement policies
  – Difficulties for recruiting for certain kind of jobs
  – Longer work life: issues of ongoing employability

• Legal and institutional changes
  – 2015 law: New territorial organization of the Republic
  – Local state service reorganization, decentralization of State decision process, inter-ministerial pooling particularly for support functions

• Financial constraints
  – Impact of the 2008 financial crisis on economic growth and public finances
  – Public finances legal framework: accountability for HR policies and management

4.1. Structural issues in the public sector... (2/2)

• Professional and managerial evolution / State missions evolution
  – Transformation of existing jobs
  – New jobs and new skills

• Digital transformation
  – Changing work methods: demand for being more reactive
  – Dematerialization
  – Breaking traditional work organization: project mode vs. hierarchical mode

• European context
  – Constraining legal framework on national policy design: e.g. EU directives on work conditions, professional qualifications
  – Need for coordination between EU countries
4. Current challenges

4.2. ... imply solutions to find for the civil service

- Economic constraints + HR modernization = key challenges to tackle, e.g.:
  - Adapt HR resources to needs and expectations: strengthen HR forward planning
  - Have a better view of results and effectiveness
  - Simplification of HR and administrative processes, ICT optimization
  - Encourage mobility of civil servants
  - Address issue of high recruitment & training costs

- The process of monitoring reforms should involve closer collaboration with civil servants and with the final employing structures

   The State must stand as a responsible employer and needs to show exemplarity

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5.1. Enhancing professional paths, careers and remunerations (1/2)

- **Axis #1: Strengthen civil service for an improved public action**
  - Adapt the legal framework to the **evolutions of society**
    - Diverse and transparent recruitment
    - Consolidate civil service unity
    - Simplify the statutory architecture within each branch
  - Better address **public service needs**
    - Foster voluntary mobility to propose varied professional paths
    - Quality of public service on the whole territory
    - Recognize skills and qualifications

5.1. Enhancing professional paths, careers and remunerations (2/2)

- **Axis #2: Improve remuneration policy in the civil service**
  - Harmonize careers and remunerations in the three branches
    - Design a more appropriate balance between basic/ index-related salary and allowances/ bonuses part
    - Harmonize career progression
  - Improve civil servants remuneration
    - Revaluate grids
  - Remuneration negotiations
    - Revaluate the index point value
5. Recent achievements

5.2. Ethics and integrity in public administration (1/3)

- A structural framework designed to promote ethics and integrity within public administration

- Preventive measures:
  - strengthen ethical performance
  - reduce potential cases of corruption

5.2. Ethics and integrity in public administration (2/3)
5. Recent achievements

5.2. Ethics and integrity in public administration (3/3)

• On 20 April 2016, a new law was adopted in order to strengthen ethics, rights and obligations of civil servants
  – To adapt the ethical framework to the evolution of our society
  – While reaffirming the validity of the principle of "laïcité" (secularism)

• e-learning module on ethics and integrity:

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6.1. Being a responsible employer (1/3)

Civil service is the first employer in volume in France: this entails to stimulate social cohesion and to represent society as a whole.

Article 6 of the 1789 Declaration: "All citizens (...) are equally admissible to all public dignities, places and employments, according to their capacity and without distinction other than that of their virtues and of their talents."

- Gender equality
  - What is to address:
    - 62% of civil servants are women and their pay is 12% inferior to men’s (19% in the private sector)
    - Job specialization is still pregnant and women are under-represented within superior management positions (only 33% in superior and top management positions)
  - What is done:
    - 2013 Agreement on gender equality in the civil service
    - Quantified target of balanced gender representation within e.g., superior management positions and competitive examination juries (40% in 2017)
    - Supervision of the implementation by ministerial departments: Equality Label

- Diversity
  - What is to address:
    - 70% of civil servants are children of civil servants: social reproduction
  - What is done:
    - 2013 Chart on promoting equality and combating discriminations in the civil service
    - Supervision of ministerial departments policies: Diversity Label
    - Special policy towards young people from disadvantaged social condition:
      - Dedicated preparatory classes to competitive examinations
      - Pre-contractual recruitment (prior to confirmation): C category
      - Apprenticeship to accompany future candidates to A and B categories competitions
    - General revision of competitive examinations: more professional and skills-oriented testing
    - Discriminations combating and secularism policies are part of training for successful candidates to competitive examinations
6. Main upcoming projects

6.1. Being a responsible employer (3/3)

• Work life quality
  – Agreement project: addressing individualization of tasks to promote a collective project
  – Issues:
    ▪ Professional and personal life conciliation
    ▪ Impact of ICT on personal life: towards a right to “disconnection”
    ▪ Coordination of inter-related issues: e.g. work organization, individual participation, change management, professional recognition, career paths design
  – Teleworking experimentation and implementation

• Health and safety at work
  – Psycho-social risks
    ▪ Strengthening training system, means of members of dedicated committees and work medical prevention staff
  – Musculoskeletal disorders
    ▪ Prevention guide of those risks, including methodologic advice towards employers

6.2. Promoting professional paths development

• Longer work life entails to offer a variety of functions and positions all along careers:
  – Attract young talents and rare skills
  – Keep fuelling staff motivation and skills development all along their professional career
  – Optimize skills and competences allocation inside the public service

• Policies and tools to foster professional paths development:
  – Better knowledge of existing jobs and skills and needs:
    ▪ HR forward planning
    ▪ Inter-ministerial and ministerial jobs directories
    ▪ Skills directory
    ▪ National and regional inter-ministerial online job exchange platforms
  – Facilitate mobility within each and all 3 civil service branches:
    ▪ Statutory flexibility
    ▪ Commitment of recruiters to a mobility charter
    ▪ Network of career and mobility advisors, career/skills assessment
6. Main upcoming projects

6.3. Empowering managers

- **Better know our managers** to place them more strategically and efficiently
  - Building “managerial plans”
  - Implement a review of managers
- **Make our managers more agile:**
  - More training to managerial techniques
    - Drafting a guide for supervising staff
    - “HR management school”
    - Training to assessment interviews, to the best distribution of bonuses envelopes
    - New assessment procedures dedicated to managers: 180° / 360° assessment
  - Managerial devolution
    - Place managerial decision processes at the appropriate hierarchical level
    - Make managers actual actors of the professional development of their teams
    - Developing the practice of engagement letters assigned to managers
- **Goal:** to disseminate an **common inter-ministerial management culture**

6.4. Becoming “State HR Directorate” (1/2)

- **DGAFP is moving towards strengthening its civil service governance role**
  - Why?
    - HR management is not sufficiently integrated into strategic and operational challenges
    - HR data are often scattered, insufficiently detailed and not structured enough
    - Empowering managers on HR issues requires a new positioning
  - How?
    - **Reinforce the HR function:**
      - More efficiency and better articulation with strategic and operational functions
      - More strategy-oriented to accompany change processes
    - **Diversify DGAFP missions:**
      - Keeping its traditional legal missions: statutes and regulations, social dialogue
      - Enhancing its new strategic steering missions:
        - Ensure coherence of HR policies
        - Accompany the modernization of HR management (tools, methods)
        - Spread information and knowledge on public employment evolutions
6. Main upcoming projects

6.4. Becoming “State HR Directorate” (2/2)

- Embodiment of the new governance of civil service with broader and more effective devices
  - Annual HR forward planning conferences: know ministerial HR policies, ensure their coherence with State HR strategy, share best practices
  - HR dashboards and annual social report: monitor significant ministerial indicators
  - Seminars for HR head directors and deputy directors: monthly meeting to share news, trends and best practices
  - Thematic steering committees: recruitment, training
  - Thematic networks: recruitment, forward planning, training, diversity, social action, mobility
  - Statistics on public employment and HR policies
  - Social agenda: talks and negotiations with trade unions on all HR issues (e.g. professional paths, work time, work life quality, equality, training)

Thank you for your attention!