

SIGMA

PMF

Public Management Forum

An Electronic Journal for Public Administration Practitioners, Academics and Eastern Europe

Managing European
Affairs

Budgeting and
Policy-making

Polish Ombudsman

Czech Guide for Civil
Servants

Forum Focus

Public
Administration
as Service

Vol. II - N° 3



Public Administration, Citizens and Enterprises

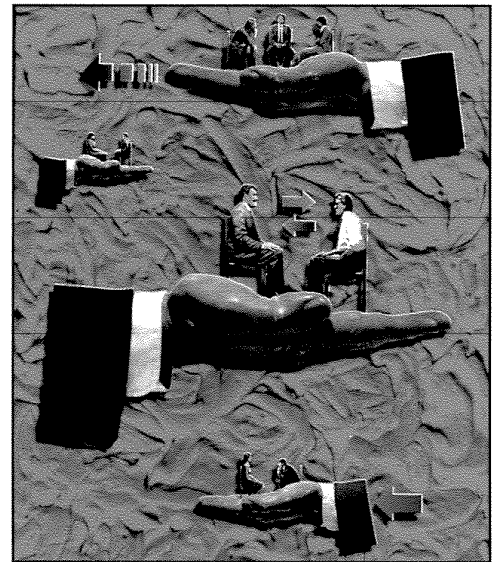
by Francis Hélin

For several years many OECD governments have been undertaking ambitious reforms of public services. An early focus was to improve service quality. But service quality is now seen as one way to raise cost-effectiveness. OECD administrations face many pressures: limiting expenditure, satisfying service expectations of demanding clients, relying more on regulation and contracting out than on producing services themselves, responding to rapidly evolving economic structures, etc. OECD countries now see public administration as a key component of national competitiveness (*Serving the Economy Better*, PUMA, 1991).

The leitmotif of reform is "managerialism" -- clarifying the relationship between policy and its implementation, introducing more discretion into administration, and managing performance by focusing on outcomes and outputs rather than inputs. But there must be balance with concerns of equity, respect for law and avoidance of abuse. Because traditional systems of accountability are weakened or made less relevant by these changes, oversight bodies are also being reformed. And governments are strengthening the ability of "citizen-clients" to control services directly.

Relevance for Central and Eastern Europe

This trend of reform raises fundamental issues for administrative reform strategies in Central and Eastern Europe. As the EU White Paper makes clear, implementation of the Internal Market will generate many more contacts between administration and citizens/enterprises, and call for new types of administrative "product." What is the most appropriate development path for public administration? What are the risks?



The Image Bank / Michael Murphy

This issue of *PMF* opens discussion of these questions by looking at reforms in OECD countries and some initiatives in central and eastern European countries (CEECs), such as Poland and the Czech Republic. *PMF* will come back to these questions over the next months.

OECD and Administrative Responsiveness

Ten years ago, OECD/PUMA studied how Members could improve service for citizens and enterprises. This resulted in a book -- *Administration as Service: The Public as Client* (see page 8) -- and three case studies on tax, employment and services to enterprises. More recent work shows that the findings are still valid, and that the reforms are not yet finished. A recent PUMA book -- *Responsive Government: Service Quality Initiatives* -- reviews the state of the art (see page 13).

Improving service requires radical thinking about public administration. Just reforming the "counter," where citizens meet administrators, is not enough.

Continued on p.14 ➤

PMF is published six times a year by SIGMA, the Programme for Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries.

Views expressed in *Public Management Forum* do not represent official views of the European Commission, OECD Member countries, or the central and eastern European countries participating in the Programme.

Written submissions are welcome. Story ideas, humour and letters to the Editor should be sent to the address below. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, style, grammar and space on the basis of, *inter alia*, the OECD *Style Book* and the OECD *Green Book*.



Head, OECD Public Management Service
Derry Ormond

Head, SIGMA Programme
Bob Bonwitt

PMF Editor
Bart W. Édes

Contributing Editors
Beatrix de Koster
Belinda Hopkinson

Assistant
Françoise Locci

Design
O.R.S.N studio - France

Printer
A&M Conseil - France

Public Management Forum
SIGMA-OECD Information Services
2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France

Tel: (33.1) 45.24.79.00 - 45.24.13.76
Fax: (33.1) 45.24.13.00
e-mail: sigma.info@oecd.org
web site: <http://www.oecd.org/puma/sigmaweb>
ISSN Number : 1024-7416
Copyright OECD, 1996

Application for permission to reproduce or translate all or part of this material should be made to:
Head of Publications, OECD, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France.

Public Management Forum is printed on recyclable paper.

A New Look

As regular readers of this newsletter already have noticed, we have inaugurated a new format. A brighter front page, more colour, a different typeface, and a more distinctive logo contribute to what we hope you will find to be a more attractive and easier to read publication.

Yet the changes do not stop with design. In issues ahead you will find more interviews with people who have had a hand in the transition process across Central and Eastern Europe. Their experiences and views will reinforce the "forum" nature of this newsletter and provide food for thought to colleagues around the region.

This issue of *Public Management Forum* features various articles on responsiveness of the public administration to its clients. Selected experiences in Sweden and the Czech Republic, as well as in the OECD region as a whole, are among those highlighted in the pages which follow. Separately, readers will learn about a unique bilateral training programme involving two Alpine states -- Slovenia and Switzerland -- and the work of the oldest ombudsman institution in a country in transition (Poland).

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Public Management Forum*. As always, we welcome your ideas sent to the address on the left.

Bart Édes - Editor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

• <i>Hands on the Reins</i> Slovenia Prepares for European Integration	3
• <i>Managing the Public Purse</i> The Vital Link Between Budgeting and Policy-making	4
• <i>Human Resources</i> Promoting Better Public Management in the Alps	5
• <i>Administrative Oversight</i> Polish Ombudsman Works for a Democratic Society	6
• <i>Public Management in OECD Countries</i> Sweden's Three Strategies to Improve Service	7
• <i>Forum Focus</i> Transforming the Public Administration to Put the Client First	8
• <i>On the Frontlines of Reform</i> Czech Guide...A Step in the Right Direction	10
• <i>In Brief</i> Public Administration in the News	12
• <i>Fresh off the Press</i> A Matter of Quality Inbox: A Compendium of Recent Publications and Articles	13
Theory and Practice	14
• <i>Donor Corner</i> German Programme Supports TRANSFORMATION	15
• <i>On the Agenda</i> Upcoming Programmes	16

Slovenia Prepares for European Integration

by Dr Benjamin Lukman

Central and eastern European nations have placed a high priority on joining inter-governmental bodies such as the European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and World Trade Organisation (WTO). Governments have introduced new practices and mechanisms to co-ordinate preparations for joining these organisations. Slovenia, for example, has adopted a new organisational framework to implement its pre-accession strategy for integration into the EU. A senior official of the Slovene Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes this framework below.

serves a dual role. First, it preserves its previous role as a body overseeing general relations between Slovenia and the EU. Second, it operates as a secretariat for the pre-accession strategy and co-ordinates inter-ministerial work connected with bilateral relations.



Dr Benjamin Lukman

The new administrative structure for the implementation and co-ordination of the pre-accession strategy is organised on three levels. At the ministerial level, the Minister of Foreign Affairs chairs a Committee of his peers ("Ministerial Co-ordination for Relations with the European Union"). However, most issues are discussed within the so-called "Inter-ministerial Committee," which meets at the level of state secretaries and reports to the Ministerial Co-ordination Committee. State secretaries address more specific issues on a more technical level within various sub-committees of the Inter-ministerial Committee.

This structure has corresponded to the needs of the first stage of the pre-accession strategy leading up to the signature of the Association Agreement. New challenges are appearing, however, including the need to

complete the sizeable questionnaire distributed by the European Commission to EU applicants. The organisational and administrative structure now must be harmonised with different tasks and requirements which are likely to arise during this stage of preparatory work. The Office of European Affairs has established a technical task force to prepare the government-wide response to the questionnaire, manage translation matters, harmonise terminology, and build more efficient links with the Commission's technical assistance office (TAIEX).

Link to Major Reforms

The alignment of Slovene legislation with Community law is one of the key preconditions for EU accession. In carrying out this extremely complex and difficult task, a good management structure must accompany legal work. This requires improvements in terms of co-ordination, definition of responsibilities, and financial and human resources.

Of course, the approximation of laws is closely linked to economic and social reforms. Such reforms are needed in order to enable the Slovene economy to adjust successfully to the full adoption of the *acquis communautaire*. This will contribute to Slovenia's competitiveness within the Internal Market.

At the same time, economic and social reforms must achieve structural reforms and full macro-economic stabilisation. While much has been done in this realm, the clear defining of priorities and the establishment of a time frame for implementing economic reforms remain on the agenda. ♦

Dr Benjamin Lukman is the Director of the Office of European Affairs at the Slovene Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He may be reached in Ljubljana at tel: (386.61) 178.23.13.

The signature of Slovenia's Association Agreement with the EU on 10 June has created a stimulus for the government to speed preparations in the framework of the pre-accession strategy. Consequently, Slovenia has examined some of the core elements linked to the preparation for EU accession:

- approximation of legislation in the context of the White Paper for integration into the Internal Market,
- domestic economic and social reforms, and
- public administration reform and training.

New Co-ordination Office

The government requires a solid management infrastructure to manage the work in these interrelated fields. To this end, it introduced a new organisational framework in October 1995 designating the Office for European Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to co-ordinate activities among line ministries, and to act as a counterpart to the European Commission in the implementation of the pre-accession strategy. In fact, the office

The Vital Link Between Budgeting and Policy-making

by François Lacasse

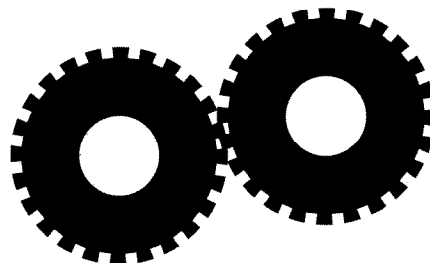
Ensuring harmonisation and complementarity between budgeting and policy-making constitutes one of government's greatest policy challenges. This summer SIGMA published a study, entitled Budgeting and Policy-making, which reviews the international evolution of budget theory and budgetary practice over the past three decades. In showing how the budget offices and centre of government must share responsibility in their support of government decision-making, the publication highlights a complex area of public management that warrants the attention of both political leaders and civil servants engaged in administrative reform.

Budget comprehensiveness -- the requirement that the budget reflect the impact of political decisions on the economy as much and as precisely as possible -- is now a universally accepted norm. Its implementation raises issues of budget office/centre co-ordination, as in the cases of special funds established for priority policy purposes, the control of public enterprises or the treatment of loans and guaranties. Similarly, the requirement that budgets fully incorporate resource commitments beyond a one-year cycle is the subject of very broad consensus. However, it constrains the flexibility of policy-making and requires systems capable of generating forecasts in a timely fashion and a structuring of relations between the budget office, the centre and the line ministries, ensuring that such information is fully integrated into the decision-making process.

The current status of budget office-centre of government relations shows the need to maintain the centre and the budget office as very distinct institutions, with different outlooks and behaviour, diverse key capabilities and personnel. All governments must handle divergent, even contradictory,

demands. Government must be flexible and responsive to changed political circumstances, but must also provide predictability, stability, rigidity and rules that are clearly specified and enforced. Meeting these demands -- no less real for being contradictory -- would probably be impossible within the framework of a single institution or perspective.

The forging of an effective equilibrium constitutes the core challenge in the relations between the budget office and the centre. It is not easy to achieve. Tensions between the two institutions can become quite dysfunctional, thereby harming the quality of both budgeting and policy-making and blocking the attainment of government priority objectives, such as reaching a budgetary equilibrium, effecting key reforms, accelerating entry into the European Union, etc. Whether tensions between the budget office and the centre are creative or dysfunctional depends to a large extent on the quality and on the characteristics of the systems put in place to ensure effective joint action, quality budgeting and well-informed policy-making, which calls for harmonisation, complementarity and the capability of handling co-responsibility tasks.



Harmonisation refers to how the budget office and the centre ensure coherence in their respective actions. Complementarity considerations have to do with the division of labour between the two institutions,

especially in areas where the initiatives of one can severely limit the leeway of the other -- eg policies introduced without proper quantification of their recurrent downstream costs. The capability for action in areas of co-responsibility is especially important. Indeed, some of the most vexing policy-budgetary problems encountered in OECD countries can be traced to gaps in this area. This is especially evident in the problems of identifying and managing cross-impacts of policies -- notably in the social field -- and of taking timely action to adjust, before the onset of a crisis, to long-run trends that are capable of perverting the intent of government policies.

Such trends may include changes in the labour market caused by new demographic trends; the effects of social or regional policies; or crises in the financial system. In most cases of co-responsibility tasks, the key challenge is not to divide the turf but to ensure that the tasks are carried out by some accountable institution with a government-wide perspective.

The systems and institutions developed to manage the three aspects of budget/policy-making relations vary from country to country. Differences are even greater when it comes to initiating reviews and policy changes. Sweden's Expert Group on Public Finance, for instance, has little in common with the UK's Efficiency Unit and yet both are effective. *Budgeting and Policy-making* distinguishes the general imperatives for a functional budget/policy-making equilibrium and the various ways in which it can be achieved according to national preferences and traditions. ♦

François Lacasse, Professor of Economy and Public Management at the University of Québec in Hull, Canada, is a former official of the Canadian Treasury Board Secretariat and of the Privy Council Office (Prime Minister). He may be reached by e-mail at 100625.1072@compuserve.com.

Promoting Better Public Management in the Alps

In Ljubljana, Swiss and Slovene experts have teamed up in an effort to modernise Slovenia's public administration system.

In December 1994, the governments of Slovenia and Switzerland signed an agreement launching the bilateral MASTER Project (Managing Administrative Systems through Training, Education and Research). It aims to reform and improve the effectiveness of Slovenia's public administration, specifically in the areas of central administration, public services, and the training and development of civil servants. The Geneva-based Centre for Socio-Economic Development (CSEND) operates the project under the auspices of the Swiss Federal Office for the Co-operation with Eastern Europe, located in Bern.

To implement the MASTER Project, an 18-month Training of Trainers (TOT) programme has been set up for civil servants currently employed in the Slovene public administration. In order to qualify for the programme, they must have university degrees and permission from their immediate supervisor to join the course. They must also be proficient in English and between the ages of 27 and 35. Forty Slovene civil servants were selected to take part in the programme, which started in August 1995 and is scheduled to be completed in December 1996.

How it Works

During the four-month Basic Programme Phase, the forty participants attended 11 training seminars in Ljubljana to acquire basic management and administrative knowledge and skills. The sessions were conducted by Swiss and international experts, who in turn were assisted by Slovene experts, and covered such areas as comparative administrative systems, human

resource management, policy evaluation, Slovene law, financial management in the public sector, personal effectiveness and computer training. Afterwards, during the Intermediate Programme Phase, all the trainees went to Switzerland for two months to study organisation and management as well as training and development systems of Swiss public and private institutions.

Upon their return from Switzerland, the trainees entered the year-long Specific Programme Phase where they were divided into two separate learning teams -- Organisation and Management and Training and Management Development -- with each team following its own learning track. The Organisation and Management (Track 1) seminars, which lasted one week, dealt with such topics as advanced financial analysis and audit, project management methods and techniques, strategy and decision-making in the public sector, consulting techniques, and how this applies to Slovene administrative systems.

The two-week-long Track 2 seminars (Training and Development) focused on policy studies and training needs assessment; adult learning and action learning methods; management theories and leadership; training management; organisational behaviour; and public finances and accountancy.

Each topic is taught in English by Swiss or international experts who are specialists in the respective content areas. They lecture in the morning and also coach national associate experts, who in turn conduct complementary tutorial sessions in small groups in the afternoon. During these tutorial sessions, trainees have an opportunity to review the lectures, do case work and participate in group discussions.



Two New Units

The MASTER Project aims to create two central government units: an Organisation and Management Unit and a Training and Management Development Unit, both with appropriate legal status, funding, rules and regulations, premises and staff. In the area of training and management, the project is expected to produce 20 trained and certified experts, a developed work method and six completed studies, including recommendations. There will be 20 trained and certified experts in training and development as well, and 10 management training modules will have been set-up. A preliminary generic training plan will also have been developed for that unit's first three years of operation.

But that is not all. Analyses of the overall training needs of the ministries of Slovenia's central government will have been done. Also, eight comparative study reports, both in English and Slovenian, on the policy, structure, and practices of Swiss and Slovene organisations -- covering all levels of government but focusing on chancelleries -- will also have been finished. ♦

For more information, please contact Ms Mojca Tos, Secretary-General of the MASTER Project, Beethovenova 3, 61000 Ljubljana, Slovenia; tel: (38.61) 126.12; fax: (38.61) 125.14.86.

Polish Ombudsman Works for a Democratic Society

by Dr Piotr Przybysz

The role of the ombudsman varies from country to country, but typically he or she defends citizen rights by investigating and reporting on claims of maladministration by the state. Poland's ombudsman institution is the oldest in Central and Eastern Europe.

Under the Act of 15 July 1987 on the Ombudsman, the *Sejm* (Parliament) appoints an individual to this position for a four-year term. The office-holder cannot be removed before the end of this term except under certain conditions, such as breach of the Ombudsman's oath.

The Scandinavian type of ombudsman served as the model for the Polish equivalent, although the Polish official's terms of reference are wider, encompassing not only control of the public administration, but the judiciary as well. The Polish Ombudsman, however, may not interfere with legislative powers.

Independence and Neutrality

"Political neutrality" characterises the Ombudsman's work. This means that he or she does not act for political reasons. Although some of his or her actions are of political importance and have a political impact, this is but a side effect. "Justice" and "rules of social coexistence" are other directives set forth in the Act of 1987.

Budgetary autonomy guarantees the independence of the Ombudsman. The position is financed from the state budget enacted by *Sejm* based on the Ombudsman's projected needs.

The Ombudsman does not become involved in policy-making, but he or she controls the activity of public authorities. Furthermore, he or she co-operates with

other authorised institutions, eg by bringing a suit to the administrative court or by pressuring the national Audit Chamber to supervise the government. The Ombudsman's role of intervening in individual cases is combined with roles of leading changes to the state system, defending fundamental values, and supporting citizens in need.

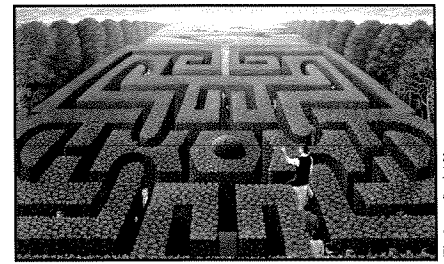
Empowered to Act

The Ombudsman may undertake actions of general importance. This includes, in the case of commonly repeated errors, misunderstandings of principles of law and mechanisms of its implementation. In some instances, infringement on civil rights is an effect of wrong regulation, not the wrong application of law. In such situations, changing a general provision may aid the individual.

The Ombudsman acts in favour of a group of citizens not identified by name. He or she does not always take up a particular case, and occasionally initiates an investigation. The Ombudsman is vested with the necessary powers to carry out assigned duties. Such powers include the opportunity to present opinions and conclusions concerning civil rights and liberties to the relevant agencies, organisations and institutions, or to approach the Constitutional Tribunal for interpretation of statutes.

This official also plays a role in deciding many policy questions of a fundamental nature and thus discussion arises on his or her role in policy-making. Therefore, one may say that the Ombudsman contributes -- both in a political and a moral sense -- to development of a democratic society.

The Ombudsman is entitled to demand the annulment of a questioned action by the



The Image Bank / Her

authority involved under rules and procedures set forth in relevant statutes. For example, he or she is entitled to request the Constitutional Court to rule an act of Parliament unconstitutional. The Ombudsman often appeals to the media for assistance.

Ombudsmen and Their Workload

The first Polish Ombudsman, Ewa Letowska, was appointed by Parliament in December 1987, and took office the following month. She was replaced by Tadeusz Zielinski in February 1992. The current Ombudsman, Adam Zielinski, assumed the post in April 1996. The office of the Ombudsman consists of 11 departments and employs 191 persons. One department answers letters concerning "non-Ombudsman" cases, and another serves an administrative function.

The nine departments which manage cases, with their share of total cases in parentheses, are as follows:

- Social Insurance, Labour (25.3%)
- Judiciary (17.7%)
- Housing, Municipal Services (14.8%)
- Taxes, Consumers' Rights (12.5%)
- Detained Persons (7.8%)
- Real Estate (7.4%)
- Constitutional Rights, Freedoms, Health Care, Education (6.4%)
- Army, Police, Firemen (5.4%)
- Local Government, Environment (1.8%)

Miscellaneous cases account for just under one per cent of the Ombudsman's workload. ♦

Dr Piotr Przybysz works in the office of the Polish Ombudsman in Warsaw. He may be reached at fax: (48.22) 276.453.

Sweden's Three Strategies to Improve Service

by Lennart Gustafsson

Since the 1980s, Sweden has tried many things to provide better service to the public. The Nordic country's experience provides a practical example to other European governments seeking to improve public service delivery. Even with today's tighter budget, there are ways to make life easier for the citizen.

Sweden has considerable experience reforming its public administration. Often, the goals have been to improve service to the public. One general lesson has been that any attempt to improve services must be coupled with profound changes in the administration's structure and systems for monitoring performance. Actions that are limited to the immediate interface between public administration and the client seldom produce long-term results.

The direct-service campaigns of the 1980s were aimed at increasing accessibility and shortening waiting times. One classic experiment involved 30 governmental agencies and produced a 50 per cent reduction in waiting times for the public by decreasing the number of stations needed to process a matter, delegating authority, immediately separating matters into "simple" or "complex," and facilitating employee access to information with improved data services.

Strategies for Change

A new public management law was introduced in 1986, stating the authorities' duty to provide service -- information, advice and other help -- to Swedish residents. In order for the law to succeed, 50 000 government employees underwent extensive training.

The goal of better service is still part of the public management policy, but in the 1990s this must occur in conjunction with the

more important goal of reducing government expenditures. Today, improving the administration's service requires broad-based change in public management. There are three strategies to achieve this:

Delegating: the Swedish public administration model is built on a division between the ministries which create policy and allocate funds and the executive agencies with broad authority which decide on the forms of production. More recently, there has been a considerable amount of delegating within the system to lower levels -- from the department level to public authorities and within the authorities to more local authorities. This is especially true of day-to-day operations, directly affecting the public, but also the case in distributing financial resources within the established budgetary limits, making decisions on organisation and staffing, and developing separate pay structures and pay policies.

Performance Management: new performance monitoring systems place the emphasis on results. The public authorities' yearly reports to the government must include accounting of the quality and amount of service provided. Every authority must develop its own methods for monitoring quality development.

Competition: there is increasing competition within government operations, including de-monopolisation of telecommunications and the post, the right of parents to choose their children's school, and the right of those in need of medical care to choose a hospital or healthcare centre. In many cases, the public agency has arranged through tender for the service to be provided by an entrepreneur.

Current Priorities

Implementing these strategies creates new possibilities for the authorities to improve



Lennart Gustafsson

service to the public. Two efforts are currently considered priorities -- the use of Information Technology (IT) to simplify the flow of information between authorities and the public, and streamlining the organisational structure.

Changes introduced through IT can take different forms. For example, many agencies have noted that computerised information collected at one place can be used by another institution. The client thus avoids having to furnish the same information to several organisations. The Government has directed that all public authorities be accessible by e-mail before the end of 1997. Modern switchboards make it possible to leave messages in individual officials' "voice mail box" when they are unable to answer. Several authorities offer information on Internet Web pages.

Another way to facilitate contact with clients is to do away with the organisational boundaries between different authorities. Recently, the Government combined four agencies under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs responsible for international development work, and the contacts with partner countries became much easier. The development of so-called "one-stop shops" also plays an important role. By locating different governmental institutions under one roof, and letting the same person handle matters which technically belong to other agencies, several matters can be processed simultaneously. ♦

Lennart Gustafsson directs the National Fund for Administrative Development in Sweden. He may be reached by fax: (46.8) 240.258 or e-mail: statens.fornylsefond@renewal.se. See also articles on pages 1, 8, and 10.

Transforming the Public Administration to Put the Client First

In 1987 the OECD released a report addressing treatment of the citizenry by the public administration (Administration as Service: The Public as Client). The report highlighted a number of changes that OECD Member governments had begun to introduce in the preceding years to better serve the population. As countries in transition start to take a closer look at the performance of their administrations, and as citizens in Central and Eastern Europe begin to demand more from state institutions -- the report's subject matter takes on new relevance. With that in mind, PMF is reprinting an edited version of an article on the report which appeared in the October-November 1987 issue of the OECD Observer.

Up until World War I, government was concerned with enforcing law and order, ensuring national defence and providing a certain number of limited social programmes. Today, it is involved in fixing wages and financing and restructuring industry. In short, both individuals and firms are becoming increasingly dependent on the administration: from unemployment to export licenses.

As clients experience the larger presence of government in their lives, they bridle more and more at its deficiencies (exchange regulations, building permits, taxation, etc.). With the assistance of unemployment benefits, clients sometimes hold the government responsible for their situation. For a firm making an investment that depends on regional development aid, questions like the access to information, the complexity of administrative regulations, and the efficiency with which the administration handles its files are matters of economic life or death.

As noted in the OECD report, most of the

Organisation's Member countries have in recent years introduced programmes of administrative reforms to improve economic efficiency and to recognise the "primacy of the customer," as stated in an Irish Government white paper on the public service. Until now, the public administration, in whatever country, has neither attempted to meet the specific requirements of individuals nor to treat them as responsible and demanding clients.

The Anonymous Administration

The administration has seen itself as serving the general interest, often treating clients as irresponsible children whom it commands and protects. Its laws and regulations are supposed to serve the interests of all, but are drawn up by the few, often without the direct participation of those for whom they are intended. Public servants are rarely trained to communicate with the public and are responsible, not to their clients, but to their superiors, who determine promotions, assignments and sanctions.

Counter staff, who constitute the real interface between the administration and

clients, are chosen not for their ability to communicate, and indeed, as the report notes, work in a position that is "undervalued, usually underpaid, and not looked to for input for managerial or policy decisions." This status may explain the lack of openness of interface staff.

The very ambiguity of the administrative function as a source of both services and constraints does not help bring about reforms to ensure the primacy of the client. The government's interests are sometimes contrary to those of the individual citizen. For example, an administration eager to inform taxpayers of their rights, through a campaign to encourage better use of tax relief and greater responsiveness on the part of the staff, might experience a fall in tax yield.

What then can be done? The OECD's view is that in a period of budgetary restraint it is difficult to foresee a wide-ranging reform and pointless to take only superficial measures. The problem is in fact as much bound up with organisational weaknesses as with an administrative culture based on the power of the state over the citizen. The



International Labour Office/Mailand

report describes the need to act pragmatically and to change key "factors" radically so that "the effects are deep and have widespread repercussions."

The client of government services desires a "responsive" administration, one which is understandable, easily approached, open to dialogue, etc. The first priority in seeking to satisfy such expectations should be given to personnel and administration organisation. Thus, for staff in contact with the public, improved status, better training and greater discretion are three key points. In many countries -- including Austria, Denmark and Finland -- the administration has organised courses to encourage public servants to be clearer when they communicate with clients.

Other options include reforming the organisation of the hierarchy to eliminate layers of supervision, and to improve accessibility to offices. For instance, the Dutch tax authority operates a fleet of "tax buses" to carry public servants around the country to help clients with tax problems, while France launched a "single window" campaign to reduce the division of tasks and the number of offices working on the same file.

The report stresses that, whatever the measures taken, it is essential that they be backed up by political will. To that end, certain countries have set up advisory structures at the highest levels of government. These efforts emphasise the importance of the problem, and that no government's economic, political or social reform can be successful without a government administration that is responsive to the needs of enterprises, the labour force and the citizens. ♦

To obtain a copy of Administration as Service: The Public as Client (OECD, 1987), contact Halima Benlatreche, SIGMA Library, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France, tel: (33.1) 45.24.13.94; fax (33.1) 45.24.13.00; e-mail: sigma.info@oecd.org. See related articles on pages 1, 7, and 10.

PUBLIC SERVICE PRINCIPLES

In the past decade a number of European and other governments have issued principles or standards of public service to clients. One of the best known of these documents is the "UK Citizen's Charter." The charter's "Principles of Public Service" are as follows:

Standard

Setting, monitoring and publication of explicit standards for the services that individual users can reasonably expect. Publication of actual performance against these standards for the services that individual users can reasonably expect.

Information and Openness

Full, accurate information readily available in plain language about how public services are run, what they cost, how well they perform and who is in charge.

Courtesy and Helpfulness

Courteous and helpful service from public servants who will normally wear name badges. Services available equally to all

who are entitled to them and run to suit their convenience.

Choice and Consultation

The public sector should provide choice wherever practicable. There should be regular and systematic consultation with those who use services. Users' views about services, and their priorities for improving them, to be taken into account in final decisions on standards.

Putting Things Right

If things go wrong, an apology, a full explanation and a swift and effective remedy. Well-publicised and easy to use complaints procedures with independent review wherever possible.

Value for Money

Efficient and economical delivery of public services within the resources the nation can afford. Independent validation of performance against standards.

"Quote, Unquote"

"In those areas where government is expected to be a servant to its citizens, it should look critically at all of its activities and ask itself whether all are necessary, whether they overlap, how they can be better structured so as to give high quality service at reasonable cost. For this purpose, the role of all government agencies must be reviewed, their existence justified in the most practical terms, and their role should be defined clearly so as to be able to gauge their performance." ♦

Conclusion of a review of Iceland's public sector published in Modernization of the Icelandic Public Sector, Ministry of Finance, Reykjavik, March 1996.

"...at the instant when free men and women are insulted for asking more of their public services, democracy is stood on its head. And to accept the insult and feel guilty is to step further down a political staircase which leads only to one place: a cellar full of second-class citizens." ♦

Neal Ascherson in The Independent (UK), 3 March 1996.

New Czech Guide to the Public Administration...

by Alena Zivnustkova

Guidebooks and simplified administrative procedures are making life easier for citizens and civil servants in the Czech Republic.

When the Czech government in autumn 1995 ordered the state administration to prepare "guidebooks" for ministries, local and regional city halls, and other state-run institutions, many people were sceptical. The deadline, set for April 1996, seemed too early and for many Czechs the idea of receiving any sort of assistance from state bureaucrats was unheard of.

State officials, however, proved the sceptics wrong. Not only were the red-tape-cutting guidebooks available in time, but unified office hours and simplified administrative procedures came into effect as announced.

Where to Find What

Ladislav Kuzvart, an official with the Czech Interior Ministry in charge of regional administration, was proud to show some of the guidebooks the regional offices had produced. Kuzvart was responsible for ensuring that every regional office knew what to do and that they had received timely instructions from the ministry.

Interviewed recently in his office near Prague's historic Obecni dum municipal house, he was half-humble, half-proud as he flipped through the guidebooks -- or "bulletins" as he calls them -- showing the information contained in the voluminous publications.

"Now, when a citizen wants to build, let's say, a family house, he goes to his local city hall where a clerk tells him, using this bulletin, where to go, what to bring with him, the address and phone number of the office, and many other details the citizen



Jindriska Rolincova in the Prague 1 District Office

previously had to find out himself," Kuzvart said. "And the citizen can also receive the necessary forms from the clerk."

The bulletins have detailed information on which office and which person is responsible for what, which permission and licenses get issued where, and what the office hours, phone numbers and addresses are of all state-run institutions in the region.

Kuzvart also pointed out that the publications include excerpts from important laws and regulations citizens most frequently come in touch with, such as laws concerning construction, the family, social benefits, taxes and the environment. The bulletin then lists where the full text of these laws can be found.

Jindriska Rolincova oversees information services at the Prague 1 District Office. She said that her office has had this type of service since 1993, but that the new guidebook represents the first clear and

well-organised guide her office has been able to work with.

"It's more than just an internal phone book," she said. She added that since this is the administrative bureau for the central part of Prague, more than 1 000 people pass through her office every day.

Kuzvart also mentioned that another part of the government's order from October 1995 was to unify office hours for all city halls, construction and social care offices, medical centres, police stations and others, and to make them Monday and Wednesday, 8 a.m. through 5 p.m.

"When a citizen living in a small village comes to the regional capital, he can take care of his social benefits, construction permit and new driver's license because he is not going to run into a closed door," Kuzvart was pleased to say.

He noted, though, that because of the state

... a Step in the Right Direction

administration's system, only the regional state administration offices could be ordered to keep certain office hours. Local city halls, serving small towns and villages, could not be required to keep these hours -- only a recommendation could be made. The reason he gave was that the size difference among these towns and villages is great and, in many cases, the mayor of a small village "has his business set up in the kitchen."

"We left it up to the local people. If they are used to coming to their mayor at certain hours, they can do it that way. We cannot order the mayor to do anything because sometimes he is not even being paid, he is not a state employee," Kuzvart explained.

A typical region where most of the villages have between 100 and 200 inhabitants -- and where the mayor comes to his office after his day job -- is the Benesov region, near Prague. Zdenek Susta, secretary to the head of the Benesov regional state administration office, said 70 to 80 of their 114 mayors operate that way. "But we have good co-operation with them and they try to be available to people at least in the evening."

Susta also noted that, thanks to their own computer equipment and hard work, it cost them only 25 000 Kc (about US\$950) to put out the bulletin. This is not the end of their work, however. Every three months they will have to update the information in the booklet and include new laws. "The goal was to make it easier for the people," he added.

Kuzvart pointed out that the purpose of the guidebooks is not only to make information more easily available, but also to simplify the process of dealing with the administration. Forms are now circulating instead of people.

"A citizen will no longer be running from one door to another within the same institution to get a number of stamps and approvals only to return to where he started."

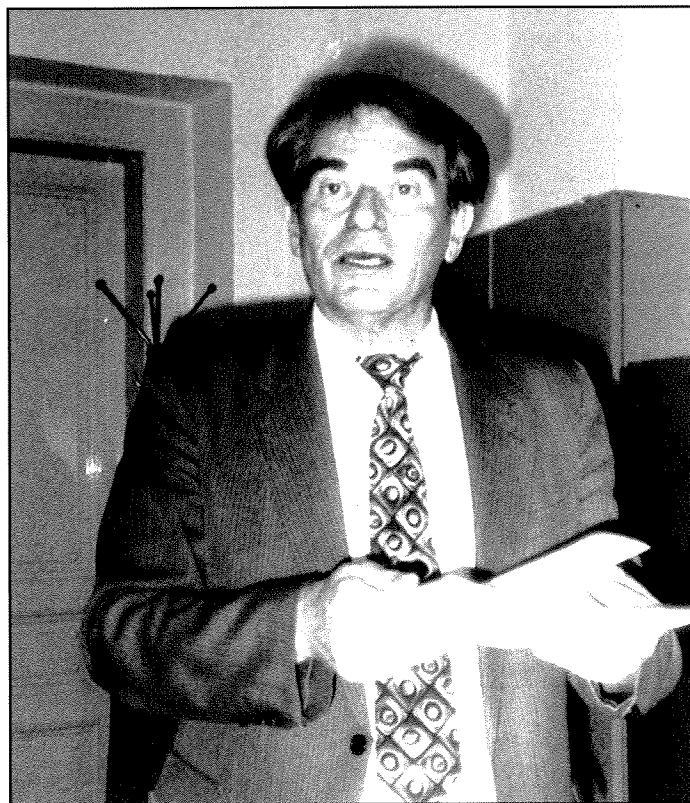
Ladislav Kuzvart

"The rule is to concentrate decision-making, which means that the official who gives the permission at the end also has to have the necessary stamps."

Eva Mikulkova is the secretary to the regional office's director in the north Moravian town of Karvina. She said it took "a lot of effort and time to put the bulletin together" for her region. For the 15 offices

Mikulkova's colleagues serve, they had to make over 200 copies. "We did everything ourselves, most of it on the weekends and after working hours." So far they have not had much response from their citizens but "it has definitely been a success with the local offices." "Because," she said, "not only citizens get confused about where to go, but the administration itself also sometimes doesn't know who is exactly in charge of what." ♦

Alena Zimustkova is a reporter with the Prague Business Journal. See related articles on pages 1, 7, and 8.



Ladislav Kuzvart of the Czech Ministry of the Interior

Alena Zimustkova Photo

Public Administration in the News

Bulgaria

New Interior Minister

Interior Minister Lyubomir Nacjev resigned in early May and was replaced by Nikolai Dobrev, chairman of the parliamentary commission dealing with national security affairs. Source: *Daily Chronicle*.

Regulating State Property

Parliament approved the Law on State Property on 8 May. The measure, enacted 1 June, regulates the disposal and management of different types of state property. In addition, it creates a special office of state property within the regional governors' offices. Source: EELM.

Energy Ministry Created

On 10 June, the Parliament voted to transform the Committee of Energy into the Ministry of Energy and Energy Resources. Source: World Bank, Sofia.

Czech Republic

Conflict of Interest Amendment

An amendment to the Act on the Protection of Public Interest has entered into effect regulating the performance of public duties by members of the government, parliament and heads of central governmental offices who are not members of the government. The amendment defines "conflict of interest" as any behaviour of public officials that may endanger their credibility through abuse of their position for their own benefit or for the benefit of any individual or legal entity. Source: Clifford Chance (newsletter).

Estonia

EU Strategy Document

On 6 June the Government approved the strategy paper for the country's integration into the European Union. Virtually all ministries participated in the development of the strategy, which sets timetables and schedules for harmonisation of national laws and regulations with those of the EU. Source: *Estonian Review*.

Auditor to EUROSAI Board

The head of the State Audit Office, Hindrek Meri, has been elected as a board member of EUROSAI, the organisation of European auditors. He will represent Central and Eastern Europe on the board. Source: *Estonian Review*.

Commission to Combat Tax Evasion

Minister of Finance Mart Opmann has formed an inter-departmental commission to combat evasion of the goods and services tax. The commission includes officials of the Ministries of Finance and Economic Affairs. Source: *Estonian Review*.

Hungary

Auditor Steps Down

The President of the State Audit Office, István Hagelmayer, has announced his resignation. He had been elected by the Parliament in 1989 to a 12-year term. Source: *OMRI*.

Latvia

Conflicts of Interest Curtailed

Parliament passed an anti-corruption bill on 24 April. The measure bars state officials from occupying posts outside of the Cabinet or parliamentary offices to which they have been appointed or elected. The officials, however, are permitted to work in educational institutions or as artists. Source: *The Baltic Times*.

Poland

Sejm Approves Government Reform

Under a government reform plan approved by the *Sejm*, several ministries will close down and others will be created as of October 1996 and January 1997. The Central Office of Planning (CUP) and the Council of Ministers' Office (URM) also will cease to exist. The plan also distinguishes between political and professional state administration posts and strengthens provincial governors' powers. Source: *The Warsaw Voice*.

Regional Offices of Privatisation

As part of the decentralisation of the privatisation process, the Ministry of Ownership Transformation has opened five regional offices to manage leasing of state-owned enterprises. The offices are situated in Bialystok, Lublin, Rzeszow, Gdansk, and Poznan. Source: Clifford Chance (newsletter).

Slovenia

Slovenia Draws Closer to Brussels

On 10 June, Slovenia became the tenth country in transition to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union. After the signing, Premier

Janez Drnovsek submitted Slovenia's application to join the EU.

Multi-country

Two New Phare Partners

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have become eligible for support from the European Union Phare Programme. Source: *Enviro-news MCP* (Phare).

Heads of State Gather

The presidents of Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Ukraine met in Lancut, Poland on 7-8 June to discuss European integration. The meeting was the fourth of its kind, and participants scheduled a fifth one for Slovenia in mid-1997. Source: *OMRI*.

OECD on Public Sector Changes

Ministers from the 27 OECD Member countries held their annual meeting in Paris 21-22 May. At the end of their deliberations they issued a communiqué with a number of policy recommendations, including some connected with the public sector:

"Ministers resolve to...

(paragraph 6): reduce deficits, by limiting public expenditure where appropriate, restore sound public finances and improve public sector management in order to improve growth prospects and help prepare for social and economic changes in the future.

(paragraph 10): pursue regulatory reform, particularly by improving the quality of regulation and easing the transition to ever more competitive markets, thereby facilitating in a non-discriminatory way enhanced trade and investment opportunities."

Let Your Voice be Heard!

The next issue of *Public Management Forum* will carry our first reader survey. Please plan to take five minutes to complete the short form so that we can learn more about what you would like to see on these pages.

-The Editor

A Matter of Quality

OECD/PUMA: Responsive Government: Service Quality Initiatives

In many different countries users of government services are increasingly seen as clients. This trend is changing how the public sector is managed as well as the way in which services are delivered. Responsiveness is now considered a key factor in determining the value of public services to users. These changes, generally referred to as "service quality initiatives," are forcing public sector organisations to become more outward-looking and, in some cases, to justify their continuing role and existence. They also are changing the relationship between citizens, public servants and elected officials.

This recent publication of the OECD Public Management Service (PUMA) contains twenty-two papers presented at a PUMA symposium held in Paris in November 1994. The authors consider the nature and content of service quality and offer comparisons between approaches of different OECD countries and guidance on developing and implementing service quality initiatives.

They also address questions such as : How far should the rights of clients extend compared to those of the taxpayer? Are these real clients -- in the market sense -- buying a public service? Or do these clients also have certain obligations in receiving the service? Which service standards should be set and how can their effectiveness be measured? What will the role of client choice be and what should be the extent of client consultation and participation? How will redress mechanisms work and information be provided?

Service quality initiatives are often rooted in the changes that are affecting society at

large, such as resource or budget pressures ("doing more with less"), demands from the public for better services and a greater say, technological progress, new management theories -- just to name a few. Despite differences among the countries which are used as examples and differing perspectives on the relationship between the state and citizens, the approaches studied here tend to share the same basic concerns. In some instances the objective of service quality

initiatives is to reduce the size and role of the public sector, in others it is to defend it by making it more responsive, but the focus is on improving the quality of existing services rather than expanding their range. ♦

OECD/PUMA: Responsive Government: Service Quality Initiatives, 1996, 298 pages. To order: OECD Publications Service, 2 rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France, tel: (33.1) 49.10.42.83; e-mail: comptepubsing@oecd.org. Also in French.

INBOX:



A COMPENDIUM OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

Note: All publications below are available in English unless otherwise noted.

From SIGMA

- SIGMA Papers : No. 4. *Management Control in Modern Government Administration*, 1996, 178 pages.

- SIGMA Papers : No. 5. *Civil Service Legislation Checklist*, 1996, 25 pages.

To order: SIGMA Library, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris, Cedex 16, France. Tel: (33.1) 45.24.13.94; fax: (33.1) 45.24.13.00; e-mail: sigmainfo@oecd.org.

Other Publications

- BUGARIC, Bojan. "The Politics of the Rule of Law," *Javna Uprava (Slovenia)*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 1995, pp 365-392.

To order: Institute of Public Administration, Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, Kongresni trg 12, 61000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. Tel: (386.61) 125.40.46; fax: (386.61) 125.12.20.

- "Changing European States, Changing Public Administration," (special feature including short articles by six public administration experts), *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 56, No. 1, Jan/Feb 1996, pp 65-103.

- "The Court of Auditors and Financial Control and Accountability in the European Community," *European Public Law*, Vol. 1, No. 4, December 1995, pp 599-632.

- GRAD, Franc. "Relationship Among Parliament, Council of Parliament, President of the Republic and Government," *Javna Uprava (Slovenia)*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1995, pp 457-476.

- SEIDLE, F. Leslie. *Rethinking the Delivery of Public Services to Citizens*, 1995, 197 pages.

To order: Renouf Publishing, 1294 Algoma Rd., Ottawa, Ontario K1B 3W8, Canada. Tel: (1.613) 741.43.33; fax: (1.613) 741.54.39.

- *Transition Brief*. Quarterly newsletter of the OECD Centre for Co-operation with the Economies in Transition.

To order: Jane Hamilton, OECD/CCET, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris, Cedex 16, France. Tel: (33.1) 45.24.16.92; e-mail: jane.hamilton@oecd.org. Also in French. Free of charge.

Theory and Practice

For Judyta Fiedin, a SIGMA advisor in policy-making and Polish administrative reform, theories are useful tools for doing practical things.

Why in the world write about me?" came the question in her SIGMA office at the OECD in Paris, where she has been working for almost a year. There are many reasons. At age 33, Judyta Fiedin has a great deal to say about the changes that are transforming not only her country, Poland, but the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe. "One of the biggest challenges these countries face today is reforming their administrations to support their European Union ambitions," she says. "If co-ordination is weak and decision-making inefficient during negotiations and even after membership, not only the national interest will pay a price, but there will be considerable economic and social costs as well."

Through her work at SIGMA, Ms Fiedin is confronted daily with the problems faced by countries in transition to make public administration reform and support for European integration a reality. This has involved organising national workshops on the internationalisation of policy-making in Slovakia, Slovenia and Latvia, and preparing the participation of SIGMA experts in the joint Phare/OMEGA-SIGMA conference on "Reform of the centre of government in Poland in light of European standards" held in Popowo this year. She is also responsible for the Poland desk at SIGMA and is the executive secretary of the SIGMA standing panel of experts which supports the Polish State Economic Administration (SEA) reform. This means briefing the panel members on developments, preparing documents and organising visits of the panel to Warsaw to meet with government officials and experts. On 11 June the panel met with Prime Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz.



Judyta Fiedin

Before coming to Paris, Judyta Fiedin had worked in the Office of the Polish Undersecretary of State for European Integration and Foreign Assistance. But even as a student at the University of Warsaw, Ms Fiedin was already interested in international relations. Besides getting her MA in English and American Studies, she was also an active member of the Polish United Nations Student Association. After two years at the American University in Washington, DC, she is now working on her PhD at the Rand Graduate School of Policy Studies in Santa Monica, California.

She is not, however, considering a career in academia. "I accept theories. They are useful tools for me to do practical things, but there are a lot of theories that don't explain or predict reality." She wants to put theories to the test, to see how they work. She wants to see institutions in Central and Eastern Europe function well, even under the difficult conditions that coalition governments often face. She hopes for a centre of government with a good "machinery" capacity that can manage transitions from one government to another, without adversely affecting public administration.

"That's the practical side of me," she explains with a smile. "But I also like Elizabethan playwright Christopher Marlowe, Star Trek and detective stories." ♦

► *continued from p.1*

The administration was previously designed to be "inward-looking" -- concerned with internal rules and hierarchy. The reforms shift the balance to make the administration more "outward-looking," thinking about how to help citizen-clients and achieve policy goals at least cost.

Public administrations are moving from bureaucracy, stressing rules and avoiding mistakes, towards management, stressing learning, measurement, judgement, discretion. There are risks, and not yet sufficient experience to evaluate these changes. But OECD governments can afford some risk because they have mature systems of law, active citizens, and established "public service" ethics.

The starting points and goals are not the same. Take tax administration. In most OECD countries, there are high yields and the concern is cost and service quality. Most CEECs need to increase yield and reduce opportunities for abuse. Better service may help; but, at this stage of transition, "inward-looking rule-bound" administration may be what's needed. CEECs have other important goals such as legitimising government and re-assuring citizens that the administration is under political and legal control, while managing a major expansion in government's role of regulating economic activity by law.

Democratisation and European integration will force CEECs to reach for western European standards of public service. There are risks and opportunities. And questions. In this issue of *PMF* we hope to start a debate. We welcome your views. ♦

Francis Hénin, Advisor in SIGMA's Country Strategy Group; can be reached at tel: (33.1) 45.24.13.20; fax: (33.1) 45.24.13.00; e-mail: francis.henin@oecd.org.

German Programme Supports TRANSFORMation

by Dr Christian Fuchs

The transition in Eastern Europe from planned economies to market economies and from the rule of a communist one-party system to democracy and a state governed by the rule of law is a lengthy process. This transition can succeed only if central and eastern European countries are willing to change their economic and social structures, which requires the vigorous support of states that have experience in market economies and in democratic forms of government. Supporting these changes in Eastern Europe presents a challenge, in particular for the western industrialised nations.

As we near the end of this century, Germany and its western European neighbours have been given the unique opportunity to create a basis for long-term and peaceful co-operation by vigorously supporting this process of transformation. Through a variety of different measures, the German Federal Government has assisted the reform process in the former Soviet Union since 1989, in Poland and Hungary since 1990, and, in more recent years, in all other central and eastern European countries.

For the last four years, the government has tried to bring together assistance measures taken by different ministries in order to make them more effective and harmonise them with efforts of other donor countries. To this end, an advisory concept has been worked out to foster democracy and social market economies in central and eastern European countries, as well as in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The advisory concept, named "TRANSFORM," applies to the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria. Its goal is to impart German experience and achievements. These comprise:

- the successful model of a social market

economy -- with its openness and competitiveness -- and a comprehensive social security system;

- experience from the restructuring process after the currency reform in 1948 and from the unification process since 1989; and
- advantages of a state with a federal structure.

In 1996, the funds allocated for all substantial and organisational advisory measures taken by the various federal ministries for the 11 countries mentioned above amounted to approximately DM 285 million.



Within the framework of the overall TRANSFORM concept, the Federal Ministry of the Interior oversees counselling on the reorganisation of administration structures (especially the autonomous administration of parishes and boroughs) and the training of civil servants at the central, regional and local levels. It promotes projects of administrative co-operation in nine countries in transition.

The co-operation partners in these countries are above all those technical agencies in the presidential offices and governments which manage reorganisation of the public administration and training of the public service. Members and committees of the parliaments are increasingly assisted in drafting basic legal provisions. Co-operation among the central administrative colleges has intensified. These colleges not only have to requalify their lecturers in a very short time, but also thousands of public officials.

Section 0-II-5 of the Federal Ministry of the Interior co-ordinates co-operation with the competent authorities of the partner

countries. It is also responsible for the appropriate use of TRANSFORM funds and for overseeing the implementation and progress of projects which, as a rule, are carried out by training institutions.

As a first step towards international co-operation, the Ministry established contact with the organisers of relevant EU programmes (Phare and TACIS) who are responsible for administrative co-operation. A meeting was then organised in Berlin in January 1996, with more than 50 participants from central and eastern European countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as representatives from Phare, TACIS and the SIGMA programme.

The assistance measures, which are geared to meet the priorities of the partner countries, are part of the co-operation agreements. Following consultation and co-ordination with these countries, the measures promoted by the Ministry -- other than giving advice on reforming the public service and selected areas of administration -- focus essentially on advanced training seminars for senior administrative staff, covering such areas as public administration tasks and organisational, personnel and budgetary issues.

Training lecturers, drafting syllabi and curricula of administration colleges, as well as promoting training-of-trainer schemes, are also priorities. When designing the training programmes, it is important to keep in mind the need for implementing reform statutes and administrative provisions in a swift, comprehensive and purposeful manner. ♦

Dr Christian Fuchs is the head of Section 0-II-5 at the German Ministry of Interior in Bonn. He may be reached at tel: (49.228) 681.42.42; fax: (49.228) 681.36.08.

SIGMA -- Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries -- is a joint initiative of the OECD Centre for Co-operation with the Economies in Transition and the European Union Phare Programme. The initiative supports public administration reform efforts in thirteen countries in transition, and is mostly financed by Phare. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an intergovernmental organisation of 27 democracies with advanced market economies. The Centre channels the Organisation's advice and assistance over a wide range of economic issues to reforming countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Phare provides grant financing to support its partner countries in Central and Eastern Europe to the stage where they are ready to assume the obligations of membership of the European Union.

Phare and SIGMA serve the same countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Established in 1992, SIGMA works within the OECD's Public Management Service, which provides information and expert analysis on public management to policy-makers and facilitates contact and exchange of experience amongst public sector managers. SIGMA offers beneficiary countries access to a network of experienced public administrators, comparative information, and technical knowledge connected with the Public Management Service.

SIGMA aims to:

- assist beneficiary countries in their search for good governance to improve administrative efficiency and promote adherence of public sector staff to democratic values, ethics and respect of the rule of law;
- help build up indigenous capacities at the central governmental level to face the challenges of internationalisation and of European Union integration plans; and
- support initiatives of the European Union and other donors to assist beneficiary countries in public administration reform and contribute to co-ordination of donor activities.

Throughout its work, the initiative places a high priority on facilitating co-operation among governments. This practice includes providing logistical support to the formation of networks of public administration practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe, and between these practitioners and their counterparts in other democracies.

SIGMA works in five technical areas: the Reform of Public Institutions, Management of Policy-making, Expenditure Management, Management of the Public Service, and Administrative Oversight. In addition, an Information Services Unit disseminates published and on-line materials on public management topics.

ON THE AGENDA



Upcoming Programmes

20-22 September 1996, York, England, UK. Annual conference of The Politics Association; theme is "Europe." Contact: The Politics Association, Studio 16, 1-Mex Business Park, Hamilton Rd., Manchester M13 0PD, UK. Tel: (44.61) 256.39.06; fax: (44.61) 256.27.01. In English.

23-27 September 1996, Vienna, Austria. Nineteenth Congress of the International Federation of Employees in Public Services (and Federation's 30th anniversary celebration). Contact: INFEDOP, Trierstraat 33, 1040 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: (32.22) 30.38.65; fax: (32.22) 31.14.72. In English and French.

1-2 October 1996, Washington, DC, USA. Fourth conference on "Courts of Ultimate Appeal: the Constitutional and Supreme Courts of Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltics, the Caucasus and Central Asia." Contact: The Center for Democracy, 1101 15th Street, NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC, USA. Tel: (1.202) 429.91.41; fax: (1.202) 293.17.68; e-mail: cfd@netcom.com. In English, French and Russian.

1-25 October 1996, Paris, France. Course on "Public Administration and the Protection of Human Rights." Contact: International Institute of Public Administration, 2, ave. de l'Observatoire, 75272 Paris Cedex, France. Tel: (33.1) 44.41.85.00; fax: (33.1) 44.41.85.59. In French.

Please note that not all of the programmes included in this calendar are open to every public administration practitioner or the general public. Details are provided directly by the organiser, who may be contacted for further information. If your organisation is planning an event of interest to Public Management Forum readers, please send details to the Editor (address on page 2).