

## **NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF PUBLIC SERVANTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The citizens rightly expect that public services adjust their actions to the changing demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The European Commission adopted on September 2000 “The European Code of Good Administrative Behavior”<sup>1</sup> which provides a useful guide for Commission staff in their relations with the public.*

*The pressures to make public services more responsive and cost - effective will not abate because the quality and effectiveness of governance is crucial for national prosperity and well - being. Categorization of countries in the XXI century is based on the quality of services provided to citizens rather than on the quantity of these services. Education should be taken as the basic strategy. The mission of education and training is to create a coordinated framework for ensuring the provision of appropriate, adequate and accessible public service training and education that will meet the current and future needs of public servants.*

**KEY WORDS:** *education, public servants, Strategy of Public Administration Reform in the Republic of Serbia, management*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** *K 23*

### **1. EXPERIENCE OF SERBIA**

In November 2004 the Government adopted *Strategy of Public Administration Reform in the Republic of Serbia* based on the general principles of “European administrative framework”, i.e. achievement of European standards and values in the area of managing so-called public affairs. Reform management is entrusted to the *Council for Public Administration Reform*, as the central strategic Governmental body for carrying out a public administration reform.

States can become full member states of European Union if they fulfill criteria established by the European Council. One of these criteria is existence of corresponding administrative capacities, i.e. existence of well organized and effective administration (on

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<sup>1</sup> The European Parliament in September 2001. approved the “ European Code of Good Administrative Behavior”.

central and local level) for consistent enforcement of taken obligations. By *Decree on foundation of the Office for European Integrations* is established that this service, in addition to other professional affairs, performs also activities of training organizing in the area of European Union, in cooperation with other public administration bodies and Governmental services.

The Law on civil servants<sup>2</sup> does not give precise definition of contents of professional improvement notion. We may conclude that civil servants professional improvement is not integrated in the human resources management system, i.e. does not prepare systematically public servants in accordance with concrete needs and for new challenges that follow in immediate or near future. Therefore, having in mind that corresponding procedure for setting needs for professional improvement is not organized by regulation, the Service for cadres management made Manual "The Procedure of professional improvement needs analyzing".

In carrying out public administration reform, according to the Public Administration Strategy in the Republic of Serbia, principles of decentralization, depolitization, professionalization, rationalization and modernization are applied. In order to make Public Administration fit and capable to change, and to adjust to new circumstances, we need well-educated and trained public managers, administrators and competent professional workers in the public sector. It is important to support long-run professionalization of the service in Serbia as a measure of depolitization. All public servants should be entitled to opportunities for training and education. Programs of training and education will be based on a detailed assessment of the needs of individual organizations and employees and will be designed in particular to secure an optimal fit between these two sets of needs.

Operational activities on realization of professional improvement can be classified on those representing general professional improvement, afterwards those related to process of European Integrations and those related to special professional improvement.

Second part of the activity on realization of professional improvement make public servants trainings related to European Integrations process, organized by the Office for European Integrations, on the basis of annual training plan.

The issue of evaluation of professional improvement putting into effect and application of acquired knowledge on the job is not specially regulated. However, it is immediately possible to monitor these processes indirectly through different kinds of documents: annual evaluations of the general professional improvement program, evaluations of reports after conducted trainings, reports on measuring effects of general professional improvement program and alike.

*Strategy of public servants professional training in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2011-2013*, made by Government, gives basic guidelines for establishment of the new – complete, universal, obligatory and sustainable system of public servants professional training. The main goal of the Strategy is contribution to the increase in efficiency and economy of public administration work and its effectiveness regarding the realization of rights and interests of citizens, economic units and other holders of rights and duties, through creating of conditions for continuous and universal increase of public servants competences level.

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<sup>2</sup> "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", no. 79/2005, 81/2005, 83/2005, 64/2007 67/2007, 116/2008 and 104/2009.

During analysis of all essential aspects of civil servants professional improvement (contents, scope, manner of organization, effects and personnel capacities of public administration bodies for performing of this function etc.) the following shortages were noticed:

- absence of complete (the lack of harmonization and dispersion of public administration jobs in the area of civil servants professional improvement), universal (professional improvement of all categories of civil servants) and permanent access in connection with professional improvement of civil servants, as the part of human resources management system in state bodies;
- absence of direct connection between fixed special programs of public servants professional improvement, strategies and planned general and individual goals of state bodies;
- the lack of prescribed procedures and conditions that would provide for establishing of high-quality and appropriate programs of professional improvement and their high-grade enforcement.

Good quality training for high-ranking state and local government leaders and officials must be based on concurrent (or even preceding) scientific work. In the Republic of Serbia in the process of selection of those who are candidates for position, written tests are applied only in skills evaluations while evaluation of knowledge is performed only through interviews.

The new approach to public service training and education focuses on outcomes rather than inputs, with particular reference to the competencies required at different levels to build individual and organizational capacity. If programs of training and education are to succeed in building the motivation, capacity and performance of the workforce, it is increasingly recognized, both at home and abroad, that they must be based in the first place on an objective and systematic assessment of institutional and individual needs.

## 2. CONCLUSION

With the introduction of continuous staff development programs public servants would continue to develop further their professional, interpersonal and other transferable skills, which are undoubtedly very important for effective day-to-day response to the challenges in front of them. In connection with introduction of the new system of public servants professional training, it is necessary to introduce amendments of regulations, as well as adopt new regulations.

Professional improvement of public servants is permanent process which has for aim continuous raising of the public administration qualification level. It is clear that selection of competent cadres provides for competence and stability in the administrative work. Therefore, it is necessary to provide for management and coordination of public administration affairs related to public servants professional improvement from one location.

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. Science and technology are the first production force and position the education as the primary strategy.

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