



HELLENIC PRESIDENCY
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
www.eu2003.gr

10th MEETING OF MINISTERS

RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE NEW MEMBER STATES AND CANDIDATE
COUNTRIES

RHODES, 6TH JUNE 2003

DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (19.5.2003)

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 and greater social cohesion. In this context the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council call for the formulation by the end of 2001 of a strategy for further co-ordinated action to simplify the regulatory environment.

The European Council of Santa María de Feira 2000 pointed out the role of administrative actions and that of better regulation in enhancing the competitiveness of the Union and the Member States, thus contributing to economic growth and employment opportunities.

The Heads of State and Government, at their meeting of the European Council of Barcelona in 2002, have reaffirmed the importance of the economic and social development of the Union to the improvement of public administrations quality.

The European Council of Seville welcomed the communications of the Commission on better lawmaking and, in particular, the Action Plan for simplifying and improving the regulatory environment. It invited the three Institution involved (Parliament, Council and Commission) to adopt an interinstitutional agreement before the end of 2002, on the basis of the Community legislation and the conditions, including timeframes, for its transposition into national law. The Seville European Council 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. They called upon all institutions to ensure its implementation by the end of 2005 and invited the Commission to present a mid-term review to evaluate progress and, if necessary, make proposals to adapt the Action Plan in good time for spring European Council in 2004. They invited the Commission to report back



to the Copenhagen European Council on the issue of networks and services in order to overcome the remaining barriers in the physical deployment of networks and to promote the development of eCommerce and eGovernment, mainly the role that electronic identification and authentication systems could play in this context.

The Ministers responsible for public administration at their meeting in 1998 in Vienna launched important initiatives on best practices and performance indicators, and at their meeting in 2000 in Strasbourg considered the main priorities and the steps required in favour of a co-ordinated effort to modernise public administrations of the European Union. At their meeting in Brussels in 2001 in the framework of the e-Government conference, they re-affirmed their commitments to rapid e-Government developments as an integral part of the Lisbon strategy. At their meeting in Logroño in 2002 they have considered necessary to meet regularly to reinforce politically the co-operation established within the Network of Directors General and have considered advisable to examine, in addition to the areas where co-operation have been already developed, other issues that affect the Public Administrations and specially 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, meeting in Rhodes on 6th June of 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 at least once a year to promote their co-operation and exchange of ideas in the fields of Better Regulation, Human Resources Management, Innovative Public Services and E-government, and thinking advisable to follow other issues that affect the Public Administrations and specially



those referring to the enlargement of the European Union, the social dialogue and the reform of the Institutions.

- ❖ Deeming essential to take into consideration the setting up of a formal Council of Ministers responsible for public administration in the European Union.
- ❖ Regarding as milestone the signature of the Accession Treaty in Athens on 16th April 2003.

Agree on the following declaration:

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

The Ministers of 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 the Public Administrations to the requirements of the European Union. They 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 2003, and anticipate its final report by December 2003. They point out its importance in relation to future co-operation in various working areas.
- ❖ Consider of vital 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.
- ❖ Welcome the initiative of the Hellenic Presidency to address a proposal to the competent Institutions of the Community for the establishment of a formal Council of Ministers responsible for Public Administration in the EU.



2. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

A) Better Regulation

- Welcome the report of the ad hoc Group of experts on Better Regulation established during the Greek Presidency in accordance with the La Rioja resolutions. They acknowledge the progress made by the member states and the Commission on better regulation issues and especially 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 to maximize the positive outcomes of better regulation policies. They support to introduce effective Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA) in all member-states.
- Strongly support all types of public consultation, formal or informal. They maintain that time limits to public consultation should be set according to the prevailing circumstances. They underline the importance of spreading the results of the consultation as wide as possible and using the modern technologies ensuring widest access to legislation. They 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 to improve the quality of regulation.
- Stress the significance of a correct and timely transposition process of Community Law. They 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 Greek Presidency, in line with the La Rioja resolution, 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 these issues and exchange good practices amongst member states encouraging them to learn from each other's experience. The group will report, as appropriate, to the Ministers responsible for Public Administration and Better Regulation.



- Strongly support the setting up of an ad hoc horizontal working party on better regulation reporting to the Council with the view to assist in the follow up to the Commission's Action Plan "Simplifying and improving the regulatory environment".

B) Human Resources

The Ministers of 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. The Ministers agree that career development systems are among the most important factors affecting job attitudes of employees and that this should be taken into account in the enhancement of public employment attractiveness.
- 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.). They acknowledge that the common training needs and the development of programmes within a European context are considerable and they wish that National Administrations, the Commission and EIPA would undertake cooperation in the field of training and organisation of open seminars. They suggest to examine the possibility to introduce an individual/personal training passport for each employee, as a tool that will encourage the promotion and mobility of civil servants.
- Welcome the Communication by the European Commission on "*Free movement of workers-achieving the full benefits and potential*". They note with satisfaction that the national administrations have made significant efforts in removing the barriers in the free movement of workers in 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 of the European Community Treaty.

C) Innovative Public Services



The Ministers of Public Administration:

- ❖ Agree that the organization of Quality Conferences is an excellent way of exchanging ideas and methods on good practices. They 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. They adopt its content and format and express their wishes for excellent results. They entrust the Directors General with the study of all the necessary preconditions for a successful preparation, taking into account the enlargement process.
- ❖ They 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. They empower the Directors General to further diffuse the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).
- ❖ They support the launching of benchmarking projects and entrust the Directors General to formulate the relevant strategy.
- ❖ They 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 regarding good practices in services delivery and in the internal organization of Public Administration.
- ❖ They appreciate the surveys on Performance Management Systems in the EU member states and thank Austria, Italy, Sweden, France and Greece for their involvement in that area.

D) E-government

The Ministers of 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 Sevilla, in order to meet citizens' needs.
- Recognise the importance of the use of Internet and ICT technologies 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.



- 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 in the field of performance value assessment of e-projects applied in EU public sectors.
- Encourage EU member states to explore appropriate processes and methodologies, concerning both the cost-benefit analysis of e-Gov projects and the evaluation of public policies for e-Gov initiatives. They 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. SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The Ministers of Public Administration

- ❖ Recognise the growing importance of social dialogue for the constant improvement of the public services within the Member States of the European Union
- ❖ Consider of vital importance to continue of the exchange of information between the national administrations and the European Trade Unions through the common meetings of the Troika of Directors-General with the European Trade Unions and the ad hoc Conferences of European Trade Unions with the National Trade Unions.
- ❖ Stress the importance of the role to be played by the social partners for the future of the European Union and anticipate the Commission's study on the representativity of Trade Unions within the European Union.



4. REFORM OF THE COMMISSION

The Ministers of Public Administration:

- ❖ Welcome the progress made by the Commission in the implementation of its Reform strategy. They express their continued support in 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.
- ❖ 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 improvement of their administrative capacity. They invite their 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 member-states that wish, to proceed to 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.

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

The Ministers appreciate the evaluation of the EU Public Administration Network carried out by the Danish Presidency and approve the Mid-Term Programme submitted by the Hellenic Presidency.