

SERBIAN CIVIL SERVICE FOR THE FUTURE

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ABSTRACT: *Times are changing and we inside of them. Public service is performed adequately if the conditions of continuity, equality and adaptability are accomplished. These principles are in a way “laws” of public service.*

The citizens rightly expect that public services adjust their actions to the changing demands of the 21st century. So, categorization of countries in the next century will be based on the quality of services provided to citizens, rather than on the quantity of these services. Governments throughout the world are under enormous pressures to work better in order to maximize results and minimize costs. The role of governments is changing from providing mere services to providing high quality service.

We should always hold human resource as the first resource and the basis to development. In public sector in Serbia today there are around half million of employees. Ethics of civil servants is one of the leading criteria in performance of the employee's duties in the public service. Investment in education of employees in public sector is necessary, because institutional supervision does not always work efficiently. It is necessary to provide for good business environment and certainly reduce administrative procedures and raise the level of trust in public administration to the satisfaction of citizens.

KEYWORDS: *public service, employees, environment, Serbia.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *K 23, K 33*

INTRODUCTION

Times are changing and we inside of them. World financial crisis developed into the world economic crisis and that has every day more implications on business and economy in Serbia (on the economic activity and of course, employment, less working places and projects...). Government of the Republic of Serbia undertakes measures that will reduce the negative consequences of the world economic crisis. The importance of the public sector has grown considerably, in such a way, that its efficiency has a significant impact on total economic efficiency.

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In the public sector in Serbia there are about half an million of employees and now the reduction of the public sector is planned for 20%. Of course, one of the most important principles of public administration is the principle of rationalization with aim that its bodies perform only necessary jobs in the most effective way. This principle has the important role in establishing of administrative structures.

Believing in the improvement of performing of public sector duties in Serbia, with the optimal number of employees and reduction of administrative expenses as the aims of strategic reform, we stress the efforts directed to rationalization of public administration.

EVALUATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF PUBLIC SERVANTS

Governments throughout the world are under tremendous pressures to work better in order to maximize results and minimize costs. The role of governments is changing from providing mere services to providing high quality service.

The citizens rightly expect that public services adjust their actions to the changing demands of the 21st century. So, categorization of countries in the next century will be based on the quality of services provided to citizens, rather than on the quantity of these services. Countries have much to learn from each other. It is necessary to achieve cooperation on the international level, with aim to create professional and effective public administration in our country, because the availability of public administration services to citizens and its reform are the key challenges Governments nowadays confront with.

Saint-Just Antoine wrote that till we can see somebody waiting in the halls of municipalities and courts – public administration is not valid nothing at all.

Our present and actual trend is to establish the practice of adequate verification of knowledge, professionalism and practical skills of public servants¹, both in the procedure of their engagement and their activities afterwards. The legal base of that system of evaluation are: The Law on the public servants², Decree on Civil Servants Performance Appraisal in Serbia³ and the Law on salaries of public servants and employees⁴. This is surely of importance for the reform and professionalization of total administrative system, and imperative for further advancement in service, i.e. the professional development of employee.

It is well known fact that the quality of public services depends of the quality of its employees. But in the procedure of evaluation of employees it is necessary to provide for the objectivity and of course, standardization in the process of evaluation.

Program of the general professional improvement of public servants from the public administration bodies and Governmental services adopts Government for every year, on the proposal of the Service for cadre management. Program of the special professional improvement of public servants is made by the manager for every year, according to the special needs of the state's body.⁵

¹ See: The Law on the public servants, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", no. 79/05, 81/05, 64/07, 67/07.

² See: »Official Gazette RS« no. 79/05, 81/2005, 83/2005, and no. 64/07, 67/2007, 116/2008, 104/2009.

³ »Official Gazette RS«, no. 11/06.

⁴ »Official Gazette RS«, no. 62/06, 115/06 and 101/07.

⁵ Article 97, of the Law on the public servants, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", no. 79/05, 81/05, 64/07, 67/07.

The creation of institutions for education of new generations of public servants represents one of the necessary steps on the way of making better public service for the future. Role of schools and institutes of public administration is to promote professionalization of public servants. These days the regional school for public administration is founded in Serbia.

One basic need, common to all Central Eastern European countries, is the one to train huge quantities of people in the shortest time. This implies the need of some sort of multiplier effect. Technically the following multiplier mechanisms as: distance learning, self-instruction (eventually computer based training), or training of trainers can be used. Distance learning and self instruction have appeared to us not quite appropriate whereas there appears to be a strong need to compare and discuss different cultural approaches. The anonymity of distance learning and self-instruction does not appear to be appropriate in such a situation.

Public service is performed adequately if the conditions of continuity, equality and adaptability are accomplished. These principles are in a way “laws” of public service.

At the end of year 2004 the Strategy of public administration reform was adopted in the Republic of Serbia. Law on the public administration⁶ was adopted in September 2005. according to the model of the European legislatures. And today, in year 2010, in the time of important technological accomplishments, superiority of knowledge and many information in all fields of the creation and life, this strategy which includes systematic, functional and organizational and cadre advancement and development of administrative system, means also the evaluation of public servants in the public administration of the Republic of Serbia.

Any country would be handicapped if it could not rely on a strong, competent, professional public service, relied on the use of information technologies. The time period before realization of the project of e-administration is very long, therefore it is necessary parallel with electronization of the public administration work to perform also its organizational and structural transformation and activate cadre capacities. E-administration in our country is in action. So far beside the capital of Belgrade, these are towns of Valjevo, Novi Sad and Leskovac, but also the others will come next in the satisfaction of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia.

We should always hold human resource as the first resource and the basis to development. Investment in education of employees in public sector is necessary, because institutional supervision does not always work efficiently. Ethics of civil servants is one of the leading criteria in performance of the employee’s duties in the public service. It is necessary to provide for good business environment and certainly reduce administrative procedures and raise the level of trust in public administration to the satisfaction of citizens.

On the recently held Round table the Proposal of Codex of good administration has been presented. The defender of citizens of the Republic of Serbia made this Codex Proposal that will be in front of the representatives of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia before the end of year. European Codex of good administrative behavior, which on the basis of the special report of the European Ombudsman and on his initiative, European Parliament adopted by the Resolution of the 6-th September in 2001. has been taken as direct model.

⁶ “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, no. 79/05, 101/05.

The Contents of the Codex of good administration does not include concrete rules, but it represents existing legal framework, whose skeleton are Constitutional provisions on the protection of citizen's dignity and respect of human rights and liberties, as well as material and procedural principles of our administrative law.

For example, if public servant makes a mistake, the citizen should get an excuse or the mistake should be corrected at state expense. If the public servant is blamed for the mistake, then he/she should bear costs and not the taxpayers.

Real priorities of our people are also education and development of knowledge economy.

TEMPTATIONS OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS IN SERBIA

The aim of public administration work is the public benefit, and public services are state's activities of general and public interest serving to satisfy citizen's needs. Of course, in the case of their stoppage the serious problems in normal functioning of the state would appear.

Public service does not have the generally accepted definition and this concept has been for a long time insufficiently prepared in legal literature.

Public administration is defined as the management of public jobs in the public interest.

Oportet privatis utilitatibus publicas anteferre. (To prefer legal benefits to personal). Public service in the sense of the Law on public services, represents institutions, enterprises and other forms of organization established by law, which perform activities i.e. the jobs that provide for realization of the citizen's rights, i.e. the satisfaction of the needs of citizens and organizations, as well as carrying out of other by law established interest in certain areas.⁷

Numerous are dangers that countries in transition, with high deficit in balance of payment, and among them also Serbia, confront with. In our country the most has been invested during year 2006.⁸ However, the state of economy requires strong and fast action through-out the world.

In our country efforts of the Government to reform its institutions and judiciary and to make employers behave in accordance with law are evident.

Legal regulation in Serbia is to a great extent harmonized with international documents and corresponding regulation of European Union (EU). The main problem is that many of regulations are not always respected and that protective mechanisms and instruments for their enforcement are sometimes weak. There are few institutions which deal with advancement and protection of economic and social rights in Serbia.⁹ Environment in which the rights from the labour relation are strictly respected and the violators of regulations are more severely punished should only be created.

⁷ Article 1. Law on public services, "Official Gazette RS", no. 42/91, 71/94, 79/2005.

⁸ Total value of foreign investments in Serbia from 2001 amounts to about 10 billions euros. (The fact from »Biznis i finansije« (»Business and finances«), no. 49, November 2008, p. 42.

⁹ These are: Ministry of labor and social politics with Labor Inspectorate and Administration for security and health at work, Ministry of Justice, Agency for peaceful settlement of the labor disputes of the Republic, as well as courts, syndicates and legal aid at municipalities.

In 2001. the process of high education reform began in Serbia. Education as the part of tradition and culture of a country must be in harmony with historical inheritance. Although, unfortunately, measured by investment in knowledge and research, it is foreseen that the European countries in transition will catch up European Union not until year 2058.

In Serbia much is done on the realization of cooperation with many institutions and organizations because of civil servants education. The analysis have been done and questionnaires conducted on the existing and necessary competences of employees in the civil service.

The question is how to provide for standardization and objectivity during the process of public servants evaluation? Even the possibility of introduction of team evaluation is proposed, and it is completely clear that successful public administration is based on the ethical surroundings and on the legal performance of public jobs.

O, tempora! O, mores! Ciceron's words meaning is that no matter in what period of time we live in, till today »man decorates the place, not place the man«

Our country possesses exceptionally favorable geo-political position and the interest for investment in this region will always exist, if the political risk is reduced and the legal order preserved. It is clear that the foreign investments are needed in Serbia, but also the obligation to increase the economic activity and export with reduction of all kinds of risks in the country.

CONCLUSION

Slowly entire Serbia is connecting and making an important step toward European Union. Together we are stronger, safeguarding our future.

Of course, we have to respect the old, and embrace the new conditions in the all spheres of life. The role of law in the world is becoming more dominant keeping in mind the changes in society, enormous technical-technological development demonstrated terrorism on many meridians in the world, crisis (economic, environmental, moral), etc. Let us remember that the first crisis emerged in 1818. and 1825. in England. It is still remembered also the agrarian crisis in 19-th century, which during two decades significantly influenced on agriculture in European countries, and the biggest crisis of hyperproduction from 1929 till 1933.

History should become yesterday's experience that can be transformed into today's wisdom.

Governments should take education as the basic strategy and increase the investments in this regard so as to win the future, they should make efforts to nurture the respect for knowledge and talents, encourage the pursuit of science.

Countries have much to learn by the exchange of experiences. More attention should be given to the attaining and preservation of the healthy work environment, and investing in education is the primary strategy.

Administration is the complex system of institutions. During the last XX century the significant reform actions in the organization of public administration have happened.

Certainly that information technology influences on the society and social processes in all its segments. Disharmony of the speed of development of the law and technology requires that regulations are more actual in accordance with the needs of time we live in. Development of information society can not be ignored. E-Government in Serbia points to the creation of the new model of public administration. Developments in information technology in administration show promise.

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