



Equal Opportunities Policy

2010 – 2020



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

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Preamble

Equal opportunities from an institutional standpoint

For years the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has actively and successfully pursued and supported an equal opportunities policy. Alongside the use of the necessary human and financial resources at both the departmental and office levels to guarantee gender equality, the FDFA has also recently stepped up its investment as regards the implementation of the national policy to promote multilingualism.

The consolidation in early 2009 of specialist resources to promote gender equality and multilingualism, coupled with the setting up of a designated Equal Opportunities Unit within the Department, has created the requisite conditions for the formulation of the present FDFA equal opportunities. This policy, which will apply to the 2010–2020 period, not only links into previous gender equality processes but is also a continuation of the department's existing equal opportunities policy.

The aim of the present policy is to create the optimal starting conditions for the long-term adherence to the principle of equal opportunities within the department and for the standardisation of practices in this regard. At the same time, it should take into account the different states of implementation and

cultural diversity within the Department, as well as define the shape that cooperation should take between the directorates, the General Secretariat, the State Secretariat and the Equal Opportunities Unit.

The process of change in the FDFA in accordance with the current re-organisation processes and its shift towards a more modern and contemporary, flexible organisational culture is considered an opportunity and should be actively used to sustainably ensure equal opportunities for all.

The present policy constitutes a “living paper” that fits within the wider context of the prevailing change process.

1. FDFA equal opportunities vision for 2020

We regard the process to promote equal opportunities as an integral part of the sweeping organisational and cultural changes, which our institution is currently undergoing. The FDFA has clearly set equal opportunities as one of its goals and affords it considerable importance.

Our vision:

- The FDFA is optimally equipped with well qualified personnel, both at headquarters and in its overseas offices, to face in an efficient, goal-oriented and outcome-oriented manner any future challenges that an ever more complex world may bring. Our personnel are highly committed to and steadfastly pursue the Swiss foreign policy objectives of internationality, peace, democracy, development and prosperity. They also have a keen sense of public service.
- We place great store by the diversity of our personnel (gender, language communities, nationality and age), considering it as an asset and recognising the added value that it brings to our institution.
- Diversity is the product of myriad experiences and skills acquired from different realities, cultures and language communities. It affords our organisation greater sensitivity and proficiency, allowing it to adopt a more discerning approach to complex situations and issues, and to devise forward-looking solutions. Diversity is a key factor in the success of our organisation, hence its systematic and targeted promotion within the Department.
- The active promotion of equal opportunities is indicative of a sound and sustainable human resources policy. This is why equal opportunities is an integral part of the FDFA's own human resources policy.
- The FDFA recognises and takes into account the diverse personal lives of its employees. Our working conditions mean that personnel with comparable skills but from different backgrounds have the same career development opportunities and prospects. Moreover, these conditions allow our personnel at all levels to strike a balance between their professional and personal obligations.
- An expression of diversity is the equal representation of not only women and men but also representatives of Switzerland's four linguistic communities at all hierarchical levels and in all FDFA activities. FDFA personnel must be proficient in the apposite working

languages of the institution, have a sound knowledge of the official languages (German, French and Italian), and possess intercultural skills.

- Working Career development is resource-led and largely shaped by the personnel themselves. HR processes are aligned to these goals. The diversity of the areas of learning and skills generate value-added, enabling the pursuit of both non-linear and linear career trajectories, which are held in equal regard by the FDFA.
- Our organisational culture is defined by an understanding of leadership, in which the principle of equal opportunities is actively lived and promoted. FDFA management considers the cross-cutting gender, language and intercultural skills as part and parcel of a complete managerial skill set and as a managerial responsibility.
- Stereotypical role expectations are systematically addressed and discussed, and we endeavour to have a corporate culture free from gender and language stereotypes. Open dialogue is used to deal with opposition and concerns surrounding the promotion of equal opportunities.
- The FDFA equal opportunities policy 2010 – 2020 in principle applies to all departmental personnel. Specific action, goals and measures for local personnel are explicitly addressed within the new local personnel policy.

2. Future challenges

The FDFA will face major challenges in the future due to changes in its national and international activities, job market trends and a demographic shift.

If it is to continue to be an attractive employer, the FDFA must view equal opportunities as part of a root-and-branch transformation of its prevailing organisation and culture. It must also consider it as a basis for success and a source of value-added within the multifaceted departmental reorganisation processes. Consequently, equal opportunities must be systematically promoted and action must be taken in the following areas to achieve this aim:

National and international context: changing role of the state

- The FDFA must take the necessary steps to improve its attractiveness in light of competition from many other employers such as NGOs, science and research, and private enterprise that are also active in the field of international cooperation.
- The international context in which Swiss foreign policy and its many missions operate has become increasingly complex and challenging, which in turn raises demand for motivated and flexible personnel who possess specific skills and who identify closely with the organisation and its goals.

Personnel: Our Department's most important resource

- Demographic change in Europe has meant that there is generally a diminishing pool of potential employees. An employer's success is contingent on its ability to attract the right personnel.
- Complete transformation of the personnel structure within the FDFA
- The next decade will see a generational shift. As a result of the current equal opportunities policy, more women will be employed in the higher echelons of the department. The occupational backgrounds and personal lives of the FDFA workforce are set to be even more diverse than they are today. Communication culture and forms of cooperation will also change.
- The FDFA will need to adopt a proactive stance as regards capitalising fully on this greater diversity in all its complexity.
- The value of accompanying persons will become more important, as will the need for specific rules on the support they are to receive.
- The complex configuration of personnel in the overseas offices (different nationalities, languages, gender in a hierarchy occupied by Swiss execu-

tives) presents a growing challenge for management. Proficient skills in the management of diversity in the workplace will be vital.

An organisational culture in flux

- The organisational culture of the FDFA already places very high demands on both its management and non-management personnel. The pressure in terms of flexibility, performance and output is likely to rise even further in the coming years. The question of how we deal appropriately with our human resources will intensify and will thus require the Department to formulate solution-driven answers.
- Personnel demand flexibility in terms of how and when they work. The prevailing organisational culture of the department will have to adapt to these demands by accepting new types of working models, such as part-time work up to managerial level, telecommuting, and flexible annual work hours.

Financial resources

- Guaranteeing equal opportunities for all requires the continual and appropriate use of resources to achieve the pre-defined goals in a lasting way by 2020.
- The systematic pursuit of a multilingualism policy requires the use of an exceptionally large investment of in translation, IT and continued education. It will necessitate the formulation

of clear guidelines, which will enable the FDFA to adhere to the provisions of the multilingualism policy (German, French and Italian) launched by the national government and to devise ways, which will allow it to balance these requirements with the inclusion of other languages that are highly relevant for its international activities.

3. Strategic objectives across five fields of action

Within the FDFA equal opportunities mean that all personnel have the same career advancement prospects and can meet both their professional and private obligations, regardless of their gender or language.

Our equal opportunities policy is based on the equal opportunities and multilingualism directives issued by the Swiss government to all federal departments, and on the experiences acquired to date through the implementation of the equal opportunities process within the Department. The strategic objectives of the FDFA four-year programme 2008 – 2011 on equal opportunities and multilingualism are assimilated in five specific fields of action and pursued further.

The present policy sets out the measures to be taken to achieve these goals. As part of the existing planning processes, each directorate sets two-year objectives and formulates concrete measures.

Many basic HR processes overlap with the cross-cutting process of equal opportunities promotion; the successful implementation of the policy requires the mainstreaming of internal equal opportunities efforts in HR management.

We understand our policy as a “living paper” formulated in the wider context of the current change processes.

The five fields of action

- 1 Zukunftsorientierte Unternehmenskultur
- 1 Forward-looking organisational culture
- 2 Working career trajectories
- 3 Representation of women and men at management level/value-added in the management culture
- 4 Forms of work and compatibility/ work life balance
- 5 Multilingualism and cultural diversity

1 Forward-looking organisational culture

If measures to promote equal opportunities are implemented well, they will always find their expression in the culture of the organisation. If such a cultural shift is to be lasting, management must act as role models through their display of leadership as well as gender, language and intercultural skills, which themselves are part of a wider managerial skill set. The implementation of an equal opportunities policy is contingent on the effective consideration at management level of the pre-defined objectives and concerns. The commitment of management is decisive to the success of an equal opportunities policy.

Objectives:

- Good management is a permanent objective of our Department. It is recognised as work and service provision and is thus given priority status.
- Equal opportunities - in the all-encompassing sense of the term - is established as an ideal and a principle across the entire line management structure.
- Multilingualism and cultural diversity are recognised and promoted as strategic objectives for the development of the organisational culture. Tolerance, respect, acceptance, trust and openness are key to the balanced participation of all language communities and to the acceptance of cultural diversity.
- The FDFA has a gender-equitable organisational culture. It considers equal opportunities an issue that is important for women and men alike and, as such, is an accepted subject of dialogue.
- The existing culture where maximum presence and availability is replaced by a culture that focuses on effective availability, clear allocation of responsibilities and skills.

Measures:

- The FDFA should invest in the development of a modern, professional and proficient management structure.
- Managerial skills, including gender and intercultural skills, is the most important criterion when selecting management personnel.
- The specific interests of each language and cultural community are addressed and where possible, reflected at management level.
- There is awareness of the impact of traditional stereotyping and outdated role models. FDFA culture will move away from such stereotyping.
- Meeting schedules and decision-making processes are reviewed. Meeting times are cut by up to 50%, allowing all concerned to organise their time more efficiently.
- Etc.

2 Career trajectories

It will be increasingly important for the next generation to be able to balance their professional obligations with their own ideas about themselves and their career and with the demands of their personal life. The key factors here are mobility, diversity of experience and the need to make an optimal contribution professionally whatever the time of life. It is likely that in the future some members of the FDFA workforce will consider their work for the department more as one of many stages in their professional life rather than as a lifelong, linear career move.

Nevertheless, the equal opportunities policy should continue to take into account that some job candidates will still seek linear and steady working career trajectories. As an employer, the FDFA must continue to attract as many qualified candidates as possible and react better to change. To this end, it must offer job candidates the opportunity of a more flexible career within the institution.

Linear and non-linear working career trajectories within the FDFA, which entail deployment in assorted and sometimes external contexts, have their respective advantages and require different skill sets. As such, the FDFA must treat them on a par.

In addition, having a career and family should not be mutually exclusive either for women or for men. Both our female and male workforce should be able to strike a balance between their professional and private obligations.

Recruitment and transfer/rotation processes are adapted to the new challenges.

Objectives:

- Thanks to more flexible career trajectories, the best person can be deployed in the right place at the right time.
- Working career trajectories that were predominantly linear before become more flexible. They enable the individual to make career decisions for a limited period and adapted to their personal circumstances at that given time.
- The allocation of functions is decided primarily according to the employee's potential and skills.
- Recognition is given to different experiences and professional milestones in the career trajectory of each employee.

Measures:

- Line management decisions on personnel deployment and rotation take into account the equal opportunities principle.
- Incentives are created to ensure equal value is given to all overseas' postings. In all FDFA career trajectories different sites of experience are valued.
- Multiple career blueprints with different stages in the career, myriad experiences and skills development are considered a source of value-added.

In HR decisions, they are given equal weighting as the conventional principles of length of service and a linear career trajectory.

- Family situations are factored into the planning and decisions on transfers/rotations. The further development of the accompanying persons policy is part of this measure.

3 Representation of women and men at management level/ value-added in the management culture

A fundamental goal of equal opportunities promotion is the equal representation of men and women in all functions and at all hierarchical levels of the institution.

Objectives:

- Share of women in 2020 (minimum)
 - senior management (salary category 32 and higher): 30%
- Share of women and men in 2020
 - lower and middle management (salary categories 24–31): 50%/50%
 - in all functions with responsibility for personnel management: 50%/50%
- When formulating their two-year objectives, each directorate and organisational unit set out the steps they intend to take to reach their target values.
- The equal representation of women and men at management level advances the organisational and management culture of the institution.

Measures:

- The promotion of young talent and personnel recruitment are aligned with the target values.
- Gender representation is also taken into account in the composition of delegations.
- Incentive systems are created to help the directorates achieve these goals. Reviews of the financial steering resources are carried out (budget process).
- Developments are regularly and jointly reviewed and regulated. The instruments to this end are target-setting and monitoring processes.
- Opposition to the equal opportunities process and its implications are actively taken on board and addressed through open dialogue.
- Etc.

4 Forms of work and compatibility/work life balance

Women and men of all ages justifiably expect to be able to reconcile work and family or personal life. If the FDFA wants to remain an attractive employer both for younger employees and for employees with families, it must forge ahead with its restructuring work.

Objectives:

- The promotion of a work-life balance. Women and men are continually supported in their efforts to reconcile their career with their main life domains, particularly as regards balancing their work and family obligations.
- All directorates actively promote the acceptance of flexible forms of employment as well as flexible working hours.

Measures:

- Flexible labour models and working times are promoted and supported at all hierarchical levels (part time, working times, telecommuting, job-sharing for women and men etc.).
- FDFA management actively promotes the acceptance of new forms of employment in the still somewhat full-time focussed culture of the Department.

- Prevailing forms of communication and knowledge management are developed further: they should better meet the needs of more flexible forms of employment, which are based non-full time presence. Spatially integrated forms of participation and decision making are developed and put into practice (electronic networks, chairing of meetings and decision making using electronic resources etc.).
- As regards maternity/parental leave, solutions are developed which are as flexible as possible but which also consider what is in the official interest. These solutions should facilitate personnel achieve a balance between their chosen career trajectory and their child-rearing obligations.
- Etc.

5 Multilingualism and cultural diversity

The composition of the FDFA workforce already reflects the diversity of the four national language communities. The promotion of multilingualism and cultural diversity aims to ensure that the four communities are fairly represented at all levels of responsibility and in all activities of the Department. The FDFA can only benefit from cultural diversity if the different language communities have the opportunity to deploy their skills adequately within the structural- and decision making processes and to hold positions of responsibility.

Parallel to this is the importance of other non-national languages of relevance for the work of the Department. Given the conflicting priorities of the pursuit of a national multilingualism policy and the need to take into account non-national languages, the FDFA, with its many overseas offices and contacts overseas, must find a viable way to resolve this situation harmoniously.

Objectives:

- The four national languages are equally represented in the management and non-management personnel of the FDFA. Differing cultural backgrounds are prized as a source of value added. Below are guideline figures regarding the balanced representation of four national language communities within the FDFA:

German-speaking personnel:
maximum 66%

French-speaking personnel:
minimum 22%

Italian-speaking personnel:
minimum 5%

Rumantsch-speaking personnel:
minimum 0.5%

- Promotion of active and passive knowledge of the official languages (German, French and Italian) and the pertinent working languages (non-national languages) among FDFA personnel.
- Multilingualism and cultural diversity are part of the management and organisational culture within the FDFA.
- The language skills of management are enhanced. FDFA senior management are aware that they must play their part in achieving the national objective of cohesion. For example German- and French-speaking members of senior management, in particular have an active knowledge of two official languages and passive knowledge of the third official language.

- Given the growing number of local staff, the FDFA places a great deal of importance on the use of the English language for knowledge management. As part of a fundamental debate, the FDFA clarified how it wants to handle the conflicting priorities of investment in the systematic implementation of Swiss multilingualism policy on the one hand and the promotion of certain non-national languages on the other.

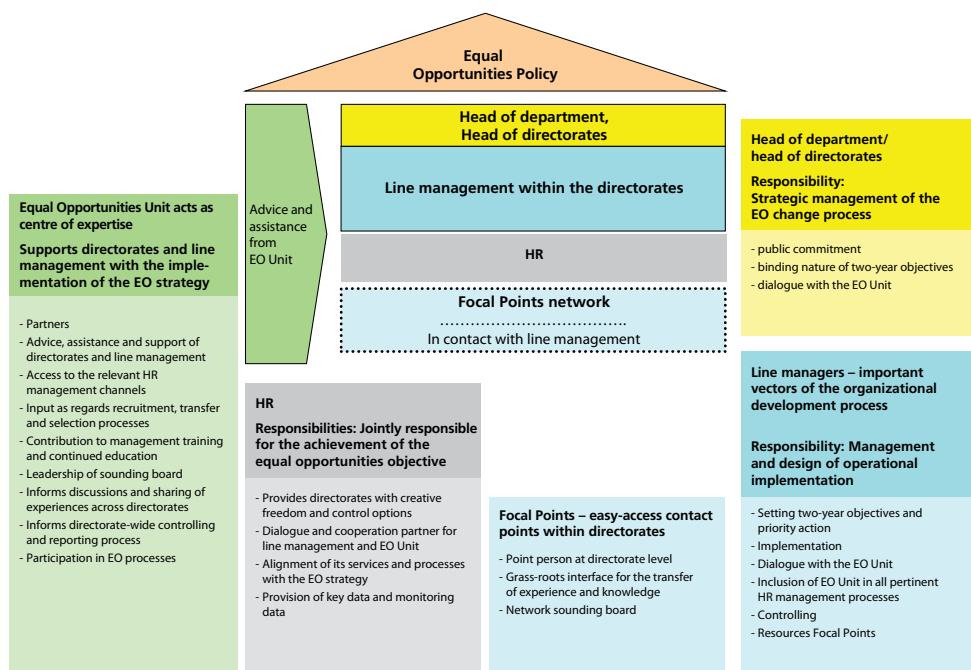
Measures:

- Investments are made commensurately in Latin languages. Individual and institutional multilingualism in the official languages (German, French and Italian) is improved (basic and advanced training, internal communication).
- Management promote the general acceptance of cultural diversity in the workplace.
- Personnel recruitment, personnel decisions (including rotations) and the promotion of young talent are consistent with the target values on the fair representation of language communities in the individual organisational units. This means that the principle of equal opportunities for women and men takes precedence over multilingualism.
- The FDFA devises practical guidelines on how it wants to handle the balancing act between the implementation of the national multilingualism policy (German, French and Italian) and the need for inclusion of other languages that are highly relevant for the FDFA's international activities or used by its overseas offices. It also sets out the goals to be pursued and the action it will take to realise them.
- Corresponding resources are invested in translation, IT knowledge platforms and continued education.
- Etc.

4. Responsibilities and instruments

We also understand equal opportunities also as a long-term organisational development process affecting all dimensions of an organisation, and as a managerial responsibility. The aims of equal opportunities and multilingualism have an impact on a great many areas of the institution, on its structures and processes, its identity, its culture and relationships. These aims demand cooperation between all major areas and decision-makers.

Responsibilities, duties and authority



The following tasks, responsibilities and competencies between the various levels and officials are agreed on:

The head of the Department and the heads of the directorates are responsible for the strategic management of the equal opportunities change process within in the FDFA

- They understand equal opportunities as a non-delegable management duty and lend their high-visibility support to the implementation of the FDFA equal opportunities policy.
- They shape the binding character of the agreed two-year goals.
- They base their strategic management on information such as the appropriate key data and enter into dialogue with the FDFA Equal Opportunities Unit and others at headquarters.

Line managers are important vectors in the organisational development process. The directorates steer and design the operational implementation of the policy.

- The directorates formulate the two-year objectives on the implementation of equal opportunities and set their own priorities.
- They shape the implementation of the policy and make the necessary decisions to this end. It is therefore within their authority to steer and designate the use of resources within their directorate.

- They seek dialogue with the Equal Opportunities Unit and communicate their specific needs and demands. They guarantee the inclusion of the Unit in the relevant HR management processes.
- They guarantee an appropriate controlling and generation of key data.
- They name Focal Points within the directorate and subsequently make resources available for the development of a network (sounding board) to enable directorates to share knowledge and experience.

The Equal Opportunities Unit is a centre of expertise and supports the directorates and line management with the implementation of the equal opportunities policy.

- It considers itself to be a partner of the line management.
- It assists, advises and supports line management as well as the individual directorates to satisfy their specific demands and requirements.
- It shares its expertise and know-how, advises the directorates during their work to set their two-year objectives and helps them to implementation measures to this end.
- It has access to all relevant HR management channels and participates in specific directorate and HR meetings.

- It participates in all relevant HR decision-making processes with the right of proposal and petition, sharing its expertise particularly as regards personnel recruitment, transfer and admission processes, as well as management training and continued education.
 - It oversees the running of the directorate-wide network, and coordinates and assists the collective learning process. It heads the sounding board, shapes discussions and knowledge sharing among the directorates, and jointly assesses the impact of measures with all participants concerned.
 - It provides the directorates with key data on the controlling of the process and informs the directorate-wide controlling and reporting process.
 - It contributes to organisational development processes and advocates that both these processes and strategic and operational HR decisions take into account issues related to equal opportunities.
- It designs its processes and range of services in accordance with the present policy and aligns itself to the formulated goals.
 - It delivers key and monitoring data.

The Focal Points are easy-access contact points within the directorates.

The Human Resources Division is another central partner in this process. Within the scope of its services and authority, and in the key HR processes of the FDFA, **it is jointly responsible for ensuring equal opportunities for all.**

- As designated point persons, the Focal Points have a sound knowledge of the issues of equal opportunities and multilingualism and deal directly with line management where appropriate. Ideally, they should belong to the HR section of the Directorate or organisation unit. However, they do not have any specific decision-making authority on equal opportunities issues.
 - Their easy accessibility creates proximity.
 - They act as an interface for knowledge and experience transfer within the directorate, between directorates and between the directorate and the Equal Opportunities Unit
 - The Focal Points collectively make up the FDFA equal opportunities network, or "sounding board". This network is led by the Equal Opportunities Unit and coordinates the sharing of knowledge and expertise across directorates in the interests of capitalising on existing experiences.
 - Focal Points have specific functions to fulfil. These are clearly stipulated in their job description.
- It gives the directorates the requisite creative freedom and control options.
 - It is a dialogue and cooperation partner for the line management and the Equal Opportunities Unit.

On a day-to-day basis **an informal network of decision-makers** works to promote the values of equal opportunities, multilingualism and cultural diversity, as well as the concomitant advancement of the organisational culture within the FDFA. As movers and powerful driving forces, these leaders constitute a voluntary network which supports and strengthens the process as part of their dialogue with the Equal Opportunities Unit.

Instruments:

The FDFA 10-year equal opportunities policy 2010–2020 serves as a reference framework and guide. It sets out the vision, the fields of action and the binding strategic aims as well as the shape that cooperation within the different areas of the department should take.

FDFA four-year equal opportunities programme and the **FDFA four-year multilingualism programme**.

These four-year programmes comply with the directives issued by the Swiss government to all federal departments on the development of catalogues of measures to promote gender equality for every new legislative period. The programmes cover department-wide strategic objectives as well as sub-goals. The catalogues of measures in the appendix are a work tool and provide a framework for the objectives and priorities of two-year programmes.

From 2010 the two-year objectives will be agreed upon within the directorates/organisational units. This means that the following organisational units will set out their goals and priorities for the implementation of the equal opportunities policy:

- State Secretariat and Directorate of Political Affairs PD
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
- Directorate of Corporate Resources DCR
- Directorate of Public International Law DV
- General Secretariat FDFA
- Consular Directorate CD

The **two-year objectives** are established **as part of the existing planning processes.** The directorates have considerable creative freedom. They include the Equal Opportunities Unit and their Focal Point in the formulation of the goals and in the drawing up of the progress report regarding the achievement of these objectives. The Equal Opportunities Unit offers assistance and support.

The directorates guarantee in an appropriate manner a **minimum degree of controlling.** The Equal Opportunities Unit proposes appropriate key data for the achievement of the two-year objectives. The directorates take responsibility for controlling at the directorate level. The Equal Opportunities Unit conducts an annual monitoring campaign and submits an **annual controlling report** to the Executive Committee on the implementation of the FDFA equal opportunities policy.

Impressum

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