



Implementation of teleworking / remote/mobile working in the Federal Administration based on Civil Service Law

Performance audit

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[FULL REPORT \(DE\)](#)



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What we audited and why

We audited the administrative and technical implementation of telework in 2020 and 2021 in the central offices of the following ministries: Federal Chancellery (BKA), Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport (BMKÖS), Federal Ministry of Labour (BMA), Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW), Federal Ministry of Science and Research (BMBWF), and Federal Ministry of Justice (BMJ).

We aim to assess the general legal and technical conditions for telework, particularly:

- the number of days allowed for teleworking and the conditions for granting occasional telework;
- the verification and assessment of the IT equipment and workplace in line with IT security requirements; and
- the development of environmentally friendly and work-life balance policies applicable to this new way of working.

What we found

Teleworking for civil servants in the Federal administration is possible since 2005, although it was, generally granted only to individual staff members under special conditions. However, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, federal civil servants worked partly from home until the regular operation of services resumed from 5 July 2021.

The already existing legal basis gave the federal ministries some flexibility to design teleworking guidelines based on the respective service needs and tasks.

Before COVID, between a third and two-thirds of all staff in the central offices of the federal ministries which we audited had workplaces with mobile devices suitable for telework. As a result, personal computers also had to be used for pandemic telework. During the pandemic, the federal ministries increased the number of mobile IT devices through additional purchases. As of end July 2021, the federal ministries' central offices we audited were largely fully equipped with these. We pointed here to the associated risks for IT security if personal IT equipment was used.





What we concluded

Protecting the interests of the service is inherent to the public servants' duties. And the option to telework, in addition to making service delivery more flexible, can increase employees' work-life balance and the federal government's attractiveness as an employer. Teleworking can also help achieving other objectives such as reducing CO2 emissions by reducing commuting, or optimising the use of office space.

- Nevertheless, when designing their teleworking strategies, the federal ministries should also bear in mind timely task fulfilment, the functioning of each service, and the teleworking conditions such as suitable teleworking workplaces). In any case, the ministries should ensure that the required number of staff are present in the office.
- For staff benefitting from teleworking, in addition to adequate supervision and checks on their performance, an analysis of the fulfilment of agreed objectives should be performed, with a particular focus on the impact of telework on service delivery quality and timeliness. If objectives are not achieved, this should be duly documented, and appropriate measures should be taken where necessary.
- For transparency purposes, the reasons for teleworking and its inherent objectives, such as a more flexible task delivery approach or timely task fulfilment should be clearly defined in the applicable teleworking guidelines. The achievement of those objectives should be included in future assessments.
- As part of its responsibility for general public service staff matters, the BMKÖS should monitor and analyse future developments when telework is used in the federal administration and draw up general guidelines regulating telework at federal level.
- Regarding transport allowance for journeys to and from work, ministries should analyse whether it is still of use when teleworking is used on a regular basis.