

SIGMA

P M F

Public Management Forum

A bimonthly newsletter for public administration practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe

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in Slovenia

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Forum Focus

Four Challenges
to Good Governance

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Phare



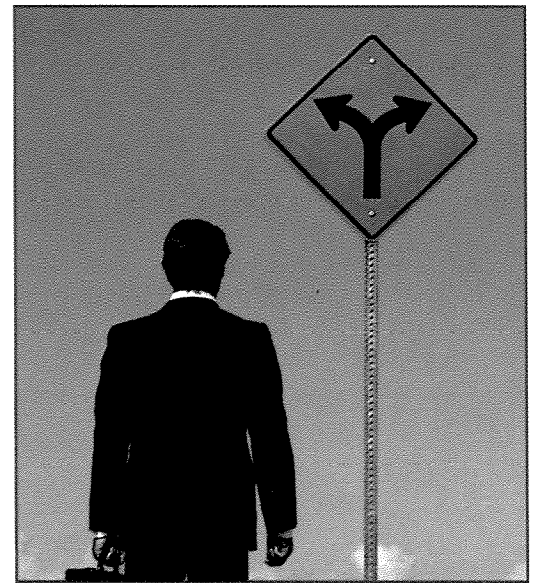
Convergence Versus Differentiation

by Bob Bonwitt

National policy priorities, combined with strong external demands, are tugging policy-makers in Central and Eastern Europe in opposite directions. On the one hand, they are experiencing the strong pull of globalisation and "the requirements of Europe," which together encourage a convergence of countries in transition. Put into motion by the end of the Cold War, this trend has been reinforced by the collapse of traditional export markets, new multilateral trading rules, changing security concerns, the EU White Paper on enlargement, and the related need to approximate legislation to the relevant parts of the *acquis communautaire*.

At the same time, however, outside pressures on central and eastern European governments to move in a common direction are accompanied by a trend toward differentiation in policies aimed at achieving such convergence. The increasing priority of public administration reform is compelling countries to reshape state institutions and procedures on the basis of varied cultural, historical, political, economic, geographic and legal considerations. While European and global developments require a "coming together," each nation's policy priorities -- including regional integration -- must be met through actions tailored to local circumstances. Naturally, these can be quite different from country to country.

Slovenia's administrative reform strategies are different from the Czech Republic's, in the same way that Bulgaria and Estonia find that their sentiments and approaches to institutional change vary significantly. Nonetheless, all four countries are converging on the goal of membership in international bodies, such as the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.



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Resolving the Dichotomy

This issue of *Public Management Forum* highlights considerations for policy-makers as they confront these conflicting forces. In the interview published on page 7, Dr Benita Plesch, new Chairman of the OECD Public Management Committee, describes convergence as a "driving force" which is "content-oriented." She contrasts this with the "country-specific" and "process-oriented" manner in which tasks are tackled and the direction in which countries are headed. Advice-giving countries and organisations should recognise the difference, she believes, and act appropriately. As Plesch puts it: "we shouldn't say *how* to countries in transition...we should only say *what*."

Complementing Plesch's insights is Tony Verheijen's article featured in "Forum Focus" (pages 8-9). Verheijen, Lecturer in Public Administration and European Integration at Ireland's University of Limerick, points out weaknesses in public sector institutions and procedures in countries in transition.

Continued on p.15 ➤

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SIGMA Begins New Phase of Work as Reform Advances

For the past four years, SIGMA has offered comparative information and advice to central and eastern European governments reforming their public administrations. This summer, EU Phare and the OECD agreed to continue support to SIGMA through December 1997. Phare remains the principal financier, and the number of partner countries grows to thirteen with the addition of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Important steps forward have been made in countries in transition with respect to the restructuring of state institutions, yet certain factors combine to slow the pace of needed reforms. First, the field is politically and culturally sensitive. Second, in a number of countries, the need for further changes -- and the benefits of those changes -- are not fully recognised or, the desire to implement reforms is hindered by insufficient knowledge of the tools available.

More progress is needed in two general areas: 1) development of a modern, professional, non-political civil service, guided by ethics and the sense of public interest; and 2) extension of the institutional capacity of government and administration to deal with policy-making, resource allocation and the implementation of control systems.

During the next phase of its work, SIGMA will support partner countries in making progress in these and other priority areas of reform, which will be reported on in future issues of *PMF*.

Bob Bonwitt - Head, SIGMA Programme

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Hungarian Task Force Supports Country's Integration Goals

In February 1996, Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn created the Strategic Task Force for European Integration to support governmental preparations for accession negotiations with the European Union, and to address strategic questions of Hungary's preparation for EU membership.



Illustration: G. Quitt

Hungary's Strategic Task Force for European Integration (STF), chaired by economist Dr András Inotai, General Director of the Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, is an independent group of experts on European integration. The group operates as a think-tank with a two-fold mission: identifying and analysing strategic issues that the Hungarian government faces on European accession, and preparing a coherent national integration strategy.

Co-operation with the Cabinet

The STF works with the Cabinet for European Integration, which is headed by the Prime Minister, and which considers papers and recommendations prepared by the STF. (The joint secretariat of the Cabinet and the Strategic Task Force is situated within the Prime Minister's Office). The Secretariat of State for European Integration, which is part of the Foreign Ministry, manages administrative co-ordination and daily work and co-operates closely with the Inter-ministerial Committee on European Integration, which consists of high-ranking civil servants from each ministry. Decisions on integration issues, however, are made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

While the STF relies heavily on documents prepared by the ministries, its strategic policy papers aim to include new policy elements, viewpoints and scenarios. Its collaborators come from the non-governmental sector -- research institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, universities, chambers of

commerce, and private companies -- and maintain their present positions. This not only allows for greater availability and use of professional expertise, a flexible working structure and reasonable financing, but also ensures a high level of political independence and commitment to the strategic interests of Hungary.

During the first quarter of 1996, the STF contributed to the preparation of Hungary's responses to the lengthy EU questionnaire. Drafting the responses was "an enormous task for the state administration," but one which helped to "define Hungarian interests more precisely," said Inotai in a recent interview published in the quarterly periodical *The Hungarian Economy*.

Specialised Working Groups

Monthly meetings provide the STF a regular opportunity to discuss papers and confer with representatives of other organisations contributing to Hungary's preparations for European Union membership. STF's nineteen working groups focus on different aspects of European integration, such as the economy, environment and institutional issues. Each working group is in contact with the respective ministries, authorities, and domestic and international organisations that deal with matters of integration.

The framework for research consists of carefully selected issues of strategic importance. Each working group adapts its

research to throw light on possible developments in the relationship between the EU and Hungary. During 1996 and 1997, STF experts will undertake several initiatives:

- prepare a comprehensive evaluation of the present and future state of relations between the EU and Hungary;
- develop a cost-benefit balance of the pre-accession period and of full membership;
- draw lessons from the schedules and negotiating strategies of those countries that have previously joined the EC/EU;
- examine the preparations being carried out in other CEFTA (Central European Free Trade Agreement) countries; and
- outline interests and concerns of EU Member States connected with eastern enlargement.

Preparing for Changes

Over the next few years, the Strategic Task Force will not only have a full work programme to complete, but also will have to help the Hungarian government adapt to new and shifting challenges. "Nobody can yet foresee how the situation of the European Union or of Hungary will evolve by the time of the entry. It is almost as futile as trying to catch a moving vehicle," said Inotai to *The Hungarian Economy*. "Not only do you have to pick up speed, but you must also guess which way the vehicle is going." ♦

For more information about Hungary's Strategic Task Force, contact Dr András Inotai at tel: (36.1) 166.44.42; fax: (36.1) 166.84.33; e-mail: h10759ino@ella.hu.

Public Procurement in Slovenia

by Peter Cernigoj

Since 1992, Slovenia has provided for open competition for government contracts. Today, the Government seeks to build on this experience while ensuring that procurement practices conform to EU and international norms. A draft law which has been reviewed in parliamentary committees is expected to be approved this autumn.

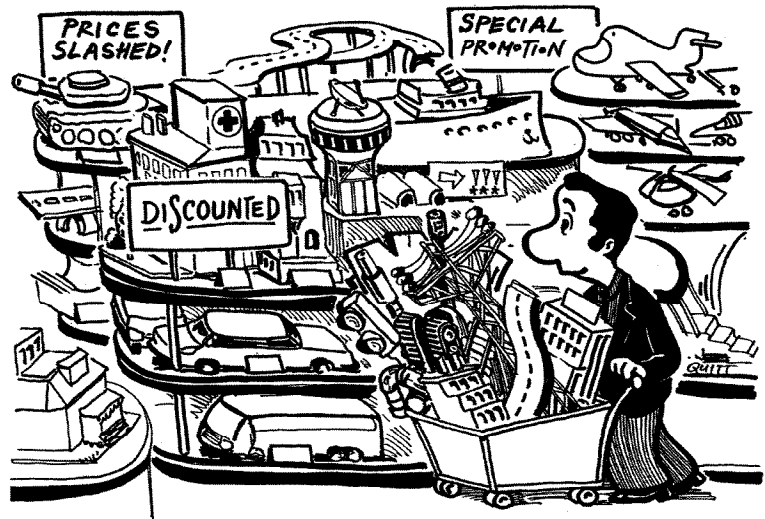
Slovenia's public procurement practices are governed by a decree issued over four years ago by the Minister of Finance. The measure applies to state budgetary expenditures at the national and local level, and tender notices for orders valued at over 5 000 ECU are published weekly in the *Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia*. The ministerial decree will continue to regulate competition for government contracts until the draft Public Procurement Law is approved as its replacement.

International Support

The Public Procurement Law was drafted in March 1994 and did not comply strictly with EU regulations or international standards. It was revised the following year to meet these demands. Foreign support, including a SIGMA development project, a meeting of CEE procurement officers in December 1995, and a Phare-financed training programme, which was awarded to the Swedish institute SIPU in April 1996, have helped Slovenia to establish more efficient procurement structures and legislation.

These activities also have raised domestic awareness of the high level of international standardisation of procurement principles, rules and practices. Key elements of EU public procurement directives and of the UNCITRAL Model Law on the Procurement of Goods, Construction and Services, have been added to the draft law.

The measure has been discussed in parliamentary committees three times since



May 1996 and is expected to be passed this autumn. Its scope will extend to the whole public sector (health, institutions, universities, utilities), providing for further methods of awarding contracts, greater flexibility for procuring officers, effective legal remedies and administrative supervision. In general, the law brings Slovenia a step closer towards meeting demands of EU directives and the Association Agreement.

Procurement in Practice

Experience has shown that a modest legislative framework is sufficient for good public procurement. Slovenia, with two million inhabitants, is a small state and cannot afford all the institutions and structures of larger countries. EU Member states, which already had necessary structures in place, only needed to transform their existing national procurement regulations to comply with EU directives.

In central and eastern European countries, however, public procurement organisations and structures did not exist. Although Slovenia did not have a centrally planned economy prior to independence, and was extensively decentralized, single-source provision of government goods was normal and in the hands of local monopolies. The task of the administration was to keep providers employed rather than to meet public needs.

The tender procedures in the first year yielded interesting results. In general there was a considerable delay in budget-financed projects,

owing to the longer lead times for preparing the project and procurement procedures. Prices fell from 30-50 per cent, even with an inexperienced public administration. In the first few years, some procuring entities could not spend all the monies they had budgeted for purchases. Contract relations between providers and procuring entities are now compulsory, and the number of new suppliers and contractors seeking orders has mushroomed.

Tools for Procurement Officers

To support and accelerate procurement organisation in Slovenia and in other countries in transition, two internationally co-ordinated and financed projects could be very helpful: drafting of generic training material for training public procurement officers; and development of a standardised computer programme and data model, with procurement software.

The training material could inform widely on European and other public procurement regulations and good practices, while the software could inexpensively transfer good public procurement practice to central and eastern European countries, compensating for their lack of experienced procurement staff and techniques. These tools could reduce training needs and shorten the transition period to an effective public procurement system. ♦

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The Next Generation of Public Servants

by *Beatrix de Koster*

In Estonia, motivated public administration students have launched a network of their peers that now spans eleven countries.

Last August in Laulasmaa, Estonia, under blue summer skies, the Association of Estonian Public Administration Students (AEPAS) welcomed seventy participants -- including public administration students from Central and Eastern Europe, and Estonian professors and senior civil servants -- to the seminar "Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe from a Comparative Perspective." "The participants brought the beautiful weather with them," mused Maili Torma, the 23 year-old vice-chairman of AEPAS. But the real reasons for her satisfaction were that the five-day seminar had yielded hoped-for results.

The objective of the meeting, which was organised by AEPAS, and sponsored by the Budapest-based Institute for Local Government and Public Service, was to create a Network of Central and Eastern European Public Administration Students (NCEEPAS). And that is exactly what transpired. At the end of the programme, students from Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine, signed the bylaws of the newly-created network and jointly declared the network's aim to:

- establish associations to unite public administration students and graduates in their own countries, and bring them into a common network;
- contribute to the democratic developments in Central and Eastern Europe and to the integration process of those countries into the European Union; and
- extend the network not only to all CEE countries but also to western European countries and create a Network of European Public Administration Students (NEPAS).



(from left to right) Marta Darulová (Slovakia), Sándor Császár (Hungary), Éva Béke (Hungary), and Jurgita Kielaite (Lithuania) join other students of public administration in Laulasmaa, Estonia, on 25 August 1996

From a Modest Beginning

It was only a year ago that the idea of starting an association for public administration students surfaced at Tartu University, one of three Estonian universities where public administration is taught (the other two are Tallinn Pedagogical University and Tallinn Technical University). The aim was to bring together students and practitioners to share information about different programmes, internships, and exchange opportunities, and to make the general public aware of public administration issues.

From the initial membership of eighty, when AEPAS was founded on 4 February 1996, the association has grown to 120, including ten practitioners and professors. Today, members meet regularly to debate questions, such as what it means to be a young official, the pro's and con's of EU membership, the survival of Estonia as a nation, and corruption. The Estonian organisation has attracted students who, for the most part, are very aware politically and follow closely what goes on in their country.

"Most of them want to play an active role in their government later on," explains Torma.

"For example, three public administration students who graduated from Tartu University last year with a Masters of Public Administration (MPA) now have jobs directly related to their studies: one works for the Ministry of Finance; another for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and a third works in a political party." Torma herself has already worked for the Ministry of Agriculture and on an EU Phare-funded project. At present she works for the Open Estonia Foundation, where she counsels high-school students on career opportunities.

Over the next few months, AEPAS will be very active. The association plans to organise two more seminars to be held later this year, this time involving local governments. It is also working to get NEPAS off the ground by, among other things, creating an Internet homepage, which will make it possible to communicate with other public administration associations all over Europe (<http://www.ibs.ee/nepas>). Other projects include the launch of a newsletter and the organisation of the AEPAS General Assembly, scheduled for February 1997. ♦

For more information on networking among European students of public administration, please contact Maili Torma in Tallinn at tel: (372.6) 31.37.91 or by e-mail: halped@pu.ee.

Protecting Citizen Rights in the European Union



Courtesy Photo

Dr Jacob Söderman, European Ombudsman

On 12 July 1995, the European Parliament elected the first Ombudsman of the European Union, Jacob Söderman. His job is to provide an effective means of redress for citizens who are denied their legal rights, or who do not receive proper administrative treatment by European institutions or bodies. After one year on the job, Söderman offered his views to PMF.

PMF: What lessons do the rising importance of the ombudsman institution, transparency and accountability in European institutions hold for countries seeking EU membership?

JS: The creation of the European Ombudsman institution was meant to underline the Union's commitment to democratic, transparent and accountable forms of administration. The institution on the European level is thus based on the same idea as it is on the national level: protection for the rights of the citizens. We work to improve the transparency and accountability of European administration for the benefit of citizens. As to the countries seeking EU membership, it is, of course, important that they accept and implement these principles. But I have to admit that within the Union, we still have work to do to reach our goals. For example, candidates for EU posts have difficulties getting information about their grades or position in the competitions.

PMF: What is being done to make the public aware of the European Ombudsman and his role?

JS: Public awareness of the existence of a European Ombudsman, his role and the kind of complaints he can deal with is essential to the fulfillment of the mission. An information campaign was started in the autumn 1995 as soon as I took up office. A brochure containing the official texts relating to the European Ombudsman was published in all official languages of the member states. Another brochure, called *How to Complain to the European Ombudsman*, containing a standard form for the complainant, was published at the beginning of 1996. These brochures have been widely distributed through the national offices of the European Parliament and the Commission, through the offices of national ombudsmen and similar bodies, and through organisations engaged in European affairs. I have personally been

engaged in conferences, interviews and the writing of articles designed to publicise my office. I also contribute a regular column to the weekly newspaper *The European*.

PMF: What role should the Ombudsman play with regard to ensuring freedom of information and transparency, as well as privacy of personal data?

JS: During the first months of office, I received a number of complaints which concerned difficulties in access to documents held by the Community institutions. It appeared that sometimes documents were disclosed with considerable delay, or that officials who had to deal with a request for documents were not adequately instructed as to how to deal with such requests. Continued on p. 14 ►

EU Ombudsman's Purview

Any citizen of an EU member state may complain to the European Ombudsman about maladministration in the activities of a Community institution or body, with the exception of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance acting in their judicial role. In addition, the Ombudsman, who is by legal statute completely independent, may conduct inquiries on his or her own initiative. However, the Ombudsman can neither make inquiries into actions taken by authorities of the Member states, nor examine the actions of international organisations.

If the Ombudsman decides that there has been an instance of maladministration, he or she informs the institution or body concerned, making draft recommendations where appropriate. The institution or body must then send the Ombudsman a detailed opinion within three months. Unless the institution or body has taken adequate steps to resolve the matter, the Ombudsman sends a report, which may include recommendations, to the European Parliament and to the institution or body concerned. He or she also informs the complainant of the outcome of inquiries, of the opinion expressed by the institution or body, and of any recommendations that he or she has made.

Like national counterparts, the European Ombudsman is not empowered to order an administrative authority to change a decision or to give redress. If a friendly settlement cannot be reached, the Ombudsman is limited to making reports and recommendations. He or she does, however, have wide powers to conduct inquiries. In particular, European Community institutions and bodies must supply the Ombudsman with any information he or she requested of them, and provide access to the files concerned. Further, EU Member states must supply the Ombudsman with any information that may help to clarify instances of maladministration by Community institutions and bodies.

Different Countries, Different Public Management Priorities



Courtesy Photo

Dr Benita Plesch,
Chair of the PUMA Committee

Dr Benita Plesch, who is leading a major development of the Dutch senior public service, has been selected by the OECD Public Management Committee to be its new Chair. In the interview below she comments on the evolution of public management internationally, and the challenge of "convergence versus differentiation" in countries in transition. In a future issue of PMF, she will address her work with the Committee and the Netherlands' public service.

PMF: Which challenges arise from the dichotomy between European convergence and country-specific restructuring of the public sector?

BP: I think convergence is a driving force. It provides the drive to do something, to get certain things done and reach specific goals. It is content-oriented. On the other hand, the way things are done and the direction in which they are going is country-specific and is more process-oriented. We shouldn't say "how" to countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe. We should only say "what". That's a very important message.

PMF: What role can international exchanges -- of experience and personnel -- play in improving public management?

BP: International exchanges are very important because they have to do with learning. It's always very useful to learn from others, and this is true for both parties. In the case of central and eastern European countries, this provides the opportunity not so much to find out what they have to do, but what they might do. International exchanges show that any one question may have several possible responses, that there is a variety of options. And this makes flexibility possible, which is vital to any reform process. It is necessary for informed decision-making, and allows countries in transition to have their own choices and find their own way. It also helps them decide which price they should pay for which reforms.

PMF: Despite different approaches and contexts, do you perceive certain common threads in the development of public management in EU and OECD countries over the last few years?

"There is a definite drive to improve public management. There is the realisation that without a good public service you can't have a good economy..."

BP: There is a definite drive to improve public management. There is the realisation that without a good public service you can't have a good economy, and that stability is an important factor for the economy. There is a drive for better value for money and serving the public better. Decentralisation is seen as desirable, but with clearer central steering. These trends, however, may not be priorities in Central and Eastern Europe. If there is a large public administration that is effective, don't change it. Efficiency and cost-cutting

alone is not enough. What is efficient may not necessarily be effective. One should first see how effective an administration is and then determine how efficient it is.

PMF: Which priorities should administrations in Central and Eastern Europe keep in mind as they integrate into European and international institutions?

BP: First of all, it is important for these countries to go through the decision-making process and determine what their own priorities are and then actually set them. There is generally a tendency not to do this.

PMF: What are the priorities?

BP: The first priority is having quality people in government. They define the quality of government itself and are vital to the government's effectiveness. For example, it is very important for them to learn other languages. It helps them become flexible and makes them more aware of how other people and institutions function. In the end, it is not so important what they are learning -- decision-making or negotiating skills -- as long as they are in a learning mode. That's what makes change possible. Of course, it helps to bring new people in but, most of all, people who are already in the administration should be trained. And it is important to be very explicit about what is expected of them.

PMF: What are the obstacles?

BP: There is always a resistance to change. But there are other risks as well. When setting up priorities for reform, target only areas that need improvement and leave the others the way they are. If a situation is working, don't change it. As the saying goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." ♦

Dr Plesch can be reached at: Development of the Senior Public Service, Ministry of Interior, Postbus 20011, 2500 EA Den Haag, the Netherlands; tel: (31.70) 302.73.38; fax: (31.70) 302.68.68.

The Relevance of “Western” Public Management Reforms for Central and Eastern Europe

by Tony Verheijen

The development of new institutional and legislative frameworks for central and local government administration in Central and Eastern Europe has proven to be much more difficult than expected. A number of structural problems remain unresolved. In view of their political, administrative and social traditions, it is questionable whether the introduction of radical public management innovations based on New Public Management (NPM) theory (in particular in the areas of organisational structures, financial management, human resource management and public service delivery) is appropriate at all for central and eastern European countries.

If, regardless of this, the introduction of such reforms is contemplated by central and eastern European governments, it is crucial that the structural problems are resolved first. This is the main conclusion reached by a group of researchers from Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Ireland, the UK, France and the Netherlands who have worked together for the last two years on a research project on comparative public management, funded by the EU (under the Phare/ACE 1994 programme).

The main question underlying the research project was whether public management innovations as applied in OECD countries could be of relevance to reformers in Central and Eastern Europe. To this end, different types of reform strategies applied in OECD countries were analysed, ranging from radical reform strategies based on NPM in New Zealand and the UK to the relatively incremental reforms in France. During field research in Central and Eastern Europe, it appeared that the introduction of reforms based on NPM principles was often presented as a panacea for the

problems of public administrations in central and eastern European countries by consultants and advisors from OECD countries. However, such advice seems to take little account of the main problems in central and eastern European administrations and of administrative and social traditions in Central and Eastern Europe.

There are several reasons why new institutional and legislative frameworks for public administration are developing so slowly. One main reason is the continued presence of attitudes which characterised public administrations under the old regime. The reluctance of politicians to address issues arising as part of the democratisation process is a second one. Indeed, politicians have shown little interest in developing the mechanisms to ensure that public offices function according to the standards expected in democratic states. Where they accept this part of the reform agenda, they are faced with weak capacities to develop and implement administrative reform policy.

Striking Similarity

It is interesting to note that regardless of the substantial differences in their reform strategies and achievements, there is a striking similarity in the main problems encountered in public administration in Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia some six years after the start of the transition to democracy. The following is a brief review of the main problems which can be observed to some degree in all three countries:

- *Fragmentation and lack of co-ordination*

The administration in former communist states has generally continued to be fragmented. This was confirmed in all

three case studies of central and eastern European countries (CEECs) conducted under the project. Furthermore, whereas the main problem under the old-regime systems was horizontal fragmentation, administrations in Central and Eastern Europe now suffer from both horizontal and vertical fragmentation. (This fragmentation is caused by the high level of turnover among top-level civil servants and the relative stability in the middle ranks. It has led to weak control over middle rank civil servants and to a breakdown of vertical communication. This problem has caused more serious difficulties in Bulgaria than in the other two countries, even though it was highlighted as an issue also in Hungary.) The lack of horizontal coordination stretches all the way down to field services of the state administration and leads to inefficiency and duplication (a problem more apparent in Bulgaria and Hungary than in Slovakia).

Furthermore the increasing fragmentation of field services has caused a negative reaction from the citizens, who were used to a one-stop-shop system under the old regime (an issue raised in Slovakia in particular). The lack of vertical co-ordination has led to delays in policy-development and implementation. The general tendency among current governments to revert to imposed top-down co-ordination without creating a culture of bottom-up co-ordination is unlikely to lead to a resolution of these problems.

- *Lack of continuity*

The high turnover among top civil servants has caused a high level of instability in public administration in CEECs. The legislative framework inherited from the old system in terms of

and Eastern European Countries



The Image Bank/Althorn Huggert

employment conditions has enabled politicians to hire and fire civil servants almost at will. Even though civil service legislation is being adopted in an increasing number of countries, there is still a general lack of stability in the central administrations of CEECs, even in Hungary, which has the oldest civil service law among the CEECs. Only a change in politicians' attitudes could bring about a significant increase in continuity.

• *Lack of policy-making capacities*

Under the old regimes, public administrations had little input into the policy-making process, since most of the policy development work was carried out in the Communist Party bureaucracy. The development of policy-making capacities should therefore have been accorded a high level of priority. However, little progress has been made in this area mostly due to the high level of turnover among top civil servants and the lack of induction and in-service training facilities.

• *Weakness of accountability systems*

Little progress has been made in the transformation of accountability systems in CEECs. Administrative accountability has been weakened by the lack of vertical integration in administrations. Parliaments are inexperienced and overburdened and are generally unable to perform their control tasks effectively. Supporting institutions such as Ombudsmen and Audit offices are at best at an early stage of development (they are most developed in Hungary, but even there only in the initial stages). The judiciary is too overburdened to deal effectively with the judicial review of administrative decisions, in particular since separate systems of administrative justice have not been developed (at least not in the countries studied under the research project). The introduction of quasi-market accountability mechanisms is an unrealistic option in the current situation. In general, citizens' possibilities to contest administrative decisions have not really improved. If accountability

systems are not strengthened significantly in the near future, this could lead to a decrease in levels of legitimacy of the new democratic systems of government.

Forthcoming Report

These are just some of the problems which will be discussed in the final report of the research project, which is to be published early in 1997. The issues highlighted here are of particular relevance to the question underlying the research project. The introduction of public management innovations based on New Public Management theory, applied in particular in English-speaking OECD countries, has led to a decrease in levels of co-ordination. The profound changes in government structures necessitated a reform of accountability systems. In addition, public management reforms based on NPM can lead to increased politicisation of the administration.

The relevance of the introduction of reforms based on NPM for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is questionable under any circumstances, mainly because the principles on which NPM is based is at odds with central and eastern European traditions. However, in view of the effect that reforms based on NPM theory are likely to have on levels of co-ordination, politicisation and accountability, the introduction of such reform strategies will certainly have a negative effect on central and eastern European administrations in their current state. ♦

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Poland Implements Ambitious Reform Plan

As reported in the last issue of Public Management Forum, the Polish Government adopted a package of laws to reform the central administration during the final weeks of 1995. SIGMA has provided support to the plan's elaboration, and continues now as implementation begins.

Poland's "State Economic Administration" (SEA) reform received the imprimatur of the *Sejm* in key parliamentary votes held on 21 June and 8 August. The reforms, which are being implemented through a package of 12 laws, aim to:

- redistribute assignments within the central administration to enhance economic policy-making;
- improve the Government's ability to formulate medium- and long-range economic strategies;
- limit line ministries' involvement in state-owned enterprises;
- decrease the size of the state sector;
- further strengthen management of Poland's integration with the European Union; and
- improve the efficiency of co-ordination and decision-making mechanisms.

Institutions Transformed

Among the most visible changes brought about by SEA reform is the creation of a number of new ministries, central institutions and bodies, including the following ministries: Ministry of Economy; Ministry of Interior Affairs and Public Administration; and Ministry of Treasury. Other new entities include the



The SIGMA Standing Panel of Experts on SEA Reform (from left to right): Luis Valente de Oliveira (Portugal); Laurence O'Toole (SIGMA Secretariat); Antonio Zabalza (Spain); Glen Shortliffe (Canada); Staffan Synnerström (SIGMA Secretariat); and Dermot Nally (Ireland). Panel members not featured include Judyta Fiedin and Jacques Fournier of the SIGMA Secretariat, and Andrew Whitehall (UK).

Office of Housing and Urban Development; National Office of Geodesy; Government Centre for Strategic Studies; Committee for European Integration; and Chancellery of the Prime Minister.

With the exception of the Ministry of Treasury and the Committee for European Integration -- both of which came into being on 1 October 1996 -- the ministries and other state organs will start their work effective 1 January 1997.

At the same time, several institutions have been -- or soon will be -- abolished: the Office of the Council of Ministers; the Ministry of Privatisation; the Ministry of Industry and Trade; the Ministry of the Interior; the Ministry of International Economic Co-operation; and the Central Office of Planning. Their functions have been assumed by the newly created state organs. For example, the Ministry of

Economy absorbs both the former Ministry of International Economic Co-operation and the former Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Prime Minister and Provinces Gain Powers

The package of laws has been accompanied by the Constitutional Law of 21 June 1996 which amends the so-called "Small Constitution." This law, together with the Law on the Organisation and Work of the Council of Ministers, increases the powers of the Prime Minister. For example, the Prime Minister will have more power to influence ministerial portfolios and to arbitrate conflicts concerning competencies of the ministries. He or she also will be acknowledged as the undisputed head of government, rather than just the "first among equals." Redefining roles and improving functioning of the Council of Ministers represents an important part of the recent

Budgetary Reform in Perspective

by Lawrence O'Toole

changes, encompassing improvement in the organisation, meeting procedures and decision-making processes.

Parallel with the SEA reform and constitutional amendments, a new Civil Service Act has been approved. Passed by the *Sejm* on 14 June, the act ensures that non-political jobs in the public administration go to career public servants. In the future, they will keep their posts regardless of the political make-up of the government of the day.

Legislation also has devolved certain powers from the central government to provincial governors. These officials will oversee special administrations, including school-supervision bodies, and become the founding authorities for more than 1 300 state-owned enterprises presently managed by ministries in Warsaw.

SIGMA's Contribution

Since March 1996, at the request of Minister Marek Pol, Secretary of State and Plenipotentiary for the SEA reform, SIGMA has provided support to the Polish Government's reform efforts. One contribution has been the creation of a nine-member Standing Panel of Experts to confer regularly with officials responsible for the reform. In addition to three members of the SIGMA Secretariat, the panel consists of experienced figures, such as former secretaries-general of government, from public administrations in six countries (see photo). ♦

For more information about the SEA reform, contact Judyta Fiedin of the SIGMA Secretariat at tel: (33.1) 45.24.13.92; fax: (33.1) 45.24.13.00; e-mail: judyta.fiedin@oecd.org.

Lawrence O'Toole (pictured in photo on left) has served as SIGMA's Senior Counsellor for Expenditure Management for three-and-a-half years. As he departs his full-time post at the SIGMA Secretariat, O'Toole observes developments in expenditure management since 1993 in central and eastern European countries.

When *Public Management Forum* asked me what I thought were the trends in expenditure management in Central and Eastern Europe, I was forced to step back from the details of individual projects on my desk and think about the larger picture – a useful exercise for myself, of course, but also hopefully of some interest to *PMF* readers. I also welcome it as an opportunity to pay tribute to the individual officials with whom I have co-operated in the finance ministries of the SIGMA countries. The progress in managing the expenditure side of national budgets has been made through their efforts; the trends I will mention are trends established through their "labours in the vineyard." Like those of budget officers everywhere, their reform and modernisation efforts are usually opposed by spending ministries and, too often, not appreciated by political masters. What they have achieved in the circumstances has my deep respect.

The laws, processes and systems which comprise expenditure management can be said to have three aims: maintaining control of total public spending, allocating resources to programs according to considered government priorities, and improving the efficiency of government operations. Since 1993, nearly all countries in the region have successfully attained the first, while, on the other two fronts, none would claim complete success and most still have a long way to go.

Bringing total spending under control has required political will; has also been aided by

declines in inflation; but also has been supported by administrations learning to do better their jobs of forecasting and controlling spending and receipts; and by others learning to collect the taxes and social security contributions better. Unfortunately, in some cases, it has been achieved simply by keeping an iron lid on the totals and cutting across-the-board whenever the forecasts are off the mark. Done without information or analysis of the effects on programmes or their clients, this approach will carry a heavy cost if pursued too long. Further, across-the-board cuts reinforce existing distortions in resource allocation.

For expenditure management to complete its other key tasks – allocating resources according to priorities and promoting efficiency in operations – budget offices everywhere must keep making improvements every year; and many factors must be made to work together, from political support through transparency in budget presentation to competent auditing. Two factors must always be present, however: accurate and meaningful data, and people with the knowledge and abilities to analyse it. The finance ministries of nearly all European countries in transition suffer serious deficits in both these areas. The reasons include absence of Civil Service Laws and discipline; poor salaries; Organic Budget Laws which do not grant the usual powers to the finance ministry; traditions of spending ministry autonomy; lack of cohesion within coalition governments; outdated accounting classifications and information systems; and many others.

The fact that, in the face of such obstacles, so much progress has been made, and that so many imaginative initiatives and pilot projects are under way is testimony to the skill and determination of central and eastern European budget officers. ♦

Lawrence O'Toole may be reached at tel: (33.1) 45.24.82.00; fax: (33.1) 45.24.13.00; e-mail: larry.otoole@oecd.org.

Public Administration in the News

Bosnia

New Branch Office for Ombudsman

The international Ombudsman for the Bosnian Federation has opened a branch in Banja Luka to investigate human rights abuses. Source: *Onasa* via OMRI.

Czech Republic

Re-structuring of State Institutions

The Law on Competencies was approved by the House of Deputies at its first reading on 26 July 1996. The law would create certain ministries and offices, and eliminate other ministries and state organs, including the Office for Legislation and Public Administration. Separately, the "Bill on the Public Defender of Rights" has been introduced into the House. The measure calls for the nomination of an ombudsman to investigate citizen complaints about the violation of laws and regulations in the state administration. Source: *East European Legislative Review*.

Estonia

New Eurominister, Information Guide

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Riivo Sinijärvi has replaced Endel Lippmaa, who resigned the post of Minister for European Affairs in August. Separately, the Government released an information booklet entitled *Current Situation and Development Problems of Estonia*. The publication includes information for the general public on issues such as state security and defence strategies. Sources: *The Baltic Times*, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Hungary

Bokros to World Bank

Former Minister of Finance, Lajos Bokros, author of an austerity plan comprising major cuts in the public administration, has been named a senior consultant with the World Bank. Bokros will be working in the international financial institution's Development Department and will focus on capital movements, bank reform and privatisation. Source: OMRI.

Latvia

Officials Must Resign Non-Government Posts

An anti-corruption law entered into effect 1 August. The measure prohibits the President, ministers, parliamentarians and parliamentary secretaries from taking part in any other occupation outside of government. Also, each must declare his or her income to the government to ensure that income sources abide by the new law. Source: *The Baltic Times*.

Lithuania

Army Administration Trimmed

General Staff Chief Lt.-Col. Valdas Tutkus reported that fusing of the general (defence) staff with the Ministry of Defence would eliminate about 70 positions. The reorganisation, to be completed by winter, is intended to restructure the army in accordance with NATO standards and strengthen civilian control over the armed forces. Source: BNS via OMRI.

Romania

Ombudsman Bill Before Senate

The Chamber of Deputies has passed a bill approving the establishment of "the People's Attorney" (Ombudsman). The bill has been sent on to the Senate for consideration. As envisioned, the official would be chosen by the Senate for a four-year term and would work as an advocate of the rights and liberties of citizens in their relations with public authorities. Source: *East European Legislative Monitor*.

Slovakia

Regional and District Leaders Appointed

On 13 August the Government agreed on the heads of the eight newly created regional administrations and on the heads of 78 of the 79 new districts. The state officials were selected by a special commission of the Ministry of Interior. Source: *Narodna obroda* via OMRI.

Multi-country

Poland was invited to become the 28th Member of the OECD on 11 July.

Letter to the Editor

I agree with almost all ideas and conclusions in Iveta Gigova's article in PMF, Volume II, Number 2. As private business is pointing out, bureaucratic barriers are among the three main problems preventing its development (together with financial difficulties and the lack of stable and solid legislation).

In my speech to the Second Economic Committee of the UN General Assembly's 50th session in December 1995 on the state and potential of the private sector and its role for sustainable economic development, I stressed that:

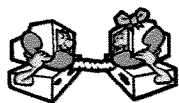
"It is essential to minimise or eliminate bureaucratic obstacles (to the private sector). Paperwork and all kinds of central and local government red tape should be cut down and procedures for operation simplified."

Vladimir Pavlov
Secretary-General
Union for Private Economic Enterprise,
Sofia, Bulgaria

Corrections

The caption beneath the photo on page 1 of PMF Vol. II, No. 2 incorrectly identified Juraj Hanák, Director, Office of the Slovak Minister of Interior, as the then-Minister of Interior, Ludovit Hudek. On page 2 of the same issue, Eduards Ikvilds, Deputy Director, Latvian State Chancellery, was mistakenly reported as being from Estonia. PMF regrets the errors. -The Editor

What's on the Web



Over the last few years, use of the Internet's World Wide Web as a forum for exchanging information has soared around the globe. For public administration practitioners, the Web is an invaluable source of current news about people and events, official texts, research findings, and the work of international institutions. Every country in Europe now has access to the Web, and most countries have a significant -- and fast-growing -- presence.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the number of sites by and about the region is growing daily. Since spring 1996, SIGMA's homepage (<http://www.oecd.org/puma/sigmaweb>) has not only reported on SIGMA's activities and publications, but also opened the door to the myriad of Internet sites on Central and Eastern Europe and public administration reform through "hypertext links."

Among the government, donor, academic and media sites accessible through the SIGMA homepage are:

- EU Phare Programme (<http://www.europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg1a/phare.html>)
- The Polish National School of Public Administration (http://www.ksap.waw.pl/welc_an.html)
- UNDP Programme-Estonia (<http://www.ciesin.ee/undp>)
- The Albanian Home Page (<http://www.albanian.com>)

One word of warning, the Web's strength can also be its weakness: a click or two away from an official page is no longer "official," and the richer and more comprehensive a list of related Web sites is, the further away from "home" you are likely to end up. Ultimately, it's up to users to be vigilant about whose page they are accessing before drawing conclusions on the reliability of the information. ♦

INBOX:



A COMPENDIUM OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

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

From SIGMA

SIGMA Papers: No. 6. *The Internationalisation of Policy Making*, 1996, 95 pages. Also French.

SIGMA Papers: No. 7. *The Audit of Secret and Politically Sensitive Subjects*, 1996, 95 pages. Also French.

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

From PUMA

Occasional Paper: No. 9. *Performance Management in Government: Contemporary Illustrations*, 1996, 109 pages. Also French.

Occasional Paper: No. 10. *Pay Reform in the Public Service: Initial Impact on Pay Dispersion in Australia, Sweden and the United Kingdom*, 1996, 58 pages. Also French.

Occasional Paper: No. 11. *Managing Structural Deficit Reduction*, 1996, 201 pages. Also French.

To order: OECD Publications Service, 2, rue Andre-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France. Tel: (33.1) 49.10.42.83; fax: (33.1) 49.10.42.76; e-mail: compte.pubsing@oecd.org

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

ALEXANDRU, Ioan. *Administrative Structures, Mechanisms and Institutions: A Comparative View*. Romanian.

To order: National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, 1 Scheiu Magureanu Ave., 5th District, 70626 Bucharest, Romania. Tel: (40.1) 614.26.74; fax: (40.1) 312.25.35.

CHAYES Abram and Antonia HANDLER CHAYES. *The New Sovereignty - Compliance with International Regulatory Agreements*, 1996.

To order: Harvard University Press, USA. Tel: (1.800) 448.22.42; Internet: <http://www.hup.harvard.edu>. US\$ 49.95.

JABES, Jak and Jacques ZILLER. "Le renforcement de la haute fonction publique, une réponse au défi de la transformation des administrations d'Europe centrale et orientale?," *Politiques et Management Public* (France), Vol. 14, No. 1, March 1996, pp 73-88. French.

MARCOU, Gérard. "Structures Territoriales et Finances Locales dans les Pays de Centre-Est Européen," *Politiques et Management Public* (France), Vol. 14, No. 1, March 1996, pp 109-141. French.

NIEHOFF, B.P. and R.H. MOORMAN. "Exploring the Relationships Between Top Management Behaviours and Employee Perceptions of Fairness," *International Journal of Public Administration* (USA), Vol. 19, No. 6, 1996, pp 941-961.

Servus (bimonthly bulletin with viewpoints of the European and International Federations of Public Service Personnel). Also French, Dutch, German and Spanish.

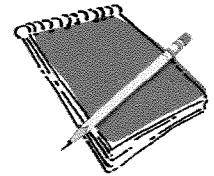
To order *Servus*: Bert Van Caelenberg, rue des Trèves, 1040 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: (32.22) 30.38.65; fax: (32.22) 31.14.72.

STOWERS, Genie N. L. "Moving Governments On-Line: Implementation and Policy Issues," *Public Administration Review* (USA), Vol. 56, No. 1, January/February 1996, pp 121-125.

SYNNERSTRÖM, Staffan. "Transformation des administrations régies par les codes du travail de type soviétique en services définis par une législation de service public," *Politiques et Management Public* (France), Vol. 14, No. 1, March 1996, pp 61-72. French.

Polish Press Reports on State Reforms

by Marzanna Doering



Reform of Poland's central government -- described on page 10 -- caught the domestic press off guard. Journalists had difficulty grasping the details, and many responded skeptically. The following article inaugurates a new feature in Public Management Forum -- "Reporter's Notebook" -- which highlights media views of public administration topics in countries in transition. Though the free press may not always give government reformers the encouragement they would like, it does play a vital role in shaping the public debate on major policy issues. For these and other reasons it cannot be ignored.

Legislative activity on central government reform only captured the interest of the media halfway through the process -- when political conflict between coalition partners emerged. Although the government's proposals appeared in as many as twelve draft laws, initial press was laconic and primarily of an informative character. This was the situation from late 1995, when the Government adopted the drafts, to early 1996, after drafts were first read in the *Sejm*.

The press simply cited voices for and against reform, refraining from thorough assessments of its own (probably because the issue was *terra incognita* to most Poles, including news professionals). The media found it hard to come up with the proper number of liquidated and established ministries. When parliamentary work began, the leftist daily *Trybuna* announced the elimination of six ministries and the creation of four new ones. Five versus seven was the verdict of the weekly *Gazeta Bankowa*. The daily *Zycie Warszawy* decided the proportion was 7:7.

Initial Confusion

Some newspapers which published their own analyses were skeptical about the whole operation, even averse to it. The weightiest accusation brought against the reform could be summed up as "it is a reorganisation, not a

reform." "Belated, needed, incomplete," asserted *Gazeta Bankowa*. "To change so as to change nothing," asserted the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, close to the opposition Freedom Union (UW).

Some newspapers picked up on selected opposition views which claimed that reform was coming "from the attic instead of from the cellar," represented just competence-shuffling among ministries, and was accompanied by neither territorial reform nor devolution of powers from the centre to local government. Newspapers taking a critical stance delivered their harshest attacks on the Ministry of the Interior Affairs and Administration, calling it, among other things, "a bureaucratic monster."

Legal Powers of Ministers

Three months of intensive work by an extraordinary committee of the *Sejm* did not arouse much media interest. But when the *Sejm* adopted drafts during the summer, and the coalition's Polish Peasant Party blocked the package in the Senate, the press pounced. Yet the media focused on the political background of the deadlock -- the perceived inability to decide on the distribution of new posts -- rather than on formal reasons -- the introduction of a constitutional amendment not foreseen in early draft legislation.

The amendment, which changed the legal basis of ministerial activities and gave the Prime Minister more power, was unanimously seen by the media as the most significant change to the state administration. Many newspapers, especially those linked to the ruling Democratic Left Alliance and the opposition UW, hailed this proposal as "the most valuable achievement" of the reform, though *Tygodnik Solidarnosc* quoted trade unionist senators who objected to the allegedly quiet way in which the amendment was introduced.

The PAP News Agency, though, highlighted the view of international experts that the reform would bring the "functioning of the executive branch in Poland [closer] to standards adopted by states belonging to the OECD." The weekly political affairs magazine, *Polityka*, stated that, taken together, the changes to the central administration constitute "one of the most important reforms of the state." The English-language *Warsaw Voice* quoted UW parliamentarian Andrzej Potocki as saying, "the administrative changes approved by the *Sejm* will use less of the taxpayers' money."

The final stages of reform were combined with preparations of draft civil service legislation, and were more positively appraised by the media. ♦

Marzanna Doering, a journalist in Warsaw, may be reached at tel: (48.22) 621.85.35; fax: (48.22) 621.61.52. See also the article on page 10.

➤ *continued from p.6*

Since part of the Ombudsman's mission is to enhance relations between Community institutions or bodies and European citizens, I asked in June 1996 each individual institution and body to inform me about the situation as to public access to the documents held by them. The Commission and the Council had already issued a common code of conduct concerning public access. In my office, too, publicity is the main rule. The complaints, registration of them, decisions disclosing the complaints, the Ombudsman's draft recommendations, the first opinion and the subsequent more detailed opinion are regarded as public documents. These documents are treated as confidential only if the citizen has requested that his complaint remain confidential, or the Ombudsman has decided on his own initiative that a complaint is to be treated as confidential. ♦

For more information about the European Ombudsman, contact tel: (33.3) 88.17.23.98; fax: (33.3) 88.17.90.62. See also earlier PMF articles on page 8 of Vol. II, No. 1, and on page 6 of Vol. II, No. 3.

German Foundation Contributes to Civil Society

For seven years, the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation has carried out projects promoting an open society throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

The Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation (FNF) operates with the belief that while great progress has been achieved in countries in transition, new structures do not yet have a firm footing. Perceived threats include new, nationalist currents often spurred by "an often emotional revival of the socialist past." Although there are great differences in economic standing, culture and mentality among the countries in which it is active, FNF activities everywhere have a common denominator: advancing the establishment of democratic and market economy structures on the basis of the principles of the rule of law, in which the protection of minorities plays a fundamental role.

Training Programmes

Among the foundation's projects are "training of trainers" courses through which participants learn to teach civic education classes to others in their countries. In the economic realm, the FNF promotes small-to-medium-sized businesses through the backing of management consulting centres. Related support is provided for the creation of a system of associations aware of what the foundation refers to as "political and market economy responsibility." The goal is to ensure that a competitive middle class can develop and maintain its position in the long run. FNF also conducts training programmes for journalists with an eye towards promoting development of a pluralistic media offering citizens a range of views.

The Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation maintains its Regional Office for Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe in

Königswinter, Germany. In addition, it operates offices to co-ordinate local work in sixteen formerly communist countries from the Czech Republic to Kazakhstan, and from Estonia to the Ukraine.



FRIEDRICH-NAUMANN-STIFTUNG

Long-term Projects

One example of the foundation's work is an eight-year project in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania started in 1992. The project aims to encourage the use of liberal principles in the political and economic spheres, as well as in social relations between different ethnic groups. Another goal is to assist and promote activities of governments, parties and institutions which stabilise the democratic rule of law and a functioning market economy.

A long-term project on Polish civic education was among the first activities launched by the foundation in Central and Eastern Europe. Its six objectives include:

1. strengthening human and civil rights;
2. establishing and guaranteeing the rule of law;
3. promoting the idea of private property, market, competition and free trade;
4. enforcing the will to face individual and social challenges and take on responsibility;
5. promoting tolerance and protection of minorities; and
6. decentralising and regionalising government.

In October 1996, the FNF organised two seminars in Warsaw. One provided the opportunity for academics to exchange experiences on German and Polish experiences with civic education. The addressed concepts, practice and policy of data protection in the same countries.

Examples, Not Models

Throughout its work, the foundation takes into account the particular political, social and cultural situation of each country in transition. FNF aims not to impose concepts and models but rather to consult and show the entire range of liberal principles with the hope that their partners can develop strategies to solve their problems. ♦

For more information on Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation activities in Central and Eastern Europe, contact Walter Klitz at tel: (49.22.23) 70.11.65; fax: (49.22.23) 70.12.89.

➤ *continued from p.1*

On the basis of a landmark research project funded by the EU Phare's ACE Programme, Verheijen and his colleagues identify four shared problems in the public administrations of Central and Eastern Europe: fragmentation and missing co-ordination; lack of continuity; absence of policy-making capacities; and weak accountability systems. Though the problems may be shared, the responses to them must be individually tailored according to local circumstances.

Also in this issue, readers will learn how countries are tackling aspects of these problems through a public procurement law (in Slovenia), an advisory body on EU integration (in Hungary) and a far-reaching reform of the centre of government (in Poland). ♦

SIGMA

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

14-17 November 1996, Boston, MA, USA. "American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies' 28th National Convention." Contact: AAAS, 8 Story St., Cambridge, MA 02138, USA. Tel: (1.617) 495.06.77; fax: (1.617) 495.06.80; e-mail: aaass@hcs.harvard.edu. In English.

27-29 November 1996, Buenos Aires, Argentina. First World Congress on "Government Financial Management." Contact: Argentine Ministry of the Economy, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Tel: (54.1) 349.60.67. In English and Spanish.

9-10 December 1996, Paris, France. "SIGMA Liaison Group Meeting." Contact: Bob Bonwitt, 2, rue Andre-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France. Tel: (33.1) 45.24.82.00; fax: (33.1) 45.24.13.00; e-mail: sigma.contact@oecd.org. In English and French.

23-26 April 1997, Tallinn, Estonia. NISPAce's Fifth Annual Conference on "Professionalism of Public Servants in Central and Eastern Europe." Contact: Ludmila Gajdosová, NISPAce, Hanulova 5/B, 840 02 Bratislava 42, Slovakia. Tel & Fax: (42.7) 78.53.57; e-mail: nispa@acadistr.sk. In English.

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).