

AUDIT

Horizontal audit of staff measures in connection with demographic change

Federal Office of Personnel

KEY FACTS

Over the next ten years, around one third of Federal Administration employees will reach retirement age. By comparison, the figure for the whole of Switzerland is lower, at just under 20%. At the same time, digitalisation and other developments such as flexible working models are posing additional challenges for the Confederation. Against this background, the Federal Council focused its Federal Administration personnel strategy for 2024-2027 on demographic change in the digital working environment. The Federal Office of Personnel (FOPER) is responsible for defining measures that are to be rolled out across the entire Federal Administration – for example, measures to improve the Confederation's attractiveness as an employer, encourage internal mobility or standardise staff processes to a greater extent. The strategy is being implemented using existing resources. The onus is upon the departments and offices to assess the impact of demographic change at their level, and take appropriate measures.

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) examined whether the Federal Administration is able to tackle the challenges posed by demographic change. The audit showed that the Federal Administration is addressing the subject with a number of measures at departmental and office level. The highly decentralised implementation of measures and the heterogeneity between the departments poses challenges. The SFAO has identified a need for action with regard to various interfaces between those involved, in order that synergies can be exploited.

Lack of exchange across departments and offices

The offices have different starting points, as the ratio of upcoming retirements in the next ten years varies from office to office. The offices also differ in terms of their size and job profiles, i.e. the specialist staff they require. They therefore set their own specific priorities for the measures they take. The SFAO observed that there was little exchange between offices across departments. Examples of successes ("good practice") are rarely passed on and some administrative units are dealing with similar topics without being aware of each other's efforts. The FOPER should therefore work together with the departments to define criteria which ensure that the potential for synergies in measures related to demographic change is used.

The personnel strategy contains a number of measures to promote internal mobility. This includes a jobs exchange for apprentices and interns. The FOPER should consistently exploit the efficiency benefits of jobs exchanges and consider extending them to permanent staff right from the outset.