

## Abstract

### Human resources management at the Belgian Institute for Postal Services and Telecommunications (BIPT)

*The remunerations of BIPT officials that were formerly seconded to the communities and the regions in the capacity of radio and television fee collector and are currently employed in various other government institutions are still partly chargeable to BIPT. This is a breach of the budgetary "speciality" principle, which implies that each expense has to be allocated within a "programme". In addition, because of the ageing of staff, planning for staff replacement also proved indispensable. Finally in the wake of the so-called "Copernicus reform", BIPT would find it an advantage to make the additional remuneration allowances now being granted dependent on an effective system of staff assessment or certification of skills.*

In its examination the Court noticed that BIPT human resources management was distinctive of the 1996 Belgacom « strategic consolidation » process. Not only did this consolidation affect BIPT's staff regulations but it also led to staff transfers whose remunerations have been or were, wholly or partly, borne by BIPT's budget. Admittedly, the reassignment of a number of these civil servants to federal bodies at the end of their secondment to the communities and regions was effected, but BIPT was still carrying on paying those staff members although it did not get in return a reimbursement equivalent to the expense incurred.

In the view of the Court, it would also be appropriate for BIPT to devote an increased attention to the recruitment issue. While BIPT's staff appeared particularly stable and hiring staff on a work contract remained very limited, it is true that due to the specificity of BIPT's institutional role and of the skills needed difficulties expected in the medium term would be more likely to worsen when it comes to make up for 'natural departures' as a result of staff ageing.

Furthermore, BIPT should make sure it heeds changes in the staff regulations of the whole federal civil service following the Copernicus reform, according to which the payment of additional remuneration allowances should objectively be subjected to its staff passing tests of competence and other certification processes.

Finally, with regard to the security of the process of remuneration payment, the implementation of the regulatory provisions was only open to limited criticism. However, the administration of payments, at least as performed up to the end of the year 2004, was not strict enough. Although employees did not seem to have been detrimented, payments due by BIPT, mainly contributions to the department for pensions, were not carried out within the timeframe required. The wage administration convention concluded between BIPT and a payroll office ("social secretariat") was revoked in 2004 and since then the Finance Ministry has been responsible for the payment of remunerations. This transfer of responsibility is too recent to be evaluated.

The minister responsible pointed out that the staff reclassification issue was under consideration with his counterpart responsible for Civil Service and that the recent enlargement of BIPT's staff establishment should make up for the negative effect of the ageing of staff.