

OECD Recommends  
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Public Servants

Preparing the Public for  
European Integration

Lithuania Plans  
Information Strategy

UK Supports Training in  
the Baltic States

## Government's Role to Inform About Europe

by Cornelia Kirchweger

Information is the keyword for bringing Europe together. Studies suggest that declining acceptance of the European Union in Member States is attributable to a lack of understandable information for the citizenry about what the EU is all about, its achievements, its role in the everyday life of people, and its function in post-war history. To many, the EU seems to be an untouchable, incomprehensible, anonymous thing, far from the individual. Member State experience has revealed that by continuously informing the people on European matters, a partnership can be built up between the Union and the citizens. This experience can help Candidate Countries as they strengthen their communication capacities and formulate strategies to inform their societies about European integration.

### Capturing People's Attention

Providing information on Europe does not mean deluging people with an avalanche of data, leading them to close their ears and go on living with their preoccupations. Austria, for example, has shown that a broad-based information campaign can capture the people's attention and motivate them to seek further details. Such an approach must take into account facts, as well as human emotional aspects; people need to be able to relate EU matters to their daily lives. Critical voices may claim that such an approach is propaganda, but this is not the case if *both* pro and con positions are provided, and if people are apprised that additional information is available. On the contrary, *thoroughly informing citizens is the obligation of governments and is the only basis upon which people can decide on such a complex topic.*

### Making Europe Tangible

The EU must become something one can "feel;" this can be made possible by informing the people. One approach is to present the EU as a dynamic construction



undergoing constant changes, *for* the people of Europe, not against them. The next decades will bring further challenges which only can be met together. Governments of current and prospective Member States must realise this. They also need to be aware that effective government communications can help the citizenry to understand why such developments take place, and where they lead. If that can be achieved, people will accept the Union as a joint project of its Members, and the feeling of "we Europeans" will be reinforced.

This issue of *PMF* explains how the governments of Austria, Hungary, Lithuania and Sweden have managed the process of communicating with journalists and the public on Europe. On the following pages, public administration practitioners and public relations specialists from these countries report on the formulation, co-ordination, and implementation of communication campaigns. Their insights are particularly timely in light of the increased media coverage of European integration and good governance in many states. ♦

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### Forum Focus

Skopje Starts Overhaul  
of the  
Public Administration

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## Administrative Reform and the Accession Partnerships

The European Commission's proposals in Agenda 2000 included bringing together the different forms of the European Union's pre-accession support within one framework called Accession Partnerships. Following consultations with the European Parliament, and based on the priorities, principles and general conditions laid out by the Council, the Commission has recently adopted individual Accession Partnerships with Candidate Countries.

The Partnerships aim at helping the central and eastern European applicant countries prepare to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria for membership, as well as to enhance their administrative structures so that the *acquis communautaire* is not only incorporated in national legislation, but that there is capacity to implement, monitor and enforce it as well. While the Partnerships enumerate priority areas and objectives for the short and medium term, they also advise that the Candidate Countries should address all recommendations included in the Commission's avis (opinions).

The Partnerships spell out the instruments for Community financial and technical assistance, with the Phare Programme serving as the main financial instrument. Seventy per cent of Phare assistance is to be channelled to investment support, and 30 per cent to institution building. Priorities of each Accession Partnership differ from one Candidate Country to another, depending on the situation and areas indicated in the avis. The measures aimed at improving the public administration include, for example, enactment and implementation of a civil service law, improvement of financial control and audit functions, the fight against corruption, improvement of inter-ministerial co-ordination, and strengthening priority ministries.

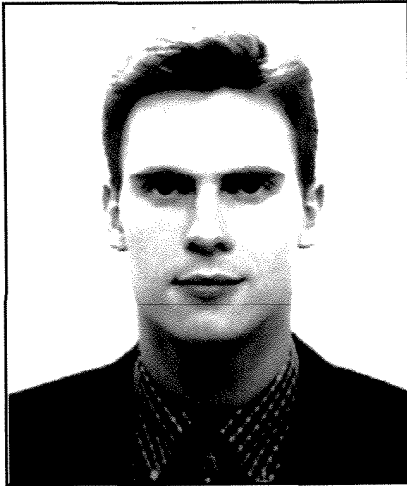
Judyta Fiedin, Administrator and Desk Officer for Poland and Slovenia, SIGMA

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# OECD Recommendation Aims to Improve Management of Public Ethics

by Frédéric Boudier



Courtesy Photo

Frédéric Boudier

On 23 April 1998, the OECD Council adopted a "Recommendation on Improving Ethical Conduct in the Public Service." This project, prepared by the OECD's Public Management Committee, demonstrates the importance that the OECD countries attach to improving the management of public ethics. In two years' time, the Committee will present a report to the Council analysing the ethics-related experiences, actions and practices that have proved effective.

OECD action on ethics responds to concerns that the government's image and ties with citizens need restoration, that public service values should be adjusted to a rapidly changing environment, and that steps should be taken to check the spread of wrongdoing within the public service. The Recommendation proposes a methodology for countries to regularly review ethical practices; promote promising initiatives; incorporate the ethical dimension into management frameworks; combine aspects of ethics management systems based on ideals with those based on the respect of rules; and assess the effects of public management reforms on ethical conduct.

The Recommendation also sets forth twelve "Principles for Managing Ethics in the Public Service," intended as a guide to action taken to improve public ethics. Although aimed primarily at the OECD Member countries and reflecting their concerns, these principles will provide non-Member countries in Central and Eastern Europe with a useful reference when they implement their own ethical frameworks.

## Principles for Ethics-oriented Governance

Proper ethics management begins with compliance with, and dissemination of, clearly-defined and strictly-applied standards. Thus, the first of twelve principles stresses that (1) *ethical standards for public service should be clear*. In addition, in order to be disseminated and conveyed, (2) *ethical standards should be reflected in the legal framework*. But enshrining principles, even in law, does not suffice to make them applicable. Public servants must be able to put those principles into effect amidst the problems and tensions they encounter every day. It is for this reason that (3) *ethical guidance should be available to public servants*. It is also important to establish procedures for disclosing breaches of these standards, while protecting those who report such breaches. For this reason, (4) *public servants should know their rights and obligations when exposing wrongdoing*.

## Creating the Right Environment

Clearly-stated and well-understood principles are not enough, as both the political and administrative environments must be conducive to the development of an ethical culture. Creating such environments entails a (5) *political commitment to ethics*. Thereafter, transparency and clarity must both be

present. (6) *The decision-making process should be transparent and open to scrutiny*, whether oversight is exercised by the legislature, citizens or the media. Increasing interaction between the public and private sectors also demands clarity, and thus (7) *there should be clear guidelines for interaction between the public and private sectors*. Further, (8) *managers should demonstrate and promote ethical conduct*. They have an important role in this regard, in particular by setting an example of ethically irreproachable conduct.

## Encouraging Better Public Management

Standards should be disseminated throughout government, and an environment contributing to compliance with those standards created, via mechanisms that reflect the commitment of the public service to ethics in daily management. For this reason, (9) *management policies, procedures and practices should promote ethical conduct*. Similarly, with regard both to career and pay prospects and to recruiting and promotion within the public service, (10) *public service conditions and management of human resources should promote ethical conduct*. To ensure that public servants are held accountable to their superiors and the public at large, (11) *adequate accountability mechanisms should be in place within the public service*. Lastly, human nature being fallible, (12) *appropriate procedures and sanctions should exist to deal with misconduct*. Stable procedures and sufficient resources are needed so that any detected wrongdoing can be met with a rapid response. ♦

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# Austria's Successful Slogan: "We are Europe"

by Cornelia Kirchweger



Courtesy photo

Cornelia Kirchweger

*Up until a few years before Austria applied for membership in the European Community (in 1989), public awareness of the European Community was limited. Yet the Government knew that when it decided to apply for membership it would eventually have to hold a referendum, since membership would bring constitutional changes requiring the people's assent. Thus, officials began to plan a strategy to inform the public.*

Austria started a European Union information initiative in late 1992. The initiative, funded with a budget of Sch 200m, continued until the referendum held in June 1994. Four out of five eligible voters participated in the referendum, and two-thirds of the voters said "yes" to EU membership. Polls indicated that the information work of the Government contributed to the strong pro-membership result.

## Expert Support and Internal Organisation

The Government invited advertising and public relations agencies to tender concepts for the initiative. The selection of winning firms was made at the highest political level, and the winning agencies worked out their strategies

with the Government. The campaign slogan selected was "We are Europe."

The Government set up a Europe Information Department to manage day-to-day work with the agencies and co-ordinate the flow of information between the political and administrative levels. A permanent working group was set up, chaired on the political level by the EU State Secretary, and on the administrative level by the head of the Europe Information Department.

The group met weekly and included representatives of all ministries, the Prime Minister's Office, and the public relations and advertising agencies. Experts were invited to brief the group on new developments and specific EU-related topics. Decisions were made in the permanent working group on a consensual basis.

## Target Groups

Target groups had to be identified to provide the right information to different demographic groups with particular concerns. Target groups in Austria were women in their roles as mothers (ensuring children's future); the elderly (fear of change); farmers (concern about losing income due to agricultural reforms); small and medium-sized enterprises (threat of enhanced competition); labour (fear of job loss); and teachers (fear of competition from German teachers). Information packages were developed on specific themes to provide appropriate answers.

## Means of Communication

Prior to the referendum, information was posted on billboards all over Austria under banners like "better together than alone" and "your opinion counts." These were complemented by advertisements on television and radio and in newspapers and special-interest publications. During the negotiations,

results of negotiations were constantly communicated to the public via brochures, teletext and advertisements.

A hot line was set up in the Prime Minister's Office and staffed by students trained to answer inquiries. The hot line number was constantly communicated to the people through television and other means, and the number of calls sometimes reached 20,000 a month. Calls could be made from all over Austria at local tariff, and informational material was mailed free of charge.

Opinion polls conducted during the campaign sought to determine public awareness of the campaign and its contents. The results revealed widespread awareness and served an important strategic purpose.

## What Was Learned

The campaign taught a number of lessons:

- an information campaign like this on largely political issues must be backed by the government (one voice, one agenda) to be successful;
- facts are important, but one should not give promises in terms of money or timing, etc. (people will remember promises);
- information should not just be thrown at people; instead, the public should be apprised of what information is available and how they can get it (eg via a hot line);
- the campaign should not stop abruptly, leaving people alone at a moment just when they start becoming interested in the subject;
- networking with all kinds of groups is an important tool to spread information; and
- budgeting should not be overly restrictive, and the information strategy must be kept flexible so it can be adapted to evolving needs. ♦

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# Hungary Fills Domestic Information Gap on European Affairs

by Iván Udvardi

To inform the public and prepare its citizens for EU membership, the Hungarian Government formulated a comprehensive communication strategy. Social scientists and a public relations firm contributed to the elaboration of the strategy, which was adopted by the Government's Interministerial Committee on European Integration in April 1995.

The Hungarian Government delegated responsibility for the central co-ordination of information activities related to EU accession to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A co-ordination unit was created under the Ministry's Department for EU Political Relations. This institutional structure links to the Interministerial Committee on European Integration and ensures that government officials responsible for the day-to-day management of EU affairs can be closely involved in the process. It also ensures that relevant parts of the most recent decisions and analyses can be directly incorporated into the strategy, and that necessary adjustments are made smoothly throughout the implementation phase. The structure also permits co-operation of various ministries in the field of EU communications and avoids overlapping structures and programmes.

## Three-Stage Implementation Process

The communications strategy proposed a three-stage implementation approach. The first stage, begun in January 1996, was intended to disseminate factual, well-balanced information with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding of EU-related issues and laying the foundations of an open, public debate on accession's consequences. The effectiveness of this stage can be measured by the increase in the general public's level of knowledge.

The second stage is based on the foundations and communication networks laid down in the first. This stage aims to enable the citizens, having since acquired basic information on the EU, to develop their own opinions on membership.

Disseminated information will become more concrete and personalised, and will closely follow the negotiation process. The document describing in detail this second stage was finalised in May 1998, and the first projects associated with it will be implemented later this year.

The aim of the third stage – timed to precede a constitutionally mandated referendum on membership – is to ensure that informed citizens will participate in the referendum, and support with their vote both the negotiated conditions of accession and the legitimacy of EU integration.

Funds from the state budget and complementary Phare resources are paying for implementation of the communications strategy.

## Research and Regional Differences

A survey was conducted to set the main parameters of communications activity, confirm the selection of target groups, and determine their detailed profile from the perspective of accession. Surveys are repeated annually to monitor the strategy's effectiveness. These surveys permit "fine-tuning," including modification of programmes aimed at specific target groups, and help to advise on future activities.

A major principle of the communications strategy is the principle of regionality. The design of targeted projects takes into account regional differences. The Government encourages participation in the communications process of

various local and subregional associations, as well as the regional media.

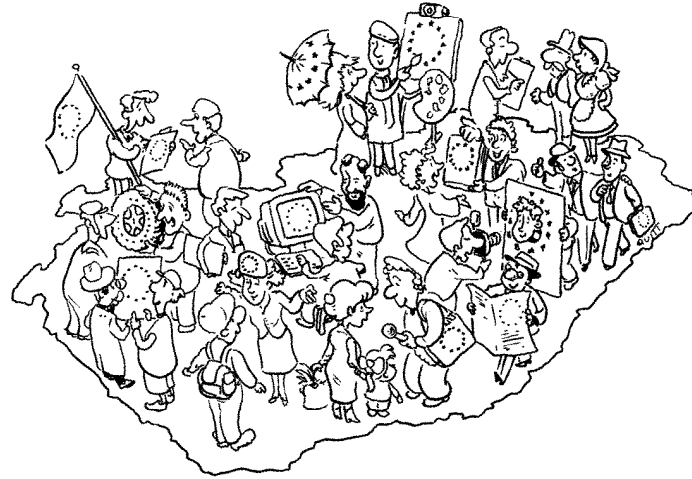
## Wide Range of Activities

Various "project-packages" have been prepared to reach different audiences. Examples include study trips to Brussels for reporters covering European affairs; teaching materials for educators; competitions for students; EU supplements in specialty publications reaching farmers and entrepreneurs; funding to NGO initiatives; and "Europe Days" and EU information stands at fairs to reach the population at large.

Informing citizens of central and eastern European countries about EU accession presents a new challenge to the public institutions of these countries. How can they better communicate with the citizens they serve? As even within a single country there is a need to address the demand for information with due consideration to existing regional differences, there is no single best example to follow.

We are ready to share our experience, project ideas and solutions, just as we ourselves have learned a great deal from the experience of the newest EU Member States. Communications strategies work best with careful planning, thorough knowledge of the local situation, excellent ideas and networking – not necessarily big budgets. ♦

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Illustration/László Quitt

# Sweden's Communications Approach Relies on Non-Governmental Actors

by Christina Lindberg and Peeter Luksep



Courtesy photo

Christina Lindberg

*Sweden became an EU Member State in 1995 after a referendum the previous year. The membership process had started five years earlier, with a footnote (!) in a Government package of proposals to counter Sweden's growing economic problems.*

The Swedish information strategy was largely built through co-ordination with a multitude of civic organisations (NGOs), including educational organisations, political parties, youth organisations, trade unions, and various interest groups such as environmentalists. At an early stage, NGOs could apply for governmental funds to carry out educational programmes about the EU. These were allocated without political strings attached.

When negotiations were more or less concluded, a government information service was set up to provide basic and strictly factual information. This included a number of publications, describing in a neutral manner various aspects of membership, and a phone-in service for the general public to provide necessary facts on all sorts of aspects of membership.

## Information Overload

Parallel to the government information service, grants were given through a separate bill in Parliament to the "Yes" and "No" sides

that were formed by political parties and civic organisations. In addition, both sides had access to contributions from sponsors. The budgetary allocation to the "Yes" and "No" sides was equal in size. It was up to respective sides to agree on the distribution of these resources among the various campaign organisations and projects that were set up.

The complexity of EU membership, in the sense that membership covers a number of larger and smaller issues in various fields, gave rise to feelings of not knowing enough. But it also created simplistic views based on a single issue, frequently a minor one, and surprisingly often a misinterpretation of EU regulations or policies.

One example is related to the size of strawberries. Swedish strawberries are small and sweet. Continental strawberries are bigger and have a different taste. Huge headlines appeared in media stating that Swedish strawberries would be banned by the EU, which of course was not true.

How can an information campaign counter these kinds of reactions to membership? Factual information was readily available but had limited effect. There seemed to be information overload. In spite of tremendous amounts of information being available, many people complained that they did not know enough. It can be presumed that hesitation was based less on unavailability of information than on not understanding, or not trusting, the underlying rationale of the EU.

The "Yes" campaign strategy was fairly low-key: a strategy to discuss the basic reasons for European integration, to invite people to build a better Europe rather than just to harmonise standards, increase or decrease farming subsidies, important as those might be. Another strategy was to use the credibility



Courtesy photo

Peeter Luksep

of well-respected personalities. For example, the individuals signed ads stating that they were in favour of a membership.

## Lessons to be Learned

In Sweden today, the EU is perceived as a symbol for all problems that did not disappear. The understanding of positive effects, such as the benefits of the free movement of people, capital, goods and services, has yet to come. Instead, the debate focuses on subjects like the membership fee, "unnecessary" regulations, bureaucracy, cheating with agricultural support money and food prices.

What lessons can be learned from the Swedish experience? First, opinions are hard to measure and can change very quickly, especially on an issue for which people do not have clear views developed over time. Second, objective factors are not the only ones that count. Third, the EU should not be used as a tool for domestic policy. And fourth, with due respect to differences in the importance of NGOs between Sweden and countries of Central and Eastern Europe, channels should be found that are not "the Government-tells-you channels". The educational system is one semi-governmental alternative. ♦

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## *Strategic Considerations in a Communications Campaign*

*Countries which have already implemented strategies to communicate on European integration have learned a number of lessons. Their tips and observations may prove helpful to current EU Applicant Countries:*

### *Campaign Organisation*

- Begin information work early enough; it takes at least six months to get the attention of people on a complicated subject like the EU.
- Do not calculate an overly restrictive budget.
- Do not think that the administration can replace professional public relations and advertising agencies, but do recruit staff experienced in public relations, journalism, and electronic media who can work with them.
- Be aware that agency cultures differ from administration cultures (flexibility and openness to learn others' "languages" is a must).
- At an early stage of the campaign, develop stable relations with the media and help reporters gain access to prompt factual information on the EU.
- Recognise the important role of regional media and develop a special approach to serve their needs.

### *Messages*

- Try to avoid taking a top-down, "the government tells you to vote yes" approach. The issue must not turn into a question of "establishment versus the people."
- The government should clearly and publicly stick to its intention to join the EU; make clear why membership is important, both in the short and long term.
- Do not promise heaven; highlight both potential advantages as well as disadvantages of membership.
- Do not blame everything on the EU. Many unpopular or painful measures undertaken in relation to membership would have to be undertaken in any case (eg to improve the functioning of the economy). Every time excuses are used, such as "it is required by the EU," enemies to the EU are made.
- The EU is rich and powerful and thus potentially scary. Treat sceptics and opponents with respect, and use facts to alleviate fears.
- Take "simple" everyday worries of the people seriously even though the underlying rationale for the EU is on another level.
- Ensure that the public is aware and confident of the special national values (cultural, economic) with which the country will enrich the community of EU Member States.
- Keep in mind that the mood of the public can change very quickly; when a certain level of information is reached, people will become aware that their lives will change.
- Use professional expertise to interpret results of public opinion surveys.

## Skopje Sheds Past While Undertaking Ambitious Restructuring of P



Photo/Bart W. Edie

Ljiljana Doneva

*The Government and administration of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are working on a major reform of public administration within the legal framework of the country's 1991 Constitution. Authorities are committed to ensuring that public administration is compatible with the new constitutional order and the needs of a democratic, market-oriented polity with ambitions to integrate with Europe. In the following interview, Ljiljana Doneva, Under-Secretary of the Budget Sector in the country's Ministry of Finance, reports on the radical changes underway.*

**PMF:** *Since achieving independence, the Republic has continued to function with a public administration system inherited from the former Yugoslav Federation. What have been the impediments to reforming this system to meet the needs of a modern European state with a market economy?*

**Ljiljana Doneva:** The Republic has inherited a variety of institutional structures oriented towards central planning from pre-independence times. These are increasingly in discordance with the emerging market economy.

After independence, a new Constitution was adopted, and the legislative and judiciary branches were established. Now new steps are under way towards the preparation of draft legislation that would address issues such as the definition of a public servant, the relationship of the executive branch to Parliament, and the functions to be undertaken by the Government that are consistent with development of a market economy.

**PMF:** *What are the main problems with the public administration as it stands, and what are the primary objectives of administrative reform in the Republic?*

**LD:** The main problem with the public administration is the excessive number of employees. The public sector -- consisting of the general government and state enterprises -- is extremely large in relation to the size of the economy. The fundamental objective of the reform process is to create a public administration that can efficiently provide a good service to the Government and to the public.

**"The public sector -- consisting of the general government and state enterprises -- is extremely large in relation to the size of the economy. The fundamental objective of the reform process is to create a public administration that can efficiently provide a good service to the Government and to the public."**

**PMF:** *What are the elements of the new legal framework which you seek to put into place to support these objectives? At present, there are no laws specifically regulating public service job categories and salaries. Do you envision any changes here?*

**LD:** We intend to restructure the government administration by amalgamating overlapping government ministries and agencies and making others redundant, which will reduce government employment by at least 45 per cent over the medium term. The civil service wage scale, which currently is limited in the range of its differentials between skilled and unskilled workers, will be expanded to provide appropriate incentives. This reform will be undertaken only after restructuring of the government sector. We also will establish a transparent system of promotion and merit increases to help develop a more efficient government organisation.

**PMF:** *Experience in other countries has shown that sustained, high-level support is necessary for the successful implementation of the kinds of sweeping reforms you have cited. How is political leadership exercised in this area in your country, and how will momentum for administrative reform be maintained beyond this year's parliamentary elections? Are there any special task forces or other governmental bodies responsible for guiding reforms?*

**LD:** The present Government has sought to make public administration reform a non-partisan reform issue. An election will be held this year and, irrespective of the outcome, it is hoped that the Government can sustain reforms



# Public Administration



currently being planned. For this to be the case, the process must avoid needless confrontation either between political parties or with groups affected by reform. Some caution and time for consultation is the price that has to be paid to avoid such difficulties. This concern for building wide support for reform is likely to be a continuing feature of any successful process.

established together with a working level secretariat. The Commission consists of the President, the Minister of Justice, and representatives of eight other ministries. It will provide political leadership for the reform process as it gathers momentum. It also will identify priority steps to be taken and will allow policies and support to be co-ordinated and implemented across the Government

LD: Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia.

PMF: *A Phare Programme for public administration is scheduled to begin by the summer of 1998. In what way will this programme contribute to reform efforts?*

LD: We will request extensive technical assistance to enable the Commission for Public Administration Reform to lead the process of reform effectively and to identify and manage reform initiatives. These initiatives include technical assistance for improved financial control and audit arrangements in central government, and assistance in improving court procedures to provide for greater efficiency and to improve access to justice. Another area is devising a method for redistributing central resources to local government in a transparent way derived from needs. ♦

**“The present Government has sought to make public administration reform a non-partisan reform issue. An election will be held this year and, irrespective of the outcome, it is hoped that the Government can sustain reforms currently being planned.”**

PMF: *How are you preparing the population for work in this area? How is administrative reform being communicated to the media and society as a whole?*

LD: In January 1998, a Commission for Public Administration reform was

on the basis of the involvement of line ministries. It represents a clear indication of continuing commitment to the reform process at the highest levels.

PMF: *To what countries are you looking for ideas as you undertake reform?*

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# Lithuania Aims to Strengthen Co-ordination as It Prepares an EU

by Ruta Duobaite

*One of the key elements of Lithuania's preparation for EU accession is a national communication strategy on EU accession. Below, an official closely involved in the formulation of this strategy sets forth the main issues under consideration.*

Lithuania's population should be informed on a broad level about EU membership implications for Lithuania. Building up an informed opinion on the European Union and the implications of EU membership is an important aspect of the process of preparing for membership. The task of preparing for membership is greater for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe than it was for countries in previous waves of enlargement. This is because earlier entrants had closer relations to the EU, as well as citizens who had been exposed to information campaigns of both advocates and opponents of EU membership.

## *Co-ordination is Essential*

It is obvious that a coherent information strategy is needed and that it should be set up in 1998. The strategy should raise awareness of Lithuanians about EU-related issues and show the advantages and full meaning of the European integration process. First of all, however, there is a need for co-ordination and proper working structures, which are indispensable to the smooth implementation of an information campaign. It is important to formulate a common message; implement information work in a coherent way; and ensure close co-ordination of relations within the administration, and between the administration and the political level.

The information strategy should be approved politically. Therefore, an action



plan should be formulated for presentation at the political level. This plan would be the basis for a briefing paper to professional public relations and advertising agencies outlining the aim of the communications work. The final presentation of the plan should be presented again to the political level by the selected agencies. Consequently, the Government should formulate only broad strategic guidelines and leave implementation of the plan to the professional agencies.

“There is a need for co-ordination and proper working structures, which are indispensable to the smooth implementation of an information campaign.”

The campaign's main objectives are: 1) to supply politicians with well-prepared, consistent information on EU activities and policy; and 2) to inform the general

public about the benefits of EU membership.

Supplying information to politicians requires the preparation of arguments and answers to ensure that messages given by leading political figures are coherent. Specific tasks in this area include the need to analyse political traditions and customs of appealing to the public; define and estimate how target groups will receive messages; and develop the principles, a cohesive framework and an elaborated plan for messages to be disseminated through politicians.

Reaching the public through the mass media requires that information and surveys of public opinion towards the EU must be analysed. Hard facts need to be collected to address concerns about EU membership. Principles for information to be disseminated through targeted media must be chosen and elaborated; and advertising and informational materials to be published in different media must be outlined.

# Information Strategy

A campaign will have to be developed for specific social groups which will be most affected by Lithuanian membership in the EU (eg farmers, students). More generally, consideration must be given to managing implementation of the campaign, and monitoring its impact on the way the public views EU issues.

## *Differentiating Among Target Groups*

During 1998 and 1999, the information strategy should focus on state institutions, municipalities, mass media, politicians, persons influencing public opinion, and influential non-governmental organisations. From the year 2000, the focus should shift towards Lithuanian society, and especially to those who have no firm opinion on EU accession.

The programme for promoting general public awareness of EU-related issues should be implemented by presenting information according to the needs of different social groups. Emphasis should be put on the rural population, persons who have not received higher education, the youth, women and the unemployed. It is important to create a decentralised infrastructure for presenting information and maintaining communication on EU subjects which, in organisational terms, would encompass all regions of the country, together with regional municipal institutions.

## *Communication Tools*

The information campaign will present information through direct and indirect means. The former will include meetings of government officials with the public, discussions, seminars, conferences, contests, cultural activities, educational programmes and an EU telephone hot line. Indirect means include preparing information

material for the mass media, consultations and seminars for journalists covering EU issues, television and radio programmes, films, video clips, EU pages in the press, publications on the EU, academic research studies and the latest updates on the Internet.

The information campaign will feature fora, discussions and meetings of the public with officials of the European integration departments of the various ministries. Such meetings already have been organised in Vilnius, Siauliai and Klapeda. At these meetings, officials working on European affairs have presented different aspects of European integration, and explained the possible impact of EU membership on people's daily lives. In addition, special qualification programmes will be organised for journalists, officials and students.

“Regardless of when negotiations on EU membership begin, the people of Lithuania have to be constantly and systematically informed about the European integration process.”

There are still very few publications on EU-related issues in the Lithuanian language. The European Commission has translated a number of publications on the EU, while the European Integration Studies Centre has prepared publications, translations and informational material from several international conferences. However, there is a need for more translations, specialised periodicals and brochures, which would briefly and vividly present EU organisational structures and advantages of the integration process.

## *Role of the Mass Media*

The mass media will play an important role in informing society about the EU. Two new television programmes, “The Clock of Europe,” and “The Country: Europe,” clearly show that television is taking an increasingly active part in this process.

Lithuanian society is interested in new opportunities connected with EU membership; business, industry, agriculture and life patterns in EU Member States; and bilateral relations between Lithuania and EU Member States. Regional television stations should be involved in the information campaign, and thought can be given to implementing an “EU hot line,” an idea used successfully in Austria. Such a telephone service can be run by students, regularly briefed by experts, to respond to public queries about the EU. Once a month, Government officials could lead discussions on the hot line. This type of direct dialogue would serve the needs of the information campaign because it would give insight into the most frequently asked questions, problems and prevalent public opinions.

## *Improving Co-ordination to Inform Better*

Providing information to the general public, and discussing the ongoing processes in a manner understood by all is an enormous task which can be achieved only by a joint effort of the institutions involved in such activities. It has to be said, however, that activities have been somewhat uncoordinated so far. Regardless of when negotiations on EU membership begin, the people of Lithuania have to be constantly and systematically informed about the European integration process. ♦

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## Public Administration in the News

### *EU Aid to Republika Srpska*

The EU Council has adopted a joint action aimed at providing rapid, short-term assistance to the Government of the Republika Srpska. Up to ECU 6m is being made available immediately from a special account established and managed by the Office of the High Representative to allow the Government to begin working effectively. The funds are intended to support the temporary financing of public service salaries; development of a coherent and transparent budgetary framework; implementation of the common customs tariff for Bosnia-Herzegovina; and submission to Parliament of draft legislation on the reform of excise and sales taxes. Source: Agence Europe.

### *Bulgarians Perceive Widespread Corruption*

An opinion poll conducted of Bulgarian citizens by the Center for Democratic Studies shows widespread belief that there is corruption among Bulgarian officials. Eighty-six per cent of respondents said bribes are essential to obtain proper medical treatment. Seventy-four per cent said bribes are readily accepted by customs officers, while 63 per cent named judges and 56 per cent police as bribe-takers. Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents believe "it is a waste of time" to report cases of corruption, while 31 per cent said paying bribes was "bad, but unavoidable." Source: AFP via RFE/RL Newline.

### *Bulgaria Overhauls Administration*

Bulgaria's Government has approved the basic principles of a new state administration system. To combat corruption, they will define clearly the rights, obligations and powers of civil servants and introduce more transparency in their activities.

To achieve these goals, the Government will table in Parliament bills on the structure of state administration and on access to information, as well as amendments to an existing law on state and municipal tenders, said Mario Tagarinski, Minister of the State Administration. "We made a profound analysis of the existing administrative structures and identified the main problems -- lack of motivation among the staff, coercive methods of supervision and lack of co-ordination," he said. First efforts will be directed towards building an adequate legal framework as a basis for a modern administrative system. The second priority is to construct an internal information and communication system and to establish adequate organisational structures with clearly defined powers and obligations.

An important element of the new state administration system is the separation of the executive branch of power from the state administration responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the executive. "This will lead to a genuine 'depolarisation' of state administration and better motivation for those working in the

system," Tagarinski stated. A new qualifications and appraisal system is aimed at improving the administration. "We want to make civil servants feel more secure in order to improve their efficiency," the Minister added.

The strategy envisages the development of feedback with the public, and establishment of public control over the administration. The strategy also provides for the creation of more efficient control structures, including an internal control system to monitor the performance of civil servants. Source: Nikolay Staykov, Daily News (Sofia-based electronic bulletin).

### *Lithuania Scraps Ministries*

The *Seimas* has voted to eliminate the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Construction and Urban Development, and the Ministry of European Affairs. It is expected that a special commission working with European Union integration issues will be placed under the supervision of the Prime Minister and will perform co-ordination functions formerly handled by the Ministry of European Affairs. Source: Rokas M. Tracevskis, *The Baltic Times*.

*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.*

*"Complaints should be made to the management in writing and placed in the receptacle installed for that purpose at the Entrance, which is cleared weekly by the Dustman."*

*British actor George Robey, 1869-1954, known in the music halls as the "Prime Minister of Mirth."*

# Creating Legitimacy for Representative Democracy: The Case of Bulgaria

*Démocratie et représentation politique en Bulgarie*, 1998, Nadège Ragaru, Centre d' Etudes et de Recherches Internationales.

The popular protest which rocked Bulgaria in January 1997 revealed how fragile representative democracy's legitimacy is likely to be in post-communist regimes. As an often overlooked item in the studies of transition in Central and Eastern Europe, political representation provides a vantage point for monitoring the process of democratic consolidation.

This investigation attempts to elucidate the ways in which the relationship between rulers and the ruled develops, and thus

unveils factors conducive to making democracy a routine affair. Author Ragaru looks closely at the social aspects of representation with a view towards identifying citizens' expectations of their leaders, and examines the symbolic and material bases upon which voters and representatives build their interactions.

In a country where the differentiation of economic interests and their channelling by political parties were hampered by the slow pace of structural reforms, political linkages

have not been primarily grounded upon the voters' rational assessment of their preferences. While politics is supposed to meet essentially clients' expectations, in Bulgaria it has -- in the author's view -- been relegated to a distant, corrupt sphere. In a context where politicians have enjoyed poor institutional legitimacy, failure to guarantee social and economic distribution threatens to disrupt representational linkages. ♦

*Démocratie et représentation politique en Bulgarie, Les Cahiers du CERI No. 19, 1998, 52 pages. To order: Rachel Bouyssou, 4, rue de Chevreuse, 75006 Paris, France. In French.*

## INBOX:



### A COMPENDIUM OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

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

#### From SIGMA

SIGMA Papers No. 24: *Central Bank Audit Practices*, 1998, 74 pages. Also available in French.

SIGMA Papers No. 25: *Public Opinion Surveys as Inputs to Administrative Reform*, 1998, 120 pages. French forthcoming.

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](mailto:sigma.contact@oecd.org). SIGMA publications also are available free of charge on the Internet at: <http://www.oecd.org/pumalsigmaweb>.

#### From PUMA

Occasional Paper No. 21. *Wage Determination in the Public Sector: A France/Italy Comparison*, 1998, 72 pages. Also in French. FF 60.

Occasional Paper No. 22. *User Charging for Government Services: Best Practice Guidelines*

and *Case Studies*, 1998, 100 pages. Also in French. FF 85.

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](mailto: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 U. Press, The Pitt Bldg., Trumpington St., Cambridge CB2 1RP, England, UK.

Commissariat à la réforme de l'Etat (France). *Développer la qualité du service—Charte qualité et engagements dans les services publics*, 1997, 108 pages. To order: La Documentation française, 29 Quai Voltaire, 75007 Paris, France. Fax: (33.1) 40.15.72.30. In French.

CRAIG, Thomas W. "Maintaining and Restoring Public Trust in Government

Agencies and Their Employees," *Administration and Society*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 1998, pp 166-193.

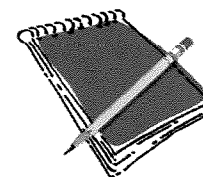
DEN BOER, Monica, ed. *Schengen, Judicial Co-operation and Policy Co-ordination*, 1997, 240 pages. To order: EIPA, POB 1229, 6201 BE Maastricht, the Netherlands. Fax (31.43) 329.62.96.

DE SENARCLENS, Pierre. "Governance and the Crisis in the International Mechanisms of Regulation," *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 1998, pages 91-104.

KICKERT, Walter J. M., cd. *Public Management and Administrative Reform in Western Europe*, 1998, 304 pages. To order: EE Publishing, 8 Lansdown Pl., Cheltenham Glos GL50 2HU, UK. £49.95.

MINEHAN, Maureen. "International Attention Turns to Corruption," *HRMagazine*, Vol. 43, No. 4, 1997, page 152.

## Hungarian Daily Reports on Code of Ethics for Civil Servants



To mark the occasion of a meeting of state employees on adoption of a code of ethics for civil servants, the Budapest-based daily, Magyar Nemzet, published an interview with István Zsuffa, Secretary of State, Hungarian Ministry of Interior. Below, PMF presents an edited version of this interview, conducted by Tibor Moldoványi.

A conference on the administration and ethics opened today at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Representatives of the administration will try to resolve the question of what a code of ethics for civil servants should contain. The Civil Service Act, adopted in 1992, requires the writing of this code. Discussions at the conference, organised by the Association of Civil Servants and the Ministry of Interior, will probably cover how standards can be set and enforced.

**Magyar Nemzet:** *Who is to decide on the code of ethics for civil servants?*

**István Zsuffa:** One issue is who will decide on the definition of ethical norms and adjudicate on them. If the Government adopts the code, the result will be a legal standard rather than an ethical one. Many civil servants are not members of trade unions. The Association of Civil Servants is a professional interest-representation body, like trade unions, and can neither make binding decisions nor enforce them. In my view, only a consensus of the concerned bodies can create a code of ethics for civil servants. These include the administration, municipalities, trade unions, and the Association of Civil Servants. Many questions remain unanswered, such as who will manage the code, and who will decide in the case of disputes.

**Magyar Nemzet:** *As corruption quickly gains more ground in society, should the code of ethics also be extended to cover the receipt of gifts?*

**István Zsuffa:** Absolutely. The possibility of accepting a gift must be treated, since corruption presents a big threat to the whole administrative system. Of course, this phenomenon is not especially Hungarian. The threat of corruption must be confronted everywhere people or bodies have power and can decide on material questions, rights and obligations. However, corruption fundamentally does not belong to the domain of ethics, but falls under criminal law. These two systems of standards overlap in certain places. A payoff is disallowed ethically, and at the same time is considered a criminal act in legal terms. Therefore, the code of ethics for civil servants will not make corruption a criminal matter, but will indeed clarify what constitutes extreme cases. An envelope full of bank papers slipped in one's pocket obviously remains a case of corruption. But is it a criminal act if somebody receives a calendar at the end of the year? To ensure justice, the character, subject and limit of the gifts must be specified. This is regulated in detail in several foreign countries.

**Magyar Nemzet:** *A specific point in the draft of the code prepared by the Association of Civil Servants addresses the question of political neutrality. Every four years the issue of loyalty arises as rumours circulate about an eventual cleaning operation.*

**István Zsuffa:** The act regulating the legal situation of civil servants sets the principle that civil servants must be politically neutral in their professional activities and loyal to the government in power. Neutrality and loyalty are the basis of a career in the administration. In the interests of civil servants, these two notions must be well-explained by the ethics code. In this way the profession can be protected from a post-election cleaning operation, which is absolutely unacceptable and destructive. The conditions of who can fill a function are

fixed by very strict professional rules, and by governmental decrees. It might not be influenced by politics. In the last nine years, it has become clear that most civil servants are de facto politically neutral and loyal vis-à-vis the ruling power. Problems arise when civil servants would like to pose as municipal or parliamentary representatives. The interest-reconciliation forum of civil servants adopted a code of conduct about four years ago. Any further guidance should be given by the code of ethics. ♦

*Tibor Moldoványi can be reached at Magyar Nemzet at tel: (36.1) 344.25.00; fax: (36.1) 344.36.51.*

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### OECD Ministers on Governance

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The Communiqué issued after the annual OECD Council Meeting at the Ministerial Level, 27-28 April, addressed a number of public management themes. Excerpts include:

"recent events [in Asia] have confirmed that good governance and effective structural policies...together with stable macroeconomic policies based on sound and transparent public finances and control of inflation, are critical to good economic performance, employment, social cohesion and the smooth functioning of the global economy" (para. 2). "Ministers also noted that the quality of public sector management is essential for effective government and encouraged analysis in this area. They welcomed the recent approval of the OECD Recommendation on Improving Ethical Conduct in the Public Service in Member countries, and asked to receive a report on this issue in 2000" (para. 19). "Ministers also reiterated the importance of regulatory reform in increasing economic growth and efficiency, and the ability of economies to adapt. The launch of the country review process...will contribute to Member countries' efforts in this regard..."(para. 20). ♦

## Baltic States Take Part in UK Programme

by Clive Parry



Courtesy photo

Clive Parry

*The Programme for Administrative Development in the Baltic States (PADBAS), an initiative supported by the British Council, trains public servants in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.*

In October 1991, the UK launched "Investor in People," a national standard for training and development. This initiative provides a framework for employers in the public and private sector to align the development of their employees with their organisational and business goals. The standard is based around four fundamental principles:

- a public commitment from the top to develop all employees to achieve business objectives;
- regular review of the training and development needs of all employees;
- action to train and develop individuals on recruitment and throughout their employment; and
- evaluation of the investment in training and to assess achievements and to improve future effectiveness.

I believe that those four principles are as valid in the public sector as they are in the

private sector, and, leaving the issue of a national standard to one side, that they are as valid to public services in other countries as they are to us in the UK.

### *Catalyst for Change*

Both our present Government and the previous one are so committed to Investors in People that they have set a target that in the year 2000 all central organisations will be recognised as Investors in People. That decision stemmed in no small part from the impressive results by organisations which have become Investors in People. The most commonly cited results are:

- *better training system* including improved identification of training needs and training audits;
- *improved workforce outcomes* in terms of a more highly skilled workforce, improved staff motivation and morale, and more employee involvement;
- *improved business performance* either general in terms of better external image, or more directly in terms of improved financial performance (including profitability and efficiency), higher quality products, and higher levels of customer satisfaction; and
- *better management system* in terms of workplace procedures and communication systems.

The standard has also proved valuable in acting as a catalyst for change and providing an external benchmark as a means of achieving further improvements in performance.

### *Application to the Baltic States*

The PADBAS programme provides tailored training and development opportunities in the UK for senior civil servants from Estonia, Latvia and

Lithuania. In Estonia, we are helping to develop skills and provide broadening opportunities for staff in the Estonian Investment Agency and the Narva City Council. In Latvia, we are helping to develop and train a professional cadre of human resource managers. In Lithuania, we have helped design a competence framework for senior civil servants and we are now in the process of helping to identify and fill gaps in the existing training provision.

All this activity, including a number of related projects in specific ministries, is aimed at improving the quality of public administration in these countries by investing in the people who make it work. We are now beyond the halfway point in the life of the project, and I am pleased to be able to report that all the feedback that we have received so far has been very positive indeed.

We all aspire to turn our public services into world class organisations. Research conducted in the UK in 1994 identified a number of characteristics that distinguish leading edge organisations from average ones. Such organisations tend to have *strong leaders who champion change, set targets and are open with all their stakeholders; unlock the potential of people by simplifying management; develop skills and encourage teamwork; constantly learn from others; and are innovative, continuously seeking to introduce new ways of doing things by exploiting new technology and techniques.* These are precisely the areas which we are addressing with our Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian partners through PADBAS. ♦

*Clive Parry, Head, International Public Service Unit, UK Cabinet Office, serves as PADBAS Technical Director. He can be reached in London at tel: (44.171) 270.64.60; fax: (44.171) 270.58.85; e-mail: ipsu@gtmet.gov.uk.*

# SIGMA

**S**IGMA -- 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 Non-member Economies 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*

**8-9 August, 1998, Oxfordshire, England, UK.** "Third International Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians" (organised by the Research Committee of Legislative Specialists and the Centre for Legislative Studies, University of Hull). Contact: Research Committee of Legislative Specialists, Dr. Lawrence D. Longley, Department of Government, Lawrence University, Appleton, WI 54912, USA. Tel: (1.920) 832.66.73; fax (1.920) 832.69.44; e-mail: PowerLDL@aol.com. In English.

**7-11 September 1998, Paris, France.** 24th International Congress of Administrative Sciences on "The Citizen and Public Administration." Contact: IIAS, Brussels, Belgium. Tel: (32.2) 538.91.64; fax: (32.2) 538.91.64; e-mail: toda3347@euronet.be. In English and French.

**14-17 September 1998, Paris, France.** IASIA Annual Conference on "Schools and Institutes of Administration: Agents for Enhanced Human Resource Management and Change." Contact: IIAS, Brussels, Belgium. Tel: (32.2) 538.91.64; fax: (32.2) 538.91.64; e-mail: toda3347@euronet.be. In English and French.

**14-17 September 1998, Paris, France.** EGPA Annual Conference on "Modernising the State for the Citizen: Alternative European Models." Contact: IIAS, Brussels, Belgium. Tel: (32.2) 538.91.64; fax: (32.2) 538.91.64; e-mail: toda3347@euronet.be. In English and French

**22-25 September 1998, Maastricht, the Netherlands.** Seminar on "Committees and Comitology in the Political Process." 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/pumalsigmaweb>.*