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About us/Introduction:

<http://www.departement.org/webdav/site/adf/shared/internet/ACCUEIL/ADF/plaquette-presentation-ADF.pdf>**The Assembly of french départements**

The Assembly of the départements of France (ADF) is a pluralistic association of councillors that brings together 102 French départements (96 metropolitan and 6 overseas).

The ADF has three missions:

- It represents the interests of local authorities in its dealing with the public authorities
- it is a permanent resource centre for the departmental councils
- it also offers councillors and département officers the means to compare ideas, exchange experiences and to decide on a common stance on important national issues

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The training institute for local (IFET)

Created in 1994, at the behest of the Assembly of the départements of France with the aim of meeting the training needs of general councillors, the Institute for the training of councillors (IFET) offers made to measure programmes in Paris or in situ.

The aim of this organisation is to give councillors and their teams the opportunity to improve their skills through training.

Each councillor must ensure the effectiveness of the local institution in which he or she is carrying out his or her mandate, and become a specialist in how local authorities are run in general and on issues for which he or she is personally in charge. This is the area that the IFET covers through its "skills relating to the local authority" section.

Finally, as a politician, he or she must permanently improve his or her ability to manage and make decisions: this is the decision-maker's general knowledge.

By dint of the law on the training of local councillors, under the approval of the Ministry for the Interior, the members of the IFET may ask for any training costs to be reimbursed by their local authority.

[Programme and training schedule, introduction to the IFET, contacts etc.](#)

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Who we are/The Missions of the ADF:

The Assembly of **French départements** represents all départements in metropolitan France and overseas in a pluralistic fashion. The assembly offers councillors and département offers the means to discuss ideas, exchange experiences and decided on a common stance on important national issues.

Missions of the ADF

- To establish close and permanent collaboration between all departmental councils on the implementation of skills transferred to départements by decentralisation laws and on all issues that affect administration of the département.
- Represent all departments when dealing with national and European public authorities.
- Inform the government of the official stance of the presidents of the Departmental councils on all legislation projects and on regulations concerning their missions, skills and the activities of the départements, and ensure that they are taken into account.
- Stay in close contact with the parliamentary assemblies so that the stance and the ambitions of the départements are taken fully into consideration during debate on legislation.
- Constitute a body that forms a link with all other institutions and organisations of economic and social life in order to express its views, and to develop with them a partnership that can ensure that public actions are run efficiently in the départements. In particular, the ADF has a tightly-knit network of relations with other assemblies and associations that represent local authorities.

To successfully carry out its mission, ADF brings together the Departmental Councillors, listens to their experiences and promotes the initiatives and policies of the départements to the general public.

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Who we are/The bodies of the ADF:

The ADF comprises several bodies to carry out its work for the départements.

The permanent board of the ADF

The permanent board is representative of the various political persuasions in the départements. It meets every month with the president of the ADF to organise the work of the ADF and to decide on the stance it wishes to take.

The members of the board are obliged to attend and cannot send a proxy. If members do not attend repeatedly without good reason, the President of the ADF may suggest that the member concerned be replaced. Minutes are taken at all meetings.

The board may hear personalities on issues relating to the work of the association. In 2009, the board of the ADF heard speeches by the Director General of local authorities, and the President and Director of the CNSA etc.

Themed Commissions

- The themed commissions are to be responsible for debating subjects that fall within their remit, and for proposing the stance to be taken by the bodies of the ADF.
- The commissions comprise councillors who have been given a mandate by their President (or permanent commissions) to hold a seat on it. A single councillor may not hold a seat on more than 2 commissions

The départements must inform the ADF of the names and positions held by the councillors that they have appointed to represent them. They will receive, just like the presidents of the departmental councils, all documents or information regarding the commissions they belong to. They are summoned to meetings and cannot send a proxy. They may be accompanied by a colleague of their choice, but this person will not have any voting rights.

The commission may take on, on the proposal of the President, should this be necessary, representatives of associations of officers by sector in the départements or external organisations as experts.

- The president of each commission is appointed for 3 years by the board from among the members after departmental elections. He or she summons meetings and sets the agenda in agreement with the President of the ADF. It reports to the Board on the work carried out and the stance taken.
- Each commission appoints two vice presidents, taking into account the statutory recognition of their political persuasions. The vice presidents help the president of the commission to carry out his or her work, to look after any undertakings of the commission and provide representation for it in the sectors attributed to them in their commission.
- The commissions meet at least 3 times a year. All members will be summoned personally by the President. At least once a year, the commission will hold a session that is open to all representatives of the departmental councils and colleagues working in the various sections of the départements.

The permanent conference of the departmental councillors of France

The permanent conference of the departmental councillors of France was created at the conference in October 2007 in Marseilles. It brings together once a year the representatives of the departmental councils of all the départements (2 per département appointed by the president of the departmental council, representing the majority party and the opposition) so that they can express their opinions on issues regarding the département as a body, the status of the councillor and the conditions for carrying out their mandate.

[COMPOSITION OF THE BODIES](#)

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Who we are/ADF team:

The permanent team of the ADF works for the départements. In addition to responsibility for carrying out analyses and assessments for the départements, it takes care of promoting and defending the département as an institution.

- **It analyses the financial repercussions and measures the impact of legislation on the policies of the départements.**

Information documents and statistics are published regularly. All draft legislation or technical work of the commission, regardless of which body produced it, must be analysed in minute detail so that decision makers in the local authorities have access to detailed and up-to-date information in real time.

- **It organises meetings between the departmental councils and prepares drafts to be debated.**

Each area of competence covered by the départements is monitored by an expert who works closely with the départements at all times. The debates prior to all legislative or regulatory work are carried out in the presence of the councillors of the appointed commission, and are helped and advised by our officers.

- **It federates initiatives and gathers in the experience of others**

All current matters that require plans to be drawn up for the medium and long term will be subject to studies or reports. All the départements are then consulted and invited to express their experience on the subject. These documents will be available on the Extranet and the site of the assembly of the départements of France

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Who we are/Members of the Board:

Members of the Board and the Executive Commission

President of the ADF:

Claudy LEBRETON, president of the departmental council of the Côtes-d'Armor

General Secretary:

Bruno SIDO, president of the departmental council of the Haute Marne

Deputy General Secretary:

Christian FAVIER, president of the departmental council of the Val de Marne

First vice-president:

Michel DINET, president of the departmental council of Meurthe-et-Moselle

Second vice-president:

Eric DOLIGE, president of the departmental council of the Loiret

Third vice-president:

Bernard CAZEAU, president of the departmental council of the Dordogne

Fourth vice-president:

Philippe LEROY, senator, president of the departmental council of the Moselle, president of the housing commission

Treasurer:

Michel BERSON, president of the departmental council of Essonne

Joint treasurer:

Maurice LEROY, president of the departmental council of the Loir et Cher

Members of the Board

Entitled members:

Mrs. Gisèle STIEVENARD, vice-president of the Council of Paris.

Mr. Claude LISE, President of the Overseas Territories Commission

Members of the Board, Presidents of themed commissions:

- Yves DAUDIGNY, President of the commission for Social and family policy
- Jean-Louis DESTANS, President of the commission for European affairs
- Didier GUILLAUME, President of the commission for Decentralised cooperation and international relations
- Vincent EBLÉ, President of the commission for Education, culture, youth and sport
- Pierre IZARD, President of the commission for Finances and local fiscal matters
- Yves KRATTINGER, President of the commission for Town and country planning and NITC
- Christian NAMY, President of the commission for Public services and the civil service
- Jean-Paul POURQUIER, President of the commission for the Environment, sustainable development and agriculture
- Gérard ROCHE*, President of the commission for Economic development and employment
- René-Paul SAVARY, President of the commission for Social integration and cohesion

Other members of the Board

- Philippe ADNOT, senator, president of the departmental council of Aube
- Claude ROIRON, president of the departmental council of Indre-et-Loire.
- Jean-Michel BAYLET, president of the departmental council of Tarn-et-Garonne
- Christophe BÉCHU, president of the departmental council of Maine et Loire
- Jean-Noël GUERINI, senator, president of the departmental council of the Bouches-du-Rhône
- Joseph-François KERGUERIS, senator, president of the departmental council of the Morbihan
- Albéric de MONTGOLFIER, president of the departmental council of Eure-et-Loir
- Anne d'ORNANO, president of the departmental council of Calvados
- Marie-Françoise PÉROL-DUMONT, MP, president of the departmental council of the Haute-Vienne

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Who we are/Commissions:

The themed commissions that the councillors and executives from the départements.

There are twelve of them and determine the work of the ADF.

All are presided over by a departmental council president. They study the files that directly concern the départements, define their stance on technical matters and put forward policy measures to the Board of the ADF.

Name of the commission

Scope of the commission

Finance and local fiscal matters

Departmental budgets, the financial situation of the departmental councils, the place of local authorities in the public finances are the main subjects of the Finance and local fiscal matters commission. Its role is to examine bills on finance and fiscal matters of local authorities and ensure the financial and fiscal autonomy of the départements.

Social and Family Policy

The Social and family policy commission examines all issues concerning child protection, child welfare, family policy and policies to reduce dependency. It is the contact for the Departmental organisation for the handicapped (MDPH) and receives the large unions and national federations in the autonomy sector.

Integration and social cohesion

All social and professional integration policies, assistance to help people return to employment and assistance contracts are worked on by the Integration and social cohesion commission. It is behind a large number of amendments to the Earned Income Support law (RSA) of 1st December 2008, as well as partnerships formed by the départements with those involved with this scheme.

Housing and accommodation

The Housing and accommodation commission is involved in departmental policies on housing, urban development and town policy. The role of the councillors has continued to grow in the area of housing since act II of the decentralisation process in 2004, so this commission follows particularly closely the process of transfer of areas of competence to identify the regulatory and legal pitfalls.

Economic development and employment

The aim of the Economic development and employment commission is to monitor and define the contribution of départements to the economic dynamism of its area and to tourism. It pays particular attention to the role of the départements in public investment, financing large structural projects for local economies and the links that they form between companies and the area.

Environment, sustainable development and agriculture

Environmental protection and sustainable development, through implementation of Agenda 21, are at the heart of the discussions of the Environment, sustainable development and

agriculture commission. It pools the experiences of sustainable development of the départements as important contributors to the protection of the natural environment.

Town and country planning and NICT

The Town and country planning and NICT commission monitors all file concerning solidarity between areas. In addition to large infrastructure, inter-urban and school transport, it aims to improve the distribution of public services in its area, maintain it in rural areas, and reduce the digital ditch.

European affairs

The European affairs commission is the contact for European institutions. It monitors departmental programmes connected with structural funds (ESF, RDF, INTERREG...) and takes part in European local authority networks within the European House of Local Authorities. The ADF took part, in 2008, in creating the European Confederation of Intermediary Local Governments (ECILG), the foremost European network of local authorities.

Education, culture, youth, and sport

The Education, culture, youth, and sport commission deals with all matters concerning educational, cultural and sporting policy of the départements. This also includes the construction and maintenance of middle schools (colleges), e-education or citizenship awareness. It also deals with school meals, extra-curricular cultural and sporting events after school hours, promotion of the heritage and support for cultural facilities.

Overseas

The Overseas commission brings together six overseas départements: Guyana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion island and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon. Taking into account the special geographical nature, it is a place for councillors to exchange views, and to learn from and pool each other's experiences.

Decentralised cooperation and international relations

The Decentralised cooperation and international relations commission fosters partnerships between French and foreign départements. This is the commission behind the Fund for the promotion of preliminary studies, transversal studies and evaluations (F3E), and that published the guide *"Improve decentralised public policy on cooperation"* in 2008.

Public services and the civil service

The Public services and the civil service commission is involved in all issues connected with public services. It serves as an interface between public employers in the départements and works on the organisation of public services. It makes many proposals to officers employed by all 102 departmental councils.

Page Departmental Councillors/History

History of the département as an institution

~~1790: The Constituent Assembly adopts the Cassini law on the creation of départements. The aim is to unify the country and put an end to the wide range of local authority structures. There are 83 départements, all of which have a "county town" which must be accessible from anywhere in the département in less than a day by horse. Each département must have a council in charge of running it under the tight control of central government.~~

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~~1871: By way of the Law of 10th August, the département is now considered to be a local authority. The law states way the departmental council is to be run. At the same time it receives overall competence for managing affairs that concern the département. The councillors are elected for a period of six year by universal suffrage with one representative per canton.~~

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~~1982: The département becomes a fully fledged local authority. Thanks to the decentralisation laws of 2nd March, the councillors are given new responsibilities. The département is no longer under the guardianship of the prefecture. The president of the departmental council now has executive power. It is the president who prepares and implements the budget for his or her département.~~

Page departmental council representatives/acronyms and abbreviations

The glossary for départements

Acronyms, abbreviations explained for you...

AAH: Benefits for handicapped adults (benefits and income support)

APA: Personalised autonomy allowance

ASE: Child benefits

CDCI: Inter-commune cooperation commission for the département

CDESI: Sites and itineraries commission for the département

CDT: Tourism committee for the département

DDE: Facilities division for the département

ENS: Sensitive natural areas

EPCC: Public bodies for cultural collaboration

EPCI: Public body for inter-commune cooperation

FSE: European Social Fund

MDPH: Organisation for handicapped people in the département

ODAS: National observatory for decentralised social initiatives

PDESI: Spaces, sites and itineraries plan for the département

PMI: Mother and child protection service

SDAS: Social action section of the département

TIPP: Tax on oil products

TOS: Departmental technician and worker

TSCA: Special tax on insurance contracts

Page departmental council representatives/mission of the départements

All the missions stem from the various areas of competence of the departmental councils that the legislator attributed to them. Their role increases with each new stage of decentralisation.

Social action

This makes up the major part of work of the département. The areas covered are welfare of the elderly, handicapped and children, as well as providing assistance for those in difficulty. Investment in this area makes up 60 % of the budgets of the départements and 80 % of its employees.

Facilities and transport

The road network of the département comes to 380,000 kilometres, ie almost 40 % of the road network in France. The departmental council takes care of highway planning and maintenance. At the same time, it develops, alongside the State and the Region, via contracts related to 5-year plans, the road and motorways networks in France. It also takes part in financing the district highways. Planning and operating the trade and fishing ports, the organisation of public transport and school transport services are also part of the remit of the départements.

Help for communes (districts)

The communes and partnership communes have special access to the départements. The departmental council helps them to invest and acquire facilities in a number of areas: drinking water supply, purification, electrification, highways, financing of commune facilities (churches, town halls, police stations, and emergency services, renovation work of villages, environmental protection, land planning etc). The département also provides financial assistance for urban projects and town policy.

Education, culture, and heritage

The construction and maintenance of middle schools as well as some of their facilities including IT, lending libraries, subsidies for a wide range of festivals and cultural events are also the responsibility of the départements.

Economic and social development

This area of competence is also covered by the regional councils. However, the département gives priority to hosting large research facilities and helping them to grow. In the rural départements, economic assistance from the departmental council allows essential business activities to be maintained (small shops, school, local public services etc.) The départements intend to emphasize their specific roles, in particular initiatives undertaken for the small and medium business sector and tradespeople and lastly they take part in modernising agriculture and helping young farmers to set up.

Environment, tourism

Departmental councils are also in charge of protecting the environment. They take particular care of sensitive natural spaces (ENS), and are responsible for managing water and waste. They are also responsible for walking and cycling paths. The départements finance on average 86% of the budget of local tourist boards that are in charge of promoting and marketing tourism in collaboration with the local partners concerned.

Page Departmental Councillors/How they are run:

How are the decisions of the departmental council taken?

How a departmental council meeting is run

The meetings of the departmental council most often take place in the municipal hall of the département but may also be held elsewhere in the département in a chosen by the permanent commission. The internal regulations state how the meetings are to be run. The President opens up the meetings, has the minutes adopted, makes any necessary announcements, runs and organises the debate based on the agenda, reads out and takes a vote on the items debated.

The rules of majority

As with other local authorities, the departmental council exercises its competence in the area of taking a vote on debates which must comply with the rules of quorum, form and majority.

The general code for local authorities states that the departmental council must only debate if an absolute majority of its members are present. If this is not the case, the meeting will be postponed for three days and the decisions will be adopted by majority of the members present.

In order to be valid, the decisions must be adopted by a majority of the votes expressed. Each councillor may not hold more than one mandate to vote, which has to be written if one of them is not able to vote.

Plenary sessions

They take place at least once a trimester at the request of the president, and are public. They are presided over by the president of the departmental council who ensures that it is properly run. Minutes are taken of the meetings. They contain reports and speeches made, and cover the debates, as well as any decisions made by vote. These minutes are sent to any voter who so requests.

The agenda

The president of the permanent commission is responsible for organising the agenda, discussions and debates. Twelve full days before the meeting, the president send all councillors a report on the matters that are to be discussed. He or she will announce the reasons for the planned debates, and provide any legal information, as well as the content of any texts put forward, and analyses the financial consequences. However, if the

departmental council has delegated part of its work to the permanent commission, the reports may be announced during the meeting.

Every year, the President draws up a special report for the departmental council on the situation of the département stating the progress made in carrying out the decisions passed and the financial situation of the département. The Prefect informs the departmental council each year of the business and services carried out by the State in the département.

The vote

A public vote is the most widely used practice, but a voting slip is required for appointments. The voting methods are defined in the internal regulations, but the essential factor is the clarity with which the representatives express their wishes.

The decisions voted by the assembly are sent to the Prefect who checks that they are legally valid and become executable once sent. They must be published in the collection of administrative acts and made available to the public for them to be considered binding.

Each département has its own internal regulations

Each departmental council is obliged to draw up its own internal regulations which lay down the rules to follow for holding meetings, discussions and making appointments. It is updated at least every three years. There are no standard internal regulations, but they usually contain the rules that departmental councils create to run and police the meetings, working commissions and studies, the creation of political groups, oral questions etc. For the councillors, these regulations guarantee their right to express themselves and the transparency of the debates.

Page departmental councillors/election methods

How are the departmental councillors elected?

Departmental councillors are elected within a canton - one per canton - for a term of 6 years. They are elected by direct universal suffrage, and make up the departmental assembly, half of which is renewed every three years. Every three years, when the cantons are renewed, a call takes place to elect the president of the departmental council and the permanent commission.

Page Departmental Councillors/Executive:

The bodies of the Departmental Council

Deliberating Assembly

Every three years, when the cantons are renewed, the only meeting whose date and content are laid by the law takes place. It has to be the second Thursday following the first round of elections and is dedicated to electing the President and the permanent commission.

At least once every trimester, the departmental councillors meet in a deliberative assembly in the municipal hall of the département to vote and adopt the important acts of the departmental institution (budget, debates, tax levels etc.)

Other meetings may take place at the request of the permanent commission or by a third of the member of the departmental council on a specific point on the agenda, for a period not exceeding two days, and possibly by government decree if the situation so requires.

The President

The president is elected by the departmental councillors for three years, and embodies the executive of the département. He or she runs the administration of the département, implements and executes the decisions made by the assembly.

The commissions:

Each of the 102 departmental councils is comprised of commissions, work groups, bringing together a certain number of councillors. The law lays down the number of appointments and each département creates the organisation it wishes according to the areas of competence that it has and the subjects it wishes to get involved in. Studies are carried out and opinions are expressed by the councillors via these commissions. The members study and assess the files that are to be debated at the plenary session. The councillors appointed to monitor the work carried out by the Assembly of the départements of France come from members of these commissions.

The permanent commission:

The permanent commission is composed of the president of the departmental council, vice-presidents and varying number of councillors; it monitors everyday affairs and organises the work of the departmental council. It is in effect the government of the departmental council.

The groups of councillors

Within the departmental council, the councillors meet up according to political persuasion. The Law of 9th January 1995 enables the creation of groups of councillors who can have access to the facilities, premises and personnel they require to do their work. The amount of this expenditure is laid down by law and states that expenditure on personnel for groups of councillors must not exceed 25% of the amount of the salary paid to the councillors.