In-house awareness-raising as a key issue

Pius Breu, Head of the Personnel Policy Projects and Diversity division at the Federal Office of Personnel FOPER, describes in an interview what the Federal Administration expects to achieve in terms of energy from mobile, flexible forms of work.

What does mobile work mean in the Federal Administration?
Today we are significantly more mobile than we were a few years ago. In the Federal Administration too, a growing proportion of employees perform their work either partially or entirely outside their own workplace – either on the move in their mobile office or from their office at home. We enter into an agreement with employees who work regularly from home. Modern modes of communication – such as shift in information and communication technology to Skype for Business in the past two years – have provided a big boost here. We have been a member of the Work Smart Initiative\(^1\) since March 2017. It sent an important signal to our employees and the management: we use the potential of mobile working to organise our activities more efficiently, but also to save resources and remain an attractive employer. This trend continues to gather pace.

To what extent do you also expect energy-related benefits from mobile and flexible working?
With mobile forms of work and flexible working time models, the Federal Administration is making a contribution to evening out traffic peaks. Firm figures for this are not yet available, however. At the same time, the Federal Administration is promoting the use of public transport by providing SBB half-fare travelcards for all its employees. The increased use of flexible working arrangements has a positive impact on our consumption of resources.

Where do you see as-yet untapped potential for energy consumption?
According to the 2017 staff survey, more than half of our employees already go to work by public transport, on foot or by bicycle. So we’ve already achieved a lot in terms of commuter traffic. However, environmental aspects should increasingly play a role in future when choosing the means of transport for business travel. We encourage the use of telephone and video conferencing as alternatives to business travel with face-to-face meetings on site. The Federal Administration is now technically well-equipped for this at all its locations. However, it is and will continue to be a major task to raise employee awareness of energy consumption and to support them with appropriate information and tools.

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\(^1\) The Work Smart Initiative supports organisations with the implementation of flexible working arrangements. The signatories of the Work Smart Charter undertake, for example, to use resources and infrastructure more efficiently.