

L A N G U A G E   O F   W O R K

It is the responsibility of the Department to ensure the equality of status of French and English as languages of work. The analysis made of their status in the Annual Report 1979-1980 indicated the intention to orient efforts, in the area of linguistic behaviour, towards habits and attitudes rather than towards changes in mechanics.

The activities undertaken during the course of the year have focused on the analysis of the degree of satisfaction and the perceptions of employees on the subject of language of work in order to determine a more realistically-based course of action. Moreover, it is important to note the results of various audit activities.

1. Survey of employee satisfaction

Using a questionnaire answered by 569 headquarters employees who were officially bilingual or who were occupying positions identified as "French essential", the Department gathered data on degree of satisfaction, actual use of French and factors seen as obstacles to the use of French at work (see Goal 5.2, p. 24). Preliminary analysis of the results shows that French is used fairly extensively in the work units. Some 63% of Francophones and 46% of Anglophones stated that they used French often, very often or always, while 12% of respondents said that French was never or almost never used in their work unit. The survey showed, among other data on usage, that 33% of Francophones never or almost never spoke to their supervisors in French. Moreover, a direct link can be established between this situation and the respondents' perception of their supervisors' language proficiency.

As to the degree of satisfaction with the possibility of using French in oral communications, 73% of Francophones, 55% of Anglophones and 86% of those who had no preference for either official language said that they were satisfied or very satisfied. It is noted that dissatisfaction is higher among Anglophones, 30% of whom said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

For Francophones, the three main obstacles to use of French are the following:

- the impression that meetings attended by ministers and senior public servants are almost invariably conducted in English;