



CURRENT AND FUTURE TRENDS IN PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM: THE VIEWS OF TRADE UNIONS AND CONSULTANTS IN TEN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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About COCOPS

The COCOPS project (Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future) seeks to comparatively and quantitatively assess the impact of New Public Management-style reforms in European countries, drawing on a team of European public administration scholars from 11 universities in 10 countries. It analyses the impact of reforms in public management and public services that address citizens' service needs and social cohesion in Europe. It is funded under the European Union's 7th Framework Programme as a Small or Medium-Scale Focused Research Project (2011-2014).

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Introduction

While public sector reform has been a constant process, sometimes evolutionary and sometimes revolutionary, the financial crisis that started in 2008, along with the streamlining and efficiency aims of New Public Management paradigms that began to emerge in the 1980s, have increased the focus on current trends in reform in Europe and what this means for the future of the public sector.

This report draws on a total of 59 interviews conducted in 10 countries with top public sector consultants and public sector trade unions to determine perceptions of current trends in the public sector in each of the countries, as well as the future of public sector reform. The interviews were conducted according to a standardised set of questions, although they were conducted in each country's native language. Interviewees were asked background questions about their role in regard to the public sector, along with questions about the state of public administration in their country, specific public sector reform factors that had improved or deteriorated over the past five years, the effects of these reforms on their work and what trends they saw shaping the future of the public sector.

List of Organisations Interviewed

Country	Trade Union interviews	Consultant interviews
Belgium	ACOD	Deloitte Belgium PricewaterhouseCoopers, Belgium
Estonia	Rotal	Civitta Praxis Thinktank
France	CFDT Union CGT-UGFF UNSA Civil Service and Europe	IDRH McKinsey France BCG Accenture
Germany	Verdi, United Trade Union for Services	Ernst & Young KPMG Germany McKinsey Germany Horvarth & Partners Germany
Hungary	Union of Hungarian Public and Civil Servants EDDSZ, the union of health care workers	Horvath & Partners Hungary PricewaterhouseCoopers Hungary Ernst & Young Hungary
Italy	CISAL UIL CGIL CISL	Deloitte Italy KPMG Italy
Netherlands	CNV Publieke Zaak Abvakabo FNV	Berenschot Deloitte the Netherlands KPMG the Netherlands PricewaterhouseCoopers the Netherlands Twynstra Gudde

Norway	UNIO Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO Central)	PricewaterhouseCoopers Norway Deloitte Norway
Spain	CSIF CCOO AFEM	Ernst & Young Spain Deloitte Spain
United Kingdom	Public and Commercial Services Union Association of First Division Civil Servants (FDA)	PriceWaterhouseCoopers United Kingdom Capita

Due to the relatively small number of interviewees in each case, representativeness cannot be completely claimed by this report. Instead, it provides the perspectives and opinions of a select group of experts in the field, drawn from top public sector trade unions and consultancies. In some cases, the interview topics were seen by respondents as dealing with sensitive topics. For this reason, and to maintain consistency, all identifying factors have been removed from the body of the report and only generalised information has been presented. However, organisations and individual respondents have been included at the end of the report.

The report will first look at public sector factors that have improved and deteriorated in the past five years in each of the ten case countries. Then, it will look at aggregate trends across all case countries and attempt to provide some comparative idea of the state of public administration in Europe from the perspective of public sector trade unions and consultants. Thirdly, it will look at the future trends identified by interviewees as areas of potential upcoming reform before developing some conclusions based on these findings.

Trends in the 10 countries

Belgium

As a low number of interviews was conducted in Belgium, it is difficult to generalize on opinions regarding public sector reform in the country from the perspective of trade unions and consultants. However, some issues can be drawn from the three interviews conducted. First, there was no consensus on whether changes in the public sector had a positive or negative effect at the federal level in the country, although two of the interviewees did feel that the changes were positive. However, there was some agreement on what aspects of reform had either improved or deteriorated over the five year period. However, there was disagreement on other specific reform initiatives, with opposing views on whether coordination improved or deteriorated from five years ago.

Improvements

There was somewhat more agreement on which areas of reform were most positive. Two of three interviewees all felt that ethical behaviour, quality of services and cost efficiency had improved in the last five years, and all interviewees agreed that the attractiveness of the government as an employer had increased. Individual respondents also felt that coordination and reduction of red tape were better than five years ago. The most important driver of these changes was NPM- and efficiency-driven goals within the public sector.

While the respondents agreed that government jobs were seen as increasingly desirable, they did not feel that this was a result of particular policy reforms. Instead, this shift could be seen to be a result of the turbulent economic times and the job stability afforded by careers in the public sector. All three interviewees mentioned flexibility, stability and job security as prime motivators for careers in the public sector, and one directly linked this to the economic changes wrought by the financial crisis. In addition, opportunities for professional training and development and work/life balance were mentioned as attractive benefits associated with public sector jobs.

Other perceived improvements in the public sector were a direct result of specific reform initiatives, in the eyes of interviewees. Ethical behaviour was seen to have improved, largely due to the development of a formalised ethical code and stricter regulations on business-related expenditure (e.g. business lunches). NPM-inspired reforms aimed at professionalising federal government also acted to improve ethics within the public sector.

Deteriorations

There was less consensus on what aspects of the public sector had deteriorated in Belgium in the past five years. Citizen trust in government was mentioned by two respondents as an area of deterioration. While two of the respondents also felt that coherency and coordination had deteriorated from five years ago, the third respondent actually felt that the public sector had improved in this regard. Individual respondents also mentioned cost efficiency, motivation, citizen participation and social cohesion.

According to the respondents, citizen trust in government has deteriorated for two possible reasons. One respondent noted the negative influence of the media and politicians in fostering trust, with politicians responsible for the civil service doing little to protect or bolster the public's perception of public service worth. Another respondent felt that this distrust was mainly a result of fiscal decisions made by the government and general relations between employers' organisations and the government.

The perceived deterioration in coherency and coordination was mainly due to reforms that downloaded large areas of policy responsibilities from the federal to regional levels. One respondent felt that the reform was not successful as it increased the complexity of policy-making and coordination in certain areas, such as labour market policies. The division of

responsibilities between government levels and between different ministries involved in a policy remain unclear, according to the respondent.

Belgium in Comparison

When compared to the overall sample of interviews, two remarks can be made about the Belgian case. First, the positive attitude towards government as an employer is at odds to the experience in the other countries, with most cases seeing a deterioration in attitudes towards the public sector as an employer. Second, while consultants and trade unions in most of the case countries noted an improvement in transparency, this was not remarked upon in the Belgian case.

Estonia

In Estonia, three consultancy executives and one union representative were interviewed. The respondents working at a consultancy firm or think tank were moderately positive about the developments in public administration during the last five years, with all speaking of incremental improvements. The trade union representative, however, believes that the overall quality of public administration in Estonia has deteriorated. There was a clear difference in perceptions between consultants and trade unions. All three factors identified by the trade union representative as deteriorating – motivation and work attitudes, cost efficiency, and citizen participation and involvement - were actually seen to be improving by the consultants.

Improvements

The areas that have improved the most according to the respondents are the quality of services and cost efficiency. In terms of quality of services, improvements were seen as incremental and were seen to be a result of either improved efforts by civil servants or improvements in information technology. Cost efficiency was mainly improved due to budget cuts resulting from the financial crisis.

Apart from those two areas, there was less agreement on what factors have improved or how any improvements have developed. Individual respondents also mentioned modest improvements in motivation and attitudes, equal access to public procurement bids, ethical behaviour, fair treatment of citizens, citizen participation and involvement and transparency and openness.

Deteriorations

The factors that deteriorated most according to the Estonian respondents were bureaucracy reduction, social cohesion, motivation and work attitude, and citizen trust in government. Other factors that were mentioned by single respondents included motivation and work attitudes, cost efficiency, citizen participation and involvement, external transparency and openness, and policy coherence and coordination.

The deterioration in bureaucracy reduction was mainly seen to be a result of EU requirements and regulations. Deterioration in social cohesion was mainly linked to the financial crisis, which increased income gaps that have been inadequately addressed by the government. In addition, specific social issues such as gender equality in certain sectors, poverty and integration of ethnic minorities, have not been sufficiently addressed. The deterioration in public sector motivation and work attitudes was also perceived to be incremental change driven by the economic recession. More specifically, respondents felt that the crisis led to uncertainty around mergers and reorganizations, changing working conditions and a lack of resources, which in turn affect motivation. There is less agreement among respondents on what caused a decrease in trust in government, with possible reasons including political scandals and re-election of the current government.

Estonia in Comparison

In general, the Estonian trade union and consultant perspectives were in line with general trends within Europe. One exception to this was the role that civil servants were seen to play in the improvement of Estonian public administration, where this type of 'bottom-up approach' was not widely reported in other countries. In addition, the economic crisis and subsequent reforms were not seen as affecting the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer. A similar pattern was seen in Belgium and Italy, but this was not the case in other countries.

France

The French sample consists of interviews with four executives working at different consultancy firms and three executives from public sector trade unions. In general, the respondents were not very positive about the changes in the public sector during the past five years. Three respondents felt that public administration in France had declined, three felt that it was dependent on the policy sector or governmental level, and one felt that reforms had been moderately positive.

Improvements

The factors that have improved the most according to the French respondents are external transparency and openness, quality of services and internal bureaucracy reduction, followed by policy effectiveness and cost efficiency. These improvements were seen to have different drivers, with the most important being improved information technology and digitalization, followed by governmental reforms such as mergers between directorates and new review programmes of public policy initiatives. However, not all respondents viewed these reforms as positive developments.

An essential driver behind all of these positive reforms was seen to be improved information technology and digitalization of policy processes and services, which factored into positive

perceptions in all reforms. Transparency and openness in public administration was seen to have increased due to increased availability of information online, as well as increased attention to improving the communication skills of frontline workers. These reforms were driven by both internal and external factors, namely improvements in digitalization of information and an increased demand from the public for information. There was less consensus from respondents about the drivers behind improved quality of services, with digitalization, mergers of different directorates, improved monitoring of costs and improved interactions between service providers and users all being mentioned as potential reasons for positive reform. The perceived increase in policy effectiveness was mainly attributed to the reforms within the public sector aimed at improving monitoring of policy effects and reducing bureaucracy. Finally, improvements in cost efficiency were also seen to be a result of improved review processes, digitalization and mergers of directorates, such as that between directorates of taxation and public accounts.

Deteriorations

The factors that have deteriorated most according to the French respondents are the attractiveness of the public sector and public sector staff motivation and attitudes towards work, followed by social cohesion and citizen trust in government. There are no differences between consultants and the union executives in answering this question. The main drivers for these developments that are mentioned by the respondents are budget cuts and reforms that put constraints on public sector organizations and civil servants.

According to the respondents, the main cause of the deterioration of the attractiveness of working in the public sector was a decrease in wages and career opportunities and increased workload, resulting from the economic crisis and budget cuts. These factors are also an important cause for the decrease in public sector staff motivation, as were declines in status of civil servants and a reduction in the sense of meaning and significance of public sector values.

Due to budget cuts and reforms, such as the reform of the legal framework for finance laws ('LOLF'), there was also less space to manoeuvre for public sector organizations. According to the respondents, civil servants therefore felt less able to effectively serve the public interest due to increasingly unclear goals and underlying values. This was strengthened by the feeling that civil servants were not sufficiently involved in the planning of the reforms.

France in Comparison

In areas of both perceived improvements and deteriorations in the public sector, France was largely representative of the overall sample of interviews.

Germany

The German respondents include four executives at consultancy firms and two heads of public sector trade union divisions. In general, the respondents were positive about the situation of the public administration in Germany. Out of the six respondents, four believe that the way public administration is run has mainly improved during the last five years and two respondents identified both improvements and deteriorations in different areas.

Improvements

The German respondents seem to agree to some extent on the factors that have improved during the past five years. The factors that have improved most according to the German respondents were cost and efficiency and citizen participation, followed by external transparency and openness and ethical behaviour. Other factors that were mentioned by a limited number of respondents were service quality, staff motivation, policy effectiveness, bureaucracy reduction, equal access to services, citizen trust in government and policy coherence and coordination.

The main drivers identified in the improvement of cost and efficiency were seen to be financial pressures and budget restrictions implemented by government in reaction to the economic crisis. Other factors identified by individual respondents included consolidation of administrative areas, movements to corporatisation and an increased focus on reducing lags in decision making.

Improvements in citizen participation were largely seen to be at the local level, with citizens increasingly consulted in local decision-making through initiatives such as citizen budgets and citizen surveys. This was most evident in response to large policy decisions like infrastructure projects.

In terms of external transparency and openness, governments aimed to improve the online availability and access to information and development of a legal base for freedom of information. However, the implementation of and effects of this freedom of information policy remain uncertain. All respondents emphasize that these developments are only first steps and that more work must be done to assess the long-term impact of these changes.

Deteriorations

The German respondents were less consistent in their opinions regarding the factors that have deteriorated. The factors most mentioned as deteriorating were the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer, staff motivation and citizen trust in government. Other factors that were mentioned by single respondents include policy effectiveness, ethical behaviour, equal access to services and social cohesion. The respondents do agree however, on the drivers of this deterioration, which were seen to largely be a negative effect of budget cuts.

Attractiveness of the public sector as an employer and the motivation of public sector staff were deteriorating largely due to an increased focus on cost and efficiency and budget cuts in the public sector, which had a knock-on effect through staff reduction and an increase in workload and work pressure. In addition, an individual respondent noted a lack of attention for professional development, training and career perspectives, which is more present in the private sector.

When it comes to deteriorating citizen trust in government, there was little agreement about the root cause and the respondents referred to different incidents and provide several explanations. In addition, there was some difference perceived in trust in the government, which was felt to have declined, and trust in the bureaucracy, which was not viewed as negatively. One respondent mentioned data protection and the scandals regarding the NSA, while also noting a decrease in trust with regard to taxation, reflected in tax transfer and tax avoidance. A different respondent attributed the perceived decline in trust as a result of unrealistic and mismatched expectations of citizens and government failures in large projects, such as defence procurement projects, the Stuttgart railway station and the Berlin airport. Finally, another respondent stated that the government often shows a lack of interest in the public/civil service, which possibly trickles down into increased distrust in the bureaucracy from citizens.

Germany in Comparison

When compared to the overall sample of interviews, the German respondents mentioned factors and drivers of improvement that were similar to those that were mentioned in most other countries, with two exceptions. First, citizen participation was mentioned as a much more relevant theme in Germany than in the other countries. Secondly, improvements in transparency and openness have been reported in most of the countries included in this study. In the other countries, these improvements have, however, been attributed to IT developments rather than to active government policy, as in Germany.

Hungary

The Hungarian sample includes interviews with two public sector trade union representatives and three representatives of consultancy firms specialised in the public sector. The respondents do not agree on whether the way public administration has been run in the past five years has improved or deteriorated or even whether there have been significant changes at all. The differences cannot, however, be attributed to differences between consultants and union representatives.

Improvements

There is little agreement among the Hungarian respondents on the factors that have improved most through public sector reform in the past five years. None of the factors are

mentioned by more than two respondents and several factors have been mentioned as improving by some respondents and as deteriorating by others.

The factors that have improved the most according to the respondents include policy coherence and coordination, cost and efficiency, quality of services, bureaucracy reduction and cutting red tape, attractiveness of the public sector as an employer, and motivation and attitudes towards work, although all of these factors were only mentioned by two respondents each. In addition, all of these factors apart from motivation and attitudes were *also* mentioned as factors of deterioration by other respondents.

Despite the differences in factors of improvement that were mentioned, a few common drivers can be identified. Firstly, the centralisation of public services that has been implemented by government has, according to some of the respondents, led to improved policy coherence, bureaucracy reduction and cost and efficiency. Furthermore, respondents noted that improvements in several areas resulted from a clear identification of problem areas by the government. For instance, government attempts to reduce of bureaucracy and red tape, improve the quality of services by bringing services closer to citizens and attempts to improve the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer were all clearly identified as areas for improvement by the government. Whether these attempts had significant concrete effects was less clear to the respondents.

Deteriorations

There is also little agreement among the Hungarian respondents when it comes to the factors that have deteriorated. The factor that was most mentioned was social cohesion, followed by policy coherence and coordination, transparency and openness and attractiveness of public sector as an employer. Single respondents also mentioned equal access to services, cost and efficiency, quality of services, bureaucracy reduction and cutting red tape, innovation, citizen participation and involvement and policy effectiveness.

Two common drivers were connected to the deterioration of these aspects of the public sector. First, and common to many of the cases, the economic crisis and subsequent budget cuts were seen to lead to a deterioration in the areas mentioned. These budget cuts were seen to have most negatively affected social cohesion, along with equal access to services, the quality of services and innovation. In addition, they believe that the budget cuts have led to less cohesion within government, by increasing competition between departments of the civil service over available resources. A second general driver of deterioration was a lack of professionalism in local councils and the civil service, leading to poor quality public procurement practices, which in turn resulted in less efficiency and lower quality of services.

Policy coherence and coordination is a clear point of disagreement between respondents, with multiple respondents noting it as both an area of improvement and an area of

deterioration. The deterioration of transparency and openness was seen to be manifested by non-transparent government decision making. There was a deterioration in the number and quality of arguments and analyses supporting bills or major decisions in areas such as new tax policies and public procurement processes.

Hungary in Comparison

In the context of the overall data in this study, three things can be remarked about the areas and drivers of improvement and decline in Hungary. Firstly, centralisation reforms were noted most strongly in Hungary as a significant driver of public sector reform. Secondly, Hungary diverges from the general trend by perceiving an increased attractiveness of the public sector as an employer. Belgium also noted this as an area of improvement, but it was reported as a declining factor in other case countries. In terms of deterioration, transparency and openness were seen to have declined in Hungary, whereas other countries saw transparency and openness as an important factor of improvement.

Italy

In Italy, four trade union representatives and two consultancy executives were interviewed. The respondents did not agree on whether the way public administration is run in Italy has improved or deteriorated. Out of the six respondents, three believe the situation in Italian public administration has deteriorated, two respondents believe public administration has improved in some respects and deteriorated in others and one respondent believes that the situation has slightly improved. These differences cannot be explained based on whether the respondent belongs to a consultancy or a trade union.

Improvements

The Italian respondents largely agree on the factors that have improved during the past five years. The factor that improved the most according to the respondents was cost and efficiency, followed by innovation. Transparency was also mentioned by two respondents, and factors such as ethical behaviour, bureaucracy reduction and cutting red tape, equal access to services and quality of services were mentioned by single respondents. Important drivers of these improvements were budget cuts, increased attention to efficiency and IT development.

The main driver of the improvement of cost and efficiency was seen to be budget cuts that were implemented during the economic crisis. One respondent felt that the trend towards improved cost and efficiency actually started before the recession, with efficiency being at the core of various reforms since the 1990s. Two respondents also remarked that the budget cuts may have reduced costs, but have not necessarily led to more efficiency. According to them, the budget cuts have simultaneously lead to a deterioration in the quality of services.

Innovation was perceived to largely revolve around IT services and was largely driven by the introduction of new technologies. Improvements in ethical behaviour resulted from scandals in Italian politics and administration, which in turn led to an increased focus on improving ethics. Still, the respondent felt that there is too little attention for the correct ethical behaviour.

Deterioration

The Italian respondents also agreed to some extent on the factors that have deteriorated in the public sector in their country. The factors that deteriorated the most according to the respondents was motivation and attitudes towards work, followed by quality of services, citizen trust in government and social cohesion. Other factors that were mentioned by single respondents included cost and efficiency, innovation, bureaucracy reduction and cutting red tape, equal access to service and policy coherence and coordination. This showed some disagreement on some areas, where different respondents felt that aspects such as cost and efficiency either improved or declined.

The main driver for the deterioration of the factors mentioned by the respondents were again budget cuts resulting from the economic crisis, and the way these cuts were implemented. Respondents connected the budget cuts to declining motivation in the public sector. Citizen trust in government was also directly connected by respondents to budget cuts and negative campaigns, as well as political crises and 'failed reforms'. Finally, the decrease in service quality and social cohesion was also perceived to be driven mainly by the implementation of budget cuts that did not sufficiently take into account the views of all parties affected by these cuts.

Italy in Comparison

When comparing Italy to the other countries in the research, the positive attitude towards innovation among Italian respondents stands out. Digitalization and IT development were also mentioned as an important driver of change by respondents from other countries, but this was not directly linked to innovation, which the Italian respondents did. Apart from that, the factors and drivers of improvement mentioned by the Italians reflect the factors and drivers that were mentioned most across all samples.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, five interviews with consultancy executives and two interviews with representatives from public sector trade unions were conducted. There was no real agreement between respondents on whether Dutch public administration had improved or deteriorated in the past five years. Four out of the seven respondents emphasize that there have been both positive and negative developments and that the effects of certain reforms so far remain unclear. NPM-style reforms were seen to result in many changes, but these

changes were not always implemented in a way where these changes had the desirable effect.

Improvements

The Dutch respondents generally agreed on the main factors of improvement, but are even more in agreement on underlying drivers and developments. The areas that have improved most according to the respondents are cost efficiency, innovation and transparency and openness. Factors that were also mentioned by one or two respondents included ethical behaviour, policy coherence and coordination, citizen participation, equal access to services, service quality, motivation and policy effectiveness. The three main drivers of these developments include digitalization, budget cuts and reforms aimed at saving money, and increased cooperation within and between public organizations and departments. Most of the respondents do not connect the improvements to specific reforms and instead believe that they are incremental changes resulting from larger societal and global trends that were developing long before the fiscal crisis. Factors such as internal bureaucracy and administrative burden have decreased and efficiency improved, but largely in an incremental fashion.

Budget cuts and reforms were seen to improve cost efficiency by leading to leaner organizations and have inducing ministries to work together, leading to greater efficiency. Respondents often refer to similar developments in improving innovation. Innovation was perceived by respondents to focus on innovation within the public sector, with budget cuts forcing public organizations to search for new solutions and how to deliver the same or better services with less money. Examples given of innovative practices include new forms of cooperation between organisations, the concentration of services and the sharing of buildings and other resources between public organisations. Some respondents view these developments as examples of innovation, whereas others view them as causes of improved efficiency. Other factors that have been positively influenced by this dynamic of budget cuts and the search for alternative solutions and new forms of cooperation include citizen participation, policy coherence and coordination and service quality.

A second factor that has driven improvements in various areas was technological development. Innovation was seen to be driven largely by technological improvements in the views of some respondents, and transparency and equal access to services were also improved by technological advancement. These IT developments allowed for more information on government and government services to be available online. Improvements to transparency were also a result of citizens and media becoming more critical, and increased connections drawn between transparency and improvements in ethical behaviour.

Deterioration

The areas in which the public sector has deteriorated most according to the respondents are citizen trust in government and the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer. Negative changes in these areas were generally seen as incremental and not perceived to be the result of public sector reform. Many respondents also identified innovation as deteriorating. As this was also seen as an area of improvement by other respondents, this indicates a lack of consensus on the positivity of innovation reforms.

There was less consensus on the drivers of these deteriorations. The decrease in citizen trust in government was attributed to various incidents in the public and semi-public services, such as the large bonuses awarded to former directors of housing cooperatives, and the attention these incidents received in the media. The attractiveness of the public sector as an employer decreased mainly due to budget cuts and salary freezes. Finally, one respondent perceived negative publicity of the civil service as a source of deterioration in public sector attractiveness.

The Netherlands in Comparison

Compared to the other countries in this study, two things can be remarked about the Netherlands. Firstly, the Netherlands, like Italy, diverges from the general trends by connecting IT developments and digitalization to innovation in government practices. Secondly, cooperation seems to be a very relevant theme in the Netherlands, whereas this is not the case in other countries.

Norway

The Norwegian sample includes interviews with representatives of two public sector trade unions and two consultancy executives. All four Norwegian respondents were positive about the development of public administration over the past five years. Two of the respondents remarked that there have only been small, incremental developments, which was seen to be common to the Norwegian public sector.

Improvements

The factor that improved the most in the past five years according to the Norwegian respondents was openness and transparency, followed by public sector staff motivation and attitudes towards work and quality of services. Other factors that were mentioned by single respondents were cost and efficiency, equal access to services and equal treatment.

The respondents identified two common drivers of these improvements. A first driver of the improvements in Norway was digitalization, leading to more openness and transparency, improved service quality, equal access to services and equal treatment. A second driver was

an increase in attention for competence and quality in government, which according to the respondents led to more openness and transparency and to increased cost efficiency. There was a clear through line linking competence and quality in the public sector with management systems and measurement schemes. These in turn were seen to contribute to more openness and transparency regarding results and clearer identification of roles and responsibilities.

One explanation for this increased attention for competence and quality is that this is a response to criticism in the media (respondent 1).

One respondent explained this attention to competence and quality as a result of media criticism, which was also seen as a driver behind improvements in public sector staff motivation. The extreme right terrorist attacks by Anders Breivik in July 2011 - and the subsequent criticism of the public service after this incident – was perceived to have led to increased realisation of the importance of public services in improving society.

Deterioration

In general, the Norwegian respondents were positive about the public sector and any perceived deteriorations were seen to be small, incremental ones or factors that simply had not improved enough according to the respondents.

The factor that deteriorated the most according to the respondents was citizen trust in government, followed by social cohesion and the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer. In this regard, Norway fits in the overall trend of this study. Other factors that were mentioned by single respondents included citizen participation and involvement, innovation, policy coherence and coordination, bureaucracy reduction and cutting red tape, equal access to services and service quality.

One driver behind the decrease in citizen trust was a mismatch in expectations, where reforms created high expectations that were not met as implementation of these changes turned out to be more difficult than expected. An example of this noted by one respondent was in the area of welfare reform.

There were few common drivers identified for other areas of perceived deterioration. However, these areas were seen to be interlinked, with a decrease in trust in government being connected to other developments such as lower social cohesion and integration and failed attempts to increase transparency (for example, too much reporting about too many details, which led to unnecessary work). Social cohesion was seen to have deteriorated because of difficulties in integrating some groups into the labour market, along with difficulties integrating immigrants in the larger cities. Finally, the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer was seen to have decreased only in relative terms; because the private sector is doing well in Norway, the public sector became less attractive.

Norway in Comparison

Compared to other countries in this study, the Norwegian respondents were positive overall, and remarkably positive about motivation in the public sector, which was one of the most cited areas of decline in the other case countries. The factors and drivers leading to improvements or declines mentioned by the Norwegian respondents are similar to other cases.

Spain

The Spanish sample includes two managers at a consultancy firm specialised in the public sector and three trade union/professional association representatives. There is a clear difference between the consultants and the union representatives in their perspective on the developments in the public sector. According to both consultants the way public administration is run in Spain has improved, whereas according to the union representatives, the public sector has either deteriorated or remained the same. The consultants interviewed did not feel that budget cuts had negatively affected the quality of public services, whereas the public sector trade union representatives felt that these cuts had an adverse effect on public services.

Improvements

The Spanish respondents generally do not agree on the factors that have improved, and overall there was a negative perception about improvements. In fact, two union representatives did not feel that any major factors had improved in the past five years. The only factor that is mentioned by more than one respondent is cost efficiency, which was mainly seen to be driven by budget cuts. Other factors that were mentioned by single respondents were quality of public services, citizen participation, policy effectiveness, cutting red tape, attractiveness of the public sector as an employer, ethical behaviour among public officials, and public sector staff motivation and attitudes towards work. The last two factors are mentioned in the context of budget cuts and staff reduction. For the other factors, no common drivers can be distinguished.

Cost efficiency has improved according to the consultants due to budget cuts, downsizing and the introduction of efficiency-directed reforms. An example mentioned was the implementation of central purchasing bodies to streamline public sector purchasing. The consultants however, have some reservations about the effectiveness of the budget cuts. Costs have been lowered, but efficiency had not been greatly improved and any improvements in this area were not yet seen to be perceived by the citizens.

Deterioration

The Spanish respondents were more in agreement about what factors had deteriorated and the underlying drivers and explanations for this deterioration. The factors that have

deteriorated most according to the respondents are the quality of public services, citizen trust in government and social cohesion, followed by the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer and equal access to services.

The main drivers perceived in the deterioration of the quality of public services, attractiveness of the public sector as an employer and equal access to services were budget cuts, lower wages, personnel reductions and privatisation in the public sector, which were implemented in reaction to the economic crisis. The perceived deterioration of social cohesion can also be connected to the economic crisis and related measures. According to the respondents it can be attributed to increased inequalities and poverty resulting from factors such as unemployment and tax increases.

The decrease of citizen trust in government was reflected in several other surveys conducted in the country on the topic. There is still a perception among citizens that corruption is prevalent at all government and institutional levels and a belief that all political parties, trade unions and other actors in power are not pursuing their own interests, rather than that of the general public.

Spain in Comparison

Compared to other countries in this study, the Spanish respondents diverge from the general trends when it comes to transparency and openness. As in Belgium and Hungary, and as opposed to the other countries, transparency and openness did not improve according to the Spanish respondents.

The United Kingdom

In the UK four consultants and three representatives of public sector trade unions were interviewed. There is a clear difference between the consultants and the union representatives when it comes to their perceptions of the changes in the public sector over the past five years. The former are generally positive about the developments in the public sector, whereas the latter hold a negative perception of the developments.

Improvements

The factors that have improved most according to the UK respondents are policy effectiveness, cost and efficiency and external transparency and openness, followed by policy coherence and coordination and internal bureaucracy reduction and cutting red tape. Other factors mentioned by one or two respondents included innovation, citizen participation and involvement, quality of services and ethical behaviour among public officials.

Policy effectiveness and cost and efficiency were mentioned as areas of improvement by all of the respondents with a consultancy background and by one union representative and

have three common, interdependent drivers. First, budget cuts were a key driver, leading to more strategic thinking and the development of less costly solutions to policy issues. A second driver involves corporatization of government and increased attention to performance, which has taken place mainly at the local level. According to one respondent, local authorities are becoming more commercially-minded and a debate has started on what their role should be in the provision of public services, coupled with an increased understanding or recognition of the challenges that local authorities are facing. A third common driver involves an increase in accountability and responsibility when it comes to public spending.

The perceived improvement in external transparency and openness was mainly attributed to the same drivers as cost efficiency and policy effectiveness, along with an increased sense of accountability and responsibility, a focus on performance and improved measurement of performance and digitalization. The improvement in policy coherence and coordination was attributed mainly to an increase in strategic thinking and rethinking of the role of local authorities. Finally, the perceived bureaucracy reduction and cutting of red tape has been attributed to a greater integration of services and a shift in administrative culture in local government directed at fast problem solving and taking personal responsibility.

Deterioration

There is less agreement among the UK respondents on the factors of deterioration. The factors that deteriorated the most according to the respondents were policy coherence and coordination, public sector staff motivation and attitudes towards work, equal access to services and citizen trust in government, followed by policy effectiveness, quality of services and equal access to services. Also mentioned by single respondents were the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer, social cohesion/fair treatment of citizens and cost and efficiency.

The most important drivers of the perceived deterioration in the public sector were budget cuts and austerity. Both consultants and trade union representatives mentioned these drivers in deterioration in connection to motivation, service quality, efficiency and policy effectiveness, and to service access. Budget cuts, according to respondents, led to lower resources for public organisations, which in turn led to lower wages for civil servants and fewer resources to do the same amount of work. According to the respondents, this increased pressure and stress on civil servants as well as lowering the quality of services. Another effect mentioned was the cutting of non-statutory, discretionary services in some areas (such as leisure provision, libraries, the arts), which can be connected to equal service access. One respondent spoke of a lack of training and professionalisation among local councillors that manage large budgets and have to decide on budget cuts.

The perceived decrease in policy coherence and coordination is explained differently by all respondents. Respondents mention that some regions still have a two-tier district structure,

leading to confusion over functions and accountability, increased churn and change within organizations and inconsistencies in the practices of the current government. Finally, the perceived decrease in citizen trust in government was also seen to have different motivations by different respondents. One respondent explained that this distrust originates from the economic crisis and can be explained by the mismanagement of banks during the financial crisis and a reduction in wages of civil servants while bonuses for politicians and senior officers remained. One respondent again mentioned the lack of professionalism of local councillors that manage budgets and budget cuts and adds that they often do not take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions.

The United Kingdom in Comparison

Compared to the other countries in this study, the UK generally fits in with overall trends when it comes to improvements and their drivers. One exception is the improvement of policy coherence and coordination, which was not seen as a significant trend in the other countries in the study, apart from Belgium and Hungary. Whether this is actually a trend in the UK is however questionable as some respondents felt that this factor had actually deteriorated. In terms of deterioration, the UK respondents saw more of a perceived deterioration of equal access to public services. The connection between equal access and budget cuts was not reported as strongly in the other countries.

Public sector trends in Europe

Based on the overall set of interviews, three positive and three negative trends can be identified. Positive trends include improvements in cost and efficiency, increased transparency and openness and increased service quality. The developments that have been perceived as negative trends include a decrease citizens' trust in government, the decreasing attractiveness of the public sector as an employer and public sector motivation, and a decrease in social cohesion. The selection is based on the number of respondents that mention these developments as an improving or deteriorating trend over the past 5 years.

Positive Trends

Cost and Efficiency

A first positive trend that has been identified is costs and efficiency improvement, which was identified by a majority of respondents from all ten countries. In all countries apart from France and Norway, cost efficiency was considered the *most* improved factor.

The perceived increase in efficiency is generally explained by the respondents in two ways. A first explanation, mentioned by respondents in Estonia, Spain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, involves budget cuts that were implemented throughout Europe after the economic crisis of 2008. In Italy, Spain, Estonia and Germany, respondents mainly spoke of the implementation of cost and personnel reductions, while

preserving service quality. Respondents from the UK and the Netherlands, in addition, explain that budget cuts also trigger creative new solutions to policy and public administration issues, such as shared buildings and collaborations between organizations and departments. In Hungary, Belgium and France, budget cuts were also perceived to be an important driver of change in the public sector, however only in the negative sense with little to no mention of service quality. Norway is the only country in which budget cuts are not mentioned as a driver of change.

A second explanation for the perceived increase in efficiency involves general improvements and reforms to how the public sector is run. In Norway, Italy, France the UK and to a lesser extent in Germany, efficiency improvements have been connected to efficiency and performance related reforms, most of which are inspired by New Public Management-style administration. The respondents speak of increased 'customer orientation', the 'corporatization' of government and increased attention to performance. There was less agreement on whether these efficiency improvements were a result of newly-implemented reforms or whether they were simply a continuation of reform processes that had been in place from the early 1990s on.

In addition to these two main explanations, some country-specific developments have been mentioned. In Hungary, centralisation of public services played a role in the perceived efficiency increase. In the UK increased attention to accountability led to cost and efficiency improvements and in the Netherlands, cooperation between public sector organizations and government departments played a role.

Transparency and openness

A second European trend that can be identified involves transparency and openness, which is mentioned by approximately one third of interview respondents. Transparency and openness improvements refer to the availability of government information online, but also to improved government communication and the availability of information on government and public sector performance. In Germany, for example, steps have been taken recently to formally secure the openness of information. Similar laws have been implemented before in the UK and the Netherlands. The attention to transparency and openness, however, is not as widespread as the concern for efficiency. Transparency improvements are perceived to be a very important trend in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK and to a lesser extent in Estonia. In contrast, transparency does not seem to be an important theme in Belgium, Hungary or Spain.

The perceived increase in transparency and openness can be connected to three main developments. Firstly, respondents from France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK mainly view the increased transparency as the result of improved possibilities in IT and the internet. Government documents and information are increasingly available through

digital means, increasing their accessibility to all actors. Secondly, respondents from Italy, Norway and the UK in addition connect transparency to the increased orientation towards efficiency, customer service and performance, which also drive the NPM type reforms mentioned in the previous section. Judging the performance of public sector organisations requires information on the activities and output of these organizations (e.g. benchmarks), therefore the respondents argue that these developments lead to more transparency and openness. Thirdly, some respondents mention increased citizen expectations and media attention as a driver of increased transparency. The respondents believe that government behaviour is increasingly under scrutiny, and therefore governments are forced to become more open and transparent.

Quality of services

A third general trend is an increase in the quality of public services. Although a number of respondents mention the negative impacts of budget cuts on the quality of public service, quality improvements were mentioned by almost one third of respondents from all of the countries included in this research. The causes of the quality improvements are however, unclear. Over half of the respondents state that the quality improvements were an incremental change rather than a result of specific reforms. Other interviewees connect quality improvements to various developments including successful reforms and mergers in France or the dedication of civil servants in Estonia. One other motivation mentioned as a factor in improving the quality of services is digitalization, which is mentioned by respondents from France, Norway, Estonia and Spain.

Negative trends

Citizen trust in government

The first most commonly mentioned negative general trend that is a decrease in citizens' trust in government. This was mentioned by almost half of all interview respondents from all countries except for Hungary. The perceived decrease in citizen trust cannot be explained by specific reforms, according to the respondents. Respondents from Belgium, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK identify political scandals and incidents in the public sector, along with the significant media attention paid to these cases, as the main driver of this decrease. Examples of scandals and incidents include troubled large-scale construction and infrastructure projects in Germany (e.g. the Berlin airport; the Stuttgart railway station) and the Netherlands (e.g. the Fyra train), disappointment in reforms in Norway and Italy, and also incidences of fraud or corruption and political crises in Italy. Respondents from Norway and Germany mentioned the increasingly high and sometimes unrealistic expectations of citizens about policies and reforms as a cause for the decrease in citizen trust. Finally, in Italy and France, respondents mentioned negative media campaigns by politicians that portray the public sector as a source of waste and inefficiency.

Attractiveness of the public sector and public sector motivation

A second general trend that can be identified involves the attractiveness of the public sector as a workplace and motivation of public sector personnel, both mentioned by approximately one third of respondents as negative trends. These two factors are viewed as interrelated, and for a large part they can be explained by the same underlying trends, most noticeably the economic crisis and subsequent budget cuts. These budget cuts led to lower wages, more pressure to do the same work with fewer resources and less room to manoeuvre in doing their jobs, making the public sector a less attractive place to work for both current and potential future civil servants.

A few exceptions to this trend need to be taken into account. In Belgium, Estonia and Italy, respondents did not report a decrease in attractiveness of the public sector as a workplace. The Belgian respondents in fact report an increase in popularity of public sector jobs, which they explained by the attractiveness of the 'overall package' that the public sector offers (e.g. work/life balance, the possibility of skills training, job security) and the tendency of the current generation to 'seek stability'. However, respondents from all three countries do believe that motivation within the public sector has decreased due to budget cuts, leading to less security and opportunities and lower wages.

On the other hand, in Hungary and Norway respondents did not mention a decrease in motivation among public sector employees and in fact even reported an increase in motivation. Hungarian respondents attribute the perceived increase in motivation to the relatively secure position of civil servants, now that significant budget cuts and personnel layoffs have been implemented. Norwegian respondents explain the increase in motivation as due to a renewed appreciation in public services, such as police and health care, after the terrorist attack in 2011. Respondents from Norway, however do mention a decrease in the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer. This, according to the Norwegian respondents, is caused by the relative attractiveness of the private sector. In this regard Norway is an exception, as respondents from other countries mainly explain the deterioration as a result of crisis-inflicted budget cuts.

Social cohesion

The third negative trend that can be derived from the interviews is a decrease in social cohesion, which was mentioned by nearly a third of all respondents throughout all of the countries included in the study. Like motivation and attractiveness of the public sector, the decrease in social cohesion was connected to the economic crisis. Respondents mention the direct effects of the economic crisis, including increased poverty and unemployment, leading to increased inequality between different people and groups in society. In addition, respondents mention indirect effects of the crisis, namely budget cuts in the public sector, which in turn have a negative effect on programmes that would support social cohesion. Respondents argue that austerity has led to decreased access to public and welfare services,

further strengthening the effects of the crisis. Respondents from the UK, France and Hungary also connected budget cuts directly to the perceived decrease in equality in service access.

Future trends

Respondents were also asked about their expectations with regard to future trends in public administration in the next five years. As this was an open-ended question, the respondents provided a large variety of answers. Some trends however, were mentioned by multiple respondents throughout the different countries included in this study. These common future trends mainly include the continuation of current trends, such as budget cuts, public procurement and privatisation, continued attention to performance and efficiency and further digitalization of public sector processes. In addition to these, respondents mentioned centralization and the increasing use of partnerships as potential areas of reform.

The future expectation that was expressed most by respondents was the continuation of austerity in the public sector. Further budget cuts are expected by almost one third of respondents overall, mainly from the UK, Italy, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. This involves the continuation of a current trend, as respondents from these countries also considered budget cuts to be an important driver of change during the past five years. The continuation of the austerity trend is expected by both consultants and trade union representatives, but felt more strongly by trade union representatives. Union representatives in the UK for example expect the continued focus on austerity to have a negative impact on staff morale and citizen involvement, and in Italy trade union respondents believe that further austerity will degrade public services in 'key areas' such as healthcare, schools and pensions.

A second trend that is expected by respondents is closely related to the austerity trend, involving how public services are delivered. This was seen to either come as a result of moves towards privatisation, as was perceived to be a future trend in Belgium, Spain, France and the UK, or changes to public procurement, which was seen as a possibility in Estonia and Germany. This expected change in how services are delivered is mentioned by both consultants and trade union representatives, but again evaluated differently. Trade union representatives expressed more caution about this trend, whereas consultants viewed the move more positively.

A third potential future trend is an increased or continued focus on performance and efficiency, which is mentioned by respondents from Germany, Norway, Belgium and Hungary. In Germany, Norway and Belgium, this is merely seen as the continuation of an existing trend, whereas the Hungarian respondents did not mention performance and efficiency management as an existing trend but did feel that it would play a greater role in the future. In the case of Norway however, there were some reservations about the

efficiency trend. The Norwegian respondents in fact expect a move away from a New Public Management style of public administration, instead pushing towards a more balanced approach to public management. Norwegian respondents spoke of the emergence of a '*post NPM era*' resulting from the realisation that NPM-style reforms were perhaps too simple and could not be applied in all situations. The respondents however do believe that NPM elements will remain part of the future public management.

A fourth trend expected by the consultants and union representatives involves increasing digitalization and reforms driven by IT development. This expectation was expressed by respondents in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Hungary, Italy and the UK, including both consultants and union representatives. Digitalization refers to both the increased use of IT and technology within public organizations, such as the integration between different digital systems and the use of 'web 2.0', as well as the digitalization of service and information provision to citizens. This is predicted to have an effect not only on information available to citizens and the transparency of public administration, but also on how services are delivered and how citizens are engaged with the process.

A fifth trend that the respondents mentioned involves an increase in partnerships and cooperation between different actors in the public sector. This trend was mentioned by respondents in the Netherlands, France, Italy and Norway. This 'partnership and cooperation trend' was mentioned only by consultants, however. When speaking of partnership and cooperation, the consultants referred to different forms of organisation and mentioned various examples. Respondents from the Netherlands for example mentioned 'chain cooperation between different ministries and organisations' and increasing public/private cooperation. French respondents mentioned co-management between the different levels of the civil service, especially between state and local levels, and a Norwegian respondent spoke of increased horizontal coordination forming new areas of cooperation and networks between actors. Among the Dutch respondents, the partnership and cooperation trend is considered to be a continuation of an existing trend.

The final international future trend that can be identified is a movement towards centralisation, mentioned by respondents from Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway and Italy. In Hungary, the government has developed large scale centralisation plans, including for example the transfer of tasks and resources from local to central structures. The respondents are positive about the plans but are less sure about whether the implementation of these plans will yield the results that they expect. In the Netherlands and Italy, consultants are hopeful that their governments will cluster together central functions such as purchase, IT and auditing. In Norway and the Netherlands, however, two opposite trends are expected by the respondents. In the Netherlands, on the one hand, some services (e.g. the police) are being centralized, whereas others (youth care and social services) are being decentralized. Similarly, in Norway, police and healthcare have been centralized, and

respondents expect a trend towards fewer and larger municipalities. At the same time, there is a possibility of increased fragmentation of public services.

Besides the six trends that are expected by respondents throughout the different countries, there are some country specific expectations for the future. Among German, Dutch and Italian respondents, some recurrent expectations can be found. In Germany, respondents expect to see changes in personnel management within the civil service. Respondents expect increased flexibility, more open, private sector-style recruitment and clearer positive consequences for qualification measures. In the Netherlands, consultants spoke of a trend towards working closer to and with citizens. This involves the use of private and citizen initiatives and finding local solutions to problems. In Italy, respondents emphasise that they expect that there will not be any radical reforms during the next few years, possibly due to a lack of resources or the disconnected and uncertain position of politics and political parties in the country.

Conclusions

While country-specific factors were important in shaping public sector trends in Europe, several general conclusions can be developed across the nations. First, the financial crisis has had a significant and wide-reaching effect on how public administration is run, how services are delivered and how citizens fit in with the process. On the positive side, effects of the crisis were seen to improve cost and efficiency of the public sector, which in at least some country cases was managed without any decrease in the quality of services. However, other countries felt these efficiency reforms more strongly and more negatively, with an adverse effect on services. Across countries, increased attention to performance-related reforms, along with increasing citizen expectations and media attention, was also seen to have increased the transparency and openness of public sector processes.

However, the positive trends in these areas came at the cost of some more negative trends directly or partially associated with the crisis. More negatively, the crisis was seen to have a negative effect on the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer and public sector motivation. This could have a long-term effect as newer generations of potential public sector employees would be less likely and less motivated to choose the public sector as an attractive job prospect. In social terms, due to the crisis and other factors, citizen trust in government was seen to be the most negatively affected aspect of the public sector in the past five years. In addition, social cohesion was also seen to be declining. These trends are worrying in terms of public engagement and the repercussions were seen to be potentially long lasting.

Future trends in the public sector in Europe were seen to largely be a continuation of trends that have been developing over the past five years. Trade unions and consultants see a continued focus on austerity-focused public administration, marked by new approaches to

service delivery, strengthening of performance- and efficiency-based reforms and further development of partnerships and cooperation between actors in the public sector. This potential future scenario may also see an increase in centralisation tendencies and more comprehensive, deeper and more integrated digitalization of public services, through information delivery as well as citizen engagement. These future trends will inevitably and necessarily be shaped by external factors as well as internal and political pressures and opportunities for the public sector, but these views of public sector trade unions and consultants give some idea of what direction the future of public sector reform and public administration in Europe will take.

Appendices

Interviews

Nelleke Aantjes, CNV Publieke Zaak, the Netherlands

Triin Andresson, Civitta, Estonia

Guy Barbier, UNSA-Civil Service, France

Stephen Biggs, Capita, United Kingdom

Ms. Bindics, Ernst & Young, Hungary

Massimo Blasi, CISAL, Italy

Ms. Bodnar, IFUA Horvath and Partners, Hungary

Miguel Borra, CSIF, Spain

Fatima Brañas, AFEM, Spain

Jorick de Bruin, CNV Publieke Zaak, the Netherlands

Hans-Peter Busson, Ernst & Young, Germany, Austria and Switzerland

Martin Caldwell, public sector consultant, United Kingdom

Jean Marc Canon, CGT-UGFF, France

Ms. Cser, EDDSZ, Hungary

Paul Dijcks, KPMG consultancy, the Netherlands

Mr. Feher, Union of Hungarian Public and Civil Servants, Hungary

Anders Folkestad, Norway

Riccardo Harmes, PhD student (before: local government public services, education/children's services), United Kingdom

Thomas Herbing, Verdi, Germany

Luis F. Martín Izquierdo, Ernst & Young, Spain
Dan James, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), United Kingdom
Brigitte Jumel, CFDT, France
Antonio Focillo, UIL, Italy
Michele Gentile, CGIL, Italy
Fulvio Giacomassi, CISL, Italy
Pedro González León, AFEM, Spain
Kalle Liivamägi, Rotal, Estonia
Fernando de la Llave, Deloitte, Spain
Serge Loumaye, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), Belgium
Javier Jiménez Martín, Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) trade union, Spain
Bernard le Masson, Accenture, France
Nick McCarthy, Public and Commercial Services Union, United Kingdom
Roger Mortensen, Norway
Emmanuel Nazarenko, BCG, France
Paul Neilson, Association of First Division Civil Servants (FDA), United Kingdom
Marco Ouwehand, FNV Abvakabo, the Netherlands
Alain Parisot, UNSA-Europe, France
Gianluca Pastena, Deloitte, Italy
Frédéric Petitbon, IDRH consultancy, France
Gerard Putman, Berenschot, the Netherlands
Guido Rasschaert, ACOD, Belgium
Jan-Hendrik Schretlen, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), the Netherlands
Ferdinand Schuster, KPMG, Germany
Mr. Sere, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), Hungary
Frédéric Sève, CFDT, France
Tor Arne Solbakken, Norway
Robert Stemmler, McKinsey Research, Germany
Vincent van Stijn, Deloitte, the Netherlands
Karim Tadjeddine, McKinsey, France

Ageeth Telleman, Twynstra Gudde, Netherlands

Annika Uudelepp, Praxis, Estonia

Pierluigi Verbo, KPMG Consulting, Italy

Wim Vergeylen, Deloitte, Belgium

Tanja Verheij, Berenschot, the Netherlands

Rauno Vinni, Praxis, Estonia

Marit Wærness, Norway

Frank Weise, Horvarth & Partner, Germany

Klaus Weber, Verdi, Germany

Darren Williams, Public and Commercial Services Union, United Kingdom

Interview Guidelines

Barring exceptional circumstances, all questions must be asked. If the interviewee does not expand on the questions him/herself, follow-up questions are provided that can be asked in order to get more expansive answers. **Please record the interviews, unless the interviewee specifically asks for them not to be recorded.** If the interviewee does not want it to be recorded, please take extensive notes on the interview.

At this time, we are **not** asking for full transcripts of the interviews. Instead, please provide detailed summaries/reports of the interviews. These summaries should be structured around the questions asked, along with any additional observations or insights from the interviewee.

Please do not spend too much time on the introductory questions (1-3). The bulk of the interview should be spent on questions 4-9.

Introductory Questions

- 1. Could you please briefly describe the role of your organisation in terms of interaction with the public sector?**

Follow-up question: What are some of the key initiatives or actions your organisation has taken with respect to the public sector?

- 2. What is your specific role in dealing with the public sector?**

Follow-up question: Can you please expand on specific tasks and responsibilities you have with regard to public sector issues?

- 3. How long have you worked in this role?**

Follow-up question: has your role changed at all over time? In what way?

Substantive Questions

- 4. Compared to five years ago, would you say that the way public administration runs in your country has mostly improved, or mostly deteriorated?**

Follow-up question: Could you please expand on why you feel this way?

At this stage, interviewees should be shown the list of potential changes, so that they can choose the three most improved and three most deteriorated factors from the last five years. Follow-up questions should be asked about each of the resulting six factors.

- 5. Please look through the entire list of the following factors that may have been effects of public sector reform. Can you rank the top 3 factors that you would say have *improved* the most in the past five years?**

Follow-up: Please expand on why you feel [factor 1/2/3] has improved.

Has this improvement in [factor 1/2/3] been significant or incremental?

What was the major driver behind the improvement of [factors 1/2/3]?

- Can you provide any examples of [factors 1/2/3]?
6. **Can you rank the top 3 factors that you would say have *deteriorated* the most in the past five years?**
 Follow-up: Please expand on why you feel [factor 1/2/3] has deteriorated.
 Has this deterioration in [factor 1/2/3] been significant or incremental?
 What was the major driver behind the deterioration of [factors 1/2/3]?
 Can you provide any examples of [factors 1/2/3]?
 7. **Apart from the items mentioned on the list, are there any other major effects of public sector reform in the last five years that you consider important?**
 Follow-up questions: were these effects positive or negative?
 Can you provide any examples of this?
 8. **What implications have these public sector reform trends had on consultants/trade unions?**
 Follow-up: have these effects been positive or negative?
 Has this changed the way in which you do your job with regard to the public sector?
 9. **In terms of public sector reform, what do you think the major trends will be in the next five years?**
 Follow-up questions: why do you think this trend/trends will develop?
 Do you think these future developments will have a positive or negative impact?
 What do you think the overall implications of these trends will be for public administration in your country?

List of Potential Reform Effects/Outcomes

Quality of services

Policy effectiveness

Ethical behaviour among public officials

External transparency and openness

Policy coherence and coordination

Public sector staff motivation & attitudes towards work

Citizen participation and involvement

Social cohesion

Citizen trust in government

Cost and efficiency

Innovation

Internal bureaucracy reduction/cutting red tape

Equal access to services

Attractiveness of the public sector as an employer

Fair treatment of citizens