



10th MEETING OF MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

RHODES, 6TH JUNE 2003

RESOLUTIONS (ADOPTED 6.6.2003)

The Council of Lisbon in 2000 came to the conclusion that the Union should become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better job opportunities, greater social cohesion and simplified regulatory environment.

These objectives were reaffirmed at both the European Council of Santa María de Feira in 2000 and the European Council of Barcelona in 2002.

The European Council of Seville in 2002 welcomed the communications of the Commission on better lawmaking and, in particular, the Action Plan for simplifying and improving the regulatory environment. It endorsed the objectives of the Commission's Action Plan for eEurope 2005 as an important contribution to the Union's efforts to bring about a competitive, knowledge-based economy.

The Ministers responsible for Public Administration at their meeting in Logroño in 2002 have considered necessary to meet regularly in order to reinforce politically the co-operation established within the Network of Directors General and have considered advisable to examine new issues that affect the Public Administrations, especially those referring to the enlargement of the European Union, the social dialogue and the reform of the Institutions.

The Ministers responsible for Public Administration in the European Union, during their meeting in Rhodes on 6th June 2003:

- ❖ Valuing very highly the exchange of ideas, experiences and good practices between the Public Administrations of the Member States of the European Union, as well as the development of activities and common tools through their working groups in the areas established in the Mid Term Programme approved in La Rioja in May 2002.



- ❖ Receiving with satisfaction the Report of the Group on Better Regulation established during the Hellenic Presidency, in accordance with the resolutions of their meeting in La Rioja, in May 2002.
- ❖ Thanking the Danish and Hellenic Presidencies for the work carried out since their last meeting in La Rioja, in May 2002.
- ❖ Considering necessary to meet regularly in order to promote their co-operation and enhance the political direction of the European Public Administration Network in the fields of Better Regulation, Human Resources Management, Innovative Public Services, E-government.
- ❖ Considering advisable to follow also other issues that affect the Public Administrations and especially those referring to the enlargement of the European Union, the social dialogue and the reform of the Institutions.
- ❖ Regarding as milestone the signature of the Accession Treaty in Athens on 16th April 2003, during the Hellenic Presidency.

Agree on the following declaration:

**1. THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION NETWORK
FOLLOWING THE ENLARGEMENT**

The Ministers responsible for Public Administration:

- ❖ Welcome with great enthusiasm the new members of the enlarged EU family and invite them to join their efforts in the field of administrative convergence.
- ❖ Appreciate very much the efforts undertaken by the acceding and the candidate countries to adapt their Public Administrations to the requirements of the European Union and reiterate the importance of supporting their efforts in building administrative and judicial capacity in order to better implement the *acquis communautaire*.
- ❖ Appreciate the work done by the Task Force on Enlargement, established by the DG meeting in Elsinore, in November 2002. Point out the importance of the group in relation to future co-operation in various working areas, and anticipate its final report by December 2003 during the Italian Presidency.
- ❖ Welcome the invitation of Italy to open the activities of all working groups to acceding and candidate countries during its Presidency.



- ❖ Support the continuous efforts of the European Public Administrations to enhance the real convergence tendency. Welcome the initiatives that are being conducted at Community level in the field of public administration modernization, such as the setting up of an ad hoc group on better regulation and inter-institutional agreement on simplification.
- ❖ Consider of importance to meet on a regular basis, in order to exchange practices and ideas in the areas of cooperation and give overall direction to activities within the network.

2. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

A) Better Regulation

The Ministers responsible for Public Administration:

- Welcome the report of the ad hoc Group of experts on Better Regulation established during the Hellenic Presidency in accordance with La Rioja resolutions. Acknowledge the progress made by the member states and the Commission on better regulation issues, especially those regarding the implementation of the Action Plan of Mandelkern Report for the member states and the Commission.
- Having considered the results of the Report of the ad hoc Group on Better Regulation, warmly support the efforts of the national governments of the member states to launch horizontal policies on better regulation in order to enhance coordination and maximize the positive outcomes of better regulation policies.
- Support the introduction of effective Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA) in all member-states.
- Strongly support all types of public consultation, formal or informal. Maintain that time limits to public consultation should be set according to the prevailing circumstances. Underline the importance of spreading the results of the consultation as wide as possible by using the modern technologies and ensuring widest access to legislation. Stress the need for the continuation of simplification and codification programs in the member-states, since they have been proved to be extremely useful tools for the improvement of the quality of regulation.
- Point out the importance of a correct transposition process of the community law. Wish, in this perspective that the directives should set the objectives to be achieved as well as the general conditions and ask the member states to provide for their



application. Note that the simplification and the clarification of the normative hierarchy are one of the challenges for the European Constitution. Recommend that Better Regulation issue should be included in the curricula of training programs, so that those concerned with the issue will become in due time familiar with it.

- Welcome the proposal of the Hellenic Presidency, in line with the La Rioja resolutions, for an informal group incorporating the Directors for Better Regulation and the experts for the Mandelkern group. The group should continue to monitor the progress of member states on relevant issues and exchange good practices amongst member states encouraging them to learn from each other's experience. The group will put forward a working plan and report, as appropriate, to the Ministers responsible for Public Administration and Better Regulation.
- In accordance with the Conclusions of the Seville, Copenhagen and Brussels European Councils, stress the need for an immediate conclusion and implementation of the inter-institutional agreement as an essential element for the success of a combined strategy to improve the regulatory environment and enhance, also in front of the public opinion, the effectiveness of the European institutions.
- Express their wish on the setting up of an ad hoc horizontal working party on better regulation reporting to the Council, through the COREPER, in accordance with article 207 of the Treaty, with the view to assist in the follow up of the Commission's Action Plan "Simplifying and improving the regulatory environment".

B) Human Resources

The Ministers responsible for Public Administration:

- Highly appreciate the significant work carried out during the Hellenic Presidency, within the framework of the Medium Term Programme of the Human Resources Working Group, approved in their meeting in La Rioja, May 2002.
- Welcome the comparative study on the "*Career development systems as an effective tool to enhance attractiveness of public employment*" that was assigned to EIPA by the Hellenic Presidency. Agree that the possibilities of career development are among the most important factors affecting job attitudes of employees and that this should be taken into account when considering the need for the enhancement of the attractiveness of public employment. Anticipate the Italian study on Performance Related Pay Systems in this context.



- Welcome the study of the Hellenic Presidency regarding the methodology followed by the member-states for the definition of training needs in public administration, as well as the study on the common training needs (i.e. organization and function of EU institutions, EU policies, foreign languages, decision making in the EU, committology, enlargement issues, negotiation skills, community structural funds, etc.). Acknowledge that the common training needs and the development of programmes within a European context are considerable and express the wish that National Administrations, the Commission and EIPA would undertake cooperation in the field of training and organisation of open seminars. Suggest the examination of the feasibility of introducing an “individual development portfolio” for each employee, as a tool that will encourage the promotion and mobility of civil servants. Assign the Directors General to follow closely the organization of open training seminars for European civil servants by the Schools for Public Administration during the Italian Presidency. Welcome the decision of Italy to organise an open training seminar and a conference of Directors of Schools of Public Administration that will lead to the signing of a memorandum of understanding.
- Welcome the Communication by the European Commission on “*Free movement of workers-achieving the full benefits and potential*”. Note with satisfaction that the national administrations have made significant efforts in removing the barriers in the free movement of workers in the public sector and urge the national administrations to take all the necessary measures, so as to align effectively with the European Court of Justice case law on article 39,4 of the European Community Treaty.
- Underline the importance of new technologies in the human resources management and anticipate the Italian Study on the impact of e-government on human resources.

C) Innovative Public Services

The Ministers responsible for Public Administration:

- ❖ Agree that the organization of Quality Conferences is an excellent way of exchanging ideas and methods on good practices. Warmly support the organization of the Third Quality Conference (3QC) for Public Administration in the European Union that will take place in Rotterdam on 15-17 September, 2004. Adopt the content and format of the Conference and express their wishes for excellent results. Entrust the Directors



General with the study of all the necessary preconditions for a successful preparation, taking into account the enlargement process.

- ❖ Consider the value of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as an excellent and self-assessment model to the identification of good practice cases in public services. Empower the Directors General to further diffuse CAF. Welcome the initiative of Italy to organise a CAF event in Rome in November and anticipate the relevant study.
- ❖ Support the launching of benchmarking projects and entrust the Directors General to formulate the relevant strategy.
- ❖ Welcome the launching of the electronic newsletter during the Hellenic Presidency as an information tool, which enhances the communication and the spread of innovative ideas among the EU member states.
- ❖ Appreciate the surveys on Performance Management Systems in the EU member states and thank Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Sweden for their contribution in that area.

D) E-government

The Ministers responsible for Public Administration:

- Reaffirm their commitment to the electronic delivery of Public Services by 2005, in accordance with the Barcelona and Brussels e-government declarations, as well as the action plan on e-government of Seville, in order to meet citizens' needs.
- Recognise the importance of the use of Internet and ICT technologies, together with the appropriate human resources training, as powerful tools for public administrations and acknowledge that the Public Sector in the EU Member States already provides or deploys e-government applications and services. Welcome the decision of Italy to organise an International Conference on e-Government in July 2003, in co-operation with the Commission.
- Acknowledge the need to introduce additional guarantees that will lead to secure e-government services to citizens and to the improvement of interoperable electronic communications among public services.
- Observe that successful steps have been taken within the European Union to make e-government a reality and express their belief in the existence of common ground and need for co-operation.



- Encourage EU member states to explore appropriate processes and methodologies, concerning the cost-benefit analysis of e-Gov projects. Recognise that all relevant Working Groups operating within the European Union are effective fora for the exchange of information and experiences in the field and urge them to promote co-operation.
- Value that the actions undertaken by the Danish Presidency, outlining a list of priority areas and themes of common interest on the e-government aspects of Public Administration, ensure an effective and well-defined work frame for the E-government Working Group.
- Appreciate the work accomplished by the Hellenic Presidency, within the above-mentioned framework.

3. RAISING OF REGIONAL INEQUALITIES FOR THE REMOTED AND INSULAR REGIONS.

The Ministers of Public Administration:

- Highly appreciate the contribution of Local and Regional Authorities in the provision of public services in the remoted and insular regions of the Union
- Estimate that isolated and insular areas can profit a lot from the modernization of public services, especially through the development of e-government applications.
- Recognize that the modernization of regional and local administration is essential to a good of major European policies.
- Evaluate transborder regional co-operation as particularly essential especially for the new member states and consider that the rules of functioning of the administrations should be adapted to facilitate this co-operation.
- Express their wish that the Summit Conference of Thessaloniki will reaffirm the necessity of realization of the regulations of the Treaty of Amsterdam on remoted and insular regions. Urge the Commission to proceed to the realization of these specific policies and to study positively all the propositions formulated, such as the proposition of the Committee of the Regions



4. SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The Ministers responsible for Public Administration, in accordance with the resolutions of their meeting in La Rioja, May 2002

- ❖ Reaffirm the growing importance of social dialogue for the constant improvement of the public services within the Member States of the European Union and consider of vital importance the continuation of the exchange of information between the national administrations and the European Trade Unions.
- ❖ Anticipate the Commission's study on the representativity of Trade Unions within the European Union.

5. REFORM OF THE COMMISSION

The Ministers responsible for Public Administration:

- ❖ Welcome the information received by the Commission about the progress made in the implementation of its Reform strategy. Express their satisfaction on the revision of the Staff Regulations and endorse the planned timetable for implementation to ensure that the new Staff Regulations could be applied in time for the recruitment of staff from the new Member States. In particular, welcome the efforts to make the institutions more open and efficient, inter alia by codifying the officials' right to freedom of expression.
- ❖ Acknowledge the substantial efforts made by the new member-states and the candidate countries, as well as by the Commission, under the pre-accession assistance programmes, in favour of institution-building and the improvement of their administrative capacity. Invite the administrations to take the appropriate measures to support this process within the Public Administration Network.
- ❖ Recognise the importance of the voluntary and reciprocal *exchange scheme of officials between the Commission and the member-states* and invite the Commission and the member-states that wish to participate in the scheme to take the necessary steps for its implementation".
- ❖ Welcome the Commission's stated policy and efforts to reflect the ethnic diversity in the composition of EU personnel, in accordance with the spirit of the Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, concerning the general principle of non-discrimination in the European Union.



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6. MID TERM PROGRAMME FOR CO-OPERATION BETWEEN DIRECTORS-GENERAL

The Ministers highly appreciate the evaluation of the EU Public Administration Network carried out by the Danish Presidency as well as the work done during the Hellenic Presidency in accordance with the mid term programme adopted in La Rioja in May 2002.

They assign the Troika DGs to cooperate closely on the elaboration of the revised mid term programme to be adopted during the Irish Presidency, taking into account the challenges and opportunities resulting from enlargement.