

PRESS RELEASE

1 February 2013

Report to the Flemish Parliament

Recruitment and selection by "De Lijn"

A number of circumstances impede the quality of the recruitment and selection policy of the Flemish Public Transport Company De Lijn. De Lijn still hasn't fully adjusted its personnel plan to the reorganization that started in 2004. The regional entities of the company divert from the recruitment and selection rules. They sometimes developed their own set of rules for certain aspects because centrally imposed rules were lacking or unclear, or carried insufficient support. In addition the central personnel directory inadequately supervises recruitments and selections organized by the regional entities.

Policy

De Lijn consists in a central service and five regional entities. The company only employs contractual personnel. Since 2004 it reorganizes all personnel functions, but the organization charts have not yet been fully adjusted. Since 2010 De Lijn faces a halt in recruitment as well as a strict replacement policy. However these measures have not yet yielded lasting savings owing to functions being cut from the organization charts or personnel plans. De Lijn did live up to the Flemish public standard for employment of immigrants but still struggles with attracting female chauffeurs and engineers. The recruitment and selection policy lacks uniformity. The regional entities divert from the set rules and internal agreements. They sometimes have their own rules. The central personnel directory insufficiently supervises all this. The selection of the same function can therefore differ from one entity to another. The extent to which entities outsource parts of the selection process also differs. Apart from that, they can't base these outsourcings on comparative assessments, open competitions or even written contracts.

Process control

The personnel services have insufficient information at their disposal about the recruitment and selection process. It is not always obvious exactly which collective labour agreements apply and there are no flow charts, written process procedures or a common data bank. Moreover, De Lijn documents its selections insufficiently. The company doesn't report on the selection interviews, the course of the selections or its material motivation. Finally De Lijn bases the verification of the required diploma and previous services merely on the statements in the cv.

Regulation of the legal status

The foundation decree of De Lijn did not include the possibility of a general contractual employment, although required by the Royal general principles decree to back up such a

choice. Also, basic regulations do not always guarantee an objective recruitment system. For instance, the company hasn't set up selection regulations for any of its functions, so that essential elements of the selection haven't been settled. De Lijn does not submit internal and external applicants to an equal procedure, so that the list of classified applicants is not determined by the same examinations. The basic regulations have created the possibility to give preference to one's own personnel at vacancies and classifications. This does not comply with the principle of equality. Some basic regulation and internal instruction provisions aren't up to date anymore or lack sufficient support by the entities.

Observation of the Legal status

De Lijn doesn't always publish vacancies in the broadest way. It also diverts from set diploma requirements, without respecting the conditions of the Royal general principles decree. It sometimes adds selection steps to the basic regulations, it deliberates applicants, it doesn't always apply precedence rules in a consistent way and it sometimes doesn't draw up the required shortlists. Employment contracts show negligences. They don't always include all salary aspects. Nor do they always get renewed when functions change. They can furthermore contain irregular shortened terms of notice or educational exigencies. De Lijn sometimes grants recruited personnel financial seniority without prior formal arrangements. Finally De Lijn doesn't respect Legal terms for the deployment of temporary personnel and it applies the advantages of its own staff to the temporary personnel.

Reaction by the minister

The minister has joined in the conclusions of the report and has asked De Lijn to comply with all recommendations by the Court.

Information for the press

The Court of Audit exerts an external control on the financial operations of the Federal State, the Communities, the Regions and the provinces. It contributes to improving public governance by transmitting to the parliamentary assemblies, to the managers and to the audited services any useful and reliable information resulting from a contradictory examination. As a collateral body of the Parliament, the Court performs its missions independently of the authorities it controls.

The audit report on *Recruitment and selection by De Lijn* has been sent to the Flemish Parliament. The full version and this press release can be found on the Court's website: www.courtsofaudit.be.