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European Institute of Public Administration
Institut européen d'administration publique

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About EIPASCOPE

EIPASCOPE is the Bulletin of the European Institute of Public Administration and is published three times a year. The articles in EIPASCOPE are written by EIPA faculty members and associate members and are directly related to the Institute's fields of work. Through its Bulletin, the Institute aims to increase public awareness of current European issues and to provide information about the work carried out at the Institute. Most of the contributions are of a general character and are intended to make issues of common interest accessible to the general public. Their objective is to present, discuss and analyse policy and institutional developments, legal issues and administrative questions that shape the process of European integration.

In addition to articles, EIPASCOPE keeps its audience informed about the activities EIPA organises and in particular about its open seminars and conferences, for which any interested person can register. Information about EIPA's activities carried out under contract (usually with EU institutions or the public administrations of the Member States) is also provided in order to give an overview of the subject areas in which EIPA is working and indicate the possibilities on offer for tailor-made programmes.

Institutional information is given on members of the Board of Governors as well as on changes, including those relating to staff members, at EIPA Maastricht, Luxembourg, Barcelona and Warsaw.

The full text of current and back issues of EIPASCOPE is also available on line. It can be found at: <http://www.eipa.eu>

EIPASCOPE dans les grandes lignes

EIPASCOPE est le Bulletin de l'Institut européen d'administration publique et est publié trois fois par an. Les articles publiés dans EIPASCOPE sont rédigés par les membres de la faculté de l'IEAP ou des membres associés et portent directement sur les domaines de travail de l'IEAP. A travers son Bulletin, l'Institut entend sensibiliser le public aux questions européennes d'actualité et lui fournir des informations sur les activités réalisées à l'Institut. La plupart des articles sont de nature générale et visent à rendre des questions d'intérêt commun accessibles pour le grand public. Leur objectif est de présenter, discuter et analyser des développements politiques et institutionnels, ainsi que des questions juridiques et administratives qui façonnent le processus d'intégration européenne.

En dehors des articles, EIPASCOPE contient également des informations sur les activités organisées par l'IEAP et, plus particulièrement, ses séminaires et conférences ouverts qui sont accessibles à toute personne intéressée. Notre bulletin fournit aussi des renseignements sur les activités de l'IEAP qui sont réalisées dans le cadre d'un contrat (généralement avec les institutions de l'UE ou les administrations publiques des Etats membres) afin de donner un aperçu des domaines d'activité de l'IEAP et des possibilités qu'il offre pour la réalisation de programmes sur mesure adaptés aux besoins spécifiques de la partie contractuelle.

Il fournit également des informations institutionnelles sur les membres du Conseil d'administration ainsi que sur les mouvements de personnel à l'IEAP Maastricht, Luxembourg, Barcelone et Varsovie.

EIPASCOPE est aussi accessible en ligne et en texte intégral sur le site suivant: <http://www.eipa.eu>



Taking the Pulse of Public Administrations in Europe

Outcome of the European Public Sector Award 2009



Tore Chr. Malterud* and Alexander Heichlinger**

More than a year ago the European Public Sector Award (EPSA) was launched by EIPA and was supported by 15 countries, the European Commission and some private sponsors. The purpose was to bring together the best, most innovative and efficient performers from all levels of public administration, in a fair and open competition. The applicants competed in four different categories, ranging from (1) *performance improvement in public service delivery*, (2) *citizen involvement* and (3) *partnership working* to (4) *leadership and management for change*. Although it is difficult to compare projects and actions at different levels of governance and from different sectors, some clear trends can be observed which reflect what really is going on in the public administration of today. The award was launched at the same time that the financial crises hit the economies in Europe, forcing the public administration to rethink their resources and budgets for the coming years. This led in many cases to a situation where a process of continuous innovation was strengthened; thereby countering the argument that public administration is slow, not innovative and that the routines are jeopardising development. A general observation was that innovation is taking place within public administration among the back-curtain of economic restraint, uncertainty about the future and a growing focus on the performance and quality of delivery in public administration in times of recession. Although the demand for changes comes from the citizens and are then articulated by the politicians, the actual move and design takes place within the services.



Mr Gerd Leers, former Mayor of Maastricht, Ms Marga Pröhl, Director-General of EIPA, Mr Alexander Heichlinger, Manager EPSA 2009 and Expert, EIPA Barcelona



The nominees and the award winners were presented in Maastricht on **4-6 November 2009** at a major event, which was co-financed by the European Commission and supported by the Town Hall of Maastricht and the Province of Limburg. In brief, the former Mayor of Maastricht, Mr G.B.M. Leers, welcomed the 250 EPSA 2009 participants to the city's Town Hall on the evening of Wednesday 4 November, where he, together with EIPA's Director-General, Ms Marga Pröhl, and the EPSA Manager, handed out the best practice certificates to 40 different organisations (details under www.epsa2009.eu). This marked the official starting point of two promising days devoted to innovative problem-solving approaches within our four highly relevant European thematic areas, which offered the participants from more than 25 countries the opportunity to exchange and learn from the EPSA 2009 experience.

The activities continued on Thursday 5 November at the Provincial Government House of Limburg with the EPSA 2009 symposium. In plenary sessions, leading figures and notabilities, such as: Vladimir Špidla, the Former European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, from the Swedish Presidency; Mr Mats Odell, Minister for Local Government, Public Administration and Financial Markets; and Mr Hessels, Vice Governor of Economic Affairs of Limburg, discussed the future challenges facing public sector actors in the new global environment and the importance of administrative capacity building to address them. In conclusion, several of these high-level speakers agreed on its relevance, and thus officially expressed their political support for the continuation of the European Public Sector Award scheme for the forthcoming years.

The most anticipated part of the programme took place on the evening of the same day. During a two-hour ceremony, the 2009 EPSA award winners were announced and presented in the presence of Mr Siim Kallas, Vice President of the European Commission and the Dutch State Secretary, Ms Ank Bijleveld, present for this occasion on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

The symposium concluded with the four parallel thematic workshops on Friday 6 November, during which the award nominees and EPSA 2009 winners presented and discussed their projects in detail.

Following a multiple-step, fair and impartial evaluation process, including an online evaluation (1st Step), a consensus meeting (2nd Step) as well as onsite visits to a small number of short-listed projects per theme (3rd Step for validation purposes), an independent jury (4th Step) selected the award trophy winners for the EPSA 2009 edition:

Performance Improvement in Public Service Delivery (Theme I)

Regional Platform for e-Services for all - e-Bourgogne (France), which is an online based system that offers enterprises access to public markets. All public bodies use a single platform that offers access to all public markets and also functions as a one-stop-shop for all public aids dedicated to small- and medium-sized enterprises. The project has shown to save time and money for business society. It is an example of successful horizontal and vertical coordination, where actors from different levels of government and from a large number of different sized local bodies are working together.

Citizen Involvement (Theme II)

Cologne Participatory Budgeting (Germany) is a project involving citizens via the internet in the preparation of the budget of the City. The project created the opportunity for citizens to participate in designing the municipal budget focusing on three areas – playgrounds, streets and sports – by setting up an e-Platform. This initiative determined a lot of discussions, but also proposals, ideas and corrections. In total, 10 231 participants, 4973 proposals, 9184 comments and overall 52 746 assessments were carried out. Through this new method a new culture of participation was created based on transparency and ability to activate huge and different target groups. Currently, and in the context of a wider approach, there are 38 municipalities in Germany which have either introduced a participatory budget or executing participatory budgeting for the second or third time.



Plenary session in Provincial Government House on Thursday 5 November 2009

New Forms of Partnership Working (Theme III)

The Oldham Local Strategic Partnership (United Kingdom) project – a cooperation between entities with different core objectives (in principle), i.e. several statutory bodies, third sector agencies and the private sector joined forces and built a partnership with the long-term aim of reviving the declining local economy, raising the level of local aspirations and addressing underlying ethnic tensions, which went well beyond their statutory obligation to cooperate.

Leadership and Management for Change (Theme IV)

Management in the San Cugat City Council (Spain).

The traditional expenses culture of a municipality public administration, where budgets are to be spent, was changed into a cost culture which is based on the continuing optimisation of economic resources by introducing a contract between politicians and top public managers (*PACTE*). In the contract, they agree on long-term vision and short-term actions. This change in management and political culture resulted not only in more efficient public organisation, but achieved the objective of both, the politicians and public managers thinking in the same direction and having the same values, therefore making better policies.

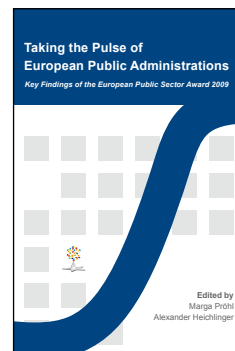
Based on an analysis of all the applications submitted, we can observe the following changes and trends in public administration from all levels in Europe:

- An increased focus on **citizen orientation**, including a strengthened focus on the quality of the service delivery. This includes both the direct involvement of citizens in different processes and the quality of the information given to citizens. Citizen involvement is most likely to be pitched at local level, the role of national governments may, in the foreseeable future, be limited to promoting, encouraging and facilitating the adoption of frameworks, principles and guidelines. This element clearly highlights that the sector is also a service provider in the society.
- The **use of new technology** is regarded as a key element for economic progress and enables quality to be increased at all levels and in all actions taken by the public administration. Not surprisingly, internet-based systems are still the most common instrument for improving service delivery; a technology component was identified in almost all applications of the EPSA 2009. ICT is a fantastic tool for opening up government and public administrations, but there are also certain risks connected

to its use (e.g. protection of privacy and integrity; the question of democracy and costs). The recommendation here is to always weigh up the costs against the benefits. ICT and integration are not goals in themselves: they are tools for performance improvement in public service delivery.

- Reduction of **administrative burdens** is high on the agenda at all levels of governance and is therefore the driving force behind changes in most public administrations. Programmes are presented and actions are taken from a multiple angle including administrative change, better regulation and focus on impact of regulations. In many ways the spotlight here is on the traditional role of the public administrator, namely as the regulator. The actions described in the applications include saving costs and time for businesses and citizens, recognising that "good governance" is strongly linked to the management of the societies.
- Increased recognition of the need for **vertical and horizontal coordination** of matters related to both internal national initiated actions and tasks related to European Integration. There are several **new formulas of partnership working** which are directly related to the above-mentioned point about citizens' focus and quality in service delivery, since there is a growing demand from both citizens and business. Political and senior level support for partnerships is important, but they work better if they are primarily driven by the enthusiasm of those responsible for making them work rather than being imposed on a top-down basis. The likelihood of success of partnerships is linked to several criteria, e.g. the clarity of objectives for formation of the partnership, joint decision making or the resource allocation as an indicator for commitment. In summary, partnerships are not the only answer to modern public management, but they can be one of the (needed) answers to deal with the challenges of contemporary public service delivery, i.e. it is an essential tool in the toolbox for public entities.

- **Leadership, strategic management and organisational development** is increasingly being seen as key factor to success. Against the background of the **ageing of society and the subsequent "fight" for talent**, HR managers from most European public sectors are facing the challenge to review their recruitment and career management systems in order to recruit and retain the most competent people. At the same time, they also have to adjust HRM more to the needs of older employees. And finally, there are enhanced trends to decentralise certain HR practices (e.g. performance-related pay, training/development, performance management, disciplinary matters) from central level towards a more decentralised level (e.g. unit level), as well as to improve the professional and managerial competencies.



The conclusions are that changes in the public administrations are both demand driven, come as a result of reduced resources and are also process driven, reflecting the diversity and variety in the sector. Two publications (the EPSA 2009 project catalogue and a full research report) highlight these facts and can be downloaded free of charge at www.epsa2009.eu.



EIPA is now being mandated by the EPSA Steering Committee to begin the preparations for and secure the financing of the next edition, which is planned to take place in 2011.

NOTES

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The EPSA Award 2009, created by Mr Leyendeckers, B.J.

International EPSA 2009 Knowledge – Transfer Workshop

In combination with the Santcugatribuna on

“The EU 2020 - What Public Management Model for the next Decade”

Sant Cugat - Barcelona (ES), 27-28 October 2010

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Objectives and methodology

Promoting the exchange of the EPSA 2009 best practice is a valuable mechanism to ensure maximum benefit of lessons learned across Europe. It contributes to a faster adoption of good practices by other public administrations as well as to better understand its trends and needs. The EPSA transfer workshop(s) will not be stand-alone activities, but is organised in a way to ensure that the take-up and facilitation of good practice cases are happening on the widest possible scale. It will focus on the promotion of accurate information on the locations where the projects have been implemented and will provide an opportunity for the exchange of experience between the “champions” who have already successfully achieved good results and those who are in the process of working on this.

Another essential element is networking. The activity will provide the unique opportunity for participants and experts to meet peers and other decision-makers in the same areas. The workshop will thus support in building up a community for future activities or co-operations and to create a common European administrative space. These networks will also support in disseminating the results and achievements of EPSA, leading to synergies and customer-centered dissemination.

Target Group

The event is open not only to the EPSA community, but to all levels of European public administrations aiming to reach “public excellence” with their reform and modernization efforts.

Methodology

The activity will combine a mixture of presentations, discussion, on-site inspection and executive summary notes from the EPSA evaluation process. Participants will receive the full case studies of the selected winners and nominees of EPSA 2009 as well as a sample of the official EPSA 2009 publications (project catalogue and research report) will be made available. Furthermore they have the opportunity to learn from the EPSA evaluation on the strengths and weaknesses of the rewarded applications (Evaluation Summary Notes). Scientific and practical accompanying comments on the projects and the thematic trends will round up and boost the learning approach.



From Self-Assessment to External Feedback

The CAF External Feedback – Labelling Effective CAF Users



Nick Thijs* and Patrick Staes**

The CAF model has proved its success over the past ten years, but it also has to take steps to prepare for the future. In this respect the CAF External Feedback procedure truly adds value to the CAF for its users. Public sector organisations want to see the results of all their efforts and therefore need feedback. This was the thinking behind the CAF External Feedback. This CAF external feedback by peers and experts will help organisations to take the next steps in their quest for quality management and make their efforts visible both internally and externally. The CAF External Feedback procedure is built on the CAF model to further support CAF users in reaching their quality targets.

Introduction

Since the launch of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in 2000 at the first European Quality Conference, nearly 2000 public sector organisations in Europe have applied the model. Over the past 10 years, the CAF model has established its position among the many quality management tools. Most of these quality management tools have recognition schemes to evaluate assessments that take place within an organisation. Until recently, the CAF did not have this kind of system, so the development of a CAF External Feedback procedure is an important step in that direction. This CAF External Feedback procedure is built on the CAF model to further support CAF users in their quality improvement process.

A pilot group within the European CAF expert group (in the EUPAN network) comprising Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Luxemburg, Slovenia and the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) and supported by EFQM, has set up a CAF External Feedback procedure, which was approved at the meeting of National CAF Correspondents¹. The goal of the envisaged procedure will be not to validate the scores by looking for actual proven results or assessing the overall (f)actual quality of organisations. The main goals are to strengthen the confidence of an organisation, and to advise them on how to perform better next time using the CAF model or other quality models and to increase the national

and international visibility of the organisation. During the course of the CAF External Feedback procedure, the intention is that external experts will come to the organisation and gather evidence on how it has prepared, implemented and followed up the CAF self-assessment process. After going through this process, the organisation will or will not receive the ECU label "Effective CAF User". This ECU label will have a limited validity.

This article aims to describe the major lines, ambitions and functionalities of this new CAF External Feedback procedure. Following an introduction outlining the CAF background and core concepts in relation to the CAF External Feedback Procedure, the main lines and principles of the CAF External Feedback Procedure are described in part two. Part three of this article deals with the more concrete functionalities of the procedure and the roles to be played by the different actors involved.

Self-assessment and improvement through the Common Assessment Framework

Origin and growth of the Common Assessment Framework

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a total quality management tool inspired by the Excellence Model of the

European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the model of the German University of Administrative Sciences in Speyer. The CAF is a result of cooperation between the EU Ministers responsible for public administration. It has been developed jointly, under the aegis of the Innovative Public Services Group (IPSG), a working group of national experts set up by the Directors-General to promote exchanges and cooperation relating to innovative ways of modernising government and public service delivery in EU Member States.

A pilot version of the CAF model was presented in May 2000, the first revised version was launched in 2002 and a second revision was carried out in 2006². Meanwhile, the CAF Resource Centre (CAF RC) was created at the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht. Together with the network of national CAF correspondents, the CAF Resource Centre gives multi-faceted support for the implementation of the model and evaluates its use. Between 2000 and 2009 approximately 1800 European public administrations used the CAF to improve performance³.

Main purpose

The CAF is in the public domain and free of charge and is offered as an easy-to-use tool to assist public-sector organisations across Europe in the use of quality management techniques to improve performance. The CAF has been designed for use in all parts of the public sector, and is applicable to public organisations at the national/federal, regional and local level. The CAF provides a self-assessment framework that is conceptually similar to major Total Quality Management (TQM) models, but is specially conceived for public-sector organisations, taking their differences into account. The CAF has four main purposes in this respect:

1. to introduce public administration to the principles of TQM and guide them, through the use and understanding of self-assessment, from the current 'Plan-Do' sequence of activities to a fully fledged 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' cycle;
2. to facilitate the self-assessment of a public organisation in order to obtain a diagnosis and definition of improvement actions;
3. to act as a bridge between the various models used in quality management, in both the public and the private sectors;
4. to facilitate bench learning between public sector organisations.

A number of components have been formulated to support these purposes: the main structure with nine criteria, 28 sub-criteria with examples, assessment panels for the enablers and the results, guidelines for self-assessment, improvement actions, bench learning projects and a glossary⁴.

Ten steps to improve organisations with CAF

The CAF model is more than a simple tool; it is a catalyst for a full improvement process in an organisation. The process of applying the CAF can be described in ten general steps. These 10 steps are divided into 3 major phases. Phase 1: the start and launch of the CAF process,

Phase 1 – The start of the CAF process
Step 1: Decide how to organise and plan the self-assessment
Step 2: Communicate the self-assessment project
Phase 2 – Self-Assessment Process
Step 3: Set up one or more self-assessment groups
Step 4: Organise training
Step 5: Undertake the self-assessment
Step 6: Draw up a report describing the results of the self-assessment
Phase 3 – Improvement plan / prioritisation
Step 7: Draft an improvement plan, based on the accepted self-assessment report
Step 8: Communicate the improvement plan
Step 9: Implement the improvement Plan
Step 10: Plan the next self-assessment

Phase 2: the self-assessment process and Phase 3: using the results of the self-assessment to formulate an action plan and launch the improvement actions in the organisation. These ten steps can be seen as the principal guidelines for the correct application of CAF and will therefore be an important element in the CAF External Feedback Procedure.

Principles of Excellence in the CAF

One of the aims of the CAF model is to help public sector organisations to get closer to the important values of Total Quality Management (TQM). By working with the CAF model these values should, over time, become part of the organisations' culture and make it focus on certain important elements of TQM. This in turn will make them aware of the need for efficient organisations to incorporate these values into everyday practice.

As a tool for Total Quality Management, CAF responds to the fundamental concepts of excellence: results orientation, citizen/customer focus, leadership and constancy of purpose, management by processes and facts, involvement of people, continuous improvement and innovation, mutually beneficial partnerships and corporate social responsibility. It aims to improve the performance of public organisations based on these concepts. Focusing these principles is an important aspect in the CAF External Feedback Procedure.



The CAF External Feedback Procedure

The CAF model forms the basis of the CAF External Feedback Procedure. This CAF External Feedback Procedure has been developed to give added value to the CAF implementation in public sector organisations. The initial link to the CAF External Feedback Procedure was made when describing the main features of the CAF model in Section 1. Section 2 aims to describe the CAF External Feedback Procedure's background and main features, as well as its aims, objectives and underlying principles. Section 3 will describe how to use the CAF External Feedback Procedure and how it works in greater detail.

The demand for External Feedback

Since the CAF was launched in 2000, its implementation and use has evolved considerably. In the early years, CAF was mainly seen as a tool to help managers and people in public organisations to carry out a self-assessment in the light of a blueprint of an excellent organisation. After a few years, the focus shifted from self-assessment to the improvement cycle and the implementation of modern management instruments in the different areas covered by the CAF model's nine criteria and 28 sub-criteria. By doing so, public sector organisations aimed to respond to the eight principles of excellence and to become more efficient and effective⁵.

But public sector organisations also wanted to see the results of all their efforts and were looking for feedback. This is how the idea grew to create a system of external feedback on the introduction of total quality management with the help of CAF; not only with regard to the self-assessment process, but also relating to the way forward chosen by organisations to reach for excellence. The aim of this external feedback by peers and experts in TQM was to help them to gain a better perception of what had been done and to open new opportunities for high-quality work in the future. Furthermore, a CAF label can be awarded those who use CAF effectively in order to make their successful efforts visible both internally and externally. A consensus based on these ideas was found among EU Member States to create a new procedure and a new label: the CAF External Feedback Procedure and the Effective CAF User Label.

The objectives of the CAF External Feedback Procedure

In relation to the nature of the needs and the kind of demands expressed by many CAF users in different Member States, the CAF External Feedback targets several important objectives.

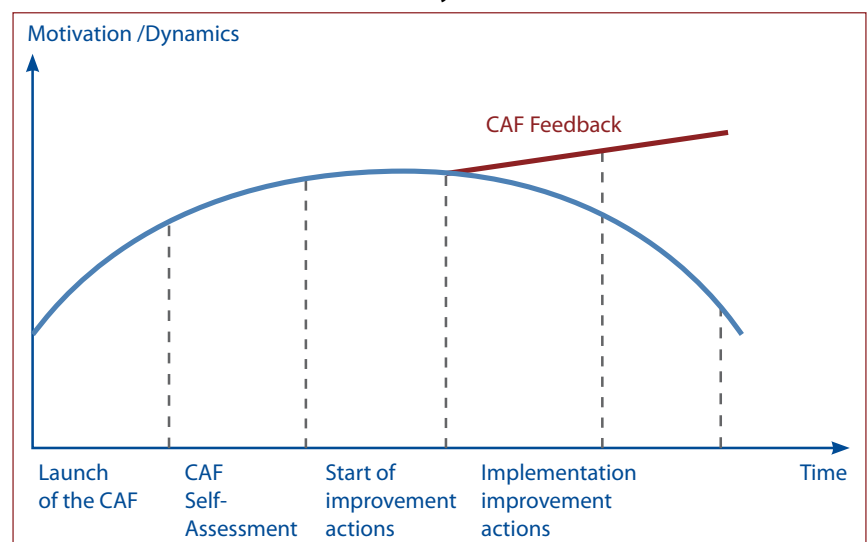
- *Support the quality of CAF implementation and its impact on the organisation.* The CAF model was launched as an instrument for self-assessment and organisational development. The use of CAF serves internal needs. To serve this purpose further, the CAF External Feedback gives organisations the opportunity to receive feedback on their CAF application and on the quality improvement process launched in the organisation.
- *Find out if the organisation is installing TQM values as the result of CAF application.* There are a number of TQM values based on the CAF, as described above. By working with the CAF model, these values should, over time, become

part of the organisation's culture. Working with the CAF makes organisations focus on certain important TQM elements. This in turn will make them aware of the need for efficient organisations to incorporate these values into everyday practice.

- *Support and renew enthusiasm for continuous improvement within the organisation.* One important element in a good CAF self-assessment is the creation and implementation of an improvement plan. It is tough for organisations to maintain the pace of change over an extended period. Many organisations lose focus and motivation after a while, as shown in the figure above. The external feedback process benefits the organisation at an ideal time by keeping attention focused on improvements and enabling the organisation to check whether it is still working on its improvements as planned. After all, the organisation cannot afford to allow its focus and motivation to drop.
- *Promote peer review and bench learning.* One of the primary aims of the CAF is to help organisations to learn from each other. CAF External Feedback provides a new opportunity to learn from other organisations and to receive useful feedback from experienced users, colleagues and peers who have been through the same process and have faced the same difficulties.
- *Reward organisations that started the process of continuous improvement towards excellence in an effective way, without judging the level of excellence obtained.* The CAF is a starting point for many organisations in terms of a structured approach to quality improvement. CAF External Feedback aims to stimulate organisations who have taken this route. The procedure recognises the efforts made by an organisation, the direction it has chosen and the way this is being put into practice.

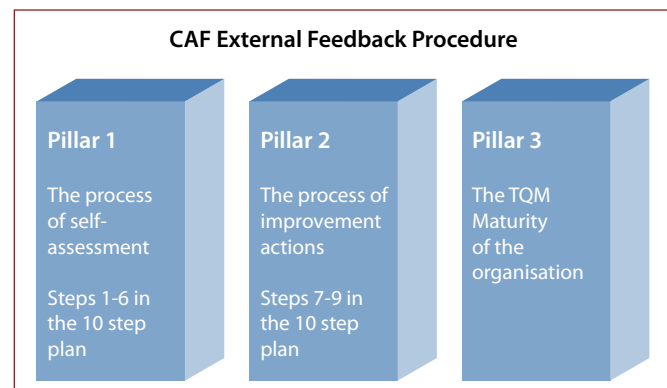
Does the implementation of the CAF model in an organisation always need external feedback? Not necessarily. Many organisations use the CAF in a very effective way and achieve excellent results in terms of quality management. This may continue to be the case. Organisations that do not need this kind of external feedback do not need to use the CAF External Feedback procedure. This external feedback is created simply to provide effective support to organisations using CAF and future quality management process by providing external feedback on carefully chosen issues, which together form the 3 pillars of the CAF External Feedback procedure⁶.

The added value of feedback in the CAF dynamics



The three pillars of the CAF External Feedback: ambitions and philosophy

The CAF External Feedback procedure is built upon 3 pillars, which are described in detail in the CAF External Feedback brochure and in various questionnaires and scoring guides, both for applicant organisations and the CAF Feedback Actors (the ones giving the feedback)⁷. We will describe the major lines of the pillars below.



Pillar 1: The process of self-assessment

The quality of the self-assessment forms the basis for how well future improvements succeed. The first pillar of the CAF External Feedback focuses on the quality of the self-assessment process. An in-depth examination of steps 1-6 of the 10-step process described above will be analysed to determine the quality of the process. A questionnaire has been formulated to assess these steps. The questionnaire covers the first six steps and does not aim to validate the scores given in the CAF self-assessment. All these steps are translated into particular actions and all of them are evaluated by the 'CAF Feedback actors'.

Steps in Pillar 1
Step 1 – Decide how to organise and plan the self-assessment
Step 2 – Communicate the self -assessment project
Step 3 – Create a self-assessment group(s)
Step 4 – Organise training
Step 5 – Undertake the self-assessment
Step 6 – Draw up a report describing the results of self-assessment

The scoring in this evaluation is based on clear and simple 5-level evaluation scale, from level 1 (limited) through to level 5 (outstanding). The scheme recognises the ability to make an effective and well-thought out self-assessment that increases the organisation's understanding of the fundamental concepts required to achieve excellence.

Self-assessment process (Pillar 1)

Step 1 - Decide how to organise and plan the self-assessment (SA)

1. Assure commitment and ownership of the management for launching the process.
2. Assure a clear management decision about carrying out SA in consultation with the organisation, the scope of SA (SA covers the whole organisation or only parts/units/departments....) the overall objective of SA
3. Define the framework for SA process and the following actions, planning the SA activities
4. Appoint a SA process leader with a high level of knowledge of the organisation or constitute a SA Committee headed by the SA process leader
5. Define the scoring panel to be used
6. Allocate resources for SA and define how to prioritise resources distribution

In an effort to support the organisation, this brief details each activity under the evaluation scale, defining the interpretation of the organisation's current situation with regard to the specific theme. An example of the first activity of step 1 is given below. The other activities and steps in this pillar are evaluated in the same way.

Pillar 2: The process of improvement actions

Following the self-assessment and a good diagnosis with the CAF, the next important element of an effective CAF implementation is to do something with the outcome. Conclusions have to be prioritised and translated into an improvement plan covering a (limited) list of considered actions to be carried out over a maximum of two years. This phase of the CAF implementation focuses on the second pillar of the CAF External Feedback Procedure and it covers steps 7-9 of the 10-step process. These steps all take a detailed look at the improvement plan: is the plan of good quality, how is it composed, communicated and monitored? The CAF External Feedback covers the planning and improvement process and is not meant to assess the results of the improvement actions. As in pillar 1, all these steps are translated into particular actions and are evaluated against the same 5-point evaluation scale.

Steps in Pillar 2

- | |
|--|
| Step 7 – Draft an improvement plan, based on the accepted self-assessment report |
| Step 8 – Communicate the improvement plan |
| Step 9 – Implement the improvement Plan |

Step 1 - Decide how to organise and plan the self-assessment (SA)

Activities	1	2	3	4	5
1. Assure commitment and ownership of the management for launching the process.	There is no evidence of commitment and ownership of the management	There is some evidence of commitment of the management for launching the process, but limited to a part of the involved managers	There is evidence of commitment and ownership of the management for launching the process	There is clear evidence of commitment and ownership of the management for launching the process, as guide and sponsor, communicating the targets and advantages	There is strong evidence of commitment and ownership of all the involved management for launching the process, as guide and sponsor, communicating the objectives and advantages and participating to the project definition

Pillar 3: The TQM maturity of the organisation (the broader scope of excellence)

One of the aims of the CAF model is to guide public-sector organisations closer to the important values of Total Quality Management. By working with the CAF model these values should, over time, become part of the organisation's culture. Working with the CAF should also make organisations focus on certain important elements of TQM and make them aware of the need for efficient organisations to incorporate these values into everyday practice. The third pillar of the CAF External Feedback focuses on these TQM values and the shifted focus after applying the CAF model to these values.

The questionnaire for TQM Assessment Maturity is based on these eight Fundamental Concepts of Excellence. The evaluation concerns the maturity level achieved by the organisation as a result of the self-assessment and the action plan. The evaluation of the TQM Maturity determines the extent to which the institution has succeeded in

other circumstances. Despite their different approaches, Member States will have to consider and follow some general common guidelines for the CAF External Feedback. By following this minimal quantity of guidelines, Member States will guarantee that all CAF External Feedback processes organised in their respective countries assure the same quality as in the other EU Member States and that, as a consequence, the 'Effective CAF User' label means the same thing all over the European Union.

A National Organiser is appointed at national level to take charge of implementing the CAF External Feedback in the country. The National Organiser selects a core group of CAF Feedback Actors (the evaluators), organises training for them at national and/or European level, distributes the workload amongst them and evaluates how they are functioning at regular intervals. The underlying principle of the CAF External Feedback is that organisations can make use of it at minimum cost.

General characteristics	0	Initiation	Realisation	Maturity
1. Leadership and constancy of purpose - Definition	The Initiation level has not been reached	Leaders establish a clear mission statement.	Leaders establish vision and values. They drive and inspire people towards excellence.	Leaders demonstrate the capability to keep the constancy of purpose in a changing environment.
1. Leadership and constancy of purpose - Examples	The Initiation level has not been reached	Leaders provide the organisation with a well defined mission according to legislation and regulation requirements, as well as taking into account the stakeholders' expectations.	Leaders provide the organisation with the definition of mission, vision and values and share it with the people in the organisation. Managers at all levels are focused on bringing the mission, vision and values into practice.	Stakeholders are confident about the constancy of purpose and steadiness of management. Managers are perceived as role models. The quality of management has been measured e.g. through management assessment or job satisfaction measurements.

implementing holistic quality development values through the self-assessment and improvement process. The aim is therefore not to evaluate the real results of the improvement activities and their quality, but to evaluate whether the self-assessment has stimulated the introduction and development of a culture of excellence within the organisation. The evaluation scale has four levels: a level where there is nothing found, an initiation level, a realisation level and a maturity level.

These different maturity levels are illustrated by concrete statements for all eight fundamental concepts. We present here as an example criteria 1 on '*leadership and constancy of purpose*'.

How the CAF External Feedback functions

The implementation of CAF External Feedback at national level

The guiding principles in elaborating the CAF External Feedback were simplicity, transparency and subsidiarity. By following these principles, it places the implementation of the CAF External Feedback in the hands of the different EU Member States – it will differ in accordance with the centralised/decentralised nature of the public administration organisation, the role of CAF National Correspondents, the number of CAF users, the resources available and several

The Role of the European CAF Resource Centre

Besides managing the CAF database, the European CAF Resource Centre at the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht supports the Member States in implementing the CAF External Feedback Procedure using a number of initiatives: promoting the CAF External Feedback at the European level, introducing the National CAF correspondents to this procedure, offering a common European training scheme for CAF Feedback Actors, and coordinating support for Member States that do not use a National Organiser.

The network of National CAF Correspondents reports at regular times to the Director-Generals of the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN), through the Innovative Public Services Group. In order to play its coordinating role, the CAF Resource centre receives information from the Member States on the National Organiser in the different Member States.

Roles, Tasks and Profile of the CAF Feedback Actors

The main task of the CAF Feedback Actors in the procedure is to:

1. analyse CAF implementation through the process of self-assessment and improvement actions and to check whether the organisation is installing TQM values;

2. give feedback and suggestions on strengths and areas of improvement in the process of implementing the CAF;
3. support and renew enthusiasm within the organisation to work with holistic quality development and self-assessment according to the CAF Model.

One of the goals of the CAF External Feedback is to promote peer review and bench learning within European public administration. It is therefore recommended that the CAF Feedback Actors should be peers from the public sector.

Being a CAF Feedback Actor requires a balance of personal and professional skills coupled with a commitment to timely and appropriate conduct. In order to be able to conduct the CAF External Feedback process competently, the CAF Feedback Actor typically needs to have a broad knowledge base and experience with management processes and development and change processes in public sector organisations. The CAF Feedback Actors can gain the necessary competencies from a variety of sources including work experience, past assessment experience (e.g. EFQM assessor), education and training.

The CAF Feedback Actor does not need to have been a manager and trained as an EFQM assessor or validator, but the competencies achieved by such training are highly useful in the feedback process. However, it is essential that the CAF Feedback Actor has participated in and passed the European or national training course required to become CAF Feedback Actor (acknowledged by the National CAF Correspondent).

Conclusion

Since the CAF was launched in 2000 its implementation and use has evolved considerably. In the early years, CAF was seen mainly as a tool to help managers and people in public organisations make a self-assessment in the light of the blueprint of an excellent organisation. After a few years, the focus shifted from self-assessment to the improvement cycle and the implementation of modern management instruments in the different areas covered by the various CAF model criteria. This helped organisations become more efficient and effective.

The CAF model has proved successful in the past ten years, but it also has to take steps to prepare for the future. In this respect the CAF External Feedback system truly adds value to the CAF for its users. Public sector organisations want to see the results of all their efforts and therefore need feedback. This was the thinking behind the CAF External Feedback system. This CAF external feedback performed by peers and experts will help organisations take their next steps in their quest for quality management and will make their efforts visible both internally and externally. The CAF External Feedback procedure is built upon the CAF model to further help CAF users to reach their quality targets.

The CAF External Feedback is a further step in the process of improving European public sector quality management. It will add a lot of value to the CAF model for organisations looking for external feedback and allows these organisations to make accelerated progress on the path towards excellence.

NOTES

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¹ Meeting of National CAF Correspondents, Oslo 28 September 2009.

² EIPA, Survey regarding quality activities in the public administrations of the European Union member states, Maastricht, p. 95, 2002

EIPA, Study for the Italian Presidency on the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in European Public Administrations. Maastricht, p. 92, 2003

EIPA, Study on the use of the Common Assessment Framework in European public services, Maastricht, p. 89, 2005

³ Thijs, N. and Staes, P., *The Common Assessment Framework in European Public Administrations: a state of affairs after five years*. Eipascope 2005/3, p. 41-49

⁴ For detailed information concerning the CAF model consult www.eipa.eu/caf.

⁵ Thijs, N. and Staes, P., *Applying the Common Assessment Framework in Europe*. In: Julnes, P., Berry, F., Aristiguette, M. and Yang, K. (eds.), *International handbook of practice-based performance management*, Sage, California, p. 455-485, 2008

⁶ The general principles of the procedure were approved by the meeting of the Director-Generals in the EUPAN network during the Slovenian Presidency of the EU in June 2008 and further discussed in the IPSG during the French Presidency in the second half of 2008 and the Czech and Swedish Presidencies in 2009.

⁷ EUPAN, Effective CAF User Recognition brochure, p. 90, 2009

More efficient civil services in times of economic recession and beyond: *can a flexicurity approach help?*



Herma Kuperus* and Anita Rode**

Every country in Europe is aware of the dangers that globalisation, demographic change, workforce ageing and other worldwide challenges can potentially bring to their doorstep in the near future. At the same time there are a lot of challenges that need to be solved right now and right here, for example actions to be taken to overcome the economic downturn. How can policy makers deal with both issues? This article examines the possibilities of the flexicurity approach being used to deal with such public administration dilemmas. It describes how the implementation of flexicurity components in public administrations in European Member States is linked to the main tendencies in their restructuring processes and their response to the current economic crisis. A difference is thereby made between short-term reactions and long-term strategy to enhance a new balance between flexibility and security in public administrations in Europe. Next, a preliminary positioning of the Member States on the flexicurity scale is presented with regard to the contractual arrangements for their national public administrations. Finally, main labour market trends and conclusions for the future are drawn.

Introduction

Globalisation and changing labour market trends bring new challenges for culture, values and ethics in European public administrations. Besides this, new generations and longer working elderly generations ask for other, different work-life combinations, lifetime learning and working time arrangements. These trends, combined with other demands of stakeholders for products, services and citizen-involvement, have to be part of a future-oriented strategy of each public organisation.

In addition, the current economic recession to all sectors and labour markets. All national, sector and organisational level policies focus on short-term solutions – how to solve current issues. People look up to their national governments for a strategy, a solution for how to survive the economic downturn. Often the public sector and its employees, e.g. in healthcare, education and public

administration sectors, as well as the most vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, young graduates and unemployed, are hit the hardest. All these groups suffer from a decreasing state budget and dismissals in the name of saving costs.

Every country is looking for appropriate instruments with which to face the current and future challenges, i.e. by making labour markets more adaptive to quick changes. Integration of a flexicurity concept (a balance between flexibility and security) in a government's policies can be helpful in developing sustainable labour market strategies, and therefore avoiding such situations as inflexible staff or high levels of unemployment. This article will deal with the issue of how new balances between flexibility and security can be sought in public administrations by using different elements of flexicurity (see the Flexicurity matrix in table 1)¹.

The Flexicurity approach

The flexicurity approach was introduced into European policies through the European Commission's 2007 communication "Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and Better Jobs through Flexibility and Security"². The flexicurity concept emphasises the flexibility of labour markets and within organisations, whilst at the same time ensuring secure transitions for employees from one job position to another, internally as well as externally.

What is flexicurity?

The flexicurity approach is an integrated strategy, constructed for handling different types of challenges in organisations and the labour market, and therefore can also be adjusted to specific problems raised by the current economic crisis. The flexicurity concept emphasises the flexibility of labour markets whilst ensuring a secure transition for employees during their lifetime: from school to work, from one job or position to another, between unemployment or inactivity and work, and from work to retirement. Security is more than just job security: it is about enabling people to progress in their working life, helping them to find new employment; it is about adequate unemployment benefits to facilitate transitions and about life long training opportunities for all employees. It must be kept in mind that this concept refers to external, as much as internal flexibility and security.

The Flexicurity matrix by Ton Wilthagen³ (see table 1) consists of four flexibility elements: *external numerical, internal numerical, functional* and *labour cost/wage flexibility*, and four security elements: *job, employment, income* and *combination security*. Each of the elements contains several further indicators which help to describe the labour market situation more precisely as flexible or secure. The flexibility and security elements can be used separately or in combination with each other in order to reach the necessary policy mix for a particular country's labour market situation. The Flexicurity matrix illustrates different trade-offs between forms of security and flexibility. For example, accepting less job security can be balanced by providing other forms of security instead, for instance income or combination security and thus increase the transition security.

From job security to other security types

The flexicurity concept differentiates between four types of security: job, employment, income and combination securities. *Job security* means protection against dismissals and major changes in employment and working conditions. It is one of the most traditional and least flexible forms of security, and also the most common in public administrations. In terms of flexicurity this is the type of security that should be avoided if possible, as it makes the labour market very rigid and inflexible. With the introduction of more flexible forms of contracts and a labour force better fitting the needs of the labour market, job security should be decreased to a minimum and replaced by, or supplemented with, employment, income and/or combination security.

Employment security refers to the degree of certainty a worker has to remain in work, even if the worker does not necessarily stay with the same employer. This means

equivalent vacant jobs, training and work-to-work transitions, guaranteed by the employer in cooperation with the State or other employers. This offers the employer the possibility of adjusting better to changing market demands, whilst at the same time guaranteeing employment for the employee.

The main methods of ensuring employment security are active labour market policies, increasing the notice period before dismissal to allow the employee more time to find a new job, reintegration and lifelong learning. Introducing more programme and project work and less specific job descriptions can increase internal flexibility. Very few European countries have used these methods in public administrations so far.

Income security relates to the protection of income in case of such occurrences as illness, unemployment or maternity, which may all involve a break in paid work.

Table 1: The Flexicurity matrix

Flexibility	Security	Job security	Employment security	Income security	Combination security
External numerical flexibility		- Types of employment contracts - Employment protection legislation - Early retirement	- Employment services / ALMP - Training / life-long learning	- Unemployment compensation - Other Social benefits - Minimum wages	Protection against dismissal during various leave schemes
Internal numerical flexibility		Shortened work weeks / part-time arrangements	- Employment protection legislation - Training / life-long learning	- Part-time supplementary benefit - Study grants - Sickness benefit	- Different kind of leave schemes - Part-time pension
Functional flexibility		- Job enrichment - Training - Labour leasing - Subcontracting - Outsourcing	- Training / life-long learning - Job rotation - Teamwork - Multi-skilling	Performance related pay systems	Voluntary working time arrangements
Labour cost / wage flexibility		- Local adjustments in labour costs - Scaling / reductions in social security payments	- Changes in social security payments - Employment subsidies - In-work benefits	- Collective wage agreements - Adjusted benefit for shortened work week	Voluntary working time arrangements

Source: Wilthagen, T., Tros, F., *The concept of 'flexicurity': A new approach to regulating employment and labour markets*, TRANSFER – European Review of Labour and Research, 10(2), 2004

It refers to the risk of not being able to maintain the same standard of living in the event of non-employment. The main methods of ensuring income security are unemployment compensation, sickness benefit and paid leave.

The Danish model is an example of high-income security where unemployment benefit is high and guaranteed for everyone. At the same time in Denmark, high-income security is combined with active labour market policies (ALMP) and lifelong learning programmes, to facilitate the unemployed to find new employment as soon as possible.

Combination security is associated with the opportunity for workers to combine paid work with their private life and social responsibilities, such as family duties or recreational activities. Combination security refers to the risk of not being able to reconcile work and family life.

Restructuring in public administrations

In a changing public environment public organisations also have to change and restructure in order to be able to satisfy new customers' needs. Citizens are considered the customers of public administration services. In several Member States the special status and role of civil servants in regard to labour market regulations have been abandoned, but in most European countries, civil servants still have the privilege of specific employment conditions, granting them lifelong employment and special social security guarantees.

Legal Status of Civil Servants

Member States have chosen different reform paths due to different historical backgrounds and administrative traditions. One of the most important elements determining specific employment conditions of civil servants is the type of employment system. Career-based employment systems normally assure more protective terms of employment for their civil servants (giving more job security), whereas two situations arise for position-based (and hybrid) systems: either greater flexibility is favoured thereby providing less employment protection for civil servants; or flexibility and security are more or less balanced. The last is only the case in Nordic countries, e.g. Denmark, Sweden and Finland. See table 2 for country groupings in employment systems.

Table 2: The Member States with career-based, position-based and hybrid systems⁴

	Career-based	Hybrid	Position-based
Member States	Austria Belgium Cyprus France Germany Greece Ireland Luxembourg Portugal Romania Spain	Bulgaria Hungary Italy Latvia Lithuania Malta Poland Slovakia Slovenia	Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland Netherlands Sweden United Kingdom

Source: Kuperus, H., Turchetti, C., Rode, A., *Recruitment and Equal Opportunities Systems in National, European and International Civil Services*; European Parliament, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, November 2008

For example, while in Denmark most of the provisions for civil servants, such as contracts and pay, are the same as in the private sector, civil servants in France are still a well protected group with lifelong employment contracts. But also in more traditional civil service system like France, the change process is beginning by slowly introducing more fixed-term contracts for special groups of employees.

Retirement Regimes

Restructuring also affects the special retirement regimes existing in many public administrations. The general trend is a change away from benefit-defined systems with a fixed retirement age towards modern contribution-defined systems that ensure portability and improved flexibility with regard to retirement age. In view of long-term scarcity of employees, some countries have raised the retirement age and make early retirement options less attractive. Therefore, the unemployment of young graduates is rising tremendously at the moment. In some other public administrations early retirement policies still exist. Especially in times of economic recession, early retirement policies can help to generate a short term increase of general employment.

Choosing between short-term goals and long-term outcomes

The nature of short-term policy making

Most often governments' policies focus on short-term results instead of long-term vision, e.g. what will be the labour market needs in 10-15 years time. During economic recession governments support early retirement, face high unemployment of young university graduates, reduce the number of civil servants and/or their salaries and initiate other policies that make budget costs, all of them often neglecting future competitiveness and challenges, like demographic changes and the aging of global society, or migration trends and staff shortages in certain economic sectors. A lot of these decisions are based on the short-term nature of decision making at the political level. This focus on achieving short-term results is also enforced at the administrative level, via the introduction of performance related rewards/pay combined with a higher mobility of (top) managers.

The changing employment conditions in public administrations often refer to employer's short-term goals, such as recruiting the best suited candidates for certain posts. The changes that are being made often do not fit into any long-term strategy; decisions are taken on an *ad hoc* basis. Often strategic plans are neglected in situations of crisis or due to other short-term priorities or due to a lack of money or fears of the impact in times of crisis.

A Flexicurity approach offers strategic and long-term vision towards labour market developments. If accepted at a management level as an overall strategic approach, it can be most helpful in dealing with labour market challenges in the shorter and longer term.

Especially the public administration, because it is not ruled by the private market principles, could invest in reforming own organisation during recession and can be pro-active in renewal of employment and working conditions during the "good" times instead of during crisis. This would be an example of a more "anti-cyclic" approach for human resource management and organisational development.

Table 3: Statutory retirement age and options for early retirement (all economic sectors)

Country	Statutory retirement age (years)		Early retirement options
	Men	Women	
AT	65	60	Men: 62, women: 57
BE	65	64	At 60 years of age
BU*	60.5 (since 2001 to become 63)	55.5 (since 2001 to become 60)	
CY	65		At 63 years of age
CZ	61.75	Depends on no. of children	2-3 years before statutory retirement
DK	65	67	If certain criteria are met (e.g. disability)
FI	65		At 62 years of age
FR	60		At 56 years of age
DE	65		Varies among different groups
EL	65	60 (65 for those insured from 1993)	37 years of contribution or 55 years of age
HU	62		Possible in different gradings under certain conditions
IE	65		None
IT	65	60	At 57 years of age (after 35 years of contribution) or any time after 40 years of contribution
LT*	62.5	60	Less than 5 years before statutory retirement (after 30 years of contribution)
LV	62	61	Up to 2 years before statutory retirement
LU	65		At 57 years of age (after 40 years of statutory insurance) or at 60 years of age
MT*	61	60 (2020: 65 for both)	
NL	65		None
PL	65	60	For women at age of 55, possible for other groups if certain criteria are met
PT	65		At 55 years of age (after 30 years of contribution)
RO*	62 - 65	57 - 60	
SI	63	61	At 58 years of age (after 40 or 38 years of contribution)
SK*	62		
ES	65		At 61 years of age if certain conditions met
SE	65		None
UK	65	60	None

Source: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, *Early and phased retirement in European companies*, 2007. For countries with*: EURES - European job mobility portal; data 2007-2008.

Introducing a flexicurity approach

A flexicurity approach can be implemented at all levels – national, sector and organisational – focusing on achieving balance between contractual flexibility and transition security, while restructuring the labour market. External changes, like change of contract forms and the implementation of flexicurity elements in the labour law, might be effective, but reaching a solution among all the involved stakeholders on the national, and sometimes on the European level, is not an easy task. Therefore, national administrations could start with a focus on their sub-sectors and organisational levels and start with implementing internal changes. This internal flexibility includes policies such as, internal mobility, flexible working conditions and work-life balance.

In the long term a strategy for structural change on a sectoral, national or European level has to be carefully developed and the implementation has to be planned carefully. For example, the introduction of fixed-term contracts, in order to replace lifelong or permanent employment for civil servants, would help to respond quicker to labour market demands. However, the roots of some of the civil service

systems are very deep, based on laws or regulations and cannot be completely changed in a day. The same applies for retirement policies and pension systems.

This suggests that the first steps in restructuring civil service systems will be very small, but that there has to be a broader strategy behind these small steps. It is obvious that reforms take time and resources for implementing reforms are scarce, and there are always other urgent issues; nevertheless, every move has to be made according to plans, using opportunities to implement them as closely as possible to the schedule.

Implementation of flexicurity components in public administration

The implementation of the flexicurity approach into public administration is more difficult and challenging than in the private sector due to the different organisational structures and traditional values. Firstly, differences exist among Member States with a career-based employment system and countries with a position-based employment system, because in each of those systems different employment conditions apply to civil servants. Secondly, although public

administration structures and employment conditions differ per country, certain similarities in civil service organisations can be seen among geographical country clusters divided into Continental, Mediterranean, Nordic and East European countries. See table 4 for the basic

Table 4: Characteristics of the different country traditions

Country tradition	Civil service tradition
Continental	High status for civil servants, organised around corps, recognised as special group of employees
Anglo-Saxon	High status for civil servants, they are non-politicised
Nordic	Civil service is highly decentralised (agency model), and it is professional and non-politicised
Mediterranean	Civil servants have a low status and political intervention in their work is possible
East European	Each has adopted different system, but common tendencies are: low civil service status & mechanisms to avoid political influence

characteristics of these clusters. The Netherlands stands in-between the Anglo-Saxon and the Nordic model.

According to the European Commission⁵, flexicurity policies can be designed and implemented across four policy components (see Box 1 below for details on the four flexicurity components) and adjusted to the specific situation in Member States.

Box 1: Flexicurity components

1. *Flexible and reliable contractual arrangements (from the perspective of the employer and the employee, of “insiders” and “outsiders”) through modern labour laws, collective agreements and work organisation;*
2. *Comprehensive lifelong learning (LLL) strategies to ensure the continual adaptability and employability of workers, particularly the most vulnerable;*
3. *Effective active labour market policies (ALMP) that help people to cope with rapid change, reduce unemployment spells and ease transitions to new jobs;*
4. *Modern social security systems that provide adequate income support, encourage employment and facilitate labour market mobility. This includes broad coverage of social protection provisions (unemployment benefits, pensions and healthcare) that help people combine work with private and family responsibilities such as childcare.*

Contractual agreements

Flexible and reliable contractual agreements both from the perspective of the employer and the employee are implemented through modern labour laws, collective agreements and work organisation. Member States have focused on introducing more flexibility in their civil service systems through non-standard contracts, mainly for a fixed term. However, there are still great differences concerning contractual flexibility in position-based and career-based civil service systems. In countries with position-based systems, both standard (for permanent-term) and non-standard contracts (for fixed-term) exist. While in countries with a career-based system mainly permanent and lifelong employment contracts are pursued, and development towards non-standard contracts is very slow. See also graph 1 on the next page, showing the level of contractual flexibility and transition security in the EU Member States.

In the cases when non-standard contracts are used in public administrations they mostly refer to the two extremes of the job ladder: either at the lowest grades, for manual or blue-collar occupations; or at the highest level, for top managerial positions. The introduction of fixed-term contracts at the highest civil service grades allows the best-suited candidates to be employed either from within or outside of the civil service. The term of employment is often linked to performance assessment and regular, steered mobility.

Lifelong learning (LLL)

Comprehensive lifelong learning strategies ensure the continual adaptability and employability of workers, particularly the most vulnerable groups. Lifelong learning is a flexicurity component that needs to be further developed in the Member States. Institutional needs analysis for future qualifications has to be balanced with individual development needs and opportunities in a strategic view. In fact, only the Nordic countries link civil servants' training with a lifelong learning policy, which is viewed as a measure to increase the inclusion of civil servants in the labour market. In contrast, most of the other Member States only focus on training civil servants (in the scope of their current or next position) and sometimes lifelong learning may arise as a consequence of

the restructuring of public administrations; for example in Portugal, legislation literally contains provisions for lifelong learning.

In career-based systems, a lack of lifelong learning possibilities links with the traditional job security that is granted to every civil servant. Civil servants traditionally have been trained in general skills for working in public administrations, and some specific skills if required for fulfilling certain positions. However, as it is often seen as a career for life, no other learning possibilities that are not related to current work are offered. Lifelong learning programmes are also not common in position-based and hybrid systems. There the main concern is that employees are hired for a specific position on the basis of their existing skills and knowledge and there is no need to train them. Furthermore, it can be seen as a risk that after following

training, employees will move to another organisation and another employer will benefit from this training investment.

Employers are reluctant to invest in their employees' training, especially if it may raise their employability in other organisations and sectors, and therefore lifelong learning should be first of all included in nations' and sectors' long-term strategies.

Active labour market policies (ALMP)

Effective active labour market policies help people to cope with rapid change, reduce unemployment spells and ease transitions to new jobs. The type of employment system largely determines active labour market policies at the sub-sector and organisational levels. Administrations with a career-based employment system mainly adopt internal mobility programmes and policies in order to find new job positions within public administrations for their civil servants, whereas administrations with a position-based employment system focus both on internal and external mobility programmes, stipulating that civil servants are to find a new job position in the event of restructuring either within public administrations, the public sector or in the private sector.

Recently, in several Member States with career-based systems internal (and external) mobility for top management positions has been facilitated through the introduction of performance contracts for a fixed term⁶. Although in career-based systems mostly internal mobility is taking place, the Spanish case shows that external private contracts can also be introduced. Such external contracts allow skilled and experienced professionals from the private sector to enter the civil service and bring new ideas into the public administration. Such an approach increases external mobility between public and private sectors, which is especially needed in career-based systems. The main problem for introducing more private contracts in the Member States is the structural differences and the salary levels in the two sectors. But already internal mobility guarantees the first steps towards ensuring both lifelong learning and employability of career civil servants.

Modern social security systems

Modern social security systems should provide adequate income support, encourage employment and facilitate labour market mobility. This flexicurity component includes such policies as pensions, unemployment benefits, health care, childcare and work-life balance. It is very important in a flexible labour market to ensure "transition security" for employees. This involves ensuring secure transition from a job to education or another job, or from a job to family leave or unemployment by means of income or employment guarantees during the transition period. If there are no such guarantees, people stick to their current job position and resist mobility and flexibility. They may also have difficulties finding a new job following a dismissal or a career break. In addition, active labour markets and lifelong learning policies are needed in order to support the transition.

Transition security is very low in most of the career-based systems, because they traditionally have high job security and the need for transition security seems unnecessary. The situation is different in position-based civil service systems, where there are more similarities in labour regulations with the private sector and job security is lower. In such situations, transition security arrangements are crucial. There are two different tendencies in the EU Member States with position-based systems: firstly, transition security is higher in those countries where flexibility and security tend to be well balanced (Nordic countries); and secondly, for the rest of the countries with position-based systems, the trend is to give up flexibility and ask for more or other forms of security.

Preliminary positioning of Member States' public administrations regarding flexicurity

In order to see where the individual Member States stand at this point in time with regard to the two strongest flexicurity

elements, approximate country positions will be plotted on the flexibility and security axes, as there are no clear and measurable indicators for flexicurity in public administrations yet (see Graph 1). The first indicative positioning is based on research of labour law, civil service laws and contract

forms in the national public administrations. Flexibility is measured by looking at the type of employment contracts for civil servants and public employees (lifelong, permanent, fixed-term or temporary contracts), and security is measured by looking at the level of transition security in the

Member States' public administrations. Flexibility is higher in the countries with more fixed-term and temporary contracts for civil servants and public employees; flexibility is lower in the countries with lifelong employment for civil servants.

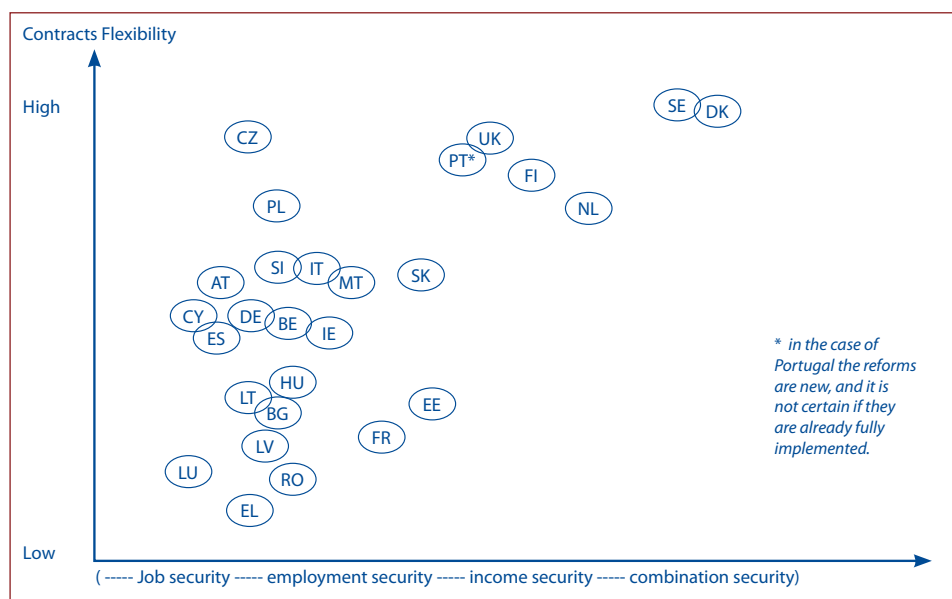
The current tendency that can be seen is that public administrations focus on increasing flexibility, while neglecting security measures. The best way to achieve a balance between flexibility and security is to introduce both flexibility and security measures in parallel therefore ensuring that a long-term strategy is developed differentiating between priority areas and less important flexicurity elements to be implemented. Such a strategy will also ensure the continuity and compatibility of flexicurity policies. When introducing more flexible contractual agreements or later retirement schemes, employees have to be offered more mobility and exchange possibilities, lifelong learning programmes, better work-life balance policies and flexible working time arrangements. Investing in security measures first would make implementation of flexibility measures easier. Due to current economic crisis, most Member States want to increase labour market flexibility also in order to reduce the number of civil servants. In this respect, public administration, especially, could have a more 'anti-cyclic' approach towards its own labour market policy

and encourage higher mobility of its employees during the 'good' economic times instead of only during the crisis.

An advantage that public administrations have traditionally had over the private sector was the guarantee of better conditions for various types of leave, e.g. maternity leave, sick leave, and other working conditions. That is slowly changing due to growing competition for the best employees. Therefore public administrations have to keep up with the developments in the private sector, which allows part-time work on the basis of flexible working patterns with good childcare facilities. Combination security could be a strategic answer to more flexibility in public administrations.

Especially the public administration, because it is not ruled by private market principles, could invest in reforming its own organisation during recession and can be pro-active in the renewal of employment and working conditions during the "good" times instead of during crisis.

Graph 1: Indicative positioning of flexicurity in the national Public Administration of the European Member States (level of contractual flexibility and transition security)



Source: Kuperus, H., Rode A. and Duta, R. *Trends in Public Administration and the Healthcare Sector*, as part of the project "Restructuring in the Public Sector: A Flexicurity Approach" (co-financed by the European Commission).

Labour market trends in the European public administrations

To summarize, three labour market trends can be seen in the public administrations of the EU Member States. They represent three types of countries, categorised on the basis of their employment system. See detailed characteristics of these types in Table 5.

Table 5: Country grouping along the three labour market types

Labour market type	Main characteristics of the system	Countries belonging
Type 1	Very secure and mostly a career-based employment system; high level of job security for employees which comes from lifelong and permanent employment contracts.	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Romania and Spain. Also Italy and Malta with hybrid civil service system. Portugal is an example of a country that had a career-based system but is slowly changing into a position-based system by introducing relevant flexicurity elements.
Type 2	A better balance between flexibility and security; lower internal mobility within the civil service; in position-based employment systems; civil servants mostly have fixed-term or open-ended contracts and are recruited for a particular position; have little chance of moving within the organisation either horizontally or vertically.	Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
Type 3	Neither a secure nor a flexible employment system; a position-based or hybrid civil service system; often, when more flexibility is introduced for employers to recruit and dismiss employees, the corresponding increase in transition security for employees is forgotten, leading to a very insecure position for employees.	Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Source: Kuperus, H., Rode A. and Duta, R. Trends in *Public Administration and the Healthcare Sector*, as part of the project "Restructuring in the Public Sector: A Flexicurity Approach" (co-financed by the European Commission).

The policy options for the different labour market types in public administrations can be given:

For the *first* type: the first steps of how to improve the flexibility of the labour market is by increasing internal mobility within the public administration organisations, and later ensuring exchange programmes, secondments or other mobility possibilities outside the public administration, e.g. moving for a while to the private sector or another Member State. In order to accommodate such exchanges, lifelong learning programmes have to be implemented and the rigidity of lifelong and permanent contracts should be reduced in order to better support job changes and easier dismissing of badly performing civil servants.

External mobility can also be improved through introducing more fixed-term contracts and/or also hiring from outside the civil service for certain positions. Implementation of such practices may take some time as structural reforms and new regulations will be needed, but it should be a long-term strategic goal. Without such reforms public administrations in these types of countries will not be efficient and therefore they will be unable to compete with the private sector or other Member States' public administrations.

For the *second* type: in order to create more internal mobility and career perspectives for well performing employees and to cope with demographic changes by active ageing strategies, special attention should be paid towards

the lifelong learning possibilities for civil servants and more internal flexibility by project work. Such programmes will help civil servants gain more skills which they can use in other positions within public administrations, and will therefore increase mobility between public administration institutions. It would also help to better balance the short-term need to reduce the number of civil servants and the long-term shortness of availability of employees, e.g. by working time arrangements over lifetime and flexible early

retirement schemes. Some Member States have already started creating special institutions to facilitate transfers between different employment situations.

For the *third* type: in order to create a work environment which is more flexible whilst at the same time being more secure, investments should be made to develop part-time work and flexible working arrangements, such as flexible working time, job sharing and teleworking. These types of arrangements allow employees to be more flexible and to balance their work and private life better. At the same time, it can be a way for employers to replace some of the job security elements with arrangements for combination security. In addition, investments need to be made towards lifelong learning programmes, social security systems and active labour market policies in order to facilitate more secure transfers.

Overall, the increase of fixed-term contracts in position-based and hybrid civil service systems is an alarm indicating that security for this group of employees must be increased in one way or another. A challenge for employers is to offer their employees a modern and future oriented security system that will keep them motivated enough to work under fixed-term contracts.

In all cases, the involvement of social partners is very important to equally balance the interest of both employers and employees.

Conclusions

Firstly, when answering the question on how new balances between flexibility and security can be sought in public administrations the solution should be dependant upon the country's public administration tradition and employment system. An influential aspect is the specific labour market challenges which each administration faces, such as a system which is too secure, has too low internal mobility, or a system which is neither secure nor flexible.

Secondly, strategic and long-term thinking with regard to public administration restructuring is one of the most important elements to ensure success, but it is often forgotten in the change process. Short-term decisions will be taken in the meantime but they should fit into the bigger strategic picture, only then can the success of reforms be assured. In order to increase the long-term responsiveness of public administrations to change and to avoid short-term solutions

in case of crisis, public administrations should consider an 'Anti-cyclic labour market and personnel policy' in their role as employer and manager, using both internal and external flexibility and security elements.

Finally, flexicurity is not only about more flexibility of labour market rules for the employer, as it is often misinterpreted. Flexicurity is about equal rights and new opportunities both for employer and employee and it supports a balance between flexibility and security measures. It is important that both the flexibility and security measures are implemented in the public administrations in parallel to modernise their employment and working conditions. Better indicators to monitor the progress can help to measure and compare the real impact in the public administrations of the European Member States.

NOTES

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¹ The empirical analysis is mainly based on a recent study: Kuperus, H., Rode A. and Duta, R. *Trends in Public Administration and the Healthcare Sector*, as part of the project "Restructuring in the Public Sector: A Flexicurity Approach" (co-financed by the European Commission).

² European Commission, (COM (2007) 359), *Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security*; Brussels, 27 June 2007

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⁵ European Commission, (COM (2007) 359), *Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security*; Brussels, 27 June 2007

⁶ Kuperus, H., Rode, A., *Top Public Managers in Europe. Management and Working Conditions of the Senior Civil Servants in European Union Member States*. Study commissioned by the French EU-Presidency; EIPA, 2008

Calendar of Events *May-July 2010*

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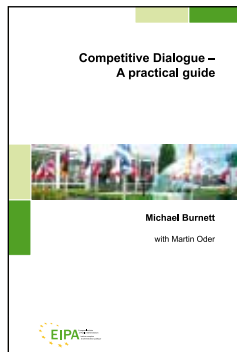
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Competitive Dialogue – A practical guide

Michael Burnett with Martin Oder

ISBN 978-90-6779-214-1

Price € 120.00

EIPA 2010, 197 Pages, 2009/02

Competitive Dialogue was created by the 2004 Public Procurement Directives as a new and more flexible solution for public authorities wanting to award contracts for complex infrastructure projects.

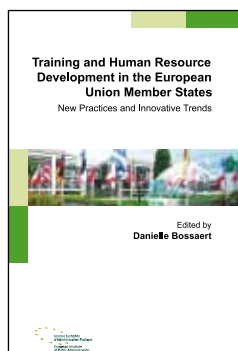
Some predicted that it might be used only rarely and others saw problems in applying it effectively to obtain value for money for the public sector. But it is now firmly established in Europe as a means of awarding public contracts, with more than 3000 award procedures launched. Yet objective advice for decision makers on when and how to use Competitive Dialogue effectively is hard to find. Cutting through the jargon and the misconceptions, this book is an independent guide for those at all levels in Europe facing these challenges.

Different approaches have been used in applying Competitive Dialogue, in particular for the conduct of the dialogue phase and in the interpretation of what can be done in the post tender phase. But not all methods have proved to be equally effective in promoting value for money for the public sector. After assessing the different approaches used so far, the authors now conclude there are clear benefits to standardising the approach to the implementation of Competitive Dialogue.

Written from a public sector perspective, this book has two main audiences in mind, i.e.:

- European decision makers responsible for creating and implementing an appropriate legal framework at EU level for Competitive Dialogue
- Politicians, public officials and their professional advisers in EU Member States currently facing choices about when and how to use Competitive Dialogue in a way which provides both legal certainty and maximises the likelihood of achieving value for money.

After an explanation and analysis of legal framework for Competitive Dialogue, the book sets out how Competitive Dialogue emerged, how it compares to the Negotiated Procedure, the legal challenges in applying Competitive Dialogue, when it is appropriate to use it and where it is being used in the EU. Successive chapters then analyse the key issues arising in the implementation of Competitive Dialogue at each stage of the process and how they should be addressed. Finally, the book draws together the key conclusions for the future use of Competitive Dialogue and the actions needed to implement them at EU and national level. Taken together, they add up to an agenda for the future effective use of Competitive Dialogue. The stakes in terms of the need to improve Europe's infrastructure and the effective implementation of key European policies, such as compliance with environmental legislation and the completion of the Internal Market, at an affordable cost are too high for it to fail.



Training and Human Resource Development in the European Union Member States: New Practices and Innovative Trends

Danielle Bossaert

ISBN 978-90-6779-210-3

Price € 45.00 (including postage and packing in Europe)

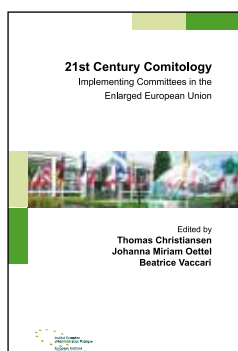
EIPA 2009, 166 Pages, 2008/05

In an age characterised by rapid economic, political and technological change, training has become a key element in the development of a more professional human resource management (HRM) as well as an important lever for facilitating cultural change at the workplace.

During the last decade, many European countries have reviewed their training approach in the context of the reform processes in the public sector and of the introduction of a more professional HRM. Although these processes vary in scope and ambition in the different countries, it is interesting to analyse whether there have been any common developments in the field of training during the last decade and what impact modernisation of the public sector has had on training in general.

One major objective of this publication is to take a closer look at some modern practices in the field of training, by focusing on questions to determine who the main actors in the field of training and what their competences are, how training is organised, how it is linked to the other elements of HRM (selection procedures, career development, promotion etc.) and what the prerequisites of an effective evaluation methodology are.

This publication will be of interest to practitioners who have to muddle through sometimes difficult reform processes as well as academics studying recent developments and trends in the field of public sector training.



21st Century Comitology: Implementing Committees in the Enlarged European Union

Thomas Christiansen, Johanna Miriam Oettel and Beatrice Vaccari (eds)

ISBN 978-90-6779-212-7

Price € 60.00 (including postage and packing in Europe)

EIPA 2009, 390 pages, 2009/01

21st Century Comitology brings together an international group of experts, from scientific scholars to policy makers, who provide an up-to-date and comprehensive account of comitology today. The book looks at comitology – the system of committees working with the European Commission to implement EU legislation – from a range of different perspectives; examining the theoretical foundations, the past evolution, the current practice and the future challenges of the system.

Individual chapters are devoted to recent developments in key sectors (such as financial services regulation or the authorisation of genetically modified organisms), whilst other authors address the respective roles of the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice in developing the rules of the system. A major theme of the book is recent changes to comitology; with authors addressing the outcome of the 2006 legislative reform, the debates about comitology in the context of the current round of Treaty reform, and the impact that enlargement with the arrival of 12 new Member States has had on the system. With respect to comitology reform, the book also contains contributions from insiders providing accounts from the perspective of the Parliament, Council and Commission.

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eGovernment – a driving force for innovation and efficiency in Public Administration



Sylvia Archmann* and Just Castillo Iglesias**

Through the increasing use of ICT, particularly with the enablement of interoperability and development of digital inclusion policies, public administrations across Europe are engaging in transformation processes, which aim at achieving a more efficient, effective, friendly, and citizen- and business-centric delivery of public services. This approach, also known as “Transformational Government”, has become a driving force for innovation and reduction of administrative burden in European public administration, taking advantage of the possibilities that the most recent technological developments such as the Web 2.0 have opened. While the opportunities presented are enormous, there are also challenges to address in the implementation of such transformation processes that will be addressed in this article; in particular ensuring digital access for all citizens, and taking into account the multidimensionality of interoperability to enable sharing of governmental information across Europe.

Introduction

eGovernment, as defined by the European Commission, is about *“using the tools and systems made possible by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide better public services to citizens and businesses. ICT are already widely used by government bodies, just as in enterprises, but eGovernment involves much more than just the tools. Effective eGovernment also involves rethinking organisations and processes, and changing behaviour so that public services are delivered more efficiently to the people who need to use them. Implemented well, eGovernment enables all citizens, enterprises and organisations to carry out their business with government more easily, more quickly and at lower cost”*¹.

The introduction of ICT in public administration, as in many other contexts, has brought about myriad opportunities for more efficient and dynamic work, opening the door to innovation and better delivery of public services.

The introduction of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and

Jobs in the year 2000 created a new focus on achieving growth and sustainability for both the European Union and its Member States. The objectives of the Lisbon strategy are to strengthen European economies to put them in good stead to reap the benefits of globalisation and to cope with the challenges faced by today’s society: ageing populations, learning issues, environmental and sustainability challenges, competitiveness and efficiency as well as technological challenges.

For this reason, EU institutions have recognised the importance of investing efforts in and prioritising the development of eGovernment and ICT, given the central role of these technologies in supporting the current trend towards greater efficiency in both public and private sectors. Consequently, public administration has been required to take a leading role in innovation, promoting more dynamic and efficient working methods and higher-quality service

provision. Public administration also has to adopt a new, market-oriented approach to the delivery of public services that minimises bureaucracy and reduces the administrative burden on citizens and for businesses, thereby enhancing their satisfaction and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration back-office functions. The aim of this article is to give a comprehensive overview of the role that ICT and eGovernment play in triggering innovation and efficiency by enabling a more modern, efficient and high-quality public administration, while mapping out some aspects relevant to the current situation in European eGovernment.

First of all, the article reviews the role of ICT in providing tools for promoting change and efficiency in public administration. Secondly, the article introduces the concept of 'Transformational Government' and tackles the adoption of citizen-centric and business-centric approaches to service delivery and 'customer' attention in public administration. Thirdly, the section also pays special attention to the role of ICT in reducing the administrative burden for citizens and businesses. Fourthly, the article reviews the opportunities and main challenges to full implementation of ICT in public administration, paying special attention to the need to promote digital inclusion, skills and infrastructure.

Finally, the article addresses the importance of public administration taking the lead in ICT implementation and innovation in order to become a model and a driver for efficiency and quality.

ICT enables the deployment of new channels of service delivery, making transactions with public administration more convenient for citizens and businesses.

communication systems, which are less efficient. In this sense, and despite most of the EU Member States having already taken this step years ago, the introduction of ICT is not only an element of change that enables more efficient performance, but it also engenders substantial savings in terms of monetary cost and time.

ICT also enables the deployment of new channels of service delivery, making transactions with public administration more convenient for citizens and businesses.

This has brought about two parallel phenomena: on the one hand, the disappearance of services which are no

longer necessary and on the other hand, the creation of new services responding to new demands. This makes it possible to reallocate resources to areas where they become more necessary and, from the user's point of view, alleviates the burden of having to comply with administrative obligations. Moreover, as

public administration back-offices become progressively more integrated and more able to share data and resources, the opportunities to offer better and simplified front-office service continues to grow. The changing role of citizens vis-à-vis the government, as well as the change in the exercise of their rights, makes this a priority area in the incorporation of ICT in public administration, which this article deals with in great detail.

Furthermore, the introduction of ICT has made it essential for leaders and public employees to acquire new skills in order to use the new tools to their full potential. The study on



ICT – A Driving Force for Innovation and Efficiency

As in other sectors, the introduction of ICT has enabled governments and public administration to perform its everyday tasks faster and more efficiently. As a result, many traditional internal processes, arrangements and ways of managing information in public administration have become obsolete, making reforms necessary. Consequently, processes of change and the re-engineering of public administration have been under way in many European countries in recent years and the introduction of ICT has become the reason and the driver for innovation and change in public administration.

First of all, ICT enables a more systematic management of an organisations' information, thus eliminating the need for traditional paper-based filing systems or internal

Leadership and Skills for eGovernment conducted by EIPA et al. in 2005 underlined the importance of incorporating a different approach to training and development in HR management so that organisations can reap the full potential benefits of ICT². Such an approach makes a command of ICT an indispensable skill for all employees in public administration. This area of competency, better known as eSkills, encompasses a whole range of capabilities related to the operation and application of ICT systems by individuals, from basic skills, such as using a word processor or a spreadsheet, to more advanced and specialist skills where required.

Finally, ICT has increased the need for public administration to adjust its internal organisation, systems and information management to enable interoperability, permitting administrations to interact, share information and

set up common services. The importance of interoperability has increased substantially with the European integration process and the aim of achieving a common market without electronic barriers. The importance of being an enabler for better eServices, providing a better experience and fewer administrative burdens for citizens and businesses, and the importance of interoperability in today's European eGovernment scene has been acknowledged by European institutions, the Member States, the private sector and academics. Making systems interoperable opens up the possibility of developing services not only across numerous administrative bodies and at different levels, but also between different Member States and even at a pan-European level.

Interoperability is multi-dimensional. The 2007 MODINIS Study on Interoperability pointed out the equal importance of the three different layers of interoperability: technical, semantic and organisational. The technical level refers to the ability of systems to communicate with one another and successfully process the exchanged information, which makes it the easiest to achieve. However, it is more costly to realise semantic interoperability, which means making the changes necessary to enable different administrations to operate with each others' information systems, and organisational interoperability, which relates to the ability of back-office systems to coordinate and share information. Semantic and organisational interoperability require engaging in re-organisational processes and intensive exchange of experiences within public administration. Such changes are necessary mainly because old back-office/front-office coordination needs to be replaced by systems that are able to work within a culture of shared services and multi-level information exchange³.

Transforming Government: Reducing Burdens for Citizen-Centric and Business-Centric Public Administration

Today's public administration has to be able to meet the challenges and requirements of the 21st century efficiently and effectively. Services have to be redesigned around the needs of citizens and businesses instead of around the needs of the administration. Reducing the administrative burden on citizens and businesses is the main benefit of increased efficiency and effectiveness in public administration, triggered by eGovernment and increased use of ICT. Public administration now has to move towards what is known as '*Transformational Government*': 1) it must meet and maintain the highest standards; 2) it must adopt a citizen-centric approach; 3) it must work towards minimising the burden for citizens and businesses; 4) it must learn how to take advantage of the opportunities offered by ICT, so as to promote internal reorganisation and become a 'learning organisation'; and 5) it must take a leading role in promoting innovation and become a driver for modernisation, improved quality and best-value delivery.

With the reorganisation of public administration led by the incorporation of ICT and the adoption of a citizen-centric approach to service delivery and relations with citizens, governments have developed valuable tools that can be used to reduce administrative burden for both citizens and

businesses. This means minimising or eliminating the costs linked to complying with the information requirements of public administration⁴. These include providing information, filling in forms and having to appear in person to sign a document. The European Commission and the Member States have progressively become aware that reducing the administrative burden is a key element in enhancing the overall economic performance and competitiveness of Europe and its respective countries. The European Commission has been measuring the impact of the main administrative burdens caused by EU regulations since 2007 and has set the goal of reducing this burden for businesses by 25% by 2012. Better regulation, making administration simpler and reducing the obligation for citizens and businesses to provide information have a major role to play in this. But ICT is also a crucial element in adopting the necessary measures, which include simplified questionnaires, authenticated portals, authenticated pre-filled online forms and direct online reporting, thereby making it unnecessary to appear in person. ICT consequently becomes a beneficial factor, making administration easier, less time-consuming and more cost-effective for businesses and citizens.

Within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs, the European Union and the Member States are actively promoting the reduction of the administrative burden as a measure to minimise inefficiencies that have a negative effect on our economies and on the trust that citizens and business have in their government. Moreover, simplifying the existing procedures using ICT has the added value of fostering entrepreneurship in Europe.

Reducing the administrative burden is intrinsically linked with several dilemmas that ICT plays a crucial role in resolving. Such dilemmas are related to the need to provide better, more efficient and more effective services with better 'customer' care, whilst the resources available remain limited. Unlike the private sector, public administration cannot choose its 'customers', meaning that all businesses and citizens have to be included in its plans. It has to deliver better and more inclusive services, so methods must be

found to provide the best value: more service at lower cost, or at least for the same cost. Moreover, in the context of the current financial crisis, it has to be considered that the difficulty of obtaining extra resources exacerbates even

more the need to boost efficiency and effectiveness in public administration. In this case, ICT-based service delivery and customer service is a solution that allows the limited resources to be dedicated to the areas where they are most needed.

Opportunities and Challenges: Increasing Citizen Involvement, Digital Inclusion and Skills

While the opportunities opened up by ICT in public administration and public service delivery are myriad, the success of eGovernment and its implantation also depends on external factors such as digital inclusion, infrastructure that enables access and digital literacy and eSkills among citizens. The potential benefits, however, go beyond the mere provision of public services via electronic channels.

ICT incorporation has raised the need to incorporate new skills among leaders and public employees in order to work with the new tools at their full potential.

Increased citizen involvement through the use of ICT is widely recognised by European governments as a valuable opportunity to enrich democratic processes and to open more available channels to social participation, potentially giving place to an administration that is more transparent and that is better able to take citizens' needs into account⁵.

Digital inclusion, or *eInclusion*, is a crucial pre-condition for eGovernment. In the case of eParticipation, moreover, it acquires greater importance than it does in the case of other eGovernment-related issues of a different nature.

The provision of public services via the internet, i.e. service delivery-oriented eGovernment projects, have to rely on high ICT penetration rates in order to be successful, or at least to be profitable for the authority in question. However, in such cases, obtaining or requesting a public service through electronic channels is just one of the options available to the citizens or the businesses. Seen from an eParticipation point of view, inclusion is an issue that has to be taken into account much more seriously, since participation is related to enhancing democracy and providing citizens with easier, direct ways of interacting with government and public administration. The core principle of democracy is inclusion of all citizens in the participatory processes.

Today's public administration has to be able to efficiently and effectively meet the challenges and requirements of the 21st Century. Services have to be redesigned around the needs of citizens and businesses instead of around the needs of the administration.



So in relation to eParticipation, adopting *eInclusion* becomes a crucial issue in ensuring that no citizen is left behind with respect to the new channels of participation and democracy.

eInclusion, as defined by the European Commission, aims at ensuring that disadvantaged people are not excluded due to their lack of digital literacy, because of their age, disability, gender, income, education, or because

they live in remote areas or have no Internet access⁶. *eInclusion* means also involving people more actively, by taking advantage of new opportunities offered by digital and technical services for the inclusion of socially disadvantaged people and less-fortunate areas.

The modern societies we live in, often called knowledge societies, are extremely dependent on information, but also have the potential to distribute knowledge in a more equal way and to offer job opportunities that overcome the traditional barriers of distance or physical space. For many

of us, ICT has penetrated virtually all aspects of our daily lives, from the way we shop to the way we communicate, work, share and network. Web 2.0 has had a major impact in transforming not only the way in which citizens communicate in their private sphere, but also the way in which civil society and politics work. Nevertheless, these technologies have not

reached everyone in our societies, nor have governments fully incorporated the potential of from these technologies into their service-delivery or decision-making processes. Therefore, the challenges for the future of eGovernment and eParticipation in Europe depend on the success of inclusion policies aimed at closing the existing digital divide.

First of all, closing the digital divide can provide better opportunities for both people and companies, thereby contributing to the stimulation of the knowledge economy. Moreover, better inclusion rates can enhance the learning processes and popularise lifelong-learning programmes supported by internet platforms. Secondly, public administration can benefit from higher inclusion rates as a way of reducing the cost of delivering public services. The savings would come from progressively replacing traditional services with their electronic equivalents, making interactions with citizens easier, more customisable and more efficient for governments. Thirdly, better digital inclusion can become an element of social cohesion, not only by enabling eParticipation but also by exploiting the potential for improving communication granted by the internet for community-building projects oriented to integrating marginalised groups into society⁷.

eInclusion, on the other hand, presents some important challenges that European governments should be ready to meet. Such challenges are directly linked to making the benefits of ICT available to the maximum number of citizens possible by 1) improving accessibility; 2) promoting the newly available channels of participation as a means to have a more active citizenry; and 3) improving social cohesion and eliminating inequalities with regard to ICT access. Meeting these challenges requires awareness, active policies and proactive planning. Regarding the first of the challenges, governments have reacted by deploying active policies aimed at improving the current ratios of ICT penetration by promoting ICT centres, sponsored broadband access and content creation, as well as by making official websites more user-friendly and accessible.

The second of the challenges is to promote what has already been achieved, either at the local government level or at the European level. Important steps to be taken to

increase citizens' willingness to use and participate in these newly available channels include increasing the visibility of the available services and building citizens' trust in the privacy and security of electronic transactions with their governments.

Thirdly, because the full benefits of the Knowledge Society, including eParticipation⁸, can only be realised if citizens have the necessary skill sets, the policies aiming at promoting digital skills and digital literacy must remain a top priority for our governments and public administration.

The 2006 Riga Ministerial Declaration on eInclusion highlighted the necessity to improve eAccessibility for the elderly and people with special needs, and to enhance competences, skills and familiarity with ICT, both in education and training, as part of the Lisbon Strategy for more and better jobs. Moreover, it stressed the need to promote socio-cultural changes that aim to embrace the benefits of the Knowledge Society, as well as to promote eInclusion in relation to EU Regional policies⁹. The November 2009 Ministerial Conference

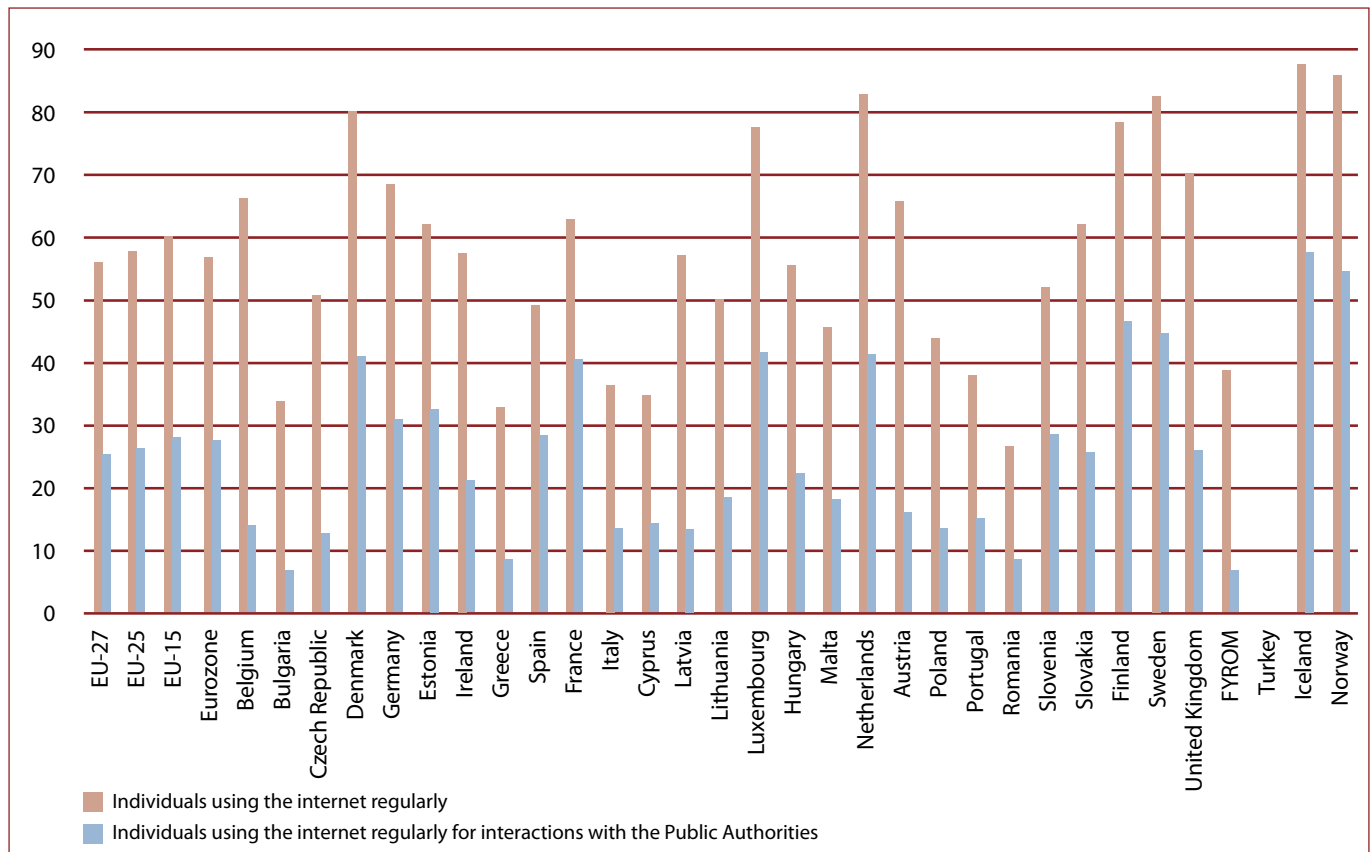
the EU through the development of broadband connection and mobile access¹¹.

The most recent Eurostat data of 2009 reveals that the gap between the different Member States has to be taken into account, as do the gaps in the use of ICT between different age groups, between people with different levels of education and computer literacy, between people from rural/urban areas and between genders. According to Eurostat, the use of ICT has reached 56% of the European Union's citizens. These figures also highlight the fact that while these rates reach nearly 90% in countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, they are between 30% and 35% in others, including Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Italy (fig. 1)¹².

However, even though internet connection availability and skills are directly related to the further development and success of eGovernment, the use of ICT for private matters is and will remain substantially higher than for conducting transactions with public administration. The latest statistics

Figure 1: Individuals regularly using the internet in the last 3 months (% of individuals ages 16 to 74).

Individuals regularly using the Internet for interacting with public authorities. Source: Eurostat



on eGovernment that took place in Malmö, Sweden further highlighted the importance of eInclusion and reinforced the commitment to achieve substantial improvements by 2015. EU governments will seek 'to empower businesses and citizens through eGovernment services designed around users' needs, better access to information and their active involvement in the policy-making process'¹⁰. As a result, the European Commission has launched an ambitious programme to promote inclusion under the motto 'No Citizen Left Behind', which aims to foster eInclusion in all segments of population, paying special attention to the risk groups: people who reside in remote areas, people with physical impairments and the elderly. In addition, the programme promotes the creation of infrastructures that make internet connection available in any location within

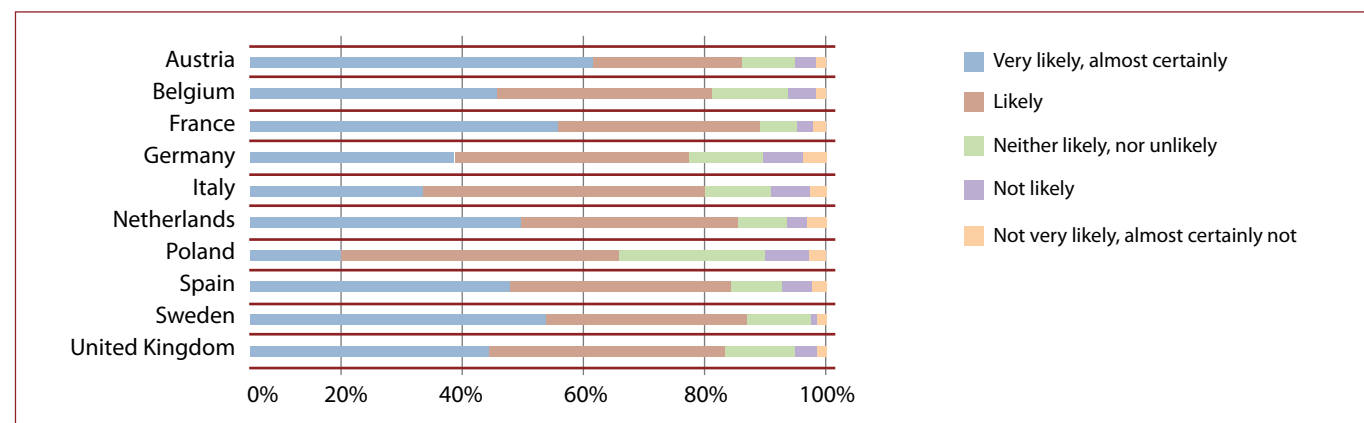
show that barely 28% of the citizens of the EU-27 used the internet to interact with public authorities at least once in the last three months and that there is a marked difference between Member States. Despite keeping a correlation with the use of the internet in private life, the rates of use for interaction with public authorities are substantially lower, reaching a peak of 55% in countries such as the Netherlands and Finland, and only 5% and 10% in countries such as Greece, Romania and Bulgaria (fig. 1)¹³.

These figures reveal the urgent need for European institutions and national governments to adopt the necessary measures to increase the digital inclusion ratios, making sure that a maximum number of citizens have access to eGovernment services. This must be linked to a strong commitment to increasing citizens' trust and confidence in

using ICT for their communications with government. Trust is an important issue, since it often acts as a barrier for citizens that use the available online services. The study on Citizen Satisfaction with eGovernment, however, has disclosed that when this barrier is overcome, the number of cases in which a citizen would consider using the online channel again to obtain a service is extremely high (fig. 2)¹⁴. At the same time, the number of users of eGovernment solutions that

eGovernment services still has good potential to increase, it reminds us that there remain aspects to be improved, mainly related to trust and inclusion. As illustrated in the top graph of figure 4, those issues that have fewer implications in terms of privacy for citizens show higher rates of usage and, therefore, a minor disparity between supply and use. However, for sensitive issues such as health, police declarations and important certificates, the

Figure 2: Likelihood of re-use of eGovernment services, per country. Source: European Commission, 2009



perceive increased benefits after use in comparison with the traditional channels for obtaining public services is also significant. In particular, the aspects that the users see as more beneficial are time savings, the increased flexibility of eGovernment and the simplicity of the processes.

Nevertheless, despite citizens' positive reception of the deployment of online public services, there are still significant differences between the availability of services and their actual use. The 2007 study on Online Sophistication conducted by the European Commission and Capgemini pointed out that Austria and Slovenia have the most developed deployment of eGovernment services in the EU (fig. 3)¹⁵. However, as seen in figure 4, the supply side is in many cases far ahead of demand. Whilst this fact has very positive aspects, meaning that the use of

number of people actually using e-channels to obtain such services is significantly lower.

Finally, it is important to remark that trust increases when users receive a positive impression of the services. The longer that citizens have been using a service satisfactorily and the longer they have been accustomed to working with ICT, the higher their level of trust becomes, as well as the likelihood that they will make further use of the service. Therefore, governments should take these issues seriously into consideration and actively promote both skills and affordable/easy access for every citizen. They also need to encourage the use of online services whenever available, emphasising the benefits for the citizens and businesses in terms of comfort, time and cost saving and safety.

Figure 3: Online sophistication ranks of the EU-27. Source: Capgemini/European Commission, 2007

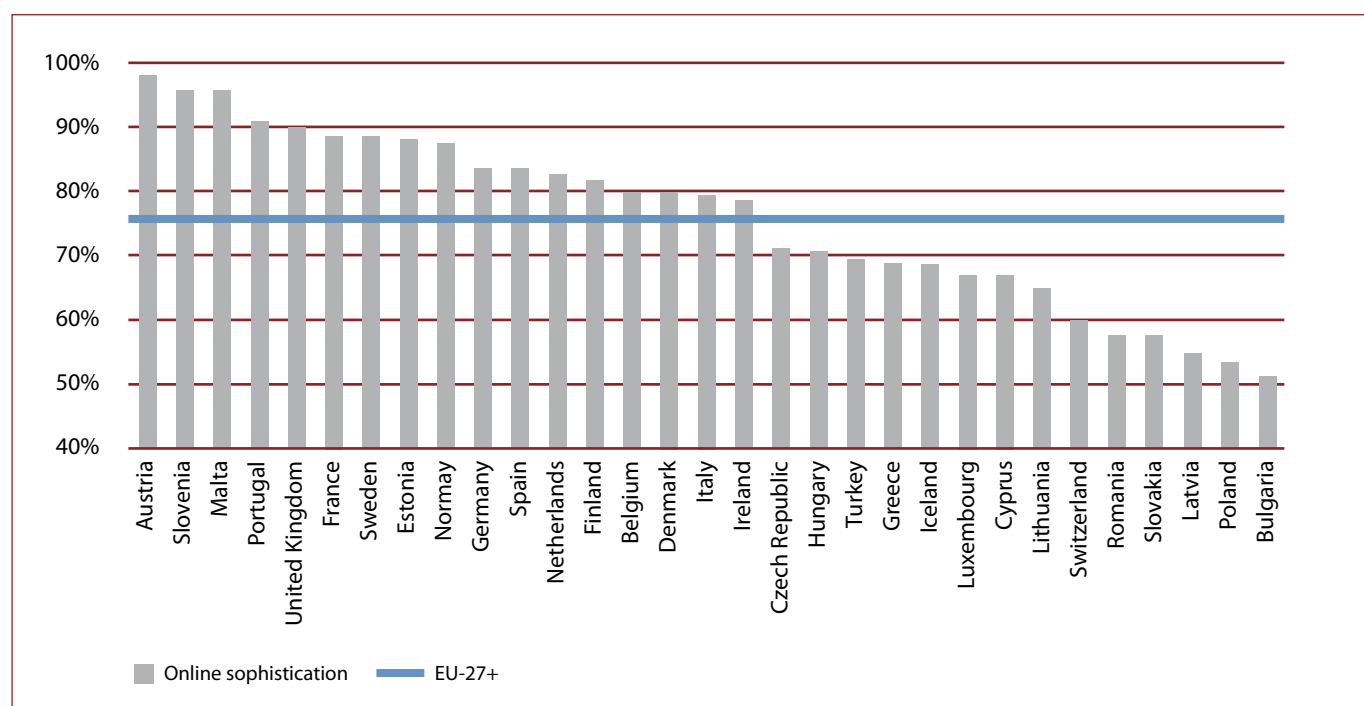
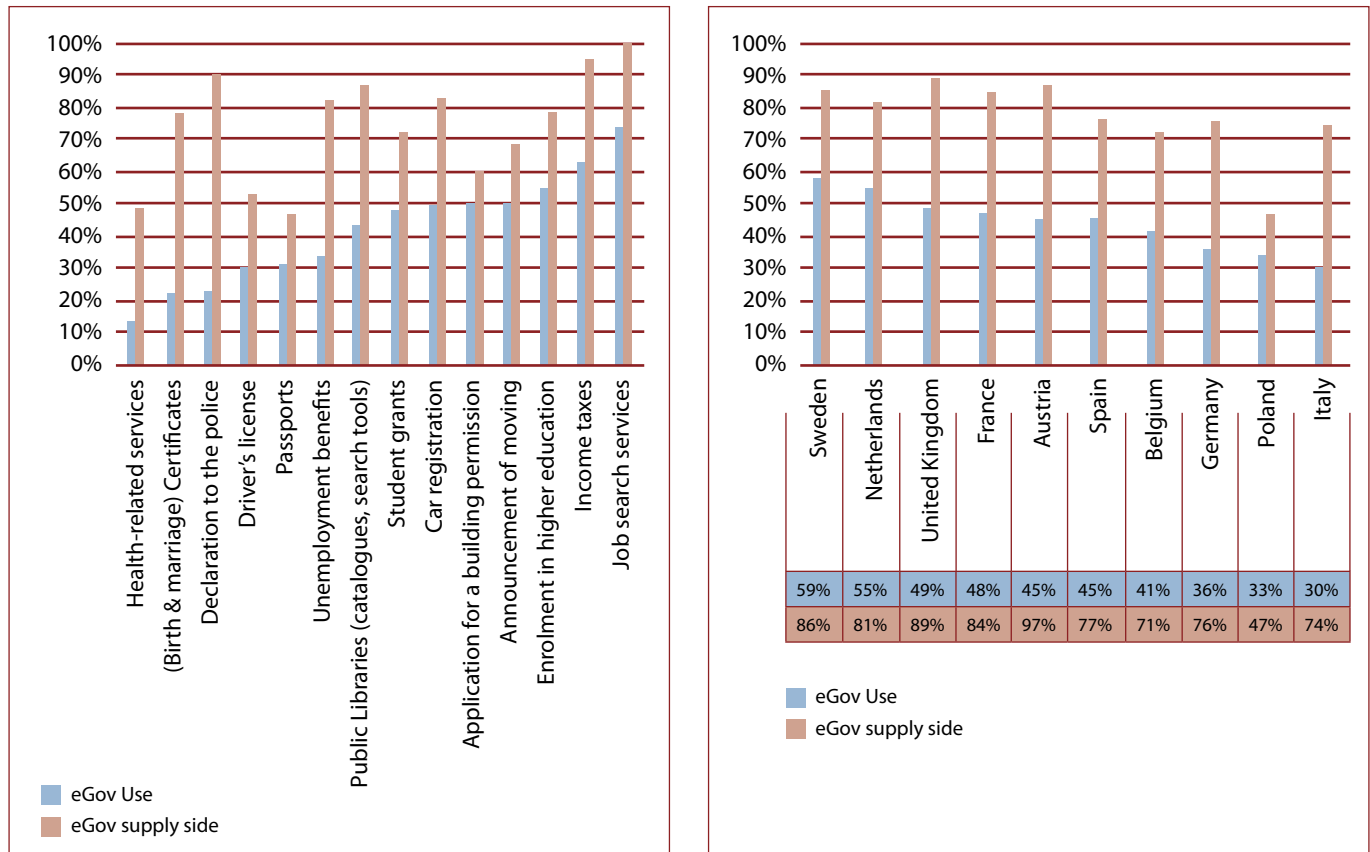


Figure 4: Figures showing the contrast between the availability of the 12 basic public services online and their respective demand. Source: European Commission 2009, p.121.



Concluding remarks

Public administration and public authorities have a leading role to play in triggering innovation by a more active use and integration of ICT. This, together with the fact that the public sector is forced to innovate as it does not have the possibility of choosing or selecting its customers, gives governments not only the responsibility of taking the lead in innovation and transformation, but also the opportunity to become best-practice models that can, at a later stage, be followed by other Member States or the private sector.

Governments and public administration are in a privileged position to develop and promote the use of new standards which, by their very nature, have to be laid down in legislation. This is the case with respect to the use of electronic signatures, certificates with full legal validity, digital ID cards, etc. Once developed, such standards become drivers for innovation within the public and private sectors, thus ensuring

a safer internet and new channels that help to reduce the administrative burden for citizens and businesses. Examples of this are the many cases of banking institutions across Europe incorporating eID authentication technologies by replacing their own earlier authentication methods.

Moreover, ICT can have positive effects in areas with which it is not normally associated, such as environmental protection. The creation of standards for electronic signatures, certificates

ICT has increased the need for public administration to adjust its internal organisation, systems and information management to enable interoperability, permitting administrations to interact, share information and set up common services.

etc. with legal validity has made it possible to reduce the amount of printed material. Similarly, establishing standards for *Green ICT* is a sensitive area in which governments need to take the lead. Nevertheless, one must not overlook the fact that greater use of eGovernment and ICT in public administration also results in the appearance of new risks and challenges. Greater openness involves a greater chance of misuse. Therefore, issues related to ICT security and the development

of secure standards are gaining importance in the implementation of eGovernment solutions as well as in regional, national and European eGovernment strategies. In this article we have shown that ICT does in fact provide great opportunities for European governments and public administration organisations to become more efficient and effective by re-organising the internal processes and information flows. If done correctly, this can ensure better coordination and

ease of access to governmental services for citizens and businesses. Furthermore, the constant development of citizen-centric eGovernment solutions for the delivery of public services has provided more opportunities to benefit from ICT as a means to reduce the administrative burden for citizens and businesses. Reducing this burden, which implies cutting unnecessary costs in terms of time and money as well as increasing citizens' satisfaction with their government, is

a key point in achieving the goals of increased efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability as set out in the Lisbon Strategy.

However, the success of these policies remains dependent on the extension of ICT skills and accessibility to the whole of the population as well as on encouraging the use of existing online solutions. Greater eInclusion means better opportunities to communicate with citizens using their preferred means, channels and language, a fact that has to be considered from all aspects in the implementation process of eGovernment solutions: 'no citizen left behind' is not a challenge to be tackled from the technical point of view.

Currently, insufficient use is being made of online services

in Europe, revealing that governments must promote its use more actively and promote trust. The importance of creating trust is supported by the quality and satisfaction surveys carried out among users of eGovernment, who have manifested their willingness to use the services again once they have tried them.

Public administration has the potential and the obligation to take a leading position in implementing full use of ICT and promoting standards that can later be extended to allow its use in both the public and the private sector, extending its potential for more efficient and effective services, increased citizen satisfaction and innovation.

NOTES

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- ² EIPA et al., *Organisational changes, skills and leadership required by eGovernment* [Electronic Version], from <http://www.epractice.eu/en/library/281215>, 2005
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Latest trends in Top Public Management in the European Union



Herma Kuperus* and Anita Rode**

Top public managers play a vital role in national developments. They take decisions that have a great impact on national policies and different stakeholders. They also have the role of employer for civil servants. All these responsibilities imply that they should acquire certain skills and competences as well as different support systems and employment conditions than those of other civil servants. This article examines different top public management models in the 27 EU Member States. It starts by grouping all European top public management systems in five models, and then follows the trends in employment and recruitment systems for top public managers and defines competences that are necessary for top managers in public administration. The article describes differences between management and leadership skills during the reform process in public administration, and illustrates main tendencies through some best practices in local, regional or national public administrations in Europe. It also looks at the representation of women in top public management positions.

Introduction

The top management of public organisations must balance the interests of every stakeholder, which include politicians, citizens and enterprises, and their employees. They have a role as policy-makers and as employers. They therefore need a vision and strategy, strong leadership competencies and people management skills, as well as political and environmental awareness. Each top manager has his or her own qualities, but in order to face global challenges, they also need the other members of the management team to use the qualities of others in the organisation in an effective and motivational way.

Top public managers (TPMs) should perform as leaders instead of just as managers, and must be able to bring movement and change to the organisation in a way that encourages employees to be part of the movement. For management this will mean strategic thinking and vision,

integrity and ethics, getting the best from people, making a personal impact, self-reflection for continued learning and improvement, focusing on the outcome, building relations, supporting teams, and creating shared understanding and values. In order to cover every competency required, top management has to operate as a complementary team.

Management team composition also requires special attention. Public sector organisations need a good balance of diversity at the top management level in order to face future challenges with an increasingly European and even international dimension. Necessary changes include a labour condition overhaul for a better work-life balance and better communication in more languages or with the help of multicultural tools/training. This will benefit everyone in the organisation, as well as society in general.

Who are top public managers and how are they managed?

Civil service managers play a vital role in national developments, thanks to their ability to acquire special leadership skills. As their profile differs to that of other civil servants, they need a different employment and support framework in which to work. Such a framework would guarantee their improved performance¹. In every Member State, the functional titles of top public managers and the number of functional levels for top public management positions differ. Nevertheless, nearly all Member States include Directors-General, Directors and Head of Departments in their TPM. The majority of Member States also include a Secretary-General. This article focuses on these positions.

Top public management systems in Member States can be grouped into five different models (see table 1). The models focus on such criteria as formal TPM status, centralised TPM organisation and special TPM conditions, as well as special support for TPM only, specific recruitment and appointment rules and benefits.

Table 1: Grouping of Member States by typology of SCS models

	Formal TPM status	No formal TPM status
Special conditions for TPM	No.1 With central SCS office: NL, UK	AT, DE, EL, ES, FR, LU, IE DK, FI, SE, SI EE, LV, SK No.4
	BE, IT, MT, PL, PT, RO No.2	
No special conditions for TPM	BG, CY No.3	CZ, HU, LT No.5

Source: Kuperus, H. and Rode, A. "Top Public Managers in Europe" (2008)

Top public management model No.1 is '*centralised TPM organisation*'. This model suggests that top public management is formally defined in a national law or regulation as a separate and special group of civil servants and that this particular group is managed by a central office, which provides a support service for top public managers and administers the recruitment, management, remuneration, evaluation and promotion of TPM. In this model special conditions apply to top public managers which distinguish them from other civil servants.

TPM model No. 2 is '*formalised TPM status with special conditions*'. This model suggests that top public management is formally defined in a national law or regulation as a separate and special group of civil servants, however there is no central office to administer and support top public managers. In this case TPM is usually administered by the same office(s) that administer the civil service in general. Furthermore, this model implies the existence of special conditions for top public managers which distinguish them from other civil servants.

TPM model No. 3 is '*formalised TPM status without special conditions*'. This model suggests the same legal and administrative basis for TPM as model No. 2, but top public managers do not enjoy any special conditions when compared to the civil service in general. The only difference between TPM and civil servants in general is their status.

TPM model No. 4 is '*recognised TPM group with special conditions*'. This model suggests that top public managers are not formally defined in any national law or regulation, but that high-level civil servants' positions are considered an exceptional achievement and have a special social status. This particular group also enjoys special conditions in relation to their recruitment, appointment, support and benefits.

TPM model No. 5 is '*no special TPM recognition or organisation*'. This model suggests that top public managers are not formally defined in any national law or regulation nor do they receive any special support or enjoy special conditions when compared to other civil servants. This basically means that top public managers' positions are considered equal to those in the civil service in general, so general civil service conditions and benefits must apply.

As can be seen from table 1, most of the Member States fit into models 2 and 4. This means that in order to fulfil their role, top public managers in most EU countries need special employment conditions that differ from those of civil servants in general. Only two Member States – the Netherlands and the United Kingdom – have created a special, centralised office for TPM management. A centralised office enables an organisation to pay special attention to the TPM group, to establish an 'esprit de corps' or corporate culture in the context of an autonomous organisation, to increase mobility between several ministries using a centrally-guided recruitment procedure and to organise specific support and development activities. This is especially useful in position-based systems. Overall, there is a general tendency in most Member States to move towards a more centralised way of managing top public managers. An example of this is the creation of the Top Level Appointments Committee, which selects candidates for almost all appointments at assistant secretary level in Ireland.

Employment systems and recruitment

Generally speaking, there are two types of employment systems – career-based and position-based. The career-based civil service system aims at building a coherent civil service with top executives who share the same culture, making working together and communication across government organisations easier. It also favours internal mobility. The main weaknesses of this system lie in the lack of competition for top positions, and the danger that senior civil servants on a secure career path that are part of a somewhat exclusive 'club', may eventually become too removed from what is going on in the broader scheme of things and the interests they are meant to serve².

The position-based civil service system aims to provide a wider choice of candidates, including those with specialist skills, to promote competition, cultural renewal and adaptation in the civil service³. This system facilitates decentralisation and makes it easier to adapt recruitment strategies to specific skill requirements. It also makes it easier to differentiate pay and other employment conditions in accordance with market value and facilitates a strong performance orientation⁴. The disadvantage of this system is the lack of planned career development for top public managers. Both internal and external candidates can compete for every position, so it is difficult to make a career development plan for these top managers. Another serious disadvantage of this system is the lack of a common, shared top management culture, which cannot develop due to ever changing managers, each

of them representing different ways of working and different organisational values.

Meanwhile, an increasing number of Member States are starting to combine elements of both these systems. They can be considered as mixed or *hybrid systems*.

In many Member States the recruitment procedures and career systems for the specific target group of top public managers differ from the general or main employment system. To improve their TPM, the Member States with a career-based employment system are moving in the direction of a position-based system for TPM positions. This would allow them to select candidates for short-term appointments on the basis of merit and performance and from outside the own organisation, corps or pool. Member States with position-based systems for TPM are tending to move elements of the system towards the career-based system, so as to ensure some kind of career path for their best employees and to strengthen the corporate identity of the group. Collective recruitment of young trainees or internal long- and shortlists of candidates for specific positions have been introduced and combined with open recruitment for external applicants for specific positions. The main differences between and trends in top public management-level employment systems are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Employment trends for top public managers

	Career	Hybrid	Position
In general	FR DE EL LU	BG LV SK SI LT >	CZ DK EE FI SE UK
Movement trends of TPM	AT, BE, PT ---> IE, RO, ES ---> CY -----> HU ----->	IT, MT > < PL CY HU	< NL

Source: Kuperus, H. and Rode, A. "Top Public Managers in Europe" (2008)

Based on the movement trends between TPM employment systems, it can be seen that Member States seem to be converging towards an increasingly similar, hybrid approach that combines elements of both basic employment systems. Member States with a career-based system are choosing to limit TPM selection based on duration of service, to increase the number of fixed-term contracts and appointments, to use performance assessments and to open top public management positions to external applicants with managerial skills and experience. Conversely, Member States with position-based and hybrid systems are willing to retain the best managers and to find a way of offering them excellent career prospects and in-service development. One new approach currently being used is creating different staffing pools with internal and/or external candidates for TPM where the best candidates for top management positions can be selected based on their competencies.

Competencies and leadership

The development of a shared vision and shared values is a pre-condition for effective leadership within an organisation.

Wherever possible, these values should be developed with all stakeholders involved and should be communicated and linked to other activities and tools in the organisation, especially to HR instruments, as competency profiles for TPM. The *main competencies* of a good leader can be summarised as:

- contributing to, shaping and championing the organisation's vision and goals;
- critically evaluating information before reaching conclusions;
- translating broad strategy into practical terms for others;
- creating a shared understanding of what has to be achieved;
- developing and overseeing the implementation of change in a fast-paced environment.

The competency framework is a list of competencies that are important for the organisation, but that can also be used to express the organisation's strategic focus and as a tool to assess and measure the organisational leaders' competencies⁵. About half of the EU Member States have a centralised competency profile for their top public managers; the rest focus on management training without a centralised competency profile. Table 3 gives an overview of Member States with a centralised TPM competency profile and also indicates their TPM management training courses, aside from entrance training. Nevertheless, this does not mean training is linked to the competency profile.

Table 3: Use of central competency profile and/or management training for TPM*

	Career	Hybrid	Position
Central Competency Profile	BE, PT	BG, IT, LV	----
+ management training*	CY, IE, RO	HU, SI	EE, NL, UK, SE
No central Competency Profile	EL, LU	SK	CZ
but management training*	AT, FR, DE, LT, ES	MT, PL	DK, FI

Source: Kuperus, H. and Rode, A. "Top Public Managers in Europe" (2008)

* Entrance training not included

To sum up the main competencies in top public managers' profiles (Table 4), most of the Member States have included some leadership elements in them or want to include these in the future, at least for the highest level. Many Member States mention people skills, but very few mention innovation, emotional intelligence and self-control, while none of them mention multicultural skills. The European dimension is also absent from most TPM competence profiles. Only a few Member States have included elements relating to languages and knowledge of European Institutions and Funds.

Table 4:
Grouping of Member States according to common elements in competency profiles*

Competences	EE, BG, IE, UK	RO, FI, NL, ES	BE, CY, IT, PT, SI
Leadership	Yes	Yes (except RO)	No (except BE, SI)
Strategic vision	Yes	No	No
Achieving results	Yes	Yes (except NL)	No
Communication	Yes	No (except RO)	No (except SI)
Managing relations, people, HRM	Yes	Yes	No (except BE)
General management	Yes	Yes	Yes
Knowledge	No	No	Yes
Awareness / sensitivity	BG, IE	NL	BE
Integrity / ethics	EE, IE, UK	NL	-
Judgement / decisional	EE, IE, EC	RO, NL	-
Innovation	EE	FI	-
Self-reflection / learning	UK	NL	-
EU-orientation	CY	-	SI
Diversity / multicultural	-	-	-

Source: Kuperus, H. and Rode, A. "Top Public Managers in Europe" (2008)

* Not all Member States included.

There are several ways to achieve the right TPM competencies. First of all, competency profiles could and should be used in the recruitment process to define the requirements for specific vacancies or group of positions at a specific level. Furthermore, competencies can be improved or developed through training and development activities for individuals or groups. But not all competencies can be developed and the organisation in charge of recruitment, training and development should know which of the required competencies can be developed and which are more basic personality characteristics (e.g. introvert/extrovert) and therefore can only be recruited. This distinction is especially important in career-based systems, where this aspect has to be taken into account when recruiting future managers at a very early stage of their career.

The leadership and management training courses offered in the majority of Member States are not always related to competency profiles. Most Member States train their top public managers in *leadership skills* and different types of *management skills*. Training and development activities are costly in terms both of money and TPM time. How effective these activities are for individual managers, as well as for the organisation, remains to be seen. Some Member States offer cross-border training courses, but more specific forms must be used to fit into the time constraints and specific learning and development needs of this group or these individuals. Sabbaticals can be used to spend a short while in public administration in another Member State or a European institution to increase the individual's understanding of the European setting, to develop multicultural skills and to build a European network.

Leadership and management of change

Managerial skills and qualities that were important during the past two decades are no longer sufficient to cope with future challenges; new competencies for the public sector management therefore have to be introduced. These days, top public managers are expected to be more performance-oriented and less process-compliant than those working in the civil service as a whole. They need managerial

focus, leadership skills and an innovation and communication-based focus, as well as professional competence. These competencies are a prerequisite for productive top management. Traditional values such as hierarchy, authority through position, conformity and the command-control paradigm are slowly going to transform into new cultural values within public administration. These new cultural values will include openness, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, authority through leadership and managerial culture⁶.

In most of the European Member States organisational change processes are generally still oriented to management rather than leadership⁷. In Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Anglo-Saxon countries, where New

Public Management was introduced some time ago, the reforms focus more on leadership in terms of the way that values, self-reflection and soft motivation skills are being developed. They focus on sustainable change, which means a real change of culture and common values and investment in a change process over a longer period of time. They mostly present real concepts of strategic vision and provide a long-term orientation process. Nevertheless, the focus on Europeanisation and multicultural skills for managers and the diversity in management teams is still lacking.

In other public sector traditions (Continental, Mediterranean and East European) they focus more on changing structures or implementing new tools and staff training programmes, without an overall vision on changing organisational cultures and fundamental values. The changes focus on specific parts of an organisation and not the organisation as a whole, thereby suggesting that Member States still favour a management approach rather than a leadership approach in public administration reforms. There is a risk that change may not be embedded - it is only partial (in the structure of the organisation, not in its values). Therefore, in the case of a political change, mobility of management or a short-term crisis and a reduction of resources, the change process will be easy to influence and will result in delays to the reform process.

Examples of real change and leadership were demonstrated among the European Public Sector Award (EPSA) 2009 nominees⁸ (see the case boxes).

A Swiss police force has introduced a 'change through methaethics' initiative aiming to develop a process of reflection among police officers of any rank and in all divisions, enabling the best possible decisions to be made, even in increasingly complex and risky environments. In this process traditional modes of management and leadership were questioned, resulting in a real change of values and culture in the police force. Change was measured through an internal staff survey, which gave showed encouraging results: about 90% of the employees said they were proud of the police force. Also the people of the city rated the police force much more highly than in any previous annual survey.

Change has been achieved in a London hospital on the basis of such components as developing a culture in which the staff feel valued and everyone understands the organisation's goals, creating a leadership development programme for all managers and monthly performance management meetings across the entire organisation. It resulted in increased efficiency, extra income and patient satisfaction, which are the main issues in any public health organisation.

Sustainable change is being implemented in the municipality of Porto through training oriented towards continuous self-improvement. This turns managers into leaders that drive change and stimulate employees to be responsible for managing their own talent, thereby becoming agents of real and sustained change. The training focuses on such concepts as values, mission, vision and customers.

In public sector leadership there is always a strong connection between administrative and political leaders. This often makes it difficult for sustainable, long-term reforms and change to be effected, because the political and administrative systems function in a way that supports short-term actions rather than a strategic long-term vision. There is a risk that, in times of political and/or economic change, the reform process will stop or be realigned. One possible solution for dealing with political issues in public management is a clear agreement between politicians and top public managers for the long-term development and/or introduction of a supporting and monitoring institution to verify the sustainability of the changes made.

One of the EPSA 2009 nominees targets the issue of cooperation between politicians and top public managers

In the local government of San Cugat, politicians and top public management have reached a strategic agreement to re-orient the prevailing traditional political culture and to encourage a public management style based on objectives and effectiveness. This has promoted a political culture where good policies are based on good resource management.

in the local government of San Cugat city in Spain (see case box).

The problem, especially in the East European Member States, is that leadership and change processes are often interrupted by frequent changes in the country's political climate. It is therefore essential to prevent the politically-motivated appointment of administrative leaders, so that leadership and policy can become continuous and sustainable. On the other hand, in most Continental and Mediterranean Member States the reforms are too one-sided and focus only on effectiveness and efficiency, while little attention is paid to cultural and ethical values and soft (non-financial) motivational skills. In times of economic downturn and resource scarcity, public organisations cannot invest more money in financial bonuses to motivate their

The Danish Immigration Service has transformed from an institution with a very bad public reputation into an entirely customer-oriented organisation, by changing the organisation's culture and values completely. The main source of inspiration for top public managers was the 'Public Governance - Code for Chief Executive Excellence in Denmark' developed by the Forum for Top Executive Management as a joint management project for senior managers across the Danish public sector. A decisive element in the transformation process was that management focused on communicating the goals and values in a credible way, as well as achieving conformity between corporate values and management decisions and actions. Stakeholder confidence rose considerably between 2006 and 2008 and negative exposure in the media saw a marked drop. The customers clearly appreciate the transformation efforts: an extensive customer survey shows that between 65% and 90 % of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of service.

staff; public sector values ought to be motivation enough. Financial motivation works well for achieving short-term results but it does not motivate staff to work towards long-term goals.

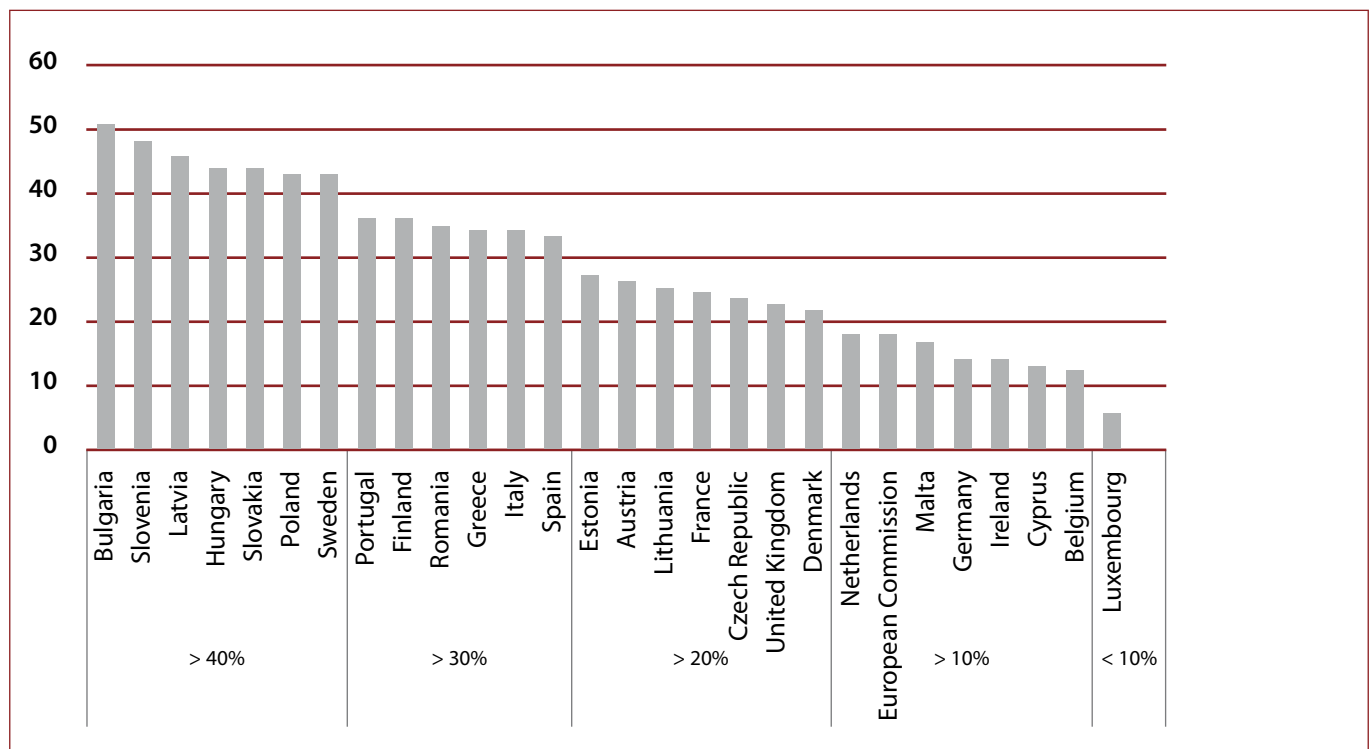


Working conditions, work-life balance and women in top public management positions

The key factors that contribute to a good work-life balance are the length of the working day and week, flexible working hours and sympathetic leave conditions. Standard working hours, the amount of overtime, autonomy with regard to working hours and opportunities to work part time and at home (teleworking) differ between Member States. For cultural or organisational reasons, flexible working arrangements or leave do not apply to TPM level positions in several Member States or are not allowed in practice. This may be one of the main reasons why women are still underrepresented in the highest management positions. In the Continental, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian Member States in particular, female representation in TPM positions is very low. In contrast, six of the seven countries with the best gender balance (in which over 40% of the highest civil service positions are held by women) are Member States that have joined the European Union since 2004 (see figure 1).

In all Member States⁹, the representation of women is higher in level 2 (deputy) positions than in level 1 (the highest) positions. This suggests that Member States not only have to focus on the general number of women in top public

Figure 1: Proportion of female civil servants in highest-ranking positions*



Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on decision-making women and men (Data collected between 19/02/2008 - 13/03/2008)

* This includes the civil servants in the two highest-ranking positions (posts of Director-General, Deputy Director-General, Director and Principal Advisor, or equivalent).

management positions, but also have to look at the positions women actually hold and try to ensure equality there as well.

The reasons for these differences in the representation of women among EU Member States are to be found in the historical and cultural background and organisational tradition of the country concerned, as well as the employment system. For example, in many Eastern European Member States the public sector is regarded as female dominated, whereas in countries where the participation of women in the labour market has traditionally been low (e.g. Ireland and the Netherlands) it takes longer to get more women in senior civil service positions.

In many career-based systems, female representation in management positions is low due to the general recruitment competition at entry level. The competition is the same for male and female applicants, but where women are not equally represented at entry level they certainly cannot be equally represented in higher positions, as recruitment for TPM positions takes place through career progression. For this reason, opening up TPM positions also to external applicants could be a way of recruiting more women to management positions.

In order to achieve equal or high representation of women in TPM positions in position-based systems, the issue must be addressed by setting certain targets as part of national policy. However, some Member States, such as Denmark, see equal treatment as a very important criterion in the recruitment process, so specific targets or quotas for female representation cannot be set. In other Member States, quotas have been, are being or will be used to increase the number of women in top positions. Specific

training, mentoring and coaching are also used as ways to support women in their career. The question is whether it is appropriate to temporarily treat some groups or individuals 'unequally' by giving them extra support, so as to achieve the ultimate goal of equal opportunity.

Conclusions

With national policy-making gaining in complexity and becoming increasingly exposed to international and European coordination, as is the case in all EU Member States, there is an even greater need for top public managers to have a broad perspective and the ability to coordinate their work with national, European and international institutions. In this regard, the EU context and development of multi-cultural skills should be emphasised and included more in the competency frameworks and the training and development activities for top public managers. New ways of developing TPM in a more structured way have to be found, taking into account their responsibilities and

Top public managers (TPM) should perform as leaders instead of only as managers, while being able to bring movement and change to the organisation in a way that encourages most of the employees to want to be part of the movement.

time restrictions. Given the importance of the European environment of public administration, more emphasis should be placed on this dimension in the future. The development of leadership skills is still important in many Member States in order to add long-term strategic thinking and team and people management to the management competencies. To lead permanent change, top public managers have to develop into top public leaders.

Long working hours are still the norm for top management positions, whilst telework or flexible working

time arrangements are still rare. Consequently, establishing flexible working arrangements that help reconcile professional and private life should be allowed also in higher and top management positions so as to enable more women to take up top positions. Another valuable stimulus is a well-designed parental leave system. In the countries with a long-established leave system, it is generally not part of the organisational culture to allow TPM to benefit from these working conditions. The main problem continues to exist, because women or men who are taking care of a child or family often thereby limit their chances of promotion or career development. This is one of the elements that will have to be considered throughout the EU. Political support for changes in this area is essential.

NOTES

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- ** Anita Rode, Research Assistant, European Institute of Public Administration, EIPA Maastricht.
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Staff News

Luxembourg



Tomasz Kramer

*The internal market, notably the free movement of persons and services and freedom of establishment;
EPSO recruitment procedures and staff regulations of EU Institutions;
EU company law and EU competition law.*

Tomasz Kramer (PL) joined EIPA's Centre in Luxembourg – the European Centre for Judges and Lawyers, as a Lecturer on March 1, 2010. In 2005, he obtained a MA in European Legal Studies from the University of Poznań (PL) and, in 2006, a LL.M. in European Law and Economic Analysis from the College of Europe, Bruges (BE). Under the Erasmus programme, he studied one year at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences at the University of Rennes (FR). Tomasz Kramer's professional experience includes positions as consultant with a consultancy firm dealing with investment projects financed by resources from the European structural funds and with drafting of an executive regulation on the National Capital Fund for the Polish Ministry of Economy (2004-2005). Furthermore, he was course director (2006-2008) and freelance project manager (2009) at the Academy of European Law in Trier responsible for developing training programmes in the field of the EU internal market law, company law, competition law and regulation of network industries. In 2009, Tomasz moved to Luxembourg to work for firms providing corporate legal services before joining EIPA.

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