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Strategic Thinking and Strategic Capacity for Reform

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Strategic thinking and strategic capacity Structure

- **Strategic thinking:**
 - Ideology? Yes, but Public Administration has to deal with its own features, context, environment and challenges
 - The environment and context of Public Administration (PA) in OECD and European Member States
 - The challenges: an agenda for governance in a changing world
- **The answers: Long running trends in reform**



Within a context of scarcity of resources and the need for fiscal sustainability

 - Citizen and society
 - Ethical principles of public service
 - Professional civil service
 - Quality initiatives:

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Strategic thinking and strategic capacity. Structure (cont.)

- **Strategic capacity**
 - Political support from the top
 - One policy of reform: one voice
 - The role of the Ministry of finances: a reformer or an ally?
 - High level expertise and competence: competent team (s) able to drive and implement reform
- **Institutional drivers of reform : how to maintain pressure for change**
 - High level political support
 - The role of society: communicate with citizen and society: raise public awareness
 - Engage civil service
- **Brief conclusion**

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Ideology and context of PA

- Ideology has a definitive role: however public administrations have to perform in special context, regardless ideology
- Public Administration has a service oriented mission to citizens and society. PA lies with values (impartiality, equal opportunities and justice) that are different from the private sector
- Problems to solve by PA can not be solved by individuals in isolation
- Citizens have a triple role vis-à-vis PA: they are customers, regulators of public choices(through democratic mechanisms) and they finance public services as taxpayers
- Administrations have a special and unique role in formulating and implementing public policies
- There are several Administrations within the general concept of PA. Administration is a *constellation* of organisations with its own problems and solutions
- PA's have at their service a group of professional civil servants, which are supposed to be competent and independent from lobbies and pressure groups.

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The challenges An Agenda for Governance in a changing world

Each country has its own realities and demands. However, there are common challenges in our globalised world:

- Globalisation and internationalisation of economy and society
- Europeanisation of public services. Administrative capacities and the Lisbon Treaty
- False debate between State and market. The end result of economy depends on the way public, social and private sector interact and complement each other
- Scarcity of resources and the EU Stability pact ; the need for reduction of budget deficits and national debt; a pressure for change
- New expectations that emerge from NIT (New Information Technology)

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The answers: long running trends



Within the context of scarcity of resources and EU Stability Pact: a pressure for change

1. **Citizens and society**
2. **Ethical values of civil service**
3. **Professional civil service**
4. **Quality initiatives**

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1. Citizens and society

- Administrations are essentially service providers to citizens and society. If the improvement in service provision is not perceived, one can say that PAR does not exist
- Citizens and society should know which the reform trends are
- Enterprises are a relevant target group as they have to be competitive in the EU single market
- Efficiency and the proper use of public resources have an ethical dimension as citizens are taxpayers, thus financing public service
- Citizen orientation is a reform trend that inspires legal systems, legal frameworks, institutional solutions, procedures and the use of IT.

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2. Ethical values of civil service

- PA has the unique role of guaranteeing justice, impartiality and equity in society.
- Fair and reliable public services inspire public trust, a favourable environment for business and economic growth (OECD).
- OECD recommendation on improving ethical conduct in public service (1998).
- Trust in Government in OECD countries(2000).
- Code of Good Administrative Behaviour (EU 2000).

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3. Professional civil service

- In a framework of scarcity of resources, to build up and improve an independent and competent civil service is one of the recurrent trends in PAR. The scarcity of resources is a pressure for reform.
- Legislation should guarantee equal opportunities, impartiality and merit in relation to the recruitment and development of civil servants, based on merit.
- A professional civil service, protected from lobbies and pressure groups, is of the essence.
- The management of civil service and high civil service deserve privileged attention from all the European Member States.

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4. Quality Management (QM)

- QM is related with citizen orientation; QM concept encompasses leadership, mission and strategy of organizations, resources, people (internal and external clients: that is to say, civil servants and citizens/customers), efficiency and results.
- QM brings public sector closer to the private sector.
- QM enhances *responsiveness* (responsibility and service orientation) towards citizens and society.
- QM requires definition of missions, goals, standards and performance targets. Reinforces continuous improvement in service delivery.
- QM is an excellent basis for evaluation and assessment of PA's .
- European Quality initiatives: CAF, CAF Resource Centre –EIPA, Quality Conferences, Innovation Public Services Group, EPSA (European Public Sector Award)

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Strategic capacity

- **Leadership of reform: political support from the top.** The political responsibility for the reform process gains when is embodied at the highest level of government: PM and /or other politician highly regarded from society and PA
- **The role of the Ministry of Finances:** a reformer or an ally?
- **One policy of reform, one voice: it is better when one voice sustains reform process** in the political arena (CM and Parliament), society (society, citizen's participation *fora*, media), public administration (hierarchy in civil service, different groups, initiatives and regions, trade unions).
- **High level expertise and competence: the group that conducts reform has to be competent and respected inside and outside service.**

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Institutional drivers

How to maintain pressure for change ?

High level political support

The team /structure that conducts reform is more effective when reporting to a high level political appointee

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Institutional drivers; the role of society

The role of society:

- Communicate with citizen and society: raise public awareness. Communicate successes and progresses creates positive synergy
- Communicate with business and enterprises. The case of CEA (Committee of Enterprises-Administration in Portugal)
- Being open to listen to constraints and failures contributes to public trust, the basis for change.

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Institutional drivers Engage civil service


Engage civil service:

- Communicate and disseminate reform strategy, issues, achievements and also constraints;
- Training policy should fit the reform Agenda;
- Support sectoral reform initiatives;
- Reward innovative services and civil servants;
- Support the champions of reform and the competent teams;
- Senior civil servants are a privileged target group to work with;
- Negotiation and industrial relations play a role

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Conclusion: Is there an European convergence in PAR?

OECD and European Member States have different administrative traditions and different solutions

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Nevertheless ...

- Common pressures and constraints are acknowledged;
- Implementation and enforcement of EU legislation and administrative cooperation is of utmost importance for EU Member States;
- Quality of service provision is of the essence;
- Ethical values are the basis for trust in government, for good relationship between Administration and society and for business environment;
- Professional Civil Services are based on impartiality and merit;
- Reform does not need big theories or big speeches: doing every day the right things - the pursuit of values - is of the essence.

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