

**POLICY GUIDELINES**  
**STRATEGY FOR STRENGTHENING HUMAN RESOURCES**  
**BY BETTER ANTICIPATING AND MANAGING CHANGE**

**8 October 2013**

**Background:**

1. In response to the European Commission's Green Paper, "Restructuring and anticipation of change: what lessons from recent experience?", the European social partners, EUPAE and TUNED (representing employers and trade unions, respectively), in the Social Dialogue Committee for Central Government Administrations (the Committee) emphasise the importance of public sector answers at both national and European levels with respect to managing and supporting change.
2. This is especially evident at a time of economic and financial crisis, and given the new EU economic governance. In areas where it is particularly well developed and efficient, the public sector acts as a buffer against the crisis.
3. A majority of EU countries have implemented austerity programmes, which have entailed, *inter alia*, measures to reduce or freeze wages, pensions and jobs, reforms to working conditions and changes in labour legislation.
4. In its response, the Committee noted that the best long-term, proactive approach to restructuring and change should integrate social dialogue based on trust between social partners, employers and trade unions, and respect for trade union rights.
5. The Committee also emphasised that when public employment initiatives are part of long-term development programmes, they can help lessen the impact of crisis unemployment while ensuring that growth benefits everyone.
6. Over and above the current context of the financial crisis, government administrations must constantly seek to optimise the use of their financial resources, to promote employees' competences, career paths security and top class management in order to retain their ability to provide high-quality public services to users.
7. This is why it must be clearly underscored that the strategy set out below can apply regardless of the financial context, as it seeks to boost the adaptability of organizations, to bolster their responsiveness and their capacity to innovate with an eye to better taking users' needs into account.
8. Moreover, this strategy rests on a basis of shared public service values recognized by government administrations as set out in the European framework agreement signed by the Committee's partners on 12 December 2012.
9. Human resource policies should no longer be defined as mere support tools. Rather, they should be part of a larger strategy for anticipating change, particularly in terms of jobs, with an eye to continually adapting to existing and future changes.
10. Such a strategy requires organizations to think deeply about their roles and how they carry them out. The idea is to better fulfil public service missions, particularly through streamlining procedures, shortening waiting times and ensuring that all users are

provided with equal access and treatment. The goal is to meet users' needs for public services and action by allowing administrations to be more responsive.

11. In addition, as underscored in the framework agreement, consistent social dialogue is a critical element in policies for managing and anticipating change, and it must be an integral part of implementing strategies to bolster human resources.

12. This strategy is built around the following objectives:

- Give social dialogue pride of place in anticipating and managing change
- Strengthen anticipating capacity
- Bolster HR departments' capacities and define their role and mission
- Streamline and clarify procedures
- Mobilise management
- Optimise the use of new technologies

13. This strategy is part of a willingness to promote well-being in the workplace and, in a larger sense, of employers' social and environmental responsibilities. The goal is to provide a framework of reference and overall consistency to HR management measures in order to better promote them and to bolster public service ability to meet the challenges of the current economic climate.

## **1. GIVE SOCIAL DIALOGUE PRIDE OF PLACE IN ANTICIPATING AND MANAGING CHANGE**

1. Social dialogue is part of change management. It is an element of social democracy that encourages staff mobilization and ownership of reform strategies.
2. Any change may be seen as a decisive moment of organizational demand and effectiveness, in response to which disagreement or lack of involvement of employees can hobble the success of the response strategy and incur additional costs. For this reason, any change must involve social dialogue, bringing to the table those who will be responsible for carrying it out.
3. Changes in the social and economic environment should not, on the one hand, compromise the need to maintain solidarity within organizations and on the other should safeguard the health and mental well-being of individuals who are often put under strain by transformations.
4. Within a context of rapid change, social dialogue is a crucial element for taking into account delicate situations, for providing humane management of the change process, and for better preparing for such change through upstream identification of the challenges, risks and opportunities.

#### **AREAS FOR ACTION:**

- ↳ Define a social dialogue framework with trade union organizations: step up timely social dialogue with employees and trade union representatives with respect to any change in the organization of work, employment and contractual relationships before, during and after the implementation of these changes
- ↳ Maintain working conditions and ensure that they are high-quality: do not allow social climate to deteriorate and maintain or increase the quality of working life

## **2. STRENGTHEN ANTICIPATION CAPACITY**

1. Anticipation is vital, particularly through the introduction of job and skill planning. This forward planning should, in the medium-term, factor in financial guidelines, foreseeable shifts in staffing along with any structural changes that may be reasonably anticipated. Assessments of skill requirements enable organizations to recruit the right people, train (or retrain) staff, avoid taking drastic measures and bolster the effectiveness of public service.
2. In addition, forward planning can be twinned with the development of watch functions, with an eye to understanding the latest trends in several areas, including user needs, new technologies, sustainable efficiency and productivity, the economy, and demographic, social and environmental changes. The idea is to introduce a thoroughgoing process for identifying not only new trends but also innovations.

#### **AREAS FOR ACTION:**

- ↳ Enhanced potential:
  - ☞ Monitor and anticipate cultural shifts
  - ☞ Active involvement in labour market equilibrium (supply and demand)
- ↳ Bolster /with respect to jobs and qualifications:
  - ☞ Monitor and anticipate demographic shifts
  - ☞ Analyse critical and emerging skills
  - ☞ Adjust recruitment policies to changes as identified
- ↳ Carry out watch functions:
  - ☞ Analyse the evolution of the public service tasks and its impact on the organization and its functioning: ensure that its role and missions correspond to reality
    - ☞ Anticipate matching of jobs and skills to the tasks
    - ☞ Identify and transfer skills
- ↳ Keep both employees and the social partners informed so that they can keep track of the changes and adapt to the needs of their organization

### **3. BOLSTER HR DEPARTMENTS' CAPACITIES AND DEFINING THEIR ROLE AND MISSION**

1. The goal is to mobilize HR tools and practices that strengthen skill management and development and help optimize resource management.
2. To best manage the impact of change, it is particularly vital to:
  - Support employees' professional development in connection with the needs of the organization and in cooperation with staff themselves (this specifically involves a mobility policy that takes into account employees' aspirations within the framework of their career paths)
  - Expand and validate the skill of each member of staff, regardless of his or her role or place in the hierarchy, by investing in lifelong training

#### **AREAS FOR ACTION:**

- ↳ Career path management:
  - ☞ Support and enhance professional careers
  - ☞ Develop skills and provide lifelong vocational training
- ↳ Pay policy negotiated with trade unions:
  - ☞ Ensure that all employees, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, age, disability or sexual orientation, are treated equally for the same work or for work of equal value
    - ☞ Pay transparency
    - ☞ Promote a coherent pay system to prevent socially unacceptable wage gaps and thus ensure that the public service is an attractive career option
    - ☞ Take into account competences and, where need be, results in connection with service quality on the basis of an objective and transparent methodology.
- ↳ Changing and improving work organisation:
  - ☞ Improve the quality of working life and work/life balance
  - ☞ Create the conditions for sustainable HR management through the social responsibility of public sector employers
  - ☞ Take into account the specificity of certain tasks by adapting work organisation

#### **4. STREAMLINE AND CLARIFY PROCEDURES AND IMPROVE SERVICE ORGANISATION**

1. Streamlining and clarifying should take place in connection with the use of new technologies, but also assessment procedures needed to update HR policies.
2. The goal of streamlining is to:
  - Ensure that rules are both transparent and accessible
  - Lighten and simplify applicable legislation
  - Cut waiting times and reduce management costs
  - Simplify procedures
  - introduce relevant quality indicators

##### **AREAS FOR ACTION**

- ↳ Monitor the quality of standards:
  - ☞ Repeal obsolete provisions
  - ☞ Regroup similar pieces of legislation
  - ☞ Ensure that all legislation is published
  - ☞ Control standards inflation
- ↳ Bring new technologies into play:
  - ☞ Cut waiting times and costs
  - ☞ Expand customized follow-up
  - ☞ Facilitate work and contacts
  - ☞ Streamline procedures
- ↳ Introduce quality procedures in order to:
  - ☞ Improve relations with users
  - ☞ Improve understanding of the task
- ↳ Improve impartiality and good administration management:
  - ☞ Avoid conflicts of interest
  - ☞ Carry out an analysis of the relevance of outsourcing policies (actual costs, quality of service, impact on the working conditions)

3. Streamlining can also be used to fight wasted resources. Cutting back red tape and streamlining procedures can help departments refocus their activities in favour of helping users. The quality assurance strategy listed above will help strengthen the principle of legality.

#### **5. MOBILISE MANAGEMENT**

1. It is critical that staff be given real autonomy in order to respond as proactively and effectively as possible to change.

2. Without replacing social dialogue, central government departments must be able to rely on management's ability to motivate and involve employees at every level. Every stakeholder must play a part in this quest for efficiency. This is the area in which the issue of values and a shared vision are critical.
  
3. Management methods to be used as part of this strategy include:
  - Collaborative efforts and a clear allocation of responsibilities
  - Networking and collective action
  - Project management and inclusive approaches
  - Enrichment of individual and collective tasks
  
4. This shift in management methods must go hand in hand with changing and strengthening procedures with an eye to fostering synergies.
  
5. Organizations' functional components are needed to introduce collaborative methods that must include:
  - Development of procedures for assessing public policies according to a transparent methodology taking into account the views of users and trade unions
  - Improved quality assurance

#### **AREAS FOR ACTION**

- ↳ Provide support for managers and adjust organizations:
  - ☞ Introduce new management methods in connection with organizational changes
  - ☞ Support and get all managers involved in implementing structural changes
  - ☞ Provide better training for managers in social dialogue, and get them more involved in the area of human resources
  
- ↳ Employee accountability:
  - ☞ Involvement and buy-in: everyone is an actor and a contributor to change
  - ☞ Change ways of working
  - ☞ Promotion involves assessment and results
  - ☞ Enrich individual tasks and increase staff autonomy
  
- ↳ Motivate/reward success in terms of medium-term innovation

#### **6. OPTIMIZE THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

1. The efficiency of organizations – government departments included – is based on economic and social intelligence (in order to anticipate change in a reasonable manner), on knowledge engineering (training) and on the good use of information technologies to:

- Better manage and share knowledge through the development of information systems (IS)
- Develop an intangible heritage of knowledge by capitalising collective know-how (particularly through the use of knowledge management applications)
- Better share information
- Improve user relations particularly through the use of online services

#### **AREAS FOR ACTION**

- ↳ Manage and share information:
  - ☞ Develop information systems and management tools
  - ☞ Develop groupware and remote applications
  - ☞ Develop knowledge management tools
  - ☞ Share information in open format
  - ☞ Train staff in the use of new tools, applications, etc.

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The EUPAE/TUNED social partners wish to promote this HR policy strategy to their respective members and to follow it up, with a view to support the adaptation of European public services and the general interest for the benefit of EU populations.