

## Contents

### Editorial

#### **Diversity: an asset for public services** Yazid Sabeg

Page 3

#### ❖ **What is expected from diversity in the civil service?**

Page 5

#### ❖ **Promoting equity through diversity**

Page 7

#### ❖ **Diversity as a way to improve public performance**

Page 9

#### ❖ **Diversity as a way to improve service quality and strengthen public confidence**

Page 11

#### ❖ **Which human resource management practices for greater diversity?**

Page 13

#### ❖ **Foreign practices under debate in France**

#### **Classifying, measuring and calculating**

Page 15

#### ❖ **France : The HALDE and the civil service**

#### **Using the Diversity label to encourage action**

---

The complete collection of Public Management Outlook is online on the IGPDE portal at:  
[http://www.institut.minefi.gouv.fr/sections/recherche\\_publications](http://www.institut.minefi.gouv.fr/sections/recherche_publications)

For subscriptions send an e-mail to  
[rev-english.igpde@finances.gouv.fr](mailto:rev-english.igpde@finances.gouv.fr)

---

Contact :  
[rev-pgp.igpde@finances.gouv.fr](mailto:rev-pgp.igpde@finances.gouv.fr)

## Diversity: an asset for public services

The civil service reflects France's ambitions. The men and women employed by the service and their commitment to their duties make this as clear as a long speech about the values of the French Republic, if not clearer. The civil service is exposed to the public eye and therefore has the duty to set an example. Our fellow citizens rightly expect it to comply at all times with the principles governing France. Promoting diversity in the civil service is a public duty as well as a source of effectiveness.

Diversity is a touchstone of equality. It strengthens the credibility and the legitimacy of the civil service, boosting efficiency. This is why the civil service needs to reflect the image of the society it serves. Can we honestly say that the French civil service sets an example in this area? How many prefects come from minority backgrounds? How many women are senior research directors at the CNRS? How many disabled people are top-level managers? Should we really assume that these people are less competent, less worthy of serving the State than others?

Since 2008, we have taken many initiatives to encourage diversity and to bring about genuine equality in the civil service. Age limits have been abolished in almost all central government examinations. The PACTE<sup>1</sup> procedure has been revived to facilitate admission to category C (665 young people were concerned in 2008). Moreover, the social partners signed a Charter to foster equality in the civil service.

In 2009, France's 170 civil service schools agreed to start providing special preparatory courses for disadvantaged candidates. While the republican principle hasn't changed since the 19th century and examinations are the same for everyone, these preparatory courses are adapted to individual applicants. Under the new system, disadvantaged candidates are not granted easier access but receive more support. Each ministry has been instructed to develop preparatory courses for its schools and to impose success rates. The students attending such courses currently account for about 30% of recruits hired after examination. Selected students get grants and housing facilities.

The government is also looking into other solutions and measures. A taskforce has been set up to determine the impact of social bias on internal examinations and on entrance examinations for new recruits to the civil service. The academism of certain tests doesn't always enrich the mix of successful candidates since it favours applicants who know the ins and outs of the system. This undermines diversity, raises doubt about the fairness of selection methods and does not necessarily lead to greater effectiveness. So far, more than 180 examinations have been reviewed in order to upgrade and gear tests toward the functions to be filled and the actual activities of the future managers.

---

1 PACTE: *Parcours d'accès aux carrières territoriales, hospitalières et de l'Etat* (regional, hospital and state career access route)

We should not overlook the importance of vocational training, an area in which the public sector is a leader with 49% women, i.e. 18 points above the private sector average. Learning is an excellent way to achieve social diversity and to integrate disabled people in an ordinary job environment. It should be used more for this purpose. We must tirelessly continue interministerial and interinstitutional efforts to step up the use of combined job/training schemes.

The government is currently reviewing the PACTE mechanism, simplifying apprenticeship contracts, aligning these contracts with the ordinary law system, piloting anonymous CVs throughout the civil service and working towards the "Diversity label", which was developed for private sector enterprises as well as public sector entities.

This issue describes some of the measures and solutions on which we are working. I am convinced that diversity is an asset for the civil service. It is up to us to strengthen it since it is a great tool in the service of equality and, I believe, in the service of France.

**Yazid Sabeg**

Commissioner for Diversity and Equal Opportunities

## What is expected from diversity in the civil service?

Nowadays, many countries consider recognition of population diversity a social cohesion issue and therefore pay closer attention to it. It is generally agreed that diversity needs to be encouraged. But which benefits do governments expect from "diversity policies"? There seem to be several views. Some stakeholders believe that diversity results in genuine equality among citizens while others argue that diversity is a source of increased productivity and creativity and strengthens public confidence. Do foreign experiences confirm these underlying postulates?

"Diversity: an asset for public services" was the final theme of the Ninth International Symposium on Public Management organised by the Institute for Public Management and Economic Development (IGPDE) in partnership with the OECD and, this year, the HALDE<sup>2</sup>. The five roundtables were addressed by speakers from eight foreign countries. The following pages summarise their views and experiences, which are enriching the ongoing debate in France.

### Implementing equal opportunity principles

When implementing the principles of equity and equal opportunity which are the cornerstones of any democracy, the objective is clear: fighting discrimination regardless of its source (gender, ethnic background, religion, disability) and fighting stereotypes. Today, civil services across the world are committed to this fight, reflected in equal opportunity committees, labels and charters. On 2 December 2008, the Minister for the Budget, Public Accounts and the Civil Service, the Minister of State for the Civil Service and the President of the *Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discriminations et pour l'Égalité* (HALDE) signed a charter to promote equality in the French civil service. The Ministries for the Economy and the Budget are getting ready for the Diversity label.

### Diversity as a way to improve efficiency

Diversity and performance can be linked in two different ways. The first is to fight discrimination by allowing everyone, regardless of their personal characteristics, to make the most of their skills in the service of the government. This raises efficiency in the administration since it means that no categories are excluded and the best talents are recruited. The second approach reflects the idea that efficiency will take root and grow in a civil service which is open to previously under-represented profiles, thanks to the conviction that different target groups contribute new competences or simply because differences and a broad "mixture" are believed to boost performance. In a recent study, "Fostering Diversity in the Public Service", the OECD reported that many countries have made diversity a top political priority to promote social mobility, equity and quality in service delivery, adding that it is probably still too early to evaluate its exact impact on performance.

### An administration which reflects society ?

Is the quality of service delivery better when the service provider resembles the user? Is this type of supplier more willing to engage in dialogue? Various studies draw different conclusions. There is no proof that resemblance to the "client" ensures better service. Moreover, this postulate raises knotty issues: if the administration needs to be a "reflection" of society, we need to identify and classify the social groups to be served at the risk of reproducing the divides we want to combat. By contrast, the presence of civil servants recruited from minority groups, if this presence is considered valuable and introduced in all departments without restriction to certain types of duties, can no doubt foster much-needed awareness and openness throughout the organisation.

---

<sup>2</sup> HALDE: *Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discriminations et pour l'Égalité* (High Authority to Fight Discrimination and to Promote Equality)

## **Reviewing human resource management processes**

While recruitment is a key ingredient of diversity policies, it is no more important than career progress, especially in such areas as appointment to top-level offices. Diversity policies cover all human resource processes, not just selection but also training, promotion, support for mobility, etc. Diversifying the civil service calls for adjustment of human resource management practices, which need to be objective and strict and serve equal opportunity each step along the way. The idea is to build a human resource management system effectively recognising the competences of all players.

## **Questions about diversity**

Certain mechanisms of the diversity policies adopted in foreign countries are still under discussion in France. While the aim remains to do away with certain inequalities by favouring one group over another, the methods used can change everything. Is it acceptable to recruit less competent employees in order to meet a target? Or should recruitment strictly reflect competences ? Can people be counted according to ethnic origin followed by specific adjustments to correct discrepancies ? How can we measure inequalities and progress? While there seems to be a consensus on methods to fight discrimination and to restore equal opportunity, "targeted" measures raise questions about identification solutions (often stigmatising), measurement of results and, more generally, the validity of diversity policies.

This issue presents the debates of the roundtables at the International Symposium :

Roundtable 1: Diversity as a way to ensure equal opportunity and combat discrimination

Roundtable 2: Diversity as a way to improve efficiency and performance

Roundtable 3: Diversity as a way to improve service quality and strengthen public confidence

Roundtable 4: Which human resource management practices for greater diversity?

Roundtable 5: Foreign practices under debate in France

## Promoting equity through diversity

While the constitution of most countries recognises the principle of equality, there remain many forms of discrimination, which hamper diversity within their organisations. The effort to encourage equity and fight discrimination is therefore intended to correct direct and indirect inequalities rather than to promote better representation by positive actions designed to guarantee the application of basic principles. Hence this is less an effort to foster diversity than to fight discrimination. As such it is a vital prerequisite for more dynamic policies.

**Chair:** Brigitte Grésy, General Inspector for Social Affairs, France, author of the report on gender equality entitled "*L'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes*".

**Israel:** Sharon Avraham-Weiss, Regional Delegate, Equal Employment Opportunities Commission

**Canada:** Ross Mac Leod, Assistant Deputy Minister, Treasury Board

**Keynote speaker:** Françoise Milewski, former rapporteur of the Steering Committee for Equal Access of Men and Women to the Civil Service

---

### Fighting inequalities to remove barriers to the effectiveness of equality

Fighting inequalities...

In Israel, women of Arab extraction have an employment rate of 20%. The poverty rate is 50% among Israeli Arabs and 60% among ultra-orthodox Jews (Haredim). Military service aggravates inequalities for these population groups (which are not called up), since the army enables soldiers to get higher positions, both military and civilian. They are separated by an economic and social divide from the rest of the population.

In Canada, significant disparities exist between the provinces. In the 1970s, a parliamentary commission published a survey of inequalities and called for the adoption of measures.

In multicultural societies such as Canada, where 20% of the population was born in a foreign country, and Israel, where the native population is the main focus of problems, barriers to the diversity of organisations are likely to generate a feeling of frustration with dangerous implications for social cohesion. Discrimination must therefore be fought to make sure equality does not just remain a word.

#### ...removing barriers to equal opportunity

Diversity policies aimed at equity and the fight against discrimination are intended to remove barriers which prevent organisations from being as diverse as society.

Israel has set up institutions to combat discrimination linked to age, gender, race, military service, religion and maternity. The mission of the High Commission for Equal Opportunity is to raise public awareness, and to receive, investigate and file complaints. Parliamentary committees have been organised for Bedouins, Circassians and the integration of Ethiopians.

Other mechanisms are used as well to fight discrimination. The Cadets for Public Service initiative developed by the Aditim agency offers an eight-year study programme enabling disadvantaged population groups to rise to senior positions. Despite these tools, the fight against discrimination is hampered by a job shortage, failure to apply the law consistently and hesitance on the part of the population groups concerned to apply for such jobs. As a result, few Israeli Arabs – who account for 20% of the overall population and only 6.67% of civil servants – occupy top management positions. Similarly, only 10% of such positions are filled by women.

Since the adoption of the Employment Equity Act of 1996, all Canadian public employers are obliged to ensure the impartiality of their system of employment, recruitment, training, advancement and/or promotion. In the Federal public service, the goal is to combine diversity with the principle of merit, which remains the key hiring criterion.

## **From the fight against discrimination to diversity policy**

Once the mechanisms to combat inequalities are in place, the next step is generally to foster diversity, in the first place in the administration, which must set an example.

For instance, since 1996, the Canadian ministries are required to analyse their workforce and to submit equity plans with targets and effective measures to the Public Service Commission for evaluation. These plans focus on four target groups: women, disabled people, native peoples and visible minorities. These groups must be represented in the civil service in equal or higher proportion than their percentage in the active population. In the Federal government, women account for 52.8% of all employees and, for the last ten years, there have been more disabled people than in the general job market.

In 1959, Israel introduced a civil service law promoting positive discrimination. This was recognised as a basic principle in 1995, albeit not tied to quotas. Targets are set and public employers must present an annual report on measures taken during the past year. Since 2000, the government must do everything in its power to achieve a balanced representation of men and women in the public service and an appropriate representation of Israeli Arabs, Jewish Ethiopians, Druses and minorities originating in Eastern Europe. Diversification of the general government gives it the benefit of the unique values, culture and characteristics of all individuals while accessibility for everyone ensures that full use is made of the different experiences and backgrounds of public officials.

Stakeholders do not argue about the fight against discrimination itself, since this fight does not call the principle of merit into question. Indeed, its purpose is to ensure the implementation of legally recognised principles and to erase the contrast between real equality and formal equality. In such countries as Canada and Israel, this may be a first step towards sometimes controversial diversity initiatives.

## Diversity as a way to improve public performance ?

Does diversity offer other benefits than the equality expected from it? Do organisations, by enriching themselves with the differences and the new skills supposed to be the "natural" contribution of discriminated groups, improve collective productivity and so become more effective? This basic postulate is not easy to substantiate. This would require complex performance measurement systems, nor can we rule out the risk of new classifications or new ethnic, gender or even religious job segmentations. According to some stakeholders, it is highly likely that certain careers will end up in preordained positions. Lastly, incentives and target-based policies requiring new expertise have a cost.

**Chair:** Dominique Lacambre, Director, Solidarity Fund, France

**United Kingdom:** Frances Taylor, Senior Policy Adviser on Diversity, Health and Well-being Strategy, Civil Service Capability Group, Cabinet Office

**Netherlands:** Janine Schreck, Manager of the Diversity Project, General Directorate for Labour, Values and Dialogue, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

**Keynote speaker:** Jacqueline Laufer, Professor Emeritus, HEC Paris

---

### Making the fight against inequalities more effective by tying initiatives to quantitative objectives

As early as the 1960s, Great Britain adopted laws to foster equality and to fight discrimination (gender, racial origins, disability, sexual orientation) in order to transform a previously inegalitarian society. In recent years, the existence of 116 reference texts called for the adoption of a consolidated law, the Equality Bill 2010, whose purpose is to promote a fair and more equal society.

Diversity policies are also reflected in targets for public administrations. The 10-point Plan for a Diverse Civil Service (2008) is intended to improve service quality and performance by stepping up recruitment in key areas. According to independent researchers, 87% of the 140 public entities interviewed for survey purposes saw a link between performance and diversity.

The Netherlands, observing that immigrant population groups had trouble integrating the Dutch labour market, which was dominated by a mostly white, male population, decided not to wait for legislation but to go ahead and implement positive discrimination mechanisms to battle inequalities. These initiatives were adopted during the period from 1980 until 2000. Because they lacked impact in both the private and the public sector and tended to affect economic competitiveness, it was decided to make diversity a political issue. The resulting policy introduces interfaces between the economic and social areas, and highlights the link between diversity and performance.

In the Dutch administration, diversity policy takes the form of recruitment targets for selected population groups. The targets are as follows for 2011: 50% women in the administration, 30% women in management positions and 8.4% ethnic minorities (up 2.5% from 2009). In addition to these targets the "promotion of multiculturalism" has become a key issue.

### How to measure performance against diversity ?

Great Britain seems to accept that the workforce can be broken down into measurable groups. The Value for All programme for the period from 2009-2012 was adopted to evaluate the link between equality and diversity and to determine the value for money of local public services.

### Examples supporting the "profitability" of diversity

- The British passport department has developed a delivery process for disabled people based upon the advice of the 6% civil servants with a declared disability.
- All prisoners of foreign origin are held at one prison in Southeast England (60 nationalities, 60 languages). Border agency translators are called in to assist the prison staff. The resulting savings reportedly amount to £5 million.
- The consulate in Jeddah has recruited an Islam official because he presumably has a better understanding of the needs and expectations of British pilgrims to Mecca.

The conclusions are less optimistic in the Netherlands. Recruits from ethnic minorities leave the administration quickly due to integration problems. According to a recent study, only 30% of all senior managers in the Dutch civil service have a "positive attitude" towards diversity. Diversity cannot become a reality without the vision of top management or the involvement of middle management, who spearhead the drive to facilitate integration. According to the Dutch Economic and Social Council, invited to analyse this situation, the severe limits on quantitative objectives make it advisable to tackle the structural causes of discrimination. Measurement of performance based on diversity policy is therefore an unlikely prospect in the short term.

---

The two speakers presented the limits on the mechanisms implemented in their respective countries, i.e. the risk of ghettoization, the difficulty of organising the mobility of certain target groups (Great Britain) and the lack of genuine integration (Netherlands). The debate concluded that there is no clear causal relation between increased diversity in the administration and improved performance.

## **Diversity as a way to improve service quality and strengthen public confidence**

Improving service quality and strengthening public confidence in the administration: this is one of the presumed benefits of efforts to promote diversity in the public service. Many tools are used to achieve this aim, but is it possible to evaluate an impact which is so hard to measure? The Chair of the third roundtable tackled this key issue head on: "We will be asking ourselves whether "resembling" the population not only makes it easier for civil servants to facilitate their dialogue with users but also to raise service quality."

**Chair:** Bernard Dreyfus, Director General, Office of the Mediator of the French Republic

**United States:** Christine Griffin, Deputy Director, Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

**Sweden:** Robert Cloarec, Senior adviser, Swedish Agency for Government Employers (SAGE)

**Keynote speaker:** Norma M. Riccucci, professor, Rutgers University, Newark

---

### **USA: it all begins with recruitment**

What are the consequences of a resemblance between civil servants and users? American studies show that there is no clear-cut answer. For instance, black police officers from San Diego are equally strict towards offenders of all racial backgrounds and may even be stricter towards black people: the "credibility of the corps" is senior to the "credibility of origin". By contrast, in the southern United States, black students often achieve better grades when their teachers are also black. Certain American agencies have measured the impact of using front-office employees who are close to the population and speak its language, and have taken measures to reflect the results (Customs).

This said, the American initiative is underpinned by the idea that the administration needs to reflect population diversity and that diversity is likely to produce benefits. With 2 million employees, the Federal civil service began its reform drive with the observation that its organisation was far from a "representative administration", even if its founding texts asserted the need for this and, since the civil service reform of 1978, the obligation. The strategic plan for diversity presented by Christine Griffin is an integral part of a recruitment reform which will not only reduce the academism of the tests and shorten recruitment times, but also establish closer ties with such important recruitment pools as colleges, training institutes and community universities.

The Federal agencies have agreed on non-discrimination criteria and expect management to spread an internal "culture of respect" based on the principle that when an organisation reflects social diversity, takes account of values and makes sure its employees enjoy their work, the whole society will benefit.

### **Sweden: from "integration" to "inclusion"**

In the 1990s, Sweden, already a leading equal opportunity employer in the public sector (in 2009, there were even slightly more women than men), launched a diversity initiative aimed at "ensuring service quality and fostering public confidence" in the administration. This initiative breaks down in three phases.

Initially targeting the fight against discrimination (which has been an obligation for government agencies since the 1980s), the focus was subsequently on efforts to improve the perception of diversity. The third phase, currently underway, is to make diversity inclusive<sup>3</sup> with the committed support of management.

Sweden's objectives for this third phase are :

- basing recruitment exclusively on job requirements in the light of merits and skills,
- providing an "integrating" ("inclusive") job environment which makes it possible to improve ethnic and cultural diversity and to achieve a "multiplicity of profiles and skills, which are important for work, quality and client-oriented service".

This is the same principle as proposed by the United States, according to which "different" people who enjoy working in a job environment with genuine career possibilities can be expected to provide better service geared to the needs of the citizens.

But how can we be sure of the results? In 2007, the Swedish Board for the Development of the Government Sector published a study entitled, "Diversity of Teams, an Asset", prepared by working groups involving almost 600 people, seven government agencies and the unions. Six months later, the participants received a questionnaire to evaluate the first impact of the diversity policies. While there seemed to be little impact on skills – although this was only the beginning – there appeared to be rather more impact on such areas as respect for individual differences, improvement of the job environment, staff motivation and the dialogue between managers and employees.

The unknown remains the impact on society in general. Sweden has planned annual evaluations in the years ahead, including formal evaluations by the government and informal evaluations between SAGE (the Agency for Government Employers), the agencies and the unions. With 14% foreign-born citizens and almost the same proportion in its administration, Sweden uses this plan inter alia to anticipate the aging of civil servants.

Despite obvious disparities, both countries have three factors in common: the importance of asserting "values" and the cultural dimension; the importance of management support for change; and the focus on the ex-post evaluations planned in the period ahead.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Swedish authorities distinguish between the concepts of inclusion and integration: "inclusion means adapting structures by removing obstacles throughout the chain and using employees skills as best as possible".

## Which human resource management practices for greater diversity ?

Human resource management is key to the personnel diversification strategies deployed by the administrations. All processes are concerned to ensure equal opportunity, not only during the vital step of recruitment but also subsequently, to give everyone a career in which their merits and competences are recognised. Belgium and Norway, albeit with different approaches, have reached similar conclusions.

**Chair:** Didier Hüe, Ministerial Delegate for Diversity and Equal Opportunities, Ministries for the Economy and the Budget

**Belgium:** Hafida Othmani, Director General, Diversity Unit, Federal Public Service, Personnel and Organisation

**Norway:** Godtfred Bøen, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Government Administration and Reform

**Keynote speaker:** Gilles Jeannot, CNRS researcher, LATTIS, Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées

---

### **In Belgium, diversity policy is part of the HR process**

In the Belgian federal government, diversity policy is applied throughout all organisations, which sign a Diversity Charter to show their symbolic commitment. This policy is an integral part of the HR processes (recruitment, introduction, training, communication, career management, etc.), and is intended to make diversity a permanent feature of human resource management. Rather than focusing on under-represented groups, the aim is to guarantee and as necessary restore equal opportunity in each "HR phase" by adjusting procedures and by providing support for the players.

#### **Disabled people: focus on adaptation of the job environment and integration in the work place**

Disabled candidates may request reasonable adaptation of the selection procedure in which they participate, whether recruitment, promotion, language tests or other procedures, in order to minimise the impact of their disability and to ensure fair assessment of their competences. The content of the tests remains unchanged, in line with the principle of inclusion. Adaptation of the job environment is another right and training is also adjusted on request.

In addition to these physical arrangements, initiatives are taken to raise staff awareness and support skills and to provide tailor-made support for managers and teams who welcome a disabled colleague.

#### **Top skills screening: support to stimulate promotion of women with high potential**

Only 17% of the employees in the three highest management levels of the federal government are women, even though a very high proportion of female applicants is selected.

The fact is that fewer women apply. The personnel selection office (Selor) has therefore developed a specific enhancement programme to boost the self-confidence of potential recruits and to encourage them to apply. Implemented in 2008 in the form of a management skills assessment, the programme seems to be bearing fruit: 25% of the women participating in the first classes applied for a job within 3 months and 83% felt better equipped to do so.

#### **Recent experiences with positive discrimination in Norway**

The Norwegian civil service is currently focusing on two seriously under-represented target groups: people of foreign origin and disabled people. The service is testing various positive discrimination measures to assist people in these groups.

#### **Policy in favour of people of foreign origin: a moderate form of positive discrimination**

The main measure in favour of immigrants is the obligation for public organisations to invite at least one immigrant for recruitment interviews. This rule, which facilitates direct access to potential employers, has turned out to be very effective: one-third of applicants received for interviews was finally recruited.

Another project, currently being piloted at 12 agencies, is to recruit a foreign candidate rather than the "best candidate", when the former has obtained similar qualifications from a foreign institution.

### **Policy in favour of disabled people: three types of measure with mixed results**

The first measure is that at least one disabled person needs to be selected for recruitment interviews (as with people of foreign origin). The scope of this measure is limited by two conditions: the person in question must be jobless and must medically be able to hold the position.

The second measure is a far more radical form of positive discrimination. Here, public employers are allowed to recruit disabled persons with the qualifications required for vacant jobs, even when there are better candidates. However, this provision is only rarely applied since there is no actual obligation to do so.

The third and most effective measure is no doubt the initiative to recruit disabled trainees, implemented at 35 agencies.

However, this initiative is restricted to holders of a master's degree (whereas the qualification level of disabled people is generally low). Selectees are offered a one-year apprenticeship in the government, which enables them to get experience and show their capabilities. One of the advantages of this formula is that it reassures managers and prompts them to make the apprenticeship and integration of disabled people a success. This is borne out by the fact that many of these apprenticeships culminate in permanent recruitment.

---

Which factors determine the success of diversity policy? A new culture, in which diversity is an integral part and a permanent concern of the organisation, seems the best guarantee of success. This would call for a review of HR practices, the designation of this issue as a strategic objective, management support for implementation and general awareness of its importance. Concrete examples would have to be used to show that it is possible to correct the bias induced by direct or indirect discrimination.

## Foreign practices under debate in France

### Classifying, measuring and calculating

Diversity policies cannot be implemented without measurement tools. It must be possible to count members of minority groups who have joined the civil service in order to know whether such minorities are "fairly" represented or not. It must be possible to evaluate the impact of diversity policies by means of measurable indicators. Measuring the diversity of a population raises ethical issues. The fifth roundtable focused on these difficult questions, tabled by the Chair and discussed by the foreign participants. Their responses highlight the way in which France can follow (or not, depending on its principles and culture) practices applied in foreign countries.

**Chair:** Jean-François Amadiou, professor at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Director of the Discrimination Observatory

**Keynote speaker:** Philippe d'Iribarne, Research Director CNRS

---

Fostering diversity means distinguishing certain members of society from others and granting them particular rights reflecting this difference. According to Philippe d'Iribarne, this classification runs counter to France's republican model, which considers each French citizen identical and equal to all others. Assigning someone to a category means placing him or her in a class. The recent debates about ethnic statistics demonstrate the almost insoluble dilemmas raised by diversity policies in France.

#### **Which characteristics do the participating countries include in diversity?**

Several countries include the concept of ethnic minority or even race in the recruitment criteria for population groups. But how do they assign race to a person? The answers suggest that no country conducts ethnoracial surveys but base themselves on "optional personal declarations". The same applies to religion and opinion. Administrations only require personal declarations in the case of complaints for discrimination.

#### **Identifying people belonging to immigrant minorities**

The countries represented at the roundtable base their statistics on place of birth or even parents. In Norway, for example, foreign-born people and people with two foreign-born parents are considered of immigrant stock. In the Netherlands, only one parent needs to be born in a foreign country. In short, the definition remains statistical and the countries concerned acknowledge that these deliberately vague approaches are unsatisfactory since they make accurate evaluations impossible. The need to create ethnoracial statistics categories is the subject of a hot debate in France and Belgium. To a lesser extent, the same is true for other participating countries.

The exception is the United Kingdom. In this State, made up of four countries, membership in a group is a source of pride. You are "white and Irish" or "white and Welsh". Thanks to this shared culture of particularism, people have no difficulty declaring their origins.

#### **Difference between quotas and targets**

In the United States, quotas require judicial decisions. When the courts recognise a case of discrimination, they impose quotas tied to penalties for non-compliance. Targets are voluntary goals set by the organisations themselves. These are merely collective objectives. In countries where managers of entities are obliged to achieve internal targets, commitment is strong and officials are proud to be part of an organisation with a proactive diversity policy. This said, targets are not always supported by the resources necessary for their achievement, in which case such mechanisms may turn out to be counter-productive.

## **Positive discrimination measures**

Based on internal surveys, the US administration has a precise map of its personnel. This is also the case with Norway. Internal survey data are compared with the general population survey to identify gaps, allowing the administration to analyse barriers against recruitment of under-represented population groups and to propose specific assistance mechanisms. These "reserved lanes", restricted to membership in a particular category rather than to individual competences, are a form of positive discrimination.

## **Implementing quotas**

Several countries, including France, set quotas for jobs to be filled by disabled persons. These are definitely quotas since the law imposes penalties for failure to appoint disabled people. Certain administrations even freeze recruitment for jobs that cannot be filled by the disabled.

Can quotas be introduced for other categories? For women? For each under-represented population group? This would clearly generate a risk that skills would be relegated to the back seat.

## **What do administrations want to measure: discrimination or diversity?**

Do administrations want to fight discrimination or to implement diversity policies? These two areas overlap only partly. Whereas there are many discrimination criteria (18 for France), they generally do not target the same population groups as diversity policies. Diversity policies can conceal a lack of effort to combat discrimination. Moreover, an increase in diversity does not necessarily stop discrimination.

---

While French stakeholders remain lukewarm towards policies targeted at population groups, they embrace the fight against discrimination. Fighting discrimination means removing obstacles and correcting bias to allow anyone with the necessary talents and skills to join the administration through normal channels. For example, when competitive examinations are adjusted to eliminate discrimination, people with the right profiles, regardless of their differences, can apply and join the civil service. Thus it is always important to focus primarily on skills, as there can be no doubt that administrations only lack the diversity of society because of persisting discrimination.

*The HALDE and the civil service*

Since its creation in 2009, the HALDE publishes an annual report on complaints received and actions taken, accompanied by a survey of discrimination in France. In 2009, the foremost source of discrimination was origin (28.5% of complaints filed), followed by health and disability (18.5%), gender (6.5%), union activities (6%) and age (5.5%).

In its 2009 report, the HALDE explained that it has sent a questionnaire to all ministries after introduction of the Charter to Promote Equal Opportunity in the Civil Service signed on 2 December 2008 between the HALDE and the Minister of State for the Civil Service, in order to assess the progress of its implementation. The questionnaire answers were analysed and presented to the High Council for the Civil Service in December 2009 (this report can be found at: [www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr](http://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr), under the heading "égalité des chances" [equal opportunity]).

The answers showed that the ministries tend to use existing tools to raise personnel awareness of efforts against discrimination (mobility/career advisers, assessment interviews, etc.) or to improve the selection process (recognition of experience, etc.). This said, several ministries have taken specific measures, e.g. the Ministry of the Interior, which has set up a Parity and Diversity Observatory. For now, only the Ministries for the Economy and the Budget have introduced a map of discrimination risks in all HRM processes (as part of their application for the Diversity label).

---

*Using the Diversity label to drive action*

In the beginning of 2009, the French Ministries for the Economy and the Budget decided to implement a committed internal policy in favour of equal opportunity and the prevention of discrimination. They believed that the best way to keep these actions going in the long term and to achieve concrete results was to obtain the Diversity label from AFNOR, the French standards organisation. While this is a demanding procedure, it also ensures progress, as the label is subject to three key conditions: analysing HR procedures to identify risks, presenting an action plan to correct weak points and developing indicators to assess results.

HR procedures were analysed with the assistance of an audit firm to ensure an independent viewpoint and to benefit from the expertise of labour relations specialists. During the last quarter of 2009, five aspects of life on the job were reviewed, i.e. recruitment, career progress, training, hygiene-health-safety and the workplace atmosphere. The resulting diagnosis was as follows: whereas there is a genuine wish to apply the principle of equal treatment to everyone, six factors of discrimination call for close attention, i.e. state of health, disability, age, origin, sexual orientation and part-time union activity of employees. Clearly, people are not exposed in the same degree to these risks at the different stages of their professional life. For example, the ministries recruit a relatively high proportion of disabled people but find it harder to ensure genuine integration and provide a satisfactory career for such employees. Similarly, the promotions system is relatively protected against the risk of discrimination against origins but the ministries are as yet unable to offer management jobs to young people from immigrant families due to lack of organised action to reach and convince different population groups that they can join the civil service, including its management levels.

These observations and conclusions, which were reported to the social partners, have been used to develop actions intended to consolidate and improve management procedures, including but not limited to the following initiatives: the principle of transparency will be applied to the recruitment of contractual personnel by making decisions traceable; the juries of competitive examinations will be trained in stereotype management and will systematically be using tables of required skills; precise instructions will be issued to avoid age as a selection criterion for discretionary promotions; a study will be conducted to make medical prevention more effective for people in difficulty because of their state of health. At the same time, a large-scale training programme has been launched to give managers practical experience in the prevention of discrimination by the end of 2012.

This programme will be enriched with indicators to verify progress and to assess the qualitative effectiveness of these measures. Studies will be launched to give ministries the capability to track, for example, the evolution of the profiles of successful examinees and to monitor the availability of training for disabled personnel.

The application file for the Diversity label is set to be submitted to AFNOR in the autumn of 2010, but even if approved, anti-discrimination policy will not stop there. The label is awarded for three years and subjected to a mid-term review. The ministries are definitely engaged in a long-term effort.

**Didier Hüe**

Ministerial Delegate for Diversity and Equal Opportunities,  
Ministries for the Economy and the Budget



**INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

Publication Manager : Ralph Dassa, IGPDE Executive Director  
Editor-in-Chief : Claire Fargeot-Boll, Research, Studies, Monitoring (RSM)  
RSM Editorial Staff : Annie Chemla-Lafay, Marie-Thérèse Deleplace, Claire  
Fargeot-Boll, Arlette Heurtaux, Emilie saussine

Design and layout : IGPDE/RSM – RDSI

Quarterly publication – ISSN 2100-0581

Copying and quoting : authorised when quoting the source  
(Public Management Outlook Newsletter, IGPDE and giving the link to the  
[www.institute.minefi.gouv.fr](http://www.institute.minefi.gouv.fr) website

**MINISTRY  
FOR THE  
ECONOMY,  
INDUSTRY  
AND  
EMPLOYMENT**

**MINISTRY OF  
THE BUDGET  
AND  
THE STATE  
REFORM**