

## **Implementation of cross-departmental office directives Federal Office of Personnel (FOPER)**

### **Key points**

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In 2014, the Federal Administration's personnel expenses amounted to some CHF 5.4 billion. This sum is spread over 34,772 full-time equivalents. The departments and some of the administrative units (AU) under them enjoy considerable discretion in personnel management matters. However, the human resources employed on both a centralised and decentralised basis must still remain with certain guidelines.

Against this backdrop, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited whether tasks, powers and responsibilities are clearly defined and whether inspection of compliance with and implementation of the directives is sufficiently and clearly regulated. This audit focuses on the FOPER as a cross-departmental office. The general secretariats of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP), the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) and the Federal Department of Finance (FDF) were included in the audit.

The SFAO believes the necessity of cross-departmental offices is indisputable. They are key to achieving a consistent approach in core areas in the Federal Administration. In order to effectively fulfil this role, the regulatory, enforcement and supervisory powers of cross-departmental offices are an essential basis.

### **Difficult basis for the FOPER: lack of supervisory and enforcement powers**

The FOPER is not assigned the corresponding formal inspection powers in the Federal Personnel Ordinance (FPersO), and neither the Federal Council nor the FDF have given it a mandate based on its supervisory and inspection duties. There is therefore a lack of enforcement tools. If the necessary basis were created, it would be the FOPER's responsibility to inspect compliance with key requirements or to have it inspected on its behalf.

Systematic inspection requires a control loop, which establishes who is to conduct audits and how they are to be conducted and documented as well as how reporting to the FOPER should take place. The FOPER may say that such a loop exists at the personnel strategy level with the comparison of target and actual values, the assessment of indicators, staff surveys and the annual reporting. At the operational level, however, there is no risk-based supervisory concept for inspecting compliance with requirements. A control loop is not in place here.

### **Variations within personnel policy: need for uniform and automated inspections**

The extent to which powers are delegated to the AUs within the departments varies. There are no documented supervisory concepts. However, the delegation directives cover part of these. Compliance with the requirements is generally monitored using management control figures, indicators, etc. The inspections are generally not clearly defined and only performed ad hoc. They are often not even documented as a result.

The different ways of dealing with the delegated powers can ultimately lead to the differentiated implementation of personnel policy. This also involves a variety of regulations, which is unnecessary.



For instance, the Federal Administration has expenses regulations which include eleven different sets of departmental prescriptions.

The SFAO recommends that the FOPER be assigned the necessary powers of supervision and inspection. The FOPER should develop a supervisory concept based on a risk analysis. The concept should define the areas to be audited and establish control loops. The focus here should be on automated inspections. The FOPER is to ensure that measures are taken in response to the audit findings. The FOPER is to oversee the elimination of the weaknesses in question. Finally, the tools enabling the execution of recommendations and corrections need to be clearly defined and strengthened. The framing of the supervisory concept will depend largely on the future assignment of powers.

**Original text in German**