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Composition...	HR Management...	Reforms...	

Background

Employment in central government under the main General Employment Framework (GEF):¹

2012: 70 492 Full-time equivalents (FTEs)

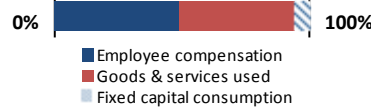
Total employment in the general government sector as a percentage of labour force (2010):[†]

17.2%

Central human resources management body:

Federal Public Service Personnel and Organisation

Government production costs (2010)^{††}



Government centralisation (2008)^{††}



Type of recruitment system (2010)



Legal Framework

GEF covers all employees:	Yes
GEF includes fixed-term contracts:	No
Private law applicable in public sector:	No

All regions and communities have constitutional autonomy, but they are still required to comply with the Royal Decree of 22 December 2000 on the applicability of the general principles of the administrative and remunerative statutes for national public servants to staff of regional and community authorities and services. The Special Law of 8 August 1980 establishes the recruitment of statutory public servants through the services of the

federal recruitment office (SELOR). The GEF covers all civil servants, who are statutory employees and form the majority of public employment. Fixed-term contracts are not covered under the GEF, but are in use. Similarly, casual employment is restricted to a number of legally defined occasions and falls outside the GEF. Guarantees in favour of life-long employment are in place for civil servants.

Staff have the right:

	to unionise	to strike
Public sector	Yes	Yes
Private sector	Yes	Yes

Benefits, to which employees are entitled to, are:

	Full funding of social security	Partial funding of social security	Some funding of pensions
Public sector	No Data	No Data	No Data
Private sector	No Data	No Data	No Data

Firing rules provide:

	Different guarantees about job protection / dismissal	Guarantees in favour of life-long employment
Public sector	Yes	Yes
Private sector	Yes	No

Composition of Employment

Central government employment (2012)¹

Total employment: 70 492 FTEs

Part-time employment: 26 077 employees

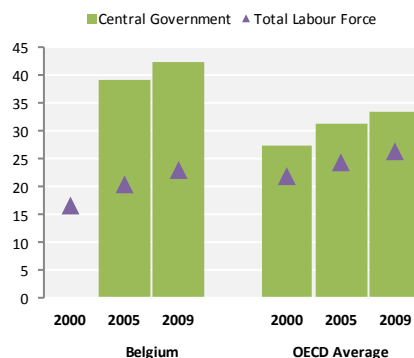
Part time is defined as less than 38 hours per week.

Gender in central government (2012)¹

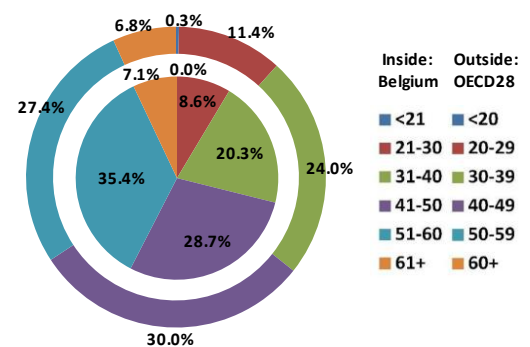
Female participation in central government workforce: 52.7%

Share of top and middle positions who are women: 42.5%

¹ Data are for core ministries and agencies of central/federal governments, including public bodies of social security, national scientific institutions and national institutions of general interest.



Percentage of employees aged 50 years or older in central government and total labour force (2000, 2005 and 2009)*



Age structure of central government 2009

In 2011, the federal government employed 133 083 civil servants, including police, military and judiciary order. Cities employed 267 345 employees; provinces had 14 321 employees; and communities and regions employed 385 405 people. The proportion of part-time employment is fairly average for OECD countries, with the vast majority of part-time employees working between 80% and 95% of full-time hours. The age structure of public employment is heavily skewed towards older employees, with the proportion

of employees aged over 50 standing at 42.4% in 2009, well above the OECD average of 34.3% for employees aged 50 or older. In addition, the proportion of this group is growing for both the public sector and the total labour force, although the level is much higher for the public sector. The representation of women in central government is roughly in line with the OECD average. However, the representation among management positions, 42.5% in 2012, is well above the OECD average of 34.7% in 2009.

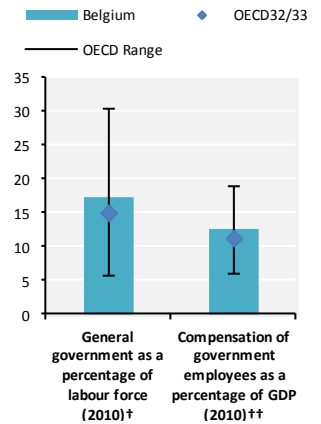
Public Sector Restructuring

Belgium is one of 27 OECD countries that reported an anticipated decrease in public employment levels as a result of planned reforms. However, details regarding the planned reforms are unavailable. The government is not permitted to dismiss civil servants when it seeks to restructure and there are no regular plans to encourage voluntary departure.~ General government sector employment (excluding public corporations) as a percentage of the labour force, 17.2% in 2010, is slightly above the OECD average of 15.1%. Similarly, compensation of public employees as a percentage of GDP, 12.6% in 2010, is also slightly above the OECD average of 11.3%.

Anticipated reforms' effect on employment level: Decrease

Implemented changes in employment levels affecting more than 50% of ministries/agencies since 2000:

- Hiring freeze / non replacement of retiring staff
- Devolution of authority over other levels of government
- Reorganisation / restructuring



Organisation of HR Management

Decentralisation of HR Management

Central HRM unit: Federal Public Service Personnel and Organisation

Role: Coordination only

Location: Dedicated ministry/organisation

- Responsibilities:**
- Provide leadership and guidance
 - Provide advice on legal framework
 - Standardise recruitment and skills profiles
 - Define salary levels and benefits
 - Provide training
 - Promote diversity

- Personnel, budget and pay delegation:**
- Pay systems are managed centrally.
 - Bonuses are defined centrally and managed by ministries.
 - Budget allocation and the distribution of posts are managed by ministries.

- Classification, recruitment and dismissal delegation:**
- The duration of posts and dismissal due to restructuring are managed centrally.
 - The post classification system is set centrally, with ministries given latitude in application.
 - Recruitment, individual employment duration, career management and other forms of dismissal are managed by ministries.

- Employment conditions delegation:**
- Flexibility of working conditions are set and monitored centrally.
 - Performance appraisal, adjustments to working conditions, the code of conduct and equal opportunity issues are set centrally, with some latitude for ministries in application.

Belgium delegates HRM practices to line ministries to a similar extent as the average OECD country. The central HRM unit co-ordinates a fairly narrow range of issues, but is closely involved in the management of pay systems, as well as some aspects of dismissal, working conditions and performance appraisal. Ministries are involved in managing a range of HRM issues, in particular recruitment, most forms of dismissal, budget allocation, career management and the distribution of posts. Overall, delegation has led to broadly comparable employment frameworks within ministries, but with significant differences across them. All Belgian governments (federal and regional) have different types of sub-government organisations, along with a separate identity and

management. All governments handle their own workforce planning and management individually. Within central government, workforce planning has been delegated to the senior management level. In addition, the central government makes substantially more use of strategic HRM practices compared to the OECD average. An accountability framework for management is fully linked to strategic objectives and requires management to report on a broad range of issues. Performance assessment considers HRM targets, but regular assessments of ministries' HRM capacity are not undertaken. Systematic forward planning is used, and covers a full range of aspects over a reasonable horizon.

Strategic HR Management

Existence of HRM accountability framework for managers: Yes, and HRM is fully linked to strategic objectives.

HRM targets feed performance assessments: Yes

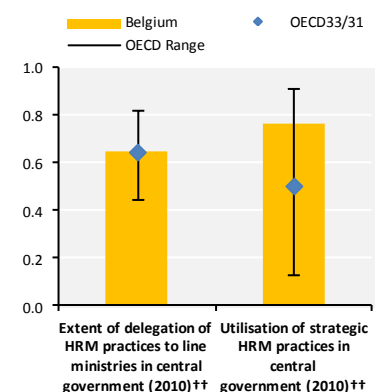
Regular HRM assessment of ministries and departments: No

- Framework requires top & middle management to plan and report on:**
- Compliance with HR rules & targets for employment and pay
 - Effectiveness of strategic workforce planning efforts
 - Workforce strategies to close competency gaps
 - General people management

Forward planning use: Yes, with regular, systematic process.

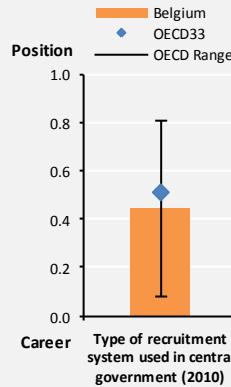
Forward-planning horizon: 2-3 years

- Key aspects explicitly considered in forward planning:**
- New issues in policy delivery
 - Civil service demographics
 - Possibilities for outsourcing
 - Possibilities for relocating staff
 - Efficiency savings (for example, through e-government)

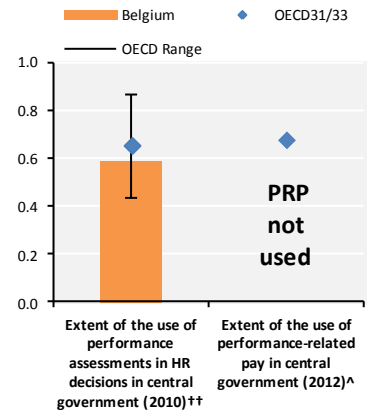


HR Management Practice

RECRUITMENT: Belgium uses a recruitment system that is somewhat more career based than position based. The method of entry into the civil service varies depending on the post. Statutory employment is used for non-senior management employees and processes for all governments (federal and regional) are regulated. Governments are required to use SELOR as their recruitment agency; use competitive examinations which are differentiated by educational level; and distribution into these groups is done by ministries. SELOR uses recruitment specific profiles built on competency-based recruitment. There is a tendency towards reducing the number of different professional groups, or corps, in the civil service. In other cases, entry is gained through direct application and an interview. Some posts are open to direct application by external candidates, and there has been action taken to increase the use of external recruitment for professionals and technical support. Disabled candidates are given preferential right to job interviews, and there are special preparation programmes available for women. An overall target of 3% of the workforce applies to disabled persons; however, in 2009 the figure stood at 0.9%.



PERFORMANCE: Belgium makes less use of performance assessment in HR decisions compared to the average OECD country. Assessment is used for almost all employees and takes the form of an annual meeting with, and written feedback from, the immediate superior, as well as a meeting with the superior two levels above every two years. In addition, plans to use 360° feedback are in preparation. A range of criteria is used, including activities undertaken, outputs, improvement of competencies and interpersonal skills. Assessment is highly important to career advancement. Belgium is one of five OECD countries that do not use performance-related pay (PRP).



PAY SETTING: Base salary is set through a collective bargaining framework and negotiations take place at the central level, with adjustments by departments. Base salary and bonuses are indexed to inflation, with some bonuses being subject to other forms of indexation. Revision of base salary can be every year or two, depending on the function, level and career stage. Job content and

qualifications are the most important determinants of base salary for all grades, with relevant experience also contributing, particularly for top management. Seniority based pay is used, but has been reduced in recent years. Previous salary and similar experience factor into a new recruit's pay level.

Most important factors to determine base salary	Top Management	Middle Management	Professionals	Secretarial Level	Technical Support
Educational qualification	◀	●	●	◀	◀
Job content	●	●	●	◀	◀
Ministry	○	◀	◀	○	◀
Performance	○	○	○	○	○
Age	○	○	○	○	○
Seniority in the position	○	◀	◀	○	○
Relevant experience	●	◀	◀	◀	◀

● Key importance ◀ Somewhat important ○ Not at all important

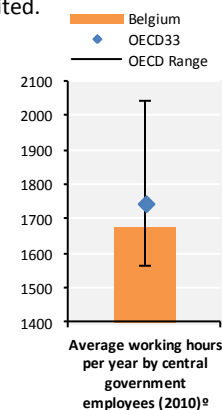
PROMOTIONS: Years of experience, qualifications and performance appraisals are factors in promotion decisions for all grades. To change job category, staff need to take a written examination, and educational barriers may apply. Vacancies are placed on transparent listings accessible government wide, and a shortlist of candidates is compiled by the HR department. Special information sessions are provided to help advance the promotion of women in the civil service.

MOBILITY: Internal mobility has been increasing, although no specific plans are in place to influence it. External mobility is accepted but not promoted in any particular way. Staff on external postings risk losing pension rights, career prospects and the accumulation of salaries and benefits if they do not return to the civil service.

TRAINING: Initial training is used for all entrants to the civil service and is differentiated by seniority level. For university graduates, training is between 10 and 20 days during the first year of service, depending on the organisation. Some institutions have specialised training programmes for certain functions. On average, public employees receive 3-5 days of training per year.

Number of regular working hours per week: ♀	38
Average number of annual leave days per year: ♀	26
Average number of bank (public) holidays per year: ♀	10
Total number of hours worked per year: ♀	1 674

WORK CONDITIONS: The average yearly working hours in Belgium, 1 674 hours in 2010, is below the OECD average of 1 745 hours. This is driven by marginally fewer weekly work hours and a few extra days of annual leave. The average number of sick days taken per employee is 12.4 days per year, and annual sick days with a medical certificate are limited.

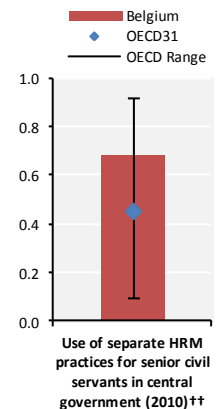


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Senior Management

Belgium uses separate HRM practices for senior civil servants (SCS) to a substantially greater extent than the average OECD country. SCS are considered a separate group and have a centrally defined skills profile. No policies are in place to identify potential leadership early in their career. SCS are recruited with a more centralised process and more attention is paid to managing their performance and potential conflicts of interest. Benefits form a larger proportion of their pay, and their contracts are for a specific term which is shorter than for regular staff. A good proportion of senior management

positions are open to external recruitment and selection panels are systematically used. The minister chooses the head of administration (highest level civil servant) among the short list of candidates who succeeded in the objectivised assessment procedure, and must motivate his choice. The head of administration selects civil servants of the level below himself in the same manner. All political advisers to the minister turn over with a change in government, as well as one chairman of the board of directors (highest civil servant), specifically the one from the Chancellery of the Prime Minister.



Industrial Relations

There is no central public sector employer's organisation. Collective bargaining agreements are negotiated with those political authorities that are responsible for determining working conditions and the level of remuneration. The main actors involved in social dialogue on the employees' side are: the General Confederation of Public Services; the Federation of Christian Public Service Unions; and the Free Trade Union of Civil Servants. Civil service unions are systematically involved in HRM negotiations and receive partial public funding. By law, unions

must be consulted over all identified HRM issues, except for government restructuring, in which they are not normally involved. Remuneration, work conditions, the employment framework and the code of conduct are negotiated both centrally and at delegated levels. The right to strike/minimum service and the introduction of new management tools are negotiated centrally. All public employees in central government are granted the right to unionise and strike, the latter of which is guaranteed without restriction.

Reforms

The Belgian government has recently developed three programs that aim to assist forward planning in managing the skills, functions and needs of a changing workforce. The In Vivo and Vitruvius programs focus on developing future leadership to foster a result-oriented leadership culture. The programs emphasise cultural elements of the

workplace and the development of soft skills. The Vitaphase project anticipates an ageing workforce and aims to help organisations to implement strategy, processes and tools for optimal talent management, taking into account the changes and needs of the organisation and employees.

Challenges

- Talent recruiting and retaining.
- Knowledge and experience transfer, especially given the changing dynamic of an ageing workforce.
- Efficiency in public service delivery.
- Quality of work life (motivation, meaning of work, development, work-life balance, flexible working arrangements, etc.)
- Optimal use of human resources; given the scarcity of means, optimal repartition of the workforce in function of needs.

Sources

Unless indicated otherwise, all data are sourced from OECD (2010), *Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management in Central/Federal Governments*, unpublished.

* Data for Total Labour Force from OECD *Labour Force Statistics Database*; data for Central Government from OECD (2011), *Government at a Glance 2011*.

† Data from International Labour Organization (ILO) *LABORSTA Database* and OECD *National Accounts Statistics*. See Methodological Note.

†† OECD (2011), *Government at a Glance 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

~ OECD (2012), *Restoring Public Finances, 2012 Update*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

° OECD (2010), *Survey on the Compensation of Employees in Central/Federal Governments*, unpublished.

^ OECD (2012), *Rewarding Performance in the Public Sector: Performance-related Pay in OECD Countries*, unpublished.

Further Reading

OECD (2012), *Public Sector Compensation in Times of Austerity*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2011), *Public Servants as Partners for Growth: Toward a Stronger, Leaner and More Equitable Workforce*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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