

Abstract

Remuneration of management and teaching staff in the social promotion education system

The Court of Audit examined the salary fixing practice for administrative and teaching staff in the social promotion education system. It also charted their salary cost and salary scales. The audit showed that the pertaining regulation is complex and contains inaccuracies, specially as far as transitional measures are concerned. This partly accounts for the high proportion of errors found in individual staff records. According to the Court, adjustment measures are required in response to these errors.

Use of samples

The Court examined the salaries fixed for administrative and teaching staff by the Flemish Ministry in charge of the social promotion education system in terms of regularity of the operations. It mainly checked the award of salary scales and financial seniority. The audit was based on a sampling of data. It appeared that 46 out of 120 personnel records (38%) contained minor or serious errors. Using a reliability of 99%, the Court found that there was a salary calculation error in at least 28.8% of all staff records. Since then the Flemish Ministry corrected all errors found in the sample.

Risks

After it carried out an assessment of the salary chain, the Court inferred there were several risks threatening a regular salary payment: a deficient or late data supply from the adult education centres and other education sections, a complex regulation and no electronic personnel record support. The fact that for every personnel record one single staff member is in charge of the whole process poses a risk. Since then, the Ministry has set up several controls to limit these risks.

Issues of principle

The audit also highlighted a few matters of principle. The transitional regulation is unclear about the referential period at issue. The Flemish Parliament decree does not give any breakdown of the posts in the recruitment, selection and promotion grades. A Flemish Government decree prolonged two temporary pecuniary measures designed to make up for the shortage of teachers but was once again introduced too late. When it came to process the sampling results, the Court did not, however, consider these issues of principle as errors.

Salary costs

The Court calculated that the average salary costs per staff member could vary strongly from one centre to another in terms of budget. The salary costs are also more dependent on the salary scales applied than on the financial seniority. Finally, in the social promotion education system there is a profusion of salary scales which vary very little. Actually, all erroneous salary scales concern personnel records in the secondary education system, where the widest diversity of salary scales is found.

Minister's response

The Flemish Minister for Education emphasized the positive measures taken by the department as a result of the audit, designed to achieve simplification of the regulation, introduction of computerisation and the broadening of processes in the salary chain. He added he also planned to come out with a new decree for adult education.