

Public Sector Reform Units in Europe - Summary

1 Introduction

“The public expects more openness, better quality service delivery and solutions to more complex problems, but without losing any of their existing social entitlements. The major challenge for 21st century governments is to find new gains that will enable them to meet these demands while remaining within tight expenditure limits.”¹

Therefore public administration needs constant development programs and reforms. To implement these programs, the work of trans-sectoral support units for public administration reform is getting more and more important.

The Department for Public Administration Reform in the Austrian Federal Chancellery wanted to get an overview about how support units work in other countries and therefore a questionnaire was sent out to the members in the IPSG group in December 2006 and February 2007. The following partners replied and filled out the questionnaire:

Figure 1: Participants in the survey

- Bulgaria,
- Cyprus,
- Czech Republic,
- Finland,
- France,
- Germany,
- Greece,
- Ireland,
- Italy,
- Latvia,
- Luxembourg,
- Netherlands,
- Poland,
- Portugal,
- Romania,
- Slovenia,
- Spain,
- Sweden,
- Turkey,
- United Kingdom.

The results about the organisational structures, current topics and success factors are summarized in the following points.

2 Organisational structures

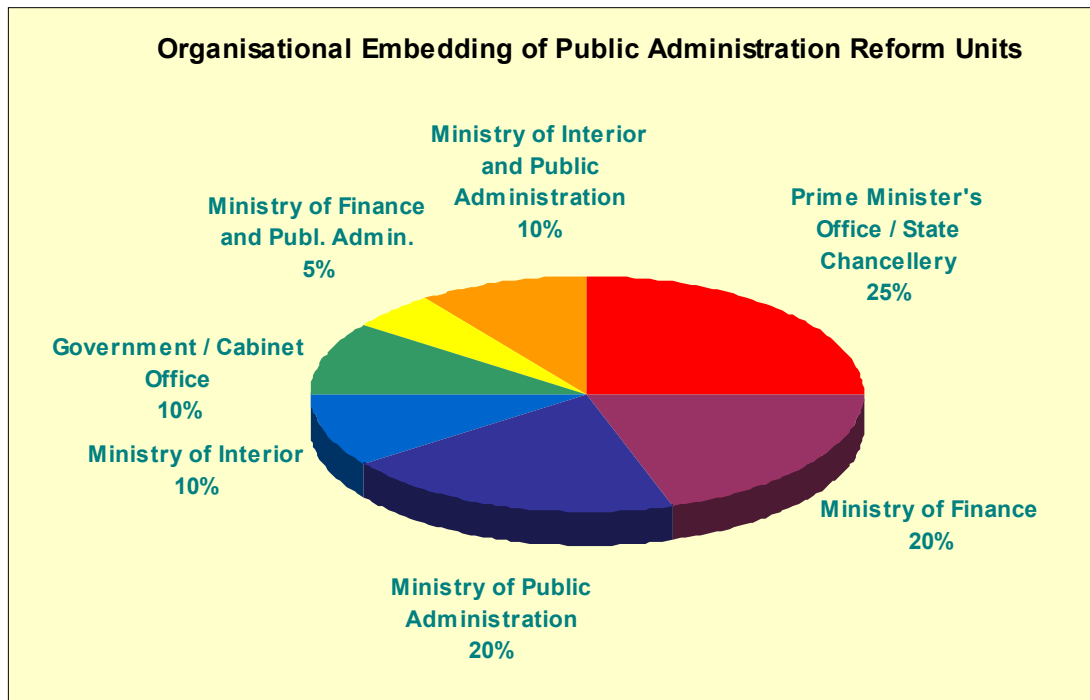
2.1 Organisational embedding of the Reform Units

The organisational embedding of the Reform Units differs between the 20 countries. The Reform Units are in most cases under the competence of the Prime Minister (25 % = Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Turkey) or the Minister of Finance (20 % = Cyprus, Finland, France, Sweden). In four countries there are own Ministries for Public Administration (Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Spain). Furthermore there is a Ministry of Interior and Public Administration in Romania and Greece and in Portugal there is the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration.

In the other countries the Reform Units are embedded in the Ministry of Interior (Germany, Greece, Netherlands) or in the Cabinet/Government Office (Czech Republic, United Kingdom).

¹ OECD Policy Brief: Public Sector Modernisation – the way forward; November 2005, p.1

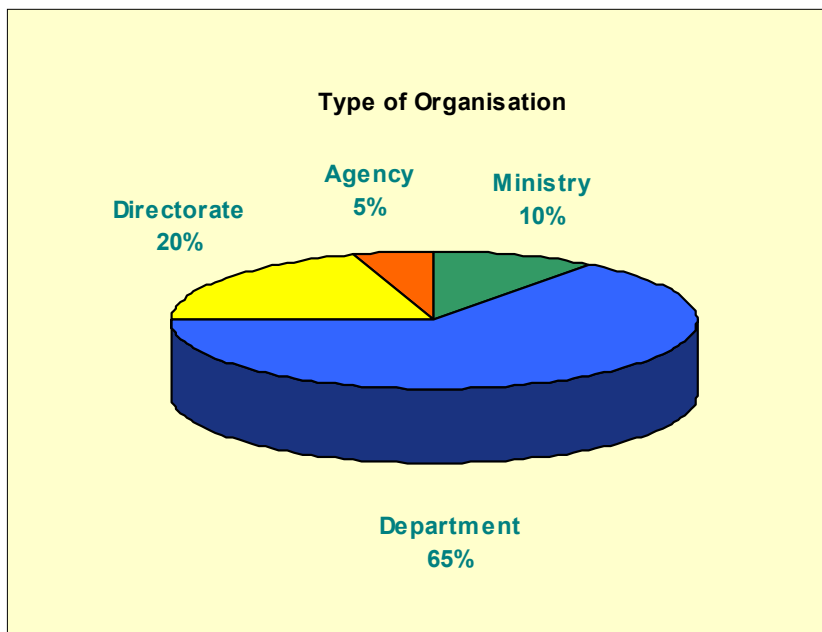
Figure 2: Organisational Embedding of Public Administration Reform Units



2.2 Type of Organisation

The figure below shows that 65 % of the Reform Units are Departments in the different ministries; followed by Directorates (20 %); own Ministries for Public Administration Reform (10 %) and Agencies (5 %).

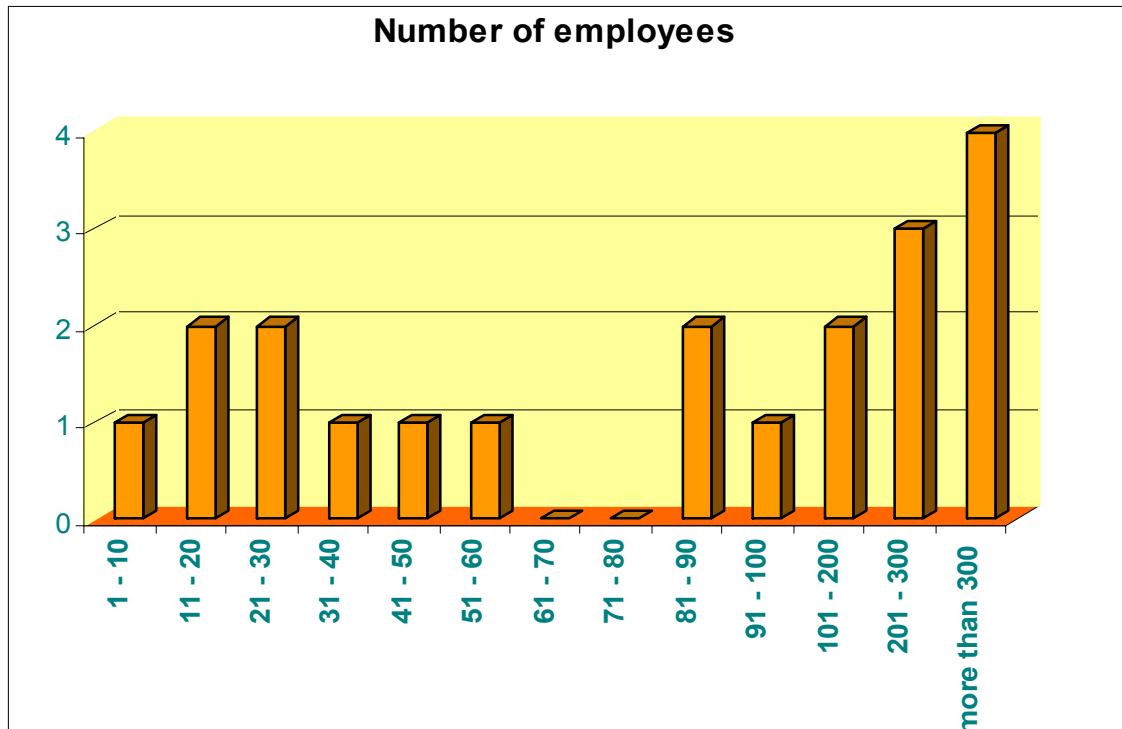
Figure 3: Type of Organisation



2.3 Number of Employees

In most Public Administration Reform Units there are less than 100 people employed (55 % of the cases). Due to this fact the display in figure 4 changes from 1 to 100 employees in steps of 10; afterwards the scale is broader. Most countries with own Ministries for Public Administration have more than 250 employees.

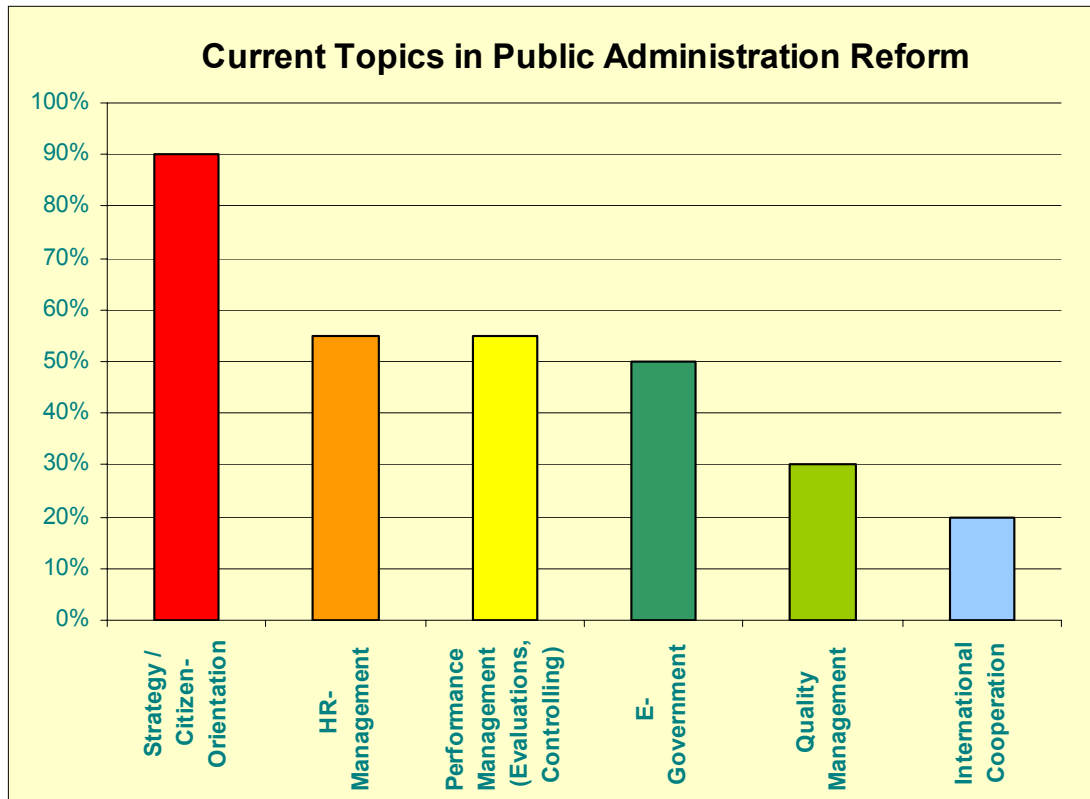
Figure 4: Number of Employees



3 Current topics

The following figure shows that the four most current topics are Strategy, HR-Management, Performance Management and E-Government. Strategy means the process of implementing a mission and vision via a clear stakeholder-focus aligning public policies / goals and other stakeholders' needs, supported by a continuously improving management of resources and processes. The strategy reflects the organisation's approach to implementing modernisation and innovation.

Figure 5: Current Topics in Public Administration Reform in Europe



4 Main success factors

The main success factors are clear and can be concluded as the following:

- Cooperation with influential partners (political will and high priorities) and adequate structures;
- Continuous communication with the persons responsible and concerned;
- Knowledge and contact with professionals in the “field”;
- Openness and transparency;
- Excellent expertise and organisation.