

SIGMA

PMF

Public Management Forum

A Bimonthly Newsletter for Public Administration Practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe

Setting High Ethical Standards

Managing Regional Development Funds

Czech Press Pushes for More Open Government

Poland Rethinks its Civil Service Law

Promoting High Standards of Conduct in the Administration

by Staffan Synnerström

Corruption and the lack of public service ethics in the state institutions of central and eastern European countries threaten not only the public administration, but also efforts to promote economic growth and citizen trust in democracy. Underdeveloped professional roles, accountability practices, and control mechanisms -- combined with low public sector wages -- make public servants vulnerable to improper conduct and foster maladministration. In addition, the heritage of the past hinders the development of ethical standards.

Democracies with advanced market economies in Western Europe and elsewhere also struggle with problems of declining ethical standards and even corruption. They do so in a climate in which there are differences between the real and perceived level of corruption, and in which the understanding of what constitutes unethical behaviour is changing. The task of managing these issues and uncertainties is aided, however, by the solid legal and institutional infrastructures which have been built up in these countries over the years. Increasing attention is now being focused on addressing ethical problems through "aspirational efforts," such as codes of conduct, ethics campaigns and training.

In most central and eastern European countries, however, aspirational efforts are not enough and the basic legal and institutional infrastructure needs to be strengthened. Further, the decentralisation of the public administration in these countries creates new opportunities for graft if appropriate control mechanisms are not put into place.

Across the globe, however, efforts to check corruption and promote high standards of conduct

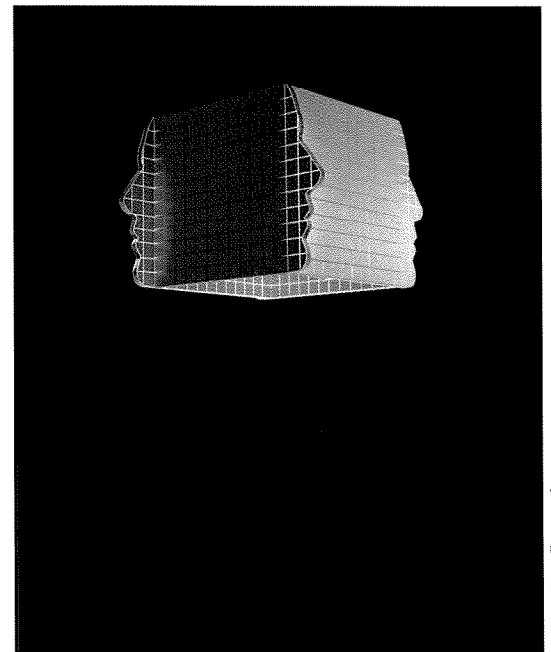


Image: Bank/Michel Teterescoff Ltd.

will not succeed without sustained political support at the highest levels. Further, political leaders must set a positive example for others to follow.

Different Components Support Ethics Framework

This issue of *PMF* takes a look at these crucial subjects. In "Forum Focus," Oxford Professor Denis Galligan explains the key role of administrative procedures acts and administrative oversight institutions in promoting public service ethics. In an interview under the "Frontlines of Reform," Jan Pastwa, Head of the Polish Civil Service, addresses anti-corruption laws in his country, as well as Polish Government plans to amend the Civil Service Law to strengthen qualification standards and non-partisanship.

Janos Bertók of the OECD Public Management Service (PUMA) explains that a combination of incentives and sanctions is needed to encourage professional standards of conduct.

Continued on p.11 ➤

Forum Focus

Building an Ethics Infrastructure :
Administrative Acts & Oversight Bodies

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Head, OECD Public Management Service
Dery Ormond

Head, SIGMA Programme
Bob Bonwitt

Editor-in-Chief
Bart W. Edes

Managing Editor
Belinda Hopkinson

Production Assistant
Françoise Locci

Design
Imp.act, Paris, France

Printer
A&M Conseil, Bron, France

Illustrations (pages 4 and 7)
László Quitt

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.contact@oecd.org
web site: <http://www.oecd.org/puma/sigmaweb>
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Regional Network Prepares Two Major Events

For over six years, NISPAcee has contributed significantly to the cross-border sharing of information and experience on public administration, and the building of professional networks across Central and Eastern Europe. NISPAcee -- the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe -- is now gearing up for two major events: its Sixth Annual Meeting and its 1998 Summer Workshop.

The Annual Meeting, slated for 18-20 March in Prague, will focus on "Public Administration and Social Policies in Central and Eastern Europe." Over 100 civil servants, researchers and academics are expected to attend the meeting, which will comprise three working sessions (on social reform in the context of economic and political transformation; systems of social security and unemployment, youth and the elderly; and health care reform and health care management). In addition, three other working sessions will be organised to debate subjects not directly related to the main theme. These will consider using public opinion surveys in public administration; public administration reform in general; and executive development in local government.

Later in the year, 6-10 July, NISPAcee will hold its annual Summer Workshop, in Bulgaria. The theme is "Teaching of Public Management," and the workshop is open to instructors of public management courses. For details on the Annual Meeting or the Summer Workshop, refer to the NISPAcee Web site at <http://www.NISPA.SK> or call tel: (421.7) 78.53.57.

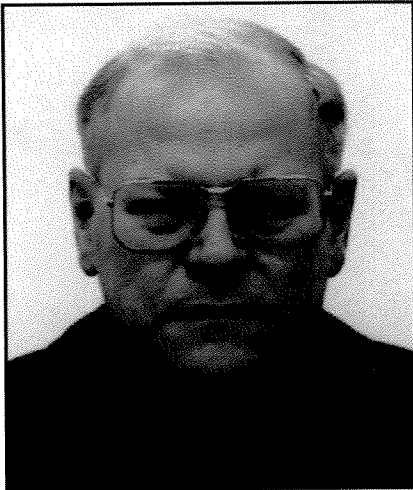
Bart W. Edes, Editor-in-Chief

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Belgium Promotes Ethics Through Greater Transparency

by Désiré De Saedeleer



Courtesy photo

Désiré De Saedeleer

The "ethics factor" has become a major public policy concern of federal authorities in Belgium. The Government has taken several legislative and structural initiatives to reinforce transparency, openness and service to the public, and in the process to encourage high standards of conduct in the administration.

Since the 1980's, Belgium, like other Western European countries, has been undergoing a continuous process of reform. Or, more precisely, of *modernisation*, since to modernise is to rise up to the challenge to espouse change, rather than to search for an ideal state that will itself be quickly overtaken.

Three factors are essential to successful modernisation:

- a coherent, shared vision within the administration and the political world;
- continuity in the vision of change; and
- harmony between what it is said and what is done, above all at the top of the hierarchy.

For a long time now, the pressure of economic and budgetary priorities has imposed the three "E's" -- *economy, efficiency and effectiveness* -- as priority objectives. But the loss of public confidence in the political world witnessed

over the past few years has pushed to the forefront a new factor: the *ethics factor*, and thus a fourth "E".

Opening Up of the Administration

We are realising that ethics is not an independent element, but rather an integral part of "New Public Management." In this context, ethics carries an importance greater than the old *deontology* (study of duty).

In emphasising an orientation towards "the consumer," the government has passed from a rather closed bureaucracy to a transparent organisation. New values are supplementing or replacing the old ones. Transparency, openness and service to the citizenry have taken on an importance that was not expected just a short while ago.

But it is not enough to regulate. The public must also know its rights and the means of demanding them if necessary. For this reason, political leaders have taken resolute action to inform public servants and the public of these rights and means. Thus, ethics constitutes an integral part of the initial training of future managers. In addition, a significant emphasis on internal communications aims at internalising these fundamental values in the public administration.

The Belgian *ministère de la Fonction publique* publishes a magazine called, *Accent : Fierté d'un métier* (Accent: Occupational Pride), distributed to federal public service personnel, that shows that the work and new values of the public service are things to take pride in.

Actions Reinforce Transparency

A number of legislative and structural initiatives have been taken to reinforce transparency, openness and service to the public. These include the:

- Charter of Users of Public Services, with an annual report on results achieved. To ensure continuity of the project, and make it independent of political whims, the initiatives covered by this Charter are entrusted to the College of Secretaries General, which brings together leading public servants from the federal ministries;
- appointment of mediators;
- law on the formal motivation of administrative acts;
- law on publicity of the administration;
- publication, at the initiative of the College of Secretaries General, of guides to the federal administration which in a concrete way bring the administration and citizen closer together; and
- creation of the "Bureau of Readability," which through its advice and training aids the administration to redesign texts to make them easier to understand.

Legal Change Foreseen in 1998

A fundamental revision of the statute of senior public servants is foreseen in 1998. Appointments will no longer be for life, but for six years. If those appointed receive a positive performance evaluation, their appointment can be renewed, but mobility will be encouraged. The "ethics factor" plays an important role in performance evaluation. A high committee of the public service will oversee objectivity of the management of high-level public servants.

The adoption of new values and ethical behaviour by all public servants depends to a large extent on the exemplary behaviour of leaders. Many public servants act as their managers act, not as they speak. At the base of the reforms scheduled for 1998 is the concept that transparency is in effect the best way to avoid all unethical conduct. ♦

Désiré De Saedeleer is the Director General of Belgium's Training Institute of the Federal Administration. He may be reached in Brussels at tel: (32.2) 229.73.11; fax: (32.2) 217.53.48; dds@club.innet.be.

Making Effective Use of EU Structural Funds: Modernising Administration

In July 1997, SIGMA organised with Slovakia's Office of the Government a seminar for senior officials on the administrative and budgetary arrangements that governments need to make in order to implement effective regional development programmes. These programmes will make use of the European Union Structural Fund joint-financing arrangements, and other external sources of finance such as loans from the European Investment Bank and the World Bank.

At the seminar, Professor Luís Valente de Oliveira and Professor George Chiotis presented the experience of the activities of their countries in this area. Professor de Oliveira served as Minister for Planning and Territorial Administration in Portugal between 1985 and 1995. Professor Chiotis, a former Director General of the Greek Ministry of Co-ordination, prepared Greece's first five-year Regional Development Programme (1981-85). In the following interview, de Oliveira and Chiotis comment on the Portuguese and Greek experiences in this field. Their observations include important messages for countries preparing for EU membership. They also highlight the need to consider the powers accorded to the ministries responsible for the channelling and accounting of regional development funds, as well as procedures for co-ordinating among these ministries.

PMF: What are the key elements in the design of an effective regional development planning system?

Professor de Oliveira: Based on the example of Portugal, I see six main elements. First, regional development should be viewed as a long-term process that requires permanent attention and firm action. Setting common goals and a common approach, agreed with all political parties, and all the key players, was an important element of success in Portugal. Second, creating strong

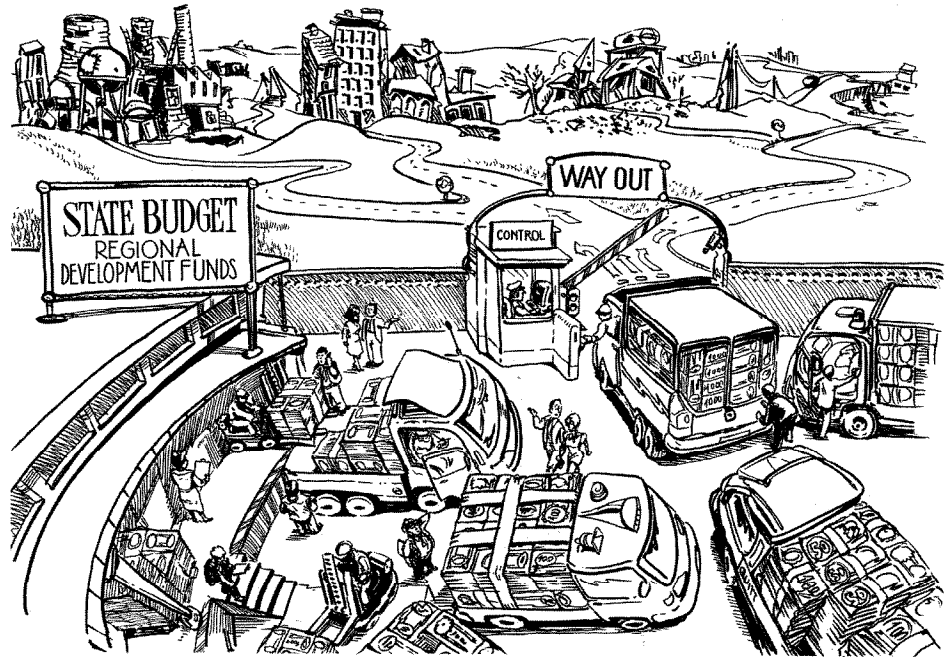


Illustration: Lucie Clair

institutional structures and co-ordination at all levels -- national, regional and local -- is another important factor. Third, a minister responsible for regional development should be designated with a strong position in the ministerial hierarchy, and the full support of the prime minister. This minister should be supported by highly qualified and trained staff. Fourth, the ministry of finance has an important role to play in co-ordinating financial resources from external and internal sources. Effective budgetary and control mechanisms must be put in place. Fifth, good and cost-effective systems for collecting and monitoring information -- and for evaluating objectively the costs and benefits of each programme and project -- must be set up. Finally, priority must be given to familiarising key politicians and officials with Brussels' rules and procedures on structural funds, and to training staff, at all levels.

Professor Chiotis: Much time and resources were spent, prior to Greek accession, in developing a national-regional-local planning framework. This was a

cornerstone for the preparation of the first Regional Development Programme that was approved by the European Commission and implemented between 1981 and 1985. The planning framework was based on the creation of a "super-ministry", the Ministry of Co-ordination, since renamed the Ministry of National Economy, with a network of regional offices; and a well-staffed Centre of Planning and Economic Research. Awareness-raising seminars on EU regulations and procedures -- and contacts with key officials in Brussels and Member States -- made it possible to improve project preparation and implementation. Upgrading the systems of planning and public administration to meet the changing requirements of the EU structural fund programmes has been a continuous effort, particularly in the areas of control, monitoring and evaluation. Recently, private sector specialists have been appointed to assist the public administration in these fields and, in effect, to manage larger programmes and projects financed by EU funds.

nd Budgetary Procedures for Regional Development

PMF: What changes in budgetary and financial control procedures are necessary?

De Oliveira: All projects financed through the EU Structural Funds must be included in the national budget even where operational responsibility for implementing them lies with line ministries or regional and local authorities. A decentralised implementation system is desirable but co-ordination units are necessary for each fund operating through a general co-ordination body chaired by the Minister for Planning and Territorial Administration. Procurement procedures should be standardised -- and brought into line with the EU Directives -- so that high standards of openness and transparency are achieved. Physical controls and financial controls must meet exacting requirements. Failure to satisfy EU inspectors in this area can result in the withdrawal of Community support for a project.

In Portugal, the main responsibility for implementing and monitoring these control systems has several layers -- the Ministry of Planning and Territorial Administration; Inspectors General in the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Finance; and the Court of Auditors. We also set up a "permanent observatory" of statistical information in order to evaluate the economic impact of regional development programmes and projects, and to establish performance benchmarks.

Chiotis: I agree fully with Professor de Oliveira's comments. In Greece, problems of co-ordination and control have been reduced by giving the Ministry of National Economy a great deal of power relative to the Ministry of Finance and the other line ministries. At present, the same individual is Minister of both the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Finance.

PMF: How successful have your regional development policies been?

De Oliveira: The picture in Portugal is mixed. GNP per capita increased from 55.1 per cent of the EU average in 1983 to 68.4 per cent in 1995, though clearly not all of this is attributable to regional development programmes. Receipts from the EU structural funds added about two percentage points a year to the GNP growth rate. There has been some narrowing of regional income disparities. The area in which structural funds have been most beneficial are public works programmes, particularly roads. The weakest areas are education, professional training and R&D.

Chiotis: Generally, I believe the outcome has been less satisfactory than in Portugal. In 1986, the year of entry of Portugal to the EU, GNP per capita in Greece was 58 per cent of the EU average, whilst in 1995 it had risen to 66 per cent. This is not only the result of less successful regional policies but worse performance by Greece in relation to most economic indicators. The absorption of EU funds has been less than desired, although it has contributed to the narrowing of regional income disparities. A comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the Community Support Framework has only recently been started. This may provide some reliable answers to the present question. However, great delays have been observed in the absorption of Social Fund assistance for training, and the special programmes for higher education, technology support, SMEs, etc.

PMF: How should countries prepare themselves for EU membership?

De Oliveira: The preparatory phase is crucial. Countries must develop a deep understanding of Commission rules and

procedures, and decision-making processes. Both politicians and officials must get to know the funding institutions -- the relevant DGs in Brussels and the EIB in Luxembourg. Training is very important at all levels -- national, regional and local. Procedures for selecting officials for training should be strict. Officials will benefit from training periods in Brussels or EU Member States. The "twinning" approach should work well in this field.

Chiotis: The process of preparation and negotiation during the pre-accession phase is very important. Arrangements should be set up for gaining access to and distributing information on EU regulations and procedures. The main ministries should establish EU offices, appropriately resourced with staff who are given the right incentives -- through salary and career development opportunities -- to reward hard work and initiative; develop close working relations with key Commission officials; and obtain the support of private sector experts. Other important steps to consider include the creation of decentralised regional bodies; reinforcement of local government with substantial decision-making and financial autonomy; promotion of a combined "top-down" and "bottom-up" planning system; and integrated national, regional and local planning procedures. Special attention needs to be given to support specific programmes and projects with high quality technical-economic studies. Early training programmes for staff in fields such as planning methodology and systems, and project preparation and evaluation, is crucial. ♦

The views expressed by Professors de Oliveira and Chiotis are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Governments of Portugal and Greece. Professor Luís Valente de Oliveira presently works for the Instituto Empresarial Portuense, EXPONOR-Feira Internacional do Porto, tel: (351.2) 998.17.42. George Chiotis, Professor, ENDECA, can be contacted in Athens at tel: (30.1) 725.11.91.

Protecting the European Communities' Financial Interest

by Neil Usher

Fraud and irregularity pose a threat to the European Communities' financial interest. They also pose a political challenge as the perception of widespread fraud and abuse undermines the European project. The European Court of Auditors has sought to define its role so as to maximise the contribution it can make to the fight against fraud and irregularity.

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) faces a legislative and professional framework that leaves some uncertainty as to its proper role in respect to fraud and irregularity. In addition, there is a conflict between this framework and the expectations of the general public. Meanwhile, the Court is keen to ensure that it contributes to the maximum possible extent towards the protection of the Communities' financial interest. In its annual report on the 1994 financial year, the ECA explained its role in the protection of the Communities' financial interest and how this relates to the roles of other institutions.

In particular, the ECA stated that "the primary responsibility for prevention, detection and investigation of fraud lies with those who manage and supervise policy execution in the Commission and the Member States." Further, "the Court, as external auditor, has to review critically the arrangements made by management. It has always done this to an appreciable extent and Court reports have consistently drawn attention to weaknesses in legislation, in accounting and in financial management systems and indicated the risks involved as well as concrete cases involved."

Strategic Actions to Head off Abuses

The Court sees its primary role as

promoting the deterrence of irregularities (including fraud), rather than to detect fraud. Its strategic approach in this realm consists of four types of actions:

- evaluating the performance of the authorities responsible for the detection and repression of cases of fraud and irregularity;
- screening legislation and associated administrative and control systems;
- identifying systematically high risk areas that are especially prone to fraud and other forms of irregularity; and
- enhancing audit procedures during the course of the Court's normal audits where the risk of fraud and irregularity is considered to be especially high.

These are described in greater detail below.

Evaluating Authorities' Performance

The Court provides independent and objective reports to the European Parliament and Council of Ministers on whether the various legislative weapons and budgetary resources that have been made available for the fight against fraud have been used effectively.

Screening Legislation

The Court has on many occasions in its annual and special reports warned that complex legislation is difficult to administer effectively, especially when the responsibility for management is shared between the Commission and the Member States, and provides fraudsters with opportunities to pursue their illegal activities.

Identifying High Risk Areas

The Court identifies those areas that it considers to be particularly at risk of fraud and irregularity so that it can take this information into account in planning and executing its audits. With the aim of providing a systematic, unified view across the whole range of European Union revenue and expenditure, all Court audit teams have recently carried out an exercise, using common methodology, which sought to identify high risk areas.

Enhancing Auditing in High Risk Areas

In carrying out classical types of audit in areas where the risk of fraud and irregularity has been assessed as high, the Court will seek to enhance its audit. This enhancement may, for example, take the form of a detailed examination of those internal control procedures -- either at the Commission or in the Member States -- which should, if they are functioning properly, prevent or detect fraud or irregularity.

Conclusion

The Court's overall audit strategy allows it to play a full role in the protection of the Communities' financial interest while simultaneously meeting other demands upon its limited resources. This strategy is now largely in place and is having an impact upon the audits being carried out by the Court in all areas. ♦

Neil Usher, Principal Administrator for Working Methods and Training at the European Court of Auditors, may be reached at ECA, 12, rue Alcide de Gasperi, 1615 Luxembourg. The views expressed in this article are his own.

Ethics Management Calls for Balanced Approach

by Janos Bertók

There is no single method sufficient to construct an ethics infrastructure in the public service. Rather, a combination of incentives and sanctions is needed to encourage professional standards of conduct.

Increased citizen concern and an apparent decline in public confidence in government has become an important political challenge for OECD countries and central and eastern European states. Ethical behaviour of public servants significantly contributes to the quality of democratic governance and sustainable economic development. It does this by enhancing the citizens' confidence in government and the performance of state institutions. Consequently, governments are expressing their determination to review and refine their ethics frameworks with a view towards ensuring high standards of conduct.

Public servants face new and different objectives and conflicts of interest due to reforms in the public sector, such as devolution of responsibility and greater managerial discretion, the changing relationship between the public and private sectors, and increased reliance on market mechanisms. In central and eastern European countries, the rapidly changing environment, including the transformation of fundamental values, the legislative framework and the make-up of institutions, has contributed to uncertainty about expected behaviour in the public service.

Two Main Approaches

International trends in ethics management reveal common directions despite the varying political, administrative and cultural environments across countries. Two OECD surveys conducted in the past three years, and deliberations at a pair of international meetings of civil service and ethics specialists held last November in Paris, revealed a shared consensus on the main functions and elements of an ethics infrastructure.



Illustration: Lucie Clair

Governments are taking two general approaches to the task of improving ethical conduct in the public service. One approach focuses on strict compliance with descriptive/administrative procedures, control mechanisms and detailed rules which define what public servants should avoid, what they should do, and how they should do it. This is known as *compliance-based ethics management*. The other approach, based on principles and objectives, relies on strong professional roles reinforced by incentives and by encouraging good behaviour. This approach is known as *integrity-based ethics management*.

Finding the Balance

The challenge for central and eastern European countries is to determine the adequate balance between the two approaches, and what elements warrant the greatest attention. The starting point is redefining ethical principles and standards to reflect modern principles of democratic governance, and the citizens' expectations.

The legal framework, developed in harmony with these principles and standards, can set the minimum obligatory standards of behaviour for public servants, enforced by systems of investigation and prosecution. Appropriate detection and prosecution capacities can lead to effective sanction against conduct which falls below these minimum standards. Further, it is important to offer public servants guidance on how to translate principles and standards into concrete cases.

Assessing the Aims of Reforms

As a long-term investment, professional socialisation -- through induction and ongoing training -- can inculcate the necessary knowledge and skills while contributing to the establishment of a new kind of corporate spirit throughout the public service. Government structures and division of responsibilities should provide clear and non-conflicting roles. Management systems should be result-oriented, offering incentives and promoting public service values which create aspirations to achieve the desired results.

Promoting professional behaviour in the public service is one important dimension of the process of redesigning the role of the state. A primary objective of reviewing ethics management is to contribute to the strategic aims of overall public service reform. The OECD Public Management Service (PUMA) is drafting an ethics checklist to facilitate the assessment and development of institutions, systems and mechanisms promoting high standards of conduct in the public service. This checklist will be of interest not only to OECD Member countries, but also to other democracies seeking to construct a solid ethics infrastructure. ♦

Janos Bertók is an Administrator in the OECD Public Management Service. Previously, he served as Director of the Secretariat of the Commissioner for Modernisation of the Public Administration in the Office of the Hungarian Prime Minister. He can be reached in Paris at tel: (33.1) 45.24.93.57; e-mail: janos.bertok@oecd.org. See also PMF, Vol. III, No. 5.

Administrative Procedures Acts and Administrative Oversight Institutions Cont.

by Professor Denis Galligan

Administrative procedures and supervisory mechanisms both play an important part in regulating activities of the administration. More profoundly, they give meaning to the values of democracy, constitutionalism and the rule of law.

One of the main aims of the reform of public administration in central and eastern European countries is to provide the conditions for it to be conducted according to the values of democracy, constitutionalism, and the rule of law. Administrative law is one useful way of translating those general values into rules and practices for public administration. This process of translation is achieved mainly through *administrative procedures* and *administrative supervision*. These are two practical ways of creating an ethical environment for public administration. Administrative procedures and administrative supervision channel administrative behaviour and contribute to the creation of a certain kind of administrative culture.

Administrative Law and Ethical Values

Administrative law has two main functions. One is to confer powers on public authorities to carry out a great range of tasks set by society through the legislative process. The other function is to provide a framework of principles of general application to public authorities, which guide them in their actions and provide the basis for their decisions.

These principles include:

- the rule of law;
- fairness in both a procedural and substantive sense;
- equality before the law;
- openness and transparency;
- accountability;
- impartiality and independence; and
- timeliness.

Each of these principles derives from deeper ideas about how government and administration ought

to be conducted in a liberal, democratic society. They are also inter-related: for example, openness and transparency are both important in their own right and are instrumental to the rule of law, fairness, and accountability.

The Role of Procedures

Administrative procedures have a dual role: they stipulate the course of action to be followed in reaching a decision, while at the same time reflecting values concerning the relationship between the citizen and the state. These two roles can be linked to the principles discussed above.

Orderly procedures. Procedural laws, especially when incorporated into general codes of procedure, provide an orderly and systematic way for administrative bodies to achieve their ends. These are themselves valuable in providing a stable environment within which the relations between citizens and the state can be developed. Orderly procedures also contribute to the rule of law by assisting the accurate and proper application of the law, certainty and predictability, and a certain objectivity.

Procedures and fairness. By enabling the law to be applied accurately and properly, good procedures help to ensure that people are treated fairly according to the law. To achieve accuracy and propriety in applying the law, certain procedures are needed. These include the steps to be taken, the involvement of the parties, the production of information, and hearings. Fairness also requires that officials act impartially; that reasons be given; and that appeal mechanisms be available. Procedures of these kinds contribute to accurate outcomes; they are also often thought to be fair procedures in themselves.

Procedures contribute to openness and transparency. These values depend on procedures such as notice, disclosure of information, hearings, reasons and recourse. Administrative processes are more open and more transparent according to how well they cover these matters. Forms of

accountability of one administrative body to another administrative, legislative or judicial body also encourage openness and transparency. Special *Freedom of Information Legislation* is often passed to deal comprehensively with the disclosure of information. (*Editor's note: see article on page 14.*)

Guarantees of impartiality and independence. Procedural codes should contain provisions relating to impartiality and independence on the part of officials.

In sum, procedures are closely intertwined with the values of administrative law. Procedures are vitally important in translating those values into the practical workings of public administration.

Supervision of the Administration

Supervision ensures that administrative bodies use their powers properly and follow the procedures. A connection can be made between ethical standards in administration and forms of supervision. The rules and doctrines of administrative law express ethical notions for practical administration. The institutions and mechanisms of supervision monitor the actions of administrative officials to see whether they are performing their functions effectively and efficiently, and that the values of administrative law are being respected.

The institutions and mechanisms of supervision are several and varied. They include: judicial supervision, the prosecutor, internal appeals, external appeals, external complaints or ombudsman, inspectorates, standard-setting bodies and parliamentary institutions. The main forms in this group will be described briefly.

Judicial supervision. Judicial supervision is an essential feature of a system of administration based on law. Judicial supervision means a process whereby an independent court examines an administrative action to determine whether it meets the conditions of legality. While the courts across Europe vary greatly, their common feature

ute to Public Service Ethics

is or should be that they are independent of the administration, the executive and the legislature.

Judicial supervision is based on two ideas. One is that public administration should be conducted within a framework of laws. The other is that the courts are responsible in the last resort for deciding whether actions are within the laws. The laws here are of several kinds: laws defining the powers of administrative bodies; laws imposing standards on the manner in which decisions are made; and laws prescribing procedures.

Prosecutor. The prosecutor historically had a major role in supervising the legality of administrative action in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In those countries that have retained the prosecutor, its main function now is to exercise some limited supervisory power and to initiate or join in actions before the courts. With the development of judicial scrutiny in the region, the supervisory functions of the prosecutor have lost much of their former importance.

Internal appeals. The first and most common form of redress in Central and Eastern Europe for an aggrieved party is an appeal to a superior administrative body. This process usually also allows the primary decision-maker to reconsider its own decision before putting it to the appeal body. Internal appeals are easy to initiate, usually fast, and generally cheap. The quality of the appeal is often low, and it is difficult to maintain a separation between the primary and appeal bodies. Internal appeals are, however, effective ways of dealing with most complaints.

External appeals. External appeals refer to a process by which a person aggrieved with an administrative decision may appeal to an appeal body outside and independent of the administration. Appeal bodies of this kind are fairly unfamiliar in the region, but where they have been tried in western countries they are considered successful.

External complaints or ombudsmen. The ombudsman is becoming a familiar complaints

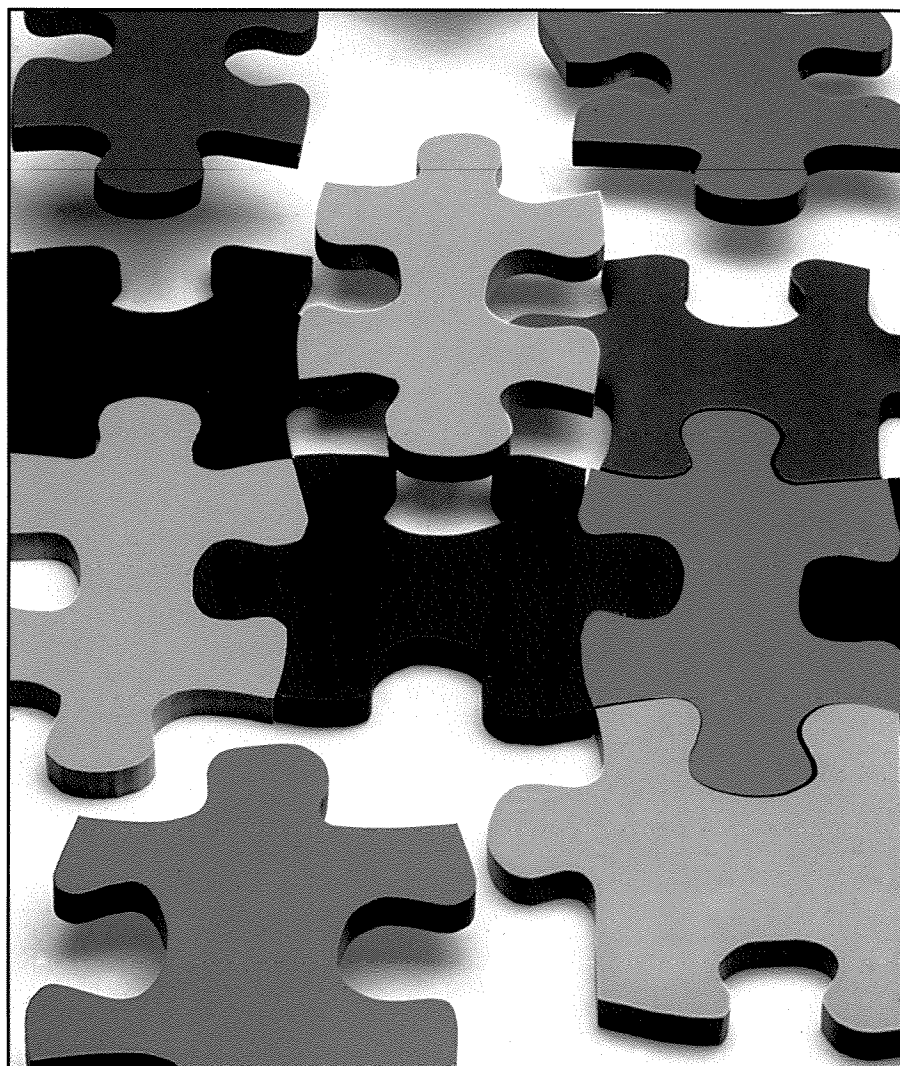


Image: Bank/Michel Thierewhoff Ltd.

process in the region. The essential idea is that the ombudsman receives and investigates complaints from persons dissatisfied with an administrative decision. The object usually is to ascertain whether there has been poor, bad or improper administration, and to recommend redress. The ombudsman's jurisdiction usually covers a wider range of matters than appeal processes.

Inspectorates. Inspectorates consist of independent and specially constituted bodies with powers to oversee an area of administration and to report their findings to parliament. The main object of inspections is to improve the quality of administration. Inspectorates do not depend on complaints but may scrutinise administrative actions as they think fit.

Parliamentary supervisors. The most important aspect of parliamentary supervision is the committee system. Parliament creates committees which are responsible for oversight of an area of

government and administration. Deputies of parliament comprise the membership, and expert assistance is usually available. The committee system has great potential as a form of administrative supervision, but that potential is so far largely undeveloped.

Fundamental Standards of Good Administration

Administrative procedures and supervisory mechanisms both play an important part in regulating the activities of the administration. Procedures guide the conduct of administration, while supervisory mechanisms check how it is in practice being conducted. Both procedures and supervision can be linked to ethical standards in administration since both are directed at ensuring compliance with fundamental standards of good administration. ♦

Professor Denis Galligan directs the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Wolfson College, University of Oxford. He may be reached at: tel: (44.1865) 284.220/231; e-mail: admindjg@cs.ox.ac.uk.

Poland Puts High Priority on Ethics in the Building of a Modern Publ.



Poland has implemented a number of measures aimed at developing an ethical, professional public administration capable of managing governance challenges, including European integration. The coalition government which assumed power in 1997 intends to amend the country's Civil Service Law to strengthen qualification standards and non-partisanship in the public service. Jan Pastwa, Head of Civil Service, reports on these plans in the following interview.

PMF: During 1997, Poland began implementing the new Civil Service Law. Does the Government intend to continue implementing this law or to amend it?

Jan Pastwa: In the first period of implementation of the Civil Service Law, a number of doubts have emerged related to certain provisions of the law, including inadequate formal guarantees of non-partisanship, low requirements for knowledge of foreign languages, and the condition that one must have served several years in the administration to be considered for a managerial post. These latter

conditions unequivocally favour persons who were promoted under communist rule. The present Government wishes to prepare a draft amendment to the Civil Service Law to definitively resolve such doubts and objections. We wish to forward the necessary modifications to the *Sejm* for approval as soon as possible in order to continue the process of developing the civil service.

PMF: What measures are employed or planned to maintain high ethical standards and to limit corruption in the Polish public administration (such as training, freedom of information, balance of powers in decision-making)?

Jan Pastwa: Legal measures used to prevent corruption in the public administration include a ban on employment in state administration offices of married couples and persons tied by bonds of kinship where they are linked by reporting lines. There are restrictions on business activities by state employees, including ownership of stock in firms, and serving on company boards.

State employees must submit declarations concerning their property and the property of their closest family members. Further, when ordering supplies of goods or services paid for with public funds, state employees must do so through public tenders, and they are barred from placing orders for goods and services on behalf of the administration if they are related to the contractor. Polish law also allows a controlled act of acceptance or presentation of a bribe by law enforcement officers if corruption is suspected.

PMF: What other types of mechanisms are used to head off the possibility of corruption in the public administration?

Jan Pastwa: We operate an open system of recruitment of administration staff which uses press announcements, competitions and qualifying interviews before a commission. Results and motions stemming from inspections of public administration entities are made public. We continually analyse results of various inspections carried out in state bodies, as well as information obtained from the general public, to determine which state bodies exhibit symptoms indicative of illegal activities. Also, regulations in certain state institutions specify and limit cash and non-monetary donations to these institutions. Further, there is a training scheme for new civil servants entering the job market which includes lectures on the pragmatic aspects of civil service. There is not, as yet, any special training of public administration staff on ethical principles.

PMF: What are the greatest challenges to building up and maintaining a professional, non-partisan civil service, and how do you plan to overcome them?

Jan Pastwa: One problem is that political impartiality for the highest civil service

Administration

posts, including general directors and department heads, has not been sufficiently guaranteed. Another serious challenge is the need to unify the management of employees, and to introduce common standards for different groups of personnel, across the state administration. While the local government system is relatively consistent, there is too much variety in the structures of the central administration and special administration at the local level. This situation, together with unawareness of the different structures, hampers effective use of resources.

The process of qualifying for civil service posts also suffers from low requirements. Knowledge of a foreign language has been checked only formally, and test questions referring to general and professional knowledge have not required any professional preparation by candidates. Another limitation to the entry of professional, non-partisan personnel to the civil service has been the lack of any arrangements for access to the civil service for graduates of the government National School of Public Administration established under the new, democratic political circumstances. Completion of two-year specialist studies does not offer any advantage in finding a job in the civil service, which as a result may soon lead to the departure of most graduates from the administration. Preferences are given to those in the administration who developed their professional careers at a time when human resources policies in state institutions were fully subordinated to the Communist Party.

To counteract these difficulties, we must amend the Civil Service Law and the related executory provisions. We have to reorganise the qualification commission, increasing the number of members from 35 to 50, and raise the level of civil service

qualifying exams to put greater emphasis on candidates' problem-solving skills.

PMF: *How do you see the relationship between Poland's integration into "Euro-Atlantic" political, economic and defence structures (EU, NATO, OECD) and modernisation of the public administration?*

Jan Pastwa: Poland's accession to European structures, first of all the European Union, requires the preparation and implementation of a strategy which includes integration of the national public administration structures with European ones. The Government is developing such a strategy, but its implementation will not be successful without a properly prepared administration. In the first stage, it is important to train large number of public servants in a variety of areas. These include basic knowledge about integration; European institutions and relations with them; impact of integration on Polish administration and society; knowledge of EU, NATO and OECD countries and their administrative cultures; and issues of special concern to Poland, including transformation of the agriculture sector.

An essential element of integration training should include training trips to European and Euro-Atlantic institutions for public administration staff responsible for specific areas. It also is of the utmost importance to develop closer co-operation with, or participation in, various institutions dealing with public administration issues in Europe, including the European Institute of Public Administration and the International Institute of Administration Sciences. Within the framework of co-operation with such institutions, Polish public administration staff will learn how the older EU Member States co-ordinated the process of EU integration. By becoming familiar with the solutions used

in Euro-Atlantic structures and in individual countries, the Polish administration will gradually transform its structures and procedures in accordance with international standards. ♦

Jan Pastwa, Head, Civil Service, may be reached at Litewska St. 2/4, 00 198 Warsaw, Poland.

► *continued from p. 1*

He also brings attention to PUMA work on an ethics checklist supporting the development of structures, institutions and mechanisms underpinning those standards in national administrations.

Desiré De Saedeleer, Director General of the Belgian *Institut de Formation de l'Administration Fédérale*, notes that ethics has evolved into a major public policy priority for the Federal Government of Belgium, where authorities are using transparency as a means to address the issue. René Jakl, a Czech journalist, reports how in Prague, too, transparency in state institutions is receiving the attention of public officials. Finally, Neil Usher of the European Court of Auditors comments on how that organisation promotes deterrence of irregularities, such as fraud, to protect the European Communities' financial interest.

Common to all these articles is the message that a well-functioning "ethics infrastructure" includes separate functional components which, taken together, support a public sector environment which encourages high standards of conduct. ♦

Staffan Synnerström is SIGMA Senior Counsellor for Management of the Public Service and may be reached in Paris at tel: (33.1) 45.24.13.15; e-mail: staffan.synnerstrom@oecd.org.

Public Administration in the News

Wage Hikes and Job Cuts in Albania

The Government has approved new salary scales for the civil service. In a bid to reduce corruption, top government officials will earn up to 70 per cent more from 1 April. The monthly salary of the President will double to US\$845, while ministers will receive US\$647-\$760. Other civil servants will receive 20 per cent salary increases. At the same time, according to Prime Minister Fatos Nano, the Government seeks to cut 15,000 public sector posts during 1998. The state employs approximately 267,000 persons, of which 150,000 work in the administration. Source: *Koha Jone* and RFE/RL Newswire.

Proposal on Bulgarian Salaries

The Minister of Finance, Mouravei Radev, has announced that he and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy will draft a joint proposal for creation of a national system for co-ordination and determination of the individual salaries of all employees and heads in the state administration. Radev indicated that the new wage-fixing system will take into account responsibility and the amount of work performed. At present, the National Assembly Chairman and the Prime Minister rank 19th in the pay hierarchy of persons employed in the state administration. The President, members of the Constitutional Court, the Director of the National Investigative Service and other senior members of the judiciary all draw

higher salaries. Source: Daily Chronicle (electronic bulletin), Sofia, Bulgaria.

Reform of Polish Sub-National Government

According to Interior Minister Janusz Tomaszewski, the Polish Government plans to call for a reduction in the number of provinces from 49 to 15 or fewer and for the creation of a new administrative unit, the *powiat*, which would be run by locally elected officials. Source: PAP via RFE/RL Newswire.

Salary Adjustments in Slovenia

Slovenian Members of Parliament passed a law cutting their own salaries by 5 per cent from February to help reduce public spending. The law, passed on 27 January, voided a pay rise which went into effect earlier in the month, and returned lawmakers' salaries to the level they stood at in December 1997. The relatively high salaries of members of parliament have been a source of public criticism for several years. As of December 1997, members of parliament earned a gross salary of between 664,025 tolar (US\$3,888) and 979,558 tolar (US\$5,735) -- at least four times higher than wages on average. The law also froze the salaries of employees in state-run institutions and companies at the December 1997 level until December of 1998, when they may be raised by 85 per cent of the consumer price inflation rate. Source: Reuter.

Customs Difficulties in Central and Eastern Europe

A survey of one hundred multi-national firms in 13 western European countries on national customs practices in fifteen central and eastern European countries shows that 89 per cent of the firms have experienced customs difficulties in Central and Eastern Europe. The survey, sponsored by the worldwide air express company DHL, shows that three-fifths of responding firms believe that customs authorities in the region do not understand the way business works, and one-quarter have mentioned the problem of corruption. The report states that "the most straightforward customs procedures are to be found in the five countries that are first in line for EU membership." DHL's Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe, Peter Davies, stated that "there needs to be a process of educating customs authorities about what business needs. In some countries, the problem is also one of lack of motivation, resources and pay." Source: *The DHL Customs Report for Central and Eastern Europe*.

Readers are invited to submit information about developments in central and eastern European public administrations to: Editor, PMF/TGP, SIGMA-OECD, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France; fax: (33.1) 45.24.13.00; e-mail: sigma-contact@oecd.org.

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<http://www.bazza.com/sj/humour/DilbertsLawsOfWork.html>

Managing Across Levels of Government

Managing Across Levels of Government, OECD/PUMA

This publication highlights the main emerging trends among OECD countries in management across different levels of government (central, local, etc.); the resulting tensions and challenges for inter-governmental relations; and the implications for managers in central government. The publication also features 26 country-specific chapters mapping the current and evolving distribution of functions, powers and resources between levels of government -- and the debate and pressures behind the changes occurring.

A mix of economic, political and cultural factors is driving the growing interest in governance, of which inter-governmental management is an integral part. New approaches by central governments towards public management are also at play in

response to pressures for budgetary discipline and improved democracy. The report, which builds on years of work by the OECD Public Management Committee, highlights that the ongoing changes in inter-governmental relations aim to: 1) facilitate the achievement of national objectives (eg fiscal strategy); 2) remove unnecessary duplication and overlap; 3) obtain better value for taxpayer's money; 4) make services more responsive to local needs; and 5) empower citizens to participate more in decision-making.

These five aims give rise to several problem areas specific to inter-governmental management. In particular, governments must decide how to adjust their structures to achieve a more coherent approach to governance; allocate responsibilities and degrees of autonomy to each level of

government; and strengthen mechanisms of inter-governmental co-ordination. Further, governments also need to decide how to apply performance management techniques to improving inter-governmental relations, and adapt inter-governmental financing to facilitate accountability and fiscal restraint.

Examples of developments in inter-governmental management cited in this PUMA publication include the formation by legislation of regional councils in Finland in 1994; a Strategic Management Initiative which encourages central/local consultation in Ireland; and the 1992 "Deconcentration Charter" which significantly changed the responsibilities of French prefects. ♦

Managing Across Levels of Government, 418 pages, ISBN 92-64-15575-9, 1997. To order: OECD Publications Service, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France. Tel: (33.1) 49.10.42.83; fax (33.1) 49.10.42.76; e-mail: sales@oecd.org.

INBOX:

A COMPENDIUM OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

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

From SIGMA

SIGMA Papers: No. 22. *Management Challenges at the Centre of Government: Coalition Situations and Government Transitions*, 1998, 78 pages. Also in French.

To order: SIGMA Information Services, SIGMA-OECD, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France. Tel: (33.1) 45.24.13.16; fax (33.1) 45.24.13.00; e-mail: sigma.contact@oecd.org. SIGMA publications also are available free of charge on the Internet at: <http://www.oecd.org/puma/sigmaweb>.

From PUMA

Co-operative Approaches to Regulation, 1997, 51 pages. Also in French.

Regulatory Impact Analysis: Best Practices in OECD

Countries, 1997, 291 pages. Also in French.

OECD Report on Regulatory Reform: Summary, 1997, 7 pages. Also in French.

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

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

BREMMER, Ian and Ray TARAS. *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, 1997, 743 pages.

To order: Cambridge University Press, The Pitt Building, Trumpington St., Cambridge, CB2 1RP, UK.

DIDIER, Jean-Pierre. "Reaffirming Ethics and Professionalism in the French Public Service."

International Review of Administrative Sciences, Vol. 63, No. 4, 1997, pp 565-582.

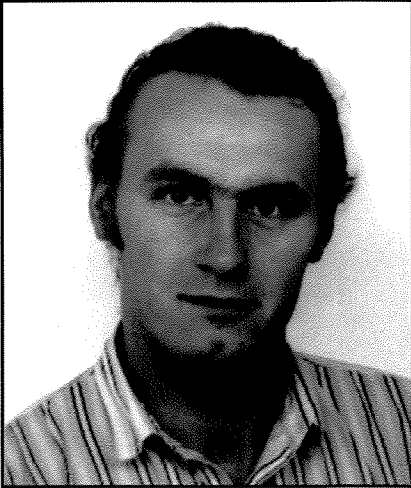
MAJONE, Giandomenico. "The Agency Model: The Growth of Regulation and Regulatory Institutions in the European Union," *EIPASCOPE*, No. 3, 1997, pp 9-14.

PROSKUROVSKA, Svetlana and Tiina RANDMA. "Training of Civil Servants: Reflections upon the Civil Service Forum," *NISPACEE News*, Vol. IV, No. 4, December 1997, pp 1-3.

TASCHERAU, Suzanne and Jose Edgardo L., eds. *Governance Innovations: Lessons from Experience. Building Government— Citizen— Business Partnerships*, 1997, 142 pages. To order: Institute on Governance, 122 Clarence St., Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5P6, Canada.

Proposed Law Shines Light into Czech Administration

by René Jaki



Courtesy photo

René Jaki

The Czech Republic, like Bulgaria and the United Kingdom, is considering the adoption of legislation to guarantee access by the public to government information. The media and non-governmental organisations have thrown their weight behind such measures on the grounds that citizens have a right to know the policies and actions of their government. As reported below, journalists in Prague have for years advocated greater transparency in state institutions.

When the Czech weekly *Respekt* asked the Ministry of Agriculture for information about state agricultural subsidies three years ago, the newspaper's request was denied. The Ministry replied that it had to refuse the request to protect "an economic secret." This situation changed when *Respekt's* former Editor-in-Chief, Vladimír Mlýnár, became a member of the Government during the political stir of recent months. His colleague, Josef Lux, Minister of Agriculture, agreed then to settle their old legal dispute and finally made the information public.

A Legal Solution

The outcome of this case represented a big step forward in creating greater openness in state

bodies. Indeed, Oldrich Kuzilek, a Member of Parliament, and Senator Michael Zantovsky have proposed the Freedom of Information Act to deal with the issue. The authors of the proposed act believe that there should be a standard legal solution for these situations -- a standard which does not depend on the prevailing political atmosphere or personal contacts. They found inspiration in British and French legislation; a recommendation of the Council of Europe, R(81)19; and legislation in the United States bearing the same name as the Czech measure.

The Czech Constitution protects the right of citizens to obtain information held by the public administration, but this right has not been defined in any specific law. There are some provisions in the Press Act, but these are considered weak, and apply only when information is requested by a journalist. "Information from the state administration has to be accessible for anybody, not only for a journalist", states Kuzilek.

Leading Journalists Express Support

Petr Holub, *Respekt's* Editor-in-Chief, welcomes the new law: "Transparency of the government has to be a general rule, with only some strictly specified exemptions." Holub considers the Official Secrets Act, which is being prepared at the same time, to be a legal measure complementary to the Freedom of Information Act. It should "protect the state secrets sufficiently", he says.

"A law on the freedom of information is absolutely necessary", says Jan Lipold, Editor-in-Chief of domestic news at the country's largest newspaper, *MF Dnes*. He thinks it is not only the law that matters: "Public discussion [of the law] is crucial for a citizen's mentality. Citizens will become more aware of what is public and what their right is. People are not used to going after information." Lipold thinks this holds true even for some journalists.

Strict Requirements

The proposed act lists all the bodies that are required to disclose information, including the entire state administration, the Office of President, the Office of Senate and House of Deputies, courts, and the Czech National Bank. All of these institutions are obliged to present upon demand any information which does not pass a strict test of the protection of privacy, state interest or economic secrecy. Economic secrecy is defined very precisely due to its former wide abuse.

If the legislative proposal is passed without changes, the state bodies covered also will have to publish certain basic information on the Internet, such as organisational status and structure, guidelines for possible applications, and public registration lists. State bodies must respond within ten days of a request, and a citizen requesting information will have to pay a photocopy fee of three crowns (US\$0.09) per page and a 150 crown (US\$4.31) flat fee for information in a written form.

Kuzilek pointed out that the new law is efficient because it contains "sanctions against officials who would unlawfully deny to disclose information." A fine up to 50,000 crowns (US\$1,436) or a ban of public service for up to two years may be imposed upon violators.

Broadbased Political Support

The authors from the right-wing Civic Democratic Alliance expect strong support of the proposal in their party and across the Parliament. Pavel Dostál, a parliamentary deputy from the strongest left-wing opposition party, the Social Democrats (CSSD), agrees: "I will definitely vote for this law, and I think the [parliamentary] club of CSSD is going to support it." ♦

René Jaki is a freelance reporter in Prague. He may be reached at e-mail: jakl@jus.prf.cuni.cz.

Institute Supports Parliamentary Development

by Enie Wesseldijk



Courtesy photo

Enie Wesseldijk

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament created the International Institute for Democracy in 1990 "to foster contacts and co-ordination among public and private institutions and organisations...and with governmental and non-governmental organisations concerned with supporting and promoting the development of democratic institutions and practices..." The Institute also was asked "to co-ordinate and promote research on pluralistic democracy."

The Institute's founders stated that to achieve these objectives, the Institute should:

- establish contact with and collect information on like-minded national and international public and private organisations;
- serve as a clearinghouse by distributing the information collected to its members and other interested bodies; and
- organise meetings and conferences between its members and other like-minded organisations, with a view to better co-ordinate their work.

Disseminating Information

The Institute's clearinghouse function became really visible in March 1992 with the launch of

the *Clearing House Review*. This bulletin contains information on seminars, conferences and other events up to five months in advance on democracy and human rights world-wide, as well as a list of recent publications in these fields.

The bimonthly publication, which has grown from four to an average of fifteen pages, is not only an important reference publication for detailed information on democracy activities and recent publications, but also an effective instrument for networking and co-ordination. Several thousand copies are distributed, and it is used by national parliaments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and academics globally.

Parliamentary Development

Because of its parliamentary background, the Institute has always particularly focused on the development of parliaments and parliamentary systems as part of democratic institution-building. After less than a year of operations, in July 1991, the Institute organised its first seminar on parliamentary practice and procedure for parliamentary staff from eight central and eastern European countries, including the Soviet Union and the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. This was the first of what became the following year a regular annual event.

Both the international European parliamentary assemblies and national parliaments have undertaken a wide range of activities in the past seven years aimed at assisting the central and eastern European parliaments with their transition to a democratic parliamentary system.

While more and more NGO's are offering training programmes to parliaments in Central and Eastern Europe, they often do not take into account what has already been done by other actors. Assessing the past is very important at a moment when the needs, for several parliaments, are changing from "getting started" to facing the challenges of European

integration. Even the terminology has changed, from "assistance" programmes to "co-operation" programmes.

Berlin Conference on Parliaments

Bearing this in mind, the Institute convened, in co-operation with the German *Bundestag*, and with sponsorship by the European Union's Tacis Democracy Programme and the European Parliament, a "Conference on Parliamentary Development Programmes" in Berlin in May 1997. Members and parliamentary staff representing over thirty parliaments from Europe and North America as well as representatives of NGO's, foundations and institutional funders participated. Emerging from their discussions were proposals on how to co-operate and where to put the priorities.

Conference participants concluded that:

- each country must find its own, specific path in the democratisation process;
- pre-programme "contractual" agreements are most likely to lead to successful programmes;
- projects that are practical and concrete are highly valued by pragmatic legislatures;
- there is a need to balance training and exposure to other parliaments for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff;
- research and documentation services for the parliament are especially important in achieving democratisation;
- in seeking to strengthen the permanent capacity of the legislature as an institution, it is important to have the benefits of parliamentary development spread widely in the institution and avoid their capture by any single party or small group of individuals.

A copy of the report of this conference, as well as other information on the Institute's work, is available upon request directed to the address below. ♦

Enie Wesseldijk, Executive Secretary, International Institute for Democracy may be reached at Palais de l'Europe, B.P. 431 R6, 67006 Strasbourg Cedex, France; tel: (33.3) 88.41.25.41; fax: (33.3) 88.41.27.81.

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 principally financed by Phare. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an intergovernmental organisation of 29 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: Public Administration Development Strategies; Policy-Making, Co-ordination and Regulation; Budgeting and Resource Allocation; Public Service Management; Administrative Oversight, Financial Control and Audit. In addition, an Information Services Unit disseminates published and on-line materials on public management topics.

ON THE AGENDA



Upcoming Programmes

18-20 March 1998, Prague, Czech Republic. NISPAcee Sixth Annual Meeting. Contact: NISPAcee Secretariat, Hanulova 5/B, 840 02 Bratislava 42, Slovakia. Tel: (421.7) 78.53.57; e-mail: nispa@nispa.sk; WWW: <http://www.nispa.sk>. In English.

27 March 1998, London, UK. Workshop on "Europeanisation and the Regulation of Risk." Contact: R. Huish, Science Policy Support Group, London School of Economics, 25 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1AW, UK. Tel: (44.171) 242.37.75; fax: (44.171) 242.37.78. In English.

11-12 June 1998, Paris, France. Ninth SIGMA Liaison Group meeting. Contact: J. O'Mahony, SIGMA. Tel: (33.1) 45.24.13.04; fax: (33.1) 45.24.13.00; e-mail: sigma.contact@oecd.org. In English and French.

15-19 June 1998, Maastricht, the Netherlands. Seminar on "European Negotiations." Contact: W. Veenman, EIPA, POB 1229, 6201 BE Maastricht, the Netherlands. Tel: (31.43) 329.62.22; fax (31.43) 329.62.96. In English and French.

17-18 June 1998, Paris, France. "Ready for Integration? The Coming Enlargement of the EU," International Open Experts' Seminar in the series Great Debates. Contact: Valerie Cohen, Cicero Foundation. Tel: (33.1) 43.80.18.21; fax: (33.1) 42.67.92.04; e-mail: cifo@compuserve.com; WWW: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/cifo>. In English.

17-19 June 1998, Maastricht, the Netherlands. Seminar on "European Documentation." Contact: W. Veenman, EIPA, POB 1229, 6201 BE Maastricht, the Netherlands. Tel: (31.43) 329.62.22; fax (31.43) 329.62.96. In English and 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, please send details to SIGMA (address on page 2). A more complete calendar of events may be found at: <http://www.oecd.org/puma/sigmaweb>.