

SIGMA

P M F

Public Management Forum

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

The Imperative for Regulatory Management and Reform

by Joanna R. Shelton

Central and eastern European governments are challenged by the need to craft and put into practice sound laws and regulations. They struggle with a lack of planning and management for the development and implementation of a regulatory system that supports market-based economies and democratic societies. While central and eastern European countries face more daunting tasks in this area than OECD countries, the latter also are seeking to improve their regulatory practices. In May 1997, the OECD will present a report on regulatory management reform to its ministers.

The OECD work in a wide range of policy areas aims at improving the economic performance of Member countries, and of non-member countries as well. Regulatory reform is just one element, but it is of increasing importance. Many economies are struggling with slow growth and inflexibility in responding to changes brought about by globalisation, yet there are serious limitations on the use of monetary or fiscal policy to address these problems. Policymakers are searching for new ways to stimulate growth and increase the competitiveness of their industries. If properly designed and implemented, regulatory reform can play a major role in increasing productivity and prospects for growth in countries that embrace it.

What do we mean by regulatory reform? We do not mean just deregulation -- the complete or partial elimination of regulation in a sector -- although that can be a part of regulatory reform. Rather, it is a broader concept, which means using regulatory power more efficiently so that markets can work better and economies can be more competitive, even as important social objectives are being met. Increasingly, reform has moved beyond regulations themselves into the processes which generate and administer them.



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Boosting Economic Performance

The benefits of good regulation are amply documented by the experiences of OECD countries. A well-planned and ambitious programme of regulatory reform can contribute to higher economic growth and produce an array of benefits -- among them, lower prices for consumers, faster exploitation of new technologies, and more effective government. By sharpening competitive pressures, regulatory reform has forced firms to become more efficient and has boosted the productivity of entire industries.

For example, after reform, prices to consumers for electricity fell by 20 per cent in Norway; airline ticket prices fell by 50 per cent in Spain; prices for trucking fell by 30 per cent in Germany; and prices for legal services fell by 33 per cent in the United Kingdom. In Japan, restrictions on the construction of large stores were relaxed, contributing to an overall reduction in prices to consumers as more efficient large stores were built.

Continued on p.7 ➤

Law Drafting
in Bulgaria

Assessing the Impacts
of Legislation

Approximation
of EU Laws

French Support to
Finance Ministries

Forum Focus

Building a Regulatory
Management System

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This issue of *Public Management Forum* gives special attention to management of the regulatory system (meaning the processes and institutions through which regulations are developed, enforced and adjudicated). In building up a regulatory system suitable for a modern democratic state and market economy, central and eastern European countries have experienced a range of difficulties. These include a lack of co-ordination and co-operation procedures in the law drafting process, and an inability to assess the economic and budgetary impact of regulations.

On the cover page, OECD Deputy Secretary-General Joanna Shelton reports on the OECD-wide project on regulatory reform. On page three, François Stasse of the French Conseil d'Etat explains the French government's new experience with regulatory impact analysis. Juhani Korhonen of the Finnish Ministry of Finance describes his country's system of assessing regulatory impact on page four. Related articles include those by Chavdar Popov (Sofia-based ExLege Consulting) on the importance of a stable civil service to law drafting, and by Scott Jacobs (OECD/PUMA) on practical ways to improve the quality of regulation.

Under "Frontlines of Reform", the European Commission's John Bell describes the challenges of approximation of transition country legislation to European Union norms, and Slovene and Slovak experts offer their views on law drafting in their countries.

Also in this issue, readers will learn about expenditure management reform in Estonia, French government support to transition country finance ministries, and Latvian media coverage of the public administration.

Bart W. Édes - Editor-in-Chief

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----------|
| • <i>Hands on the Reins</i> France Experiments with Impact Studies | 3 |
| • <i>Managing the Public Purse</i> Finland's System of Assessing Regulatory Impacts Expenditure Management Reforms in Estonia | 4 5 |
| • <i>Human Resources</i> Law Drafting in Bulgaria: The Need for Professionally Trained Public Servants | 6 |
| • <i>Public Management in OECD Countries</i> The Imperative for Regulatory Management and Reform (continued from cover page) | 7 |
| • <i>Forum Focus</i> Improving Regulatory Management | 8 |
| • <i>On the Frontlines of Reform</i> Preparing for EU Membership: the Approximation of Laws Law Drafting in Central and Eastern Europe | 10 11 |
| • <i>In Brief</i> Public Administration in the News | 12 |
| • <i>Fresh off the Press</i> Norwegian Ministries at Work Inbox: A Compendium of Recent Publications and Articles | 13 |
| • <i>Reporter's Notebook</i> Latvia's Press Grows Into Its Watchdog Role | 14 |
| • <i>Donor Corner</i> ADETEF Supports Modernisation of Finance Ministries | 15 |
| • <i>On the Agenda</i> | 16 |

France Experiments with Impact Studies

by François Stasse

Before 1996 no impact study was required of a bill prior to its submission to the French Parliament. The situation changed with the Prime Minister's circular of 21 November 1995, which aimed to "check the proliferation of statutes and regulations which has made law obscure, unstable and finally unjust." The Government will soon assess the results of the circular, which are not likely to be all positive.

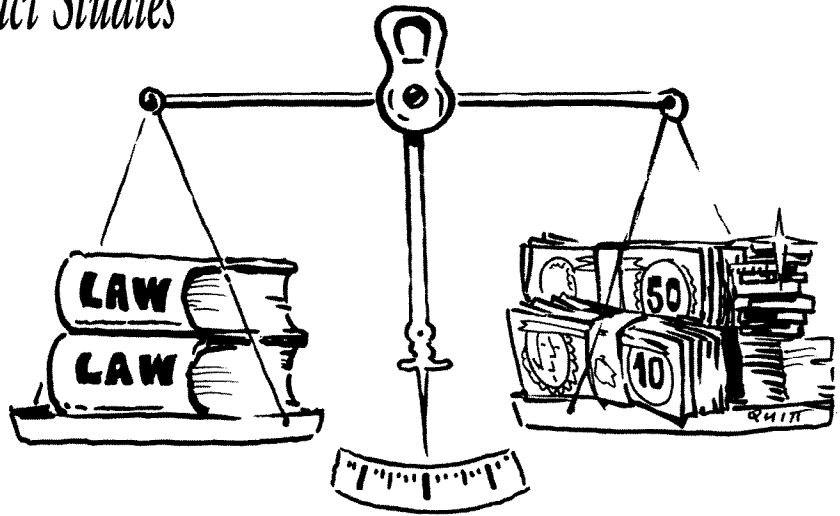


Illustration / Lazaro Quint

As of 1 January 1996, an impact study must be carried out for all bills (except finance laws) and all important draft orders submitted to the *Conseil d'Etat* for approval. Such impact studies must include a precise analysis of the expected effect of a measure. The circular defines six areas of interest for an impact study:

- 1) *Presentation of the expected advantages.* Defines shortcomings of the existing situation and explains how the proposed measure is to improve it. A figure should be put on the estimate.
- 2) *Forecast of the impact on employment.* Given the high joblessness rate in France, the circular requires a precise forecast of the measure's impact on employment in the short-, medium- and long-term.
- 3) *Assessment of the impact on other issues of general interest for the nation or the region concerned.* Such issues include environmental protection.
- 4) *Computation of the financial consequences.* Must go beyond a traditional budget assessment, which is often limited to the budgetary impact during the first year of implementation; the circular demands a five-year forecast.
- 5) *Assessment of the impact on administrative formalities.* The purpose is to simplify relations between individuals, firms and

governmental agencies. To the extent possible, the new text must lead to the cancellation of prior texts and to a simplification of administrative procedures.

6) *Presentation of the new legal status.* The new text should lead to simplified legal standards. The impact study must show that a new legal text is necessary and explain why it is impossible to achieve the same results without amending the law or the regulation.

The Procedure

The Prime Minister's circular is explicit as to the mandatory nature of impact studies and provides for penalties in the event of non-observance. The Prime Minister's cabinet and the *Conseil d'Etat* may refuse to examine any bill or draft order which is not submitted with an impact study. The circular allows each originating ministry to organise itself as it sees fit in carrying out the impact study.

First Assessment

While no one questions the principle of impact studies nor the six areas of interest specified in the circular, governmental agencies have hardly changed their habits. The impact studies they submit to the Prime Minister, the *Conseil d'Etat* and Parliament rarely give more information than that found in the presentation and justification documents they provided in the past.

The situation is, therefore, unsatisfactory, and the French Government will probably have to consider whether or not to continue this experiment. The Government faces two major questions:

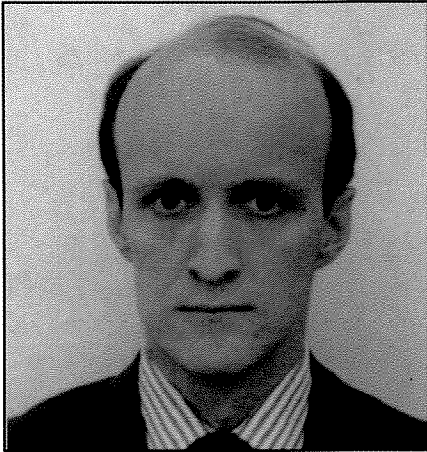
- 1) Should it carry out the threat not to examine a ministerial project which does not include a high-quality impact study? This has never been done, which probably partially explains why the ministries do not pay too much attention to it. Yet this is a weapon which is difficult to use; the measures in question may be important from an administrative or political point of view.
- 2) Should the originating ministry continue to carry out the impact study? Alternatives would be to entrust the work to the research department of another ministry or even an independent consulting firm.

Finally, this incomplete French experiment raises a difficult question that other countries have been faced with: how is it possible to separate the assertion of the political objectives of reform from the assessment of the technical means required for its enforcement? This separation is never totally possible. But it is nonetheless desirable to carry out the technical assessment in the most objective way if we want to improve the quality of laws and regulations. ♦

François Stasse serves on the French Conseil d'Etat. He may be reached in Paris at tel: (33.1) 40.20.80.00. Also see "The State and the Citizen" in PMF Vol. I, No. 4, 1995, page 8.

Finland's System of Assessing Regulatory Impacts

by Juhani Korhonen



Courtesy Photo

Juhani Korhonen

In response to various regulatory impact analysis problems, the Finnish Ministry of Finance set up, in 1996, a project to improve general regulatory impact analysis, as part of a Government programme to improve law drafting. This project will focus on the economic impact of regulations on government, businesses and households. The purpose is to review the analytical methods and assessment processes within the ministries.

In Finland, budgetary impact assessment of proposed regulation is required by three subordinate regulations issued by the Government (Council of State). Each ministry is in charge of its regulatory activities and assessing the impacts of proposed regulation. Sectoral ministries are required to consult the Ministry of Finance if the proposal has significant impacts on the economy or the government's budget. The Cabinet's Finance Committee (a statutory ministerial committee) and the Ministry of Finance conduct an economic review of all significant proposals before a ministry or the Cabinet takes a decision to issue a regulation or a bill. In May 1996, the Government issued a programme to improve law drafting, under which the requirement of assessing impacts was reinforced.

Impact Assessment Methodology

The methods chosen to assess regulatory impacts depend on the substance and sector of the proposed law. In large reforms that include legislative, organisational and structural changes, the Ministry of Finance uses an econometric model called KESSU to estimate effects on the whole economy and fiscal effects on the government. A ministry usually sets up a working group or a committee to prepare and draft a law proposal, including its impact assessment. Concrete analysis or calculation, however, is performed by ministry staff or by a subordinate government agency. In some cases, the impact assessment is acquired from a government or private research institute.

Major Costs to Government

The types of legislation that represent major costs to government are tax and social legislation. In the late 1970s, the Ministry of Finance developed the first micro-simulation model on taxation (the HVS-model) to calculate and analyse impacts of personal taxation on both government and on different social groups. In the mid-1980s, the Ministry introduced another micro-simulation model (the TUJA-model) in which the analysis of income taxation and social «transfer» payments was integrated. These payments include pensions, unemployment benefits, sickness benefits, child allowances, housing assistance, etc. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has developed similar micro-simulation models for analysing distributional effects between social groups. The purpose of all these models is to evaluate different policy options for legislative activities and to assess financial and taxation consequences of the screened options.

Challenges to the Assessment Process

Analysing regulatory impacts is not often a simple task. Tight schedules for legislative

activities do not allow adequate time for proper analysis. Senior managers' responsibility for impact analysis is not always clear. There are also methodological problems. Although several models for different legislation are available, there remains a lack of appropriate methods and models. In addition, civil servants need more training to use the methods available.

Political support for regulatory analysis is important. Politicians (along with the Ministry of Finance) regularly call for proper and better impact analysis. In some politically sensitive cases, however, political considerations may displace impact analysis.

Lessons Learned in Reforming Impact Assessment

First, the responsibility of each ministry for impact analysis must be clear. If a ministry or agency has not carried out appropriate analysis, deadlines cannot accommodate a new analysis just before the final decision-making on a regulatory proposal. Thus, senior managers must monitor carefully the regulatory activities within their ministries. Second, routine communication with the Ministry of Finance is important. Timely consultation will help in the assessment of budgetary impacts and will prevent undesirable surprises in the budgetary process. Third, databases should be adequate and, if possible, standardised. National accounts, but also statistical and historical information on government expenditure and revenues (for instance on the salaries of government personnel), will help to assess the impacts on government. Fourth, the analytical process should be a systematic part of regulatory process, not just an *ad hoc* exercise. Fifth, the development of analytical methods and models should be on-going. This may require that the development task be assigned to a certain government body, research institute or ministry.

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Expenditure Management Reforms in Estonia

by Erwin Reister

Taken in its widest sense, public expenditure management in Estonia covers the State budget of a small country with a population of 1.5 million, the budgets of cities and 255 local governments, the social security system, the bulk of investments financed by foreign loans (not included in the state budget), as well as some minor extrabudgetary funds (for example, regional and environmental).

The country's economic background is as follows: a US\$4 billion GDP (1996) with annual growth of about four per cent (re-establishing output levels of 1990). Consumer price inflation has successfully been brought down from an annual rate of 900 per cent to approximately 15 per cent. Since its creation six years ago, the national currency, the kroon, has been tied to the deutsche mark in a relation of 8 to 1. The kroon is managed through a currency board system managed by the Estonian Central Bank (Eesti Bank). Rapid privatisation has dramatically reduced the State's involvement in the economy, which is to a large extent open and deregulated, though the government remains a shareholder in certain (mainly infrastructural) enterprises.

In 1997, the State budget represents some 40 per cent of overall public sector spending (which includes extra-budgetary funds, social security and local authorities) totalling 15 billion crowns (US\$1.17 billion). Payroll accounts for some 30 per cent of spending, mainly comprising the salaries of some 80 000 civil servants (20 per cent of labour force). About 60 per cent of spending is recurrent expenditure, including subsidies and social costs associated with the high speed of transition towards a market economy and an ageing population. Capital expenditures amount to some 10 per cent of the total budget.

Alignment with EU Standards

From the perspective of EU membership, efforts are being concentrated on strict adherence to a balanced budget principle, disallowing the Government of Estonia to finance budget expenditures by internal borrowing. However, when externally financed investments are taken into account, the government has a financial deficit of about 2.1 per cent of GDP. Maastricht criteria are fulfilled for total government debt, around 20 per cent of GDP, whereas the inflation and interest rate targets cannot be met at this stage.

Still fiscal policy and monetary policy have helped to stabilise the economy in a very short time span, allowing the authorities to address successfully the objective of sustainable growth.

"The treasury department of the Ministry of Finance has successfully consolidated the cash management function, which was previously split among some 2 000 spending units running their own bank accounts."

Treasury Function Introduced

The management of public expenditures has been strengthened over the last two years through the introduction of a treasury function. The treasury department of the Ministry of Finance has successfully consolidated the cash management function, which was previously split among some 2 000 spending units running their own bank accounts. Its organisation comprises a central treasury and 19 field treasury offices (15 on district level and four in Tallinn, linked to bigger ministries).

The execution of expenditures relies on a budget management system, computerised at

a basic level, and based on modern technology. The aim is to achieve daily aggregated cash flows, reflecting the overall financial position of government revenues and expenditures (receipts and payments), including debt servicing and borrowing (outside of budget). The concept of "consolidated funds", however, will require some more years to be fully operational. Improved techniques of debt management and asset management are being introduced.

Liquidity management of the treasury is in its early stages, but there has already been some improvement in the government's interest earnings on its cash balances. In order to improve cash management further, the government has proposed to issue short-term securities in order to smooth temporarily imbalances in revenues and expenditures. However, this will require new legislation which is controversial and currently under discussion in the State Assembly. The Assembly is also currently discussing a revised draft for a State budget law that will bring budgetary procedures in Estonia -- on issues such as budget authority and the separation of power between the executive and Parliament -- into line with those in EU countries.

Future Challenges

Major concerns for the near future are to:

- re-establish internal financial control, including performance audit;
- introduce standardised accounting practices throughout State budget institutions;
- further improve financial regulation;
- upgrade existing financial regulation, some of which currently hinder "performance budgeting".

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Law Drafting in Bulgaria: The Need for Professionally Trained Public Servants

by Chavdar Popov

One of the main priorities for central and eastern European governments is the establishment of a professional public service. There is a special need for experts in law drafting and regulatory management. Indeed, in Bulgaria, there are no professional law drafters *per se*. The bulk of law drafting (excluding the bills submitted by members of Parliament which comprise only a small percentage of primary and secondary legislation) is carried out by the staff of ministries and other government agencies. Even though in many cases, these public servants are quite competent and knowledgeable in their respective fields, they lack specific training in law drafting. This is true even for the ministry lawyers who, as members of working groups, take part in the drafting process.

Assessment of Conformity with EU Legislation

One extremely important aspect of the role of professional public service staff in law drafting and regulatory management should be to take into account Bulgaria's preparations for its accession to the EU. In the years since the entry into force of the Europe Agreement, the Bulgarian Government has made significant progress in setting up a formal system of conformity assessment of all Bulgarian legislation with EU legislation. Specifically, law drafters are provided with special compatibility forms which must be attached to a draft bill or regulation through its final adoption. Existing legislation is also checked. The civil servants in the line ministries who usually do the drafting have, as a rule, good knowledge of the relevant EU legislation in their specific area and in most cases are able to prepare drafts

which are fully, or at least to a large extent, compatible.

Developing and Retaining Qualified Staff

Nevertheless, greater effort must be put into recruiting and retaining qualified personnel with a good knowledge of both Bulgarian and EU legislation for this type of work. One of the most important issues facing the Bulgarian administration is to be able to maintain continuity and to create incentives for this personnel.

professional public service staff for law drafting and regulatory management, one must immediately ask the question, "Who will do the training?"

The Bulgarian law drafting tradition is based on non-professional drafters. Consequently, there is no formal training process and law drafters receive all their training on the job. Furthermore, as far as we are aware, there is no system or methodology for providing law drafting training in either the universities or in

“The most important aspect of improvement of the quality of laws and regulations is the training of those involved in the process.”

The challenge of Bulgaria's preparation for accession to the EU is so immense that the existence of a core of professional public servants with an in-depth knowledge of EU legislation, each in his or her own respective sphere, would ultimately prove insufficient. Specific efforts should be made to create a more *broad-based* knowledge of EU legislation among more lawyers and other professionals. This in turn would increase the pool of persons from whom public servants adapted to the new conditions could be drawn.

Need for Law Drafting Training

The most important aspect of improvement of the quality of laws and regulations is the training of those involved in the process. But when one speaks of the need for training a

government training courses. Therefore, an immediate priority should be the training of law drafting trainers and the elaboration of training methods.

It should be noted, however, that Bulgaria receives important assistance in the areas of law drafting, regulatory management, and approximation of legislation to EU norms through workshops, studies and other actions sponsored by the British Council, Phare and SIGMA. ♦

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The Imperative for Regulatory Management and Reform

Continued from cover page



Photo/OECD: Darryl Evans

Joanna R. Shelton

Strengthening Social Protections

Regulatory reform also has improved government capacity to secure better results from social policies through more effective use of resources and by exploiting private sector innovativeness in the public interest.

Performance standards that focus on results rather than details can be more effective. A comparison of nursing home regulations in Australia and the United States found that the quality of care for patients was higher with flexible outcome-oriented standards (numbering 31 in Australia) compared to detailed input-oriented standards (numbering over 500 in the United States).

In certain cases, voluntary and co-operative approaches can achieve better results than can regulation. An education and training programme on major industrial accidents has helped Canada to achieve higher levels of safety and environmental protection at lower cost, compared with other countries.

Reform Costs

While reform can have long-lasting benefits, it can also involve costs, both in the short-term

and in the longer-term as well. These include business disruptions and failure (particularly where businesses have been heavily protected for many years), job losses in specific sectors, and consumer anxiety about safety, public services or environmental protection. Such fears are sometimes exaggerated, but some costs are genuine and unavoidable. In most cases, governments can take steps to minimise the magnitude and duration of the costs of reform. The key is design of a package of co-ordinated reforms that gives fullest scope to market forces while protecting social goals in the most efficient manner possible.

Good Regulation More Important Than Ever

Pressing economic and social problems can be mitigated through regulatory reform. For example:

- Some OECD countries suffer from *sluggish growth*, contributing to *high jobless rates*. To the extent that regulatory reform can help boost gross domestic product this enhances employment opportunities, especially when coupled with labour market reform.
- The burdens of formalities and red tape on new businesses represent a significant barrier to entry to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). This is a major concern because SMEs have been an important source of innovation, new jobs, and flexible supply to larger firms.
- Technological innovation is changing the nature of economic activity, creating new industries, expanding the scope for competition, and quickening product development. Rigid and out-dated regulations stifle the pace and diffusion of innovation and long-term growth, thereby reducing quality and choice in goods and services, and keeping costs high for consumers and industries.
- Globalisation requires broad changes in regulatory style and content. As tariffs and other border measures fall, domestic regulations often remain as significant impediments to an open, competitive market economy.

Regulatory barriers can be major stumbling blocks to the free flow of goods, services and technologies that benefit consumers and bring domestic firms up to international standards of performance.

The OECD Study on Regulatory Reform

As they set about shaping their own regulatory systems, governments of central and eastern European countries may benefit from studying both the promising practices and the shortcomings in regulatory management in various OECD countries.

At the request of OECD Ministers, we are preparing a major report for their consideration in May 1997. In this report, we will make specific policy recommendations that relate both to the policy directions that governments should pursue (eg the need for a strong and effective competition policy), and the institutional changes that can increase the prospects of successful reform (eg the need for on-going review of regulations to eliminate outdated or unnecessary ones). We will base our conclusions on actual country experiences and analytical work conducted within the OECD Secretariat.

Clearly, we will not have all the answers to the challenges of regulatory management and reform by the time our report is completed in May. Yet we intend to continue our work in this area to promote a deeper understanding of the benefits, costs and most successful methods of reform. This will involve more in-depth assessment and perhaps monitoring of country experiences (which may directly involve some of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe). This work will provide a continuing stream of information on how to improve the competitive position of economies.

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Improving Regulatory Management

by Scott Jacobs



Courtesy Photo

Scott Jacobs

The quality of regulatory instruments and institutions is a defining element of effective governance. Regulations are needed, together with strong and vigorous markets, to safeguard competition and a wide range of vital social values. The need for efficient and transparent regulation is even more critical in emerging markets like those in central and eastern European countries, where trade, investment and job creation depend on a flexible, competition-promoting regulatory environment.

Dynamic economic and social changes around the world are rendering national regulatory institutions and regimes increasingly obsolete, and even harmful to national prosperity and government effectiveness. The problem is that national governments have lost control of regulation. Traditional administrative controls are not suitable for ensuring that expanding regulatory powers are used cost-effectively and coherently.

Changing economic and social conditions -- globalisation, rising unemployment, cultural diversity, new technologies -- require broad changes in the style and content of regulation, but governments are unable to react. Regulatory regimes are increasingly

technocratic, and too vulnerable to interest group pressures. Fundamental structural reform of national regulatory systems is overdue. The challenge for governments is to develop capacities for regulatory discipline, flexibility and innovation.

Urgent demands for greater discipline, rationality, efficiency, co-ordination, accountability and transparency in regulatory processes require new means to reform and manage enlarged regulatory structures. In response, most of the 29 OECD countries have today established regulatory management and reform programmes (compared to just three or four countries with such programmes in 1980). By historical standards, this is a very rapid government response and suggests the importance of the problem. But progress has been slow with a difficult and complex reform agenda that is ill-suited to the political cycle.

Concrete Reform Actions

The purpose of reform is to upgrade the quality of existing national regulatory regimes, and to develop a system of regulatory management in which regulatory powers are used skilfully and creatively within more competitive and global market structures. The focus is on regulatory *quality*, which is a neutral concept with respect to size of government or scope of intervention. Different countries will legitimately choose to pursue different regulatory policies. The challenge is to ensure that regulation is used as efficiently, effectively and transparently as possible in the public interest.

Experiences in OECD countries indicate that an effective regulatory management and reform programme will have the following characteristics:

- It is supported by explicit policy from the top.
- It is directed and overseen by central bodies with connections to influential bodies at the

centre of government.

- It takes into account both existing and new regulations.
- It addresses both operating and dynamic regulatory costs.
- It applies a consistent and co-ordinated approach across the administration.
- It is transparent.

Concrete steps that governments can take to build these characteristics into their programme include:

Building a Regulatory Management System

1) Adopt regulatory reform policy at the highest political levels to organise and drive reform efforts throughout the administration. It is important that this policy be endorsed by the government to ensure that its objectives are consistent with political priorities.

2) Establish explicit standards for regulatory quality and principles of regulatory decision-making. The policy should define «regulatory quality» by establishing concrete quality standards and decision criteria to determine if government action is required and whether any proposed regulation is acceptable.

3) Build capacities for central management and oversight of implementation of regulatory reform policy, for the same reasons that a central budget office is needed to manage fiscal policies. Most OECD countries have created such bodies. These bodies tend to most effective if they are self-governing, have a great deal of freedom, can initiate reform actions, and are located close to the centre of government.

Improving the Quality of New Regulations

4) Adopt regulatory impact analysis (RIA) processes to improve the quality of the information on which decisions are based. Programme design decisions critical to the

success of RIA include data collection procedures, analytical methods, transparency, and independent scrutiny and quality control.

5) Establish a comprehensive policy on public consultation which will open up the regulatory process to interested groups and provide regulators with access to valuable information on regulatory impacts. Safeguards are needed against undue influence by interest groups on the decision.

6) Consider systematically alternatives to regulation that will help governments develop more effective, lower-cost policy instruments. Such assessment should occur very early in the decision process. Governments may wish to establish experimental programmes to assist in developing new approaches.

7) Improve regulatory co-ordination so that multiple objectives are integrated and related policies are treated coherently. This co-ordination system is the focal point for bringing together economic and social objectives within the decision process. Trade and competition authorities will be particularly important actors in the system.

Upgrading the Quality of Existing Regulations

8) Review and evaluate the stock of existing regulations and paperwork to determine if regulations have been effective, without undue negative impacts. Governments should consider adoption of systematic programmes of review, which may include sunseting, phased repeals and guillotine programmes.

9) Reduce red tape and government formalities, an action which can produce substantial payoffs in government efficiency and economic cost-savings. ♦

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Speeding up Investment: Investor Choice in Permitting Requirements

In 1996, the German federal government adopted an innovative system for reducing the costs of permitting and licensing procedures to promote business investment. The central element of the programme is a more flexible model in which the investor can choose among different procedures (the so-called «supply model»), each with different risks and costs for the investor. At the same time, permitting procedures as a whole have been simplified and streamlined.

This innovative system is a major element in the programme to speed up approvals of investment plans in Germany. The main elements of the governmental programme are:

(1) The *supply model* which provides a range of permitting options for the investor, which differ according to the time required and the degree of risk accepted by the investor if the project is, in fact, not in compliance with legal requirements.

(2) *Improved flexibility* in review procedures, allowing the administration to, for example, review the investment project before all documents are presented.

(3) *Simplification* of permitting procedures. The most important example is the replacement of authorisation by a simple notification requirement in cases where changes to production processes improve environmental quality. Authorisation procedures are also supposed to be abolished for the substitution of old by new production plants and research and development plants. Problems do rise with respect to European Union environmental law, requiring sometimes a permit procedure.

(4) *Service orientation* of the responsible administration. The administration responsible for permissions is now obliged by law to guarantee rapid procedures and to develop administrative reforms contributing to an acceleration of procedures. Especially for small- and medium-sized companies, the new service-oriented approach is seen as an important improvement. Centralisation of procedures is foreseen for very complicated investment plans involving multiple offices.

The innovative approach also required amendment of the administrative procedure law to allow for early and encompassing consultation with investors with respect to preconditions, time schedule, and organisation of the permitting procedure.

Further Reading

For additional information on trends, experiences, and priorities related to regulatory management and reform in OECD countries, readers may consult the following OECD publications:

Recommendation of the Council of the OECD on Improving the Quality of Government Regulation (including the OECD reference checklist for regulatory decision-making and background note), March 1995.

Co-operative Approaches to Regulation, PUMA Occasional Paper, forthcoming.

Regulatory Impact Analysis: Best Practices in OECD Countries, PUMA, forthcoming.

Preparing for EU Membership: the Approximation of Laws

by John Bell

*The goal of European Union membership for central and eastern European countries presents a significant challenge to their national administration's capacity to adopt, apply and enforce the body of laws called the *acquis communautaire*.*

For those central and eastern European countries which have signed, or are concluding, Association Agreements ("Europe Agreements"), the task of approximating the 20 000 primary legislative elements of the *acquis communautaire* is clearly spelled out as a principal goal. By adapting the EU's legislation, the candidate countries are taking a fast-track to the development of a modern market economy in which greater competition and openness increases quality, productivity and foreign investment, and tackles inflationary prices, industrial inefficiency and investor uncertainty.

Vast Legislative Challenge

The task facing national administrations in preparing, managing and monitoring national programmes of approximation is enormous. Depending on the country, there may or may not be a continuous recent national history of law-making and law-enforcement with all the linked administrative, parliamentary and judicial structures which this implies. In order to tackle this vast legislative challenge, the administration must develop a structure which is responsible for preparing, prioritising and sequencing programmes of approximation through co-operation with line ministries' EU integration units and all relevant actors in the process. The programming and sequencing of approximation of legislation will inevitably give rise to conflicts between various actors, and the responsible structure should also have access to the political level to enforce its decisions.

But this programming process presumes the presence in the national administration of suitably trained administrators in sufficient numbers and with adequate resources. Given the general situation confronting these public

administrations, the recruitment, remuneration and retention of such highly trained people often proves difficult.

Developing Institutional Capacities

The requirement of compatibility with the *acquis communautaire* for this legislative output requires the development of the institutional capacity 1) to sequence legislation according to acceptable priorities using the economic impact analysis; 2) to draft legislation which is linguistically and legally consistent with the intentions of the EU *acquis* using accurate translation and drafting techniques; 3) to ensure consistency between legislation in different domains and drafted at different times when the subject is overlapping; and 4) to improve the application and interpretation of the law through judicial and other responsible structures. The development of these skills as part of a single legislative process often requires a far reaching restructuring of administrative structures and heavy investment in training, information and legal resources within the administration at central, deconcentrated and decentralised levels of government.

Progress Reporting

To effectively manage this process and facilitate a transparent monitoring process for reviewing progress internally and with the European Commission, the administration needs to develop a progress reporting format which, starting from EU directive references, charts the state of progress of approximation directive-by-directive, and provides a clear

overview of when such directives may be approximated and when their required implementing structures will be in place. In a number of countries such progress reporting formats are already in use and they provide a useful management tool for the national administrations and an essential reference point for discussions with the EU.

Support During the Approximation Process

In keeping with the intensification of relations between the EU and the Associated States in the pre-accession period, provision is made to support the approximation process through a wide range of structures, resources and measures linking the European Commission and its partner countries. As the legally binding framework for relations between the EU and the Associated States, the Europe Agreements and their structures are responsible for the oversight of the approximation process.



At the working level, this means that the Europe Agreements sub-committee responsible for approximation of legislation is the forum in which the Community, and the Associated States may assess progress, identify future priorities, review technical assistance and resolve outstanding issues in a constructive institutional context.

Within the legal framework of the Europe Agreements, the Community has undertaken to provide technical assistance and know-how to support our partner countries' efforts. A significant instrument in this regard has been the White Paper which the Commission adopted in 1995 to provide a selective guide through the *acquis communautaire* relating to the Single Market.

In addition to the White Paper's legislative guide, a specialised Technical Assistance Office called TAIEX has been funded by Phare to provide a wide range of services including training seminars, documentation, data, legislation and quick responsive advice to associated states. TAIEX will prove to be an invaluable source of information on the Single Market *acquis* and regarding its transposition, application and enforcement.

This service is in addition to Phare's numerous national programmes for the approximation and administration of legislation. It also complements multi-country programmes which directly -- through the "PRAQ" standards and norms programme -- or indirectly -- via SIGMA in co-operation with the OECD -- contribute to the preparation of these countries for the opportunities and responsibilities of membership. And in view of the current state of the pre-accession process, it is likely that co-operation in this area will significantly intensify in the months and years ahead. ♦

John Bell is Desk Officer for Poland with the Phare Programme at the European Commission. He may be reached in Brussels at fax: (32.2) 296.42.51; e-mail: j.bell@DG1A.CEC.BE.

Law Drafting in Central and Eastern Europe

Transition countries face a complex of obstacles in the drafting of laws and regulatory management. These include: scarcity of qualified personnel, intense political pressures, lack of accessible and reliable data, insufficient co-ordination and implementation mechanisms, and the costs involved. Pressures mount as increasing attention is directed towards the approximation of legislation to European Union norms. Where formal law drafting requirements and co-ordination mechanisms are in place, actual practice lags behind somewhat. Indeed, setting up appropriate systems is neither quick nor easy.

An ongoing SIGMA project -- on law drafting and regulatory management -- aims to support the development of a good regulatory framework by strengthening law drafting capacities. As a first step, experts from six central and eastern European countries participating in the project have responded to a questionnaire on national law drafting procedures, techniques and institutions. In addition, SIGMA has based on this questionnaire an informal document, *Checklist on Law Drafting Procedures and Techniques*, which is to be published and widely distributed in 1997 as a working tool for law drafters in all central and eastern European countries.

(The *Checklist* complements an earlier (1994) SIGMA publication, *Improving the Quality of Laws and Regulations: Economic, Managerial and Legal Techniques*, which identifies techniques for improving legislative and regulatory quality that can be implemented in the short-term at low cost without radical change to the public sector.)

The experts recently met to consider the first drafts of the questionnaire. They highlighted the difficulty of writing quality legislation, and noted the opportunities presented by the project to identify and alleviate weaknesses. Peter Kukliš, adviser in the legislative department of the Slovak Republic's Office of the National Council, observed that "law drafting procedures remain a compromise between theory and reality." He explained that the SIGMA questionnaire gave participants the chance to "think more deeply" about the law making process.

Miro Prek, Under-Secretary of State in Slovenia's Office for Legislation in the Department of European and Comparative Law, remarked that he "never thought so many questions could pertain to law drafting." He observed that "the quality of law drafting has decreased and will further decrease with the volume and urgency to transpose laws [from EU norms]. This is a danger." He expressed regret that transition countries in the accession process do not have a formal channel through which they can provide input on EU legislation "which itself is not always up to standard". Prek said that the lack of law drafting personnel is a grave problem, "There are not enough people, and we are forced to improvise."

As part of this project, SIGMA is gathering countries' laws and regulations on law drafting (some of which are published in regular parliamentary gazettes) that will be available as comparative references. The country papers and a comparative issues paper will be published. Planned follow-up activities include workshops on specific issues in the context of law drafting.

-Belinda Hopkinson and Anke Freibert

Public Administration in the News

Estonia

Parliamentary Committee on Europe

The *Riigikogu* has formed an *ad hoc* parliamentary Committee on European Affairs to contribute to Estonia's integration into the European Union. The committee will closely cooperate with the government in the Eurointegration process, while developing relations with the European Parliament and other EU institutions. Source: local news services via Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press and Information Department.

Hungary

Parliament Approves Constitutional Plan, Transparent Privatisation

Parliament has passed the long-debated concept for a new Constitution, as well as an amendment to the privatisation law aimed at making the process more transparent. This latter legislation instructs the State Privatisation and Holding Company to place privatisation-related documents in the National Archives for public perusal within 30 days after closing each deal. Source: OMRI.

Lithuania

Ministry, Positions Created

The *Seimas* has adopted an amendment to the law on the administration establishing the posts of ministerial

vice ministers as political officials. Under the amendment, the prime minister may appoint and dismiss vice ministers at the suggestion of ministers. Ministers also will appoint one ministerial secretary who would become a career civil servant. In addition, the Ministry of European Affairs, headed by Laima Andrikiene, has been established. Source: Baltic News Service, Lithuanian government.

Local Officials to Serve Longer

The *Seimas* has voted to amend Article 119 of the Constitution to change the term of office for local government councils from two to three years. Source: Radio Lithuania via OMRI.

Poland

Regional Management of Services

An experimental alliance of 14 communes in Nowy Sacz province (*powiats*) in southern Poland will manage the region's health service, education, culture, sport and foster homes, and will serve as a test for an intermediary level of local administration between the commune and the province. Source: *Rzeczpospolita* via OMRI.

Romania

Clearing House at Ministry of Interior

Citing the government's anti-corruption campaign as cause for his action, Gavril Dejeu, Minister of

Interior, has announced the replacement of twenty officers at his ministry. Source: Romanian Press Review.

Multi-country

Governance and European Integration

On 29-30 May, under the Netherlands' Presidency of the European Union, a conference on "Governance and European Integration" will be held in Rotterdam. Sponsored by the Dutch Ministry of Interior, the event aims to launch a dialogue between representatives of EU Member States and the ten associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe on different aspects of governance. Workshops will focus on four themes within a broader context of both "governance" and "civil society": reliable administration; local and regional government; cultural diversity; and environmental policy. Source: Dutch Ministry of Interior.

Readers are invited to send to the editors (address on page 2) details about changes to public administration institutions, regulations, and appointments.

"Don't be irreplaceable; if you cannot be replaced, you cannot be promoted."

from "Dilbert's Laws of Work", <http://www.cynical.net/hypermail/bryans-list/1363html>.

Norwegian Ministries at Work

Ministries at Work, by Rolf Normann Torgersen

The Norwegian Ministry of Public Administration has recently published a book which describes how the Norwegian ministries are organised, who their personnel are in general terms and what their day-to-day activities are. These activities are explained primarily in relation to the ministries' mission as whole and also in relation to the links between the respective ministries and the Government (Council of State), on one hand, and the National Assembly (the *Storting*), on the other.

Ministries at Work outlines relations between the ministries' administrators and directorships, as well as between these leaders and political representatives, such as ministers, state secretaries and political counsellors. The publication also describes the close co-operation between the ministries and the *Storting*.

The Ministry issued the book with the intention of describing the Norwegian bureaucracy in the most straightforward and succinct manner. It is written for the general public, but is useful for public service appointees and trainees. Both experienced public administration officials and politicians have expressed their satisfaction with the information contained in the book.

For those with access to Internet, the book may be downloaded or printed from the following World Web Site: <http://www.ft.dep.no/html/nofovalt/depter/ad/publ/depeng/innhold.html>. ♦

Ministries at Work, 1996, 94 pages, ISBN 82-91080-03-8. To order: Ministry of Public Administration, tel: (47.22) 34.49.79; fax: (47.22) 34.95.17. Also in Norwegian.



A COMPENDIUM OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

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

From PUMA

SIGMA Papers: No. 10, *Civil Service Pension Schemes*, 1997, 124 pages. Also in French.

To order: SIGMA, Information Services, 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

From PUMA

Occasional Paper: No. 14, *Ethics in the Public Service: Current Issues and Practice*, 1996, 59 pages. Also in French.

Occasional Paper: No. 15, *Performance Pay Schemes for Public Sector Managers: An Evaluation of the Impacts*, 1997, 100 pages. Also in French.

Integrating People Management into Public Service Reform, 1996, 278 pages. Also in French.

Performance Audit and the Modernisation of Government, 1996, 285 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: compte.pubsinq@oecd.org

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

"The Administrative Reform – A Big Challenge for Bulgaria," *Administration* (Bulgaria), No. 2, 1996, pp 23-28. In Bulgarian.

BORGHI, M. and P. MEYER-BISCH, eds. *La corruption: l'envers des droits de l'homme*. (ISBN 2-8271-0696-5), 1995, 400 pages. In French.

To order: Editions Universitaires de Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland. ChFr 50.

DZUNOV, Todor. "Protection of Freedoms and Rights in the Constitutional Court," *Balkan Forum* (FYROM), Vol. 4, No. 4(17), December 1996, pp 117-126.

GODTFREDSSEN, Lawrence R. "Entrepreneurship in Slovenia: Assessing the

Impact of Public Policy," *Communist Economies and Economic Transformation* (UK), Vol. 8, No. 3, 1996, pp 411-425.

GRARD, Loïc, Jacques VANDAMME, and François VAN DER MENSBRUGGHE. *Vers un service public européen*, (ISBN 2-910-777-07-3), 1996, 637 pages. In French.

To order: ASPE Europe, Paris, France. FFr 220.

HARVEY, Brian. *Networking in Eastern and Central Europe: A Guide to Voluntary and Community Organisations*, 1995, 290 pages.

To order: CDF, 60 Highbury Grove, London N5 2AG, UK. Tel: (44.171) 226.53.75; fax: (44.171) 704.03.13.

LOUIS, Jean-Victor. *L'union européenne et l'avenir de ses institutions*, 1996, 192 pages. In French.

To order: Presses Interuniversitaires européennes, Brussels, Belgium. FFr 160.

ROSS, Cathryn. "The EU and Poland: Issues Surrounding Harmonisation of Policies on State Aid," *Communist Economies and Economic Transformation* (UK), Vol. 8, No. 3, 1996, pp 363-391.

SHUGART, Matthew Soberg. "Executive-Legislative Relations in Post-Communist Europe," *Transition* (Czech Republic), 13 December 1996, pp 6-11.

SMITH, Alasdair, Peter HOLMES, Ulrich SEDELMEIER, Edward SMITH, Helen WALLACE, and Alasdair YOUNG. *The European Union and Central and Eastern Europe: Pre-Accession Strategies*, 1996, 24 pages.

To order: SEI, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9QN, UK. Tel: (44.12.73) 67.85.78; fax: (44.12.73) 67.85.71; e-mail: sei@sussex.ac.uk. UK £ 6 (Europe); UK £ 7 (elsewhere).

VAN DEN BEMPT and Greet THEELEN. *From Europe Agreements to Accession: The Accession of the Central and Eastern European Countries into the European Union*, (ISBN 90-90-5201-614-3), 1996, 180 pages.

To order: Presses Interuniversitaires européennes, Brussels, Belgium. FFr 160.

Latvia's Press Grows Into Its Watchdog Role

by Andres Kahar



Latvia's newspapers do not always stake out the strongest positions on all topics, but this has not stopped journalists from looking into a number of key issues. Editorial pages often lack a leader (newspaper editorial), but do contain potent commentaries by pundits and known public figures. Scanning the pages of the Latvian press over the past several months, it is possible to discern certain trends that reveal journalists' main foci of interest.

Sanctity of the Democratic Process

One recurrent concern of the country's newspapers centres on the sanctity of democratic process. For instance, when Prime Minister Andris Skele unveiled his government's blueprint for government reform at the regional level last autumn -- a plan that would see local elected officials replaced by central government-appointed prefects -- reporters leapt all over the draft plan.

The country's largest daily, *Diena* (The Day), cited concerns that democracy at the grassroots level was under threat of being "erased". While Skele's twin aims of bureaucratic downsizing and cost-cutting at the local government level earned kudos from the press, papers urged Parliament to carefully consider the implications of installing prefects in the place of directly elected officials.

Skele's drive to reform the government and civil service at all levels has also won the backing of the press. It is little wonder that the premier's plan to shrink the cabinet from 25 ministers to 15 over the next two years and his war on corruption in the customs service went over well with journalists. The papers had long caricatured both low-

and high-ranking civil servants as little more than self-appointed fief rulers with a penchant for pilfering and loose legal interpretation.

Last November, *Neatkariga Rita Avize* (Independent Morning Paper), a paper of a decidedly conservative stance, turned the spotlight of scrutiny on Finance Ministry civil servants for their alleged failure to account for an unannounced ministry budget increase of 11 per cent, and for not earmarking certain ministerial funds. When one centre-left party's MPs took up this very theme, *Neatkariga* applauded the MPs for promoting dialogue and contact between the legislature and ministry employees -- something which the paper claims has been absent.

Uncovering Conflict of Interest

The press, however, still remains somewhat suspicious of political parties and continues to uncover cases of party stalwarts' conflicts of interest. Many papers have either hinted at or exposed the economic interests behind leading political organisations. When one controversial candidate for the post of finance minister was being reviewed by the ruling coalition at the start of this year, journalists did not shy away from reporting on the candidate's dubious business dealings and alleged violations of the country's anti-corruption law.

The so-called anti-corruption law, in force since August 1996, repeatedly captured the attention of leading Latvian papers over recent months. The legislation addresses the question of conflict of interest by making it illegal for a public servant to retain top business posts while in public office. In the months leading up to the law's

coming into force, papers reported on the mounting pressure on leading politicians to leave their seats on various enterprise councils. Those politicians who refused to comply with the law and held on to their posts after 1 August have been subject to regular drubbings by newspapers.

The Watchdog Role of the Press

Newspapers have also been notably active in boosting state-created "watchdog" institutions like the ethics council. Government was not spared the journalistic axe at the start of this year when the ethics council, staffed by appointed private persons and civil servants, ceased to exist in the face of waning interest on the part of government leaders. The press was nonplussed by the fact an ethics code drawn up the council for Parliament was all but ignored.

As political leaders seek to bring Latvian laws into line with EU White Paper requirements, legislative themes are often picked up by papers. For example, nationalist MPs' foot-dragging over liberalising land sale for foreign firms earned a few unapproving newspaper profiles. Papers have also called into question the 20-year monopoly contract between the state telecommunications monopoly Lattelekom and the Government, asking whether such an agreement is in the spirit of EU competition laws. That journalists have played the roles of critic and advisor in the government's formulation of an effective EU integration strategy is clearly in the public's long-term interests. ♦

Andres Kahar is Deputy Editor of The Baltic Times. He may be reached in Riga at tel: (371.2) 462.119; fax: (371.2) 463.387.

ADETEF Supports Modernisation of Finance Ministries

by Pierre-Yves Cossé

The Association for the Development of Exchanges in Economic and Financial Technologies (ADETEF) is the French Ministry of Economy and Finance's implementation agency for administrative co-operation. Along with many other organisations, the ADETEF has been contributing for a number of years to the development of regulatory mechanisms in central and eastern European countries.

Work with Finance Ministries

ADETEF's usual partners are ministries of finance which have long suffered from being ruled by the *Gosplan* and central planning. Today their objective is to set up effective and efficient regulatory mechanisms, whether for policy mix, public finance, customs, company failures or competition regulation.

These ministries seek to modernise their fiscal and customs levies systems and to achieve transparent and efficient management of the public treasury. In this context, the ADETEF has provided support to the Hungarian Ministry of Finance which seeks to minimise its financing needs, guarantee coherent and controllable budgetary execution and obtain credible information. In order to achieve this, it was considered that the most convenient solution was to establish a State Treasury and a single account, centralising the funds of the central budgetary bodies.

At present, Hungary can boast modernised public funds management tools and procedures, even though these still need to be extended and improved. ADETEF has provided similar assistance in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania, although on a more limited scale.

Future initiatives will give priority to public institutions, in particular in the fields of health, culture and to local authorities. It is

indeed essential that there be complete transparency in the public sector and that control be extended to all public institutions, however different their management methods.

To master public finance and budgetary balance, government need the capacity to adjust revenues and expenses to the prevailing economic situation. In this context, ADETEF has participated in Hungary and the Czech Republic in activities for improving the available tools for economic analysis and for macro-economic forecasting, as well as the co-operation procedures between economists'



services and financial administrations. Regarding enterprises, efforts made to improve coherence and consistency with fiscal policy has led many a country to develop an accountancy framework that matches international standards and to organise the profession of accountancy. ADETEF has participated in activities of this nature in many countries, including Romania and Hungary.

The abatement of customs levies, undertaken as a result of international agreements undersigned by these countries, obliges them to rely on economically neutral taxes, applied on a wide basis and with a high rate of return. The VAT is an answer to these requirements, despite its complexity. French fiscal specialists have provided their know-how in the field of computerised control of enterprises and detection of fraud trends and have supported training programmes.

Approximation of Legislation

To carry out these missions, ADETEF agrees with its partners on annual programmes following an *in loco* assessment. It calls on experts from the Ministry of the Economy and Finance's main departments: budget, taxes, public accountancy, customs, forecasting. In some cases it may call on independent experts. While relying on their professional experience, ADETEF experts keep in mind the local context and the requirements of approximation of legislation -- a priority for countries that are candidates for European integration.

In the context of approximation and alignment with the *acquis communautaire*, a blend of bilateral and multilateral co-operation seems ever more appropriate. ADETEF wishes to extend its work under a wider range of modalities. For example, it can assist national administrations in developing terms of reference and provide experts for short term missions, such as for feasibility studies undertaken by the public management units of finance ministries.

Participation in Consortia

ADETEF also is endowed with the legal capacity to participate -- being careful not to distort competition -- in international consortia as a leader, a co-leader or a sub-contractor. The criteria that leads its choices is the relative importance of needs for expertise and public sector know-how. In 1996, ADETEF carried out 137 missions to -- and hosted 46 missions from -- countries covered by the Phare Programme. ♦

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SIGMA

SIGMA -- Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries -- is a joint initiative of the OECD Centre for Co-operation with the Economies in Transition and the European Union Phare Programme. The initiative supports public administration reform efforts in thirteen countries in transition, and is mostly financed by Phare. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an intergovernmental organisation of 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: the Reform of Public Institutions, Management of Policy-making, Expenditure Management, Management of the Public Service, and Administrative Oversight. In addition, an Information Services Unit disseminates published and on-line materials on public management topics.

ON THE AGENDA

Upcoming Programmes



21 April-16 May, Cambridge, MA, USA. "Program on Fiscal Decentralization and Financial Management of Regional and Local Governments" (to focus on strategies of fiscal decentralisation and strengthening regional and local government financial management). Contact: Roy Kelly, Harvard University; tel: (1.617) 495.96.27; fax: (1.617) 496.29.11; e-mail: pfd@hiid.harvard.edu. In English.

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

29-30 May 1997, The Haag, the Netherlands. "Governance and European Integration," (EU working conference on standards of governance). Contact: Jos van der Steen, Ministry of Home Affairs, POB 20011, 2500 EA The Hague, the Netherlands. Tel: (31.70) 302.70.78; fax: (31.70) 302.76.34. In English.

2-6 June 1997, Maastricht, the Netherlands. Seminar on "European Neogiations." Contact: EIPA, POB 1229, 6201 BE Maastricht, the Netherlands. Fax: (31.43) 329.62.96. In English.

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