

BUILDING UP ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

THESIS

THE THESIS, upheld in the present lecture, is that certified training of municipal clerks in Bulgaria comes up as an objective necessity due to three main reasons:

- ◆ THE FIRST reason regards the still insufficient administrative capacity in Bulgarian municipalities;
- ◆ THE SECOND reason concerns the very important requirements by the European Commission and the Government of Republic of Bulgaria with respect to the professional knowledge, skills and competence of the clerks in the Bulgarian administrative system and especially those of Bulgarian municipal clerks;
- ◆ THE THIRD reason concerns the lack of a comprehensive efficient system for training, qualification and improving the qualification of municipal clerks in Bulgaria, which could guarantee COMPARABLE knowledge, skills and competence so that municipal clerks communicate among themselves in ONE AND THE SAME "PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE" and the issued certificates are normatively acknowledged as obligatory prerequisite for the career and professional development of municipal clerks.

MAIN ISSUES:

- I. HOW ARE THE MUNICIPALITIES IN BULGARIA POSITIONED?
- II. WHAT ARE THE CURRENT CHALLENGES IN FRONT OF THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION?
- III. WHAT IS CHARACTERISTIC OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS AS A FOCUS OF TRAINING?
- IV. WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO THE TRAINING OF ADMINISTRATIVE CLERKS?
- V. WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES AND PREREQUISITES FOR EFFICIENT TRAINING OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS?

I. HOW ARE THE MUNICIPALITIES IN BULGARIA POSITIONED?

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE TERRITORIAL AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

THE CONSTITUTION OF REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA - Article 2, defines Bulgaria as a unified state with local self-government where there are not allowed any autonomous formations. The existence of municipal ownerships is ratified. Chapter 7 regulates the territorial division, as well as the local self-government and administrative bodies.

THE EUROPEAN CHAPTER FOR LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT (ECLSG) signed by Bulgaria on 03 September 1994 and ratified with the ECLSG Ratification Law passed on 15 October 1995 has become part of the national legislation after its promulgation. ECLSG incorporates all significant issues of local self-government - terms, rights and responsibilities of official bodies, relations with central authorities, financial and resource independence, territorial changes, court defense, and others.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE TERRITORIAL AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

LAWS:

- LAW FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT;
- LAW FOR THE TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE;
- LAW FOR LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION;
- LAW FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE OF REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA;
- LAW FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS;
- LAW FOR MUNICIPAL PROPERTY;
- LAW FOR MUNICIPAL BUDGETS;
- LAW FOR LOCAL TAXES AND FEES;
- LAW FOR THE TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF SOFIA-CITY MUNICIPALITY AND THE BIG CITIES (WITH POPULATION OF OVER 300 000 PEOPLE - PLOVDIV AND VARNA).

REGIONS AND MUNICIPALITIES IN BULGARIA

REGIONS	REGIONAL CLERKS	NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES	MUNICIPAL CLERKS
BLAGOEVGRAD	39	39	14
BURGAS	47	13	1 102.5
VARNA	48	12	1 218
VELIKO TARNOVO	39	10	783.5
VIDIN	38	11	506.5
VRATSA	38	10	641.5
GABROVO	33	4	352
DOBRICH	33	8	686.5
KARDZHALI	33	7	787
KYUSTENDIL	33	9	534
LOVECH	33	8	505
MONTANA	39	11	587
PAZATDZHIK	36	11	751.5
PERNIK	33	6	428.5
PLEVEN	36	11	799
PLOVDIV	52	18	1 515
RAZGRAD	35	7	488.5
RUSSE	39	8	602.5
SILISTRA	35	7	476.5
SLIVEN	33	4	522
SMOLYAN	38	10	566.5
SOFIA-CITY		72	1
SOFIA REGION	52	22	989
STARA ZAGORA	39	11	873.5
TARGOVISHTE	34	5	525.5
HASKOVO	37	11	844
SHUMEN	34	10	684
YAMBOL	33	5	424.5
TOTAL:			
28 regions	1091 regional clerks	264 INCL.: 99 (37,5%)- up to 10 000 people 177 (67%) - up to 20 000 people 76 (29%) - B/N 20 and 100 000 people 11 (4%) - over 100 000 people	21 015 Municipal clerks

PLANNING AREAS

The territory of Republic of Bulgaria is divided into planning areas according to the regions in the country - their geographical location, economic development, size of population and development perspectives.

The planning areas are:

- ◆ North-western, incorporating the regions of Vidin, Vratsa and Montana;
- ◆ Central-northern, incorporating the regions of Russe, Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Pleven and Lovech;
- ◆ North-eastern, incorporating the regions of Varna, Targovishte, Shumen, Razgrad, Silistra and Dobrich;
- ◆ South-eastern, incorporating the regions of Burgas, Sliven and Yambol;
- ◆ Central-southern, incorporating the regions of Plovdiv, Kardzhali, Haskovo, Pazardzhik, Smolyan and Stara Zagora;
- ◆ South-western, incorporating the regions of Sofia-City, Sofia Region, Kyustendil, Blagoevgrad and Pernik.

REGIONS OF FOCUSED IMPACT

Within the planning regions there are formed the so-called regions of focused impact. The regions of focused impact are the territorial basis for carrying out of state policies for regional development through a system of measures aimed at achieving sustainable rate of social and economic development and overcoming of the inter-regional differences. The regions of focused impact incorporate the territories of one or more neighboring municipalities.

THE CRITERIA AND INDICATORS FOR DEFINING THE REGIONS OF FOCUSED IMPACT ARE:

DEGREE OF URBANIZATION;
ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY;
TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE;
SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE;
UNEMPLOYMENT;
EMPLOYMENT;
TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE;
NEAR-BORDER LOCATION.

THE REGIONS OF FOCUSED IMPACT ARE THE FOLLOWING TYPES:

REGIONS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH;
REGIONS IN INDUSTRIAL DECLINE;
UNDERDEVELOPED BORDER REGION;
UNDERDEVELOPED RURAL REGION;
UNDERDEVELOPED MOUNTAINOUS REGION;
SOFIA-CITY MUNICIPALITY.

II. WHAT ARE THE CURRENT CHALLENGES IN FRONT OF THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION?

BULGARIAN ADMINISTRATIVE ENVIRONMENT

In general, The external and internal working environments of municipal administrations in Bulgaria could be defined as:

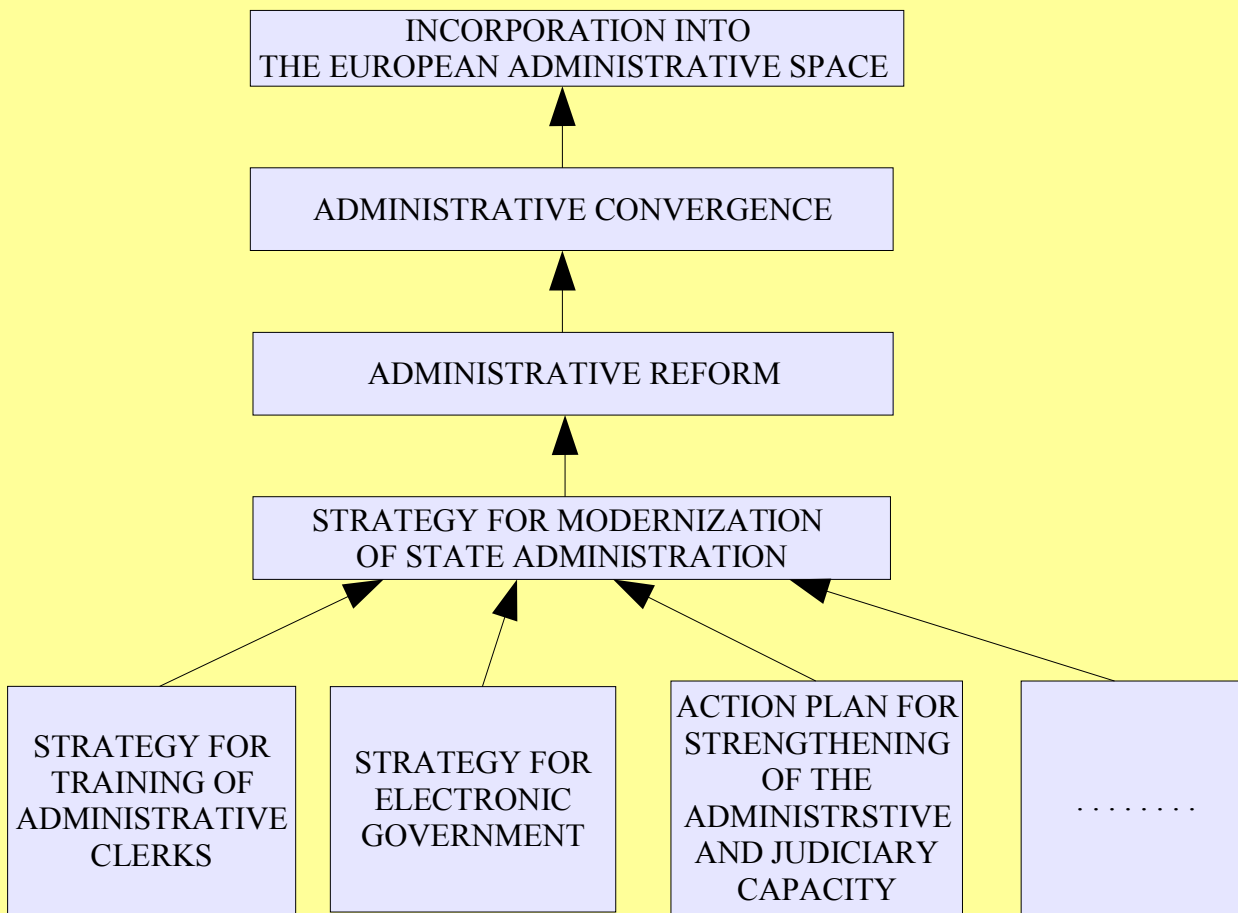
- ◆ Increasingly changing at a higher pace (for example, the normative base);
- ◆ Increasingly complicated (for example, the more and more complex relations and interaction both among the various administrative structures as well as between the administration and the structures of civil society);
- ◆ Increasingly ambiguous (for example, there is lack of clarity with respect to the result-oriented tools and mechanisms for effective and efficient administrative reform).

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT CHALLENGES FOR MUNICIPAL CLERKS

- ◆ Glocalization (The relation "globalization-regionalism");
- ◆ "Minimization" of the role of the nation state;
- ◆ The high requirement of the "white book" of the European Union for good state governance and top-level administrative capacity;
- ◆ Formation of the European administrative space within the framework of the common European space.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT CHALLENGES FOR MUNICIPAL CLERKS

- ◆ LACK OF NORMATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PREPAREDNESS OF CENTRAL AUTHORITIES FOR AN OVERALL DECENTRALIZATION;
- ◆ LACK OF BALANCE IN THE CORRELATION "DECENTRALIZATION - DECONCENTRATION";
- ◆ DETERIORATED STATE OF MUNICIPAL BUDGETS AND DECAPITALIZATION OF MUNICIPALITIES;
- ◆ LOW LEVEL OF INVESTMENTS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES;
- ◆ LOW QUALITY OF MUNICIPAL PUBLIC SERVICES;
- ◆ NOT ALWAYS ADEQUATE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY.



ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY:

The ability, preparedness and potential of the administration of EU member-states to apply EU policies and legislation in an efficient and effective way, as well as to support the competent decision-making process in EU.

VERTICAL (SECTORIAL) CAPACITY:

Sectors (for example, agriculture, transport, etc.)

HORIZONTAL CAPACITY:

The overall condition and potential of the administration for applying EU legislation in all spheres, as well as for monitoring its practical implementation, i.e. at the level of its efficiency, effectiveness, coordination and transparency.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONVERGENCE

The term Administrative Convergence refers to the process of converging (or, bringing together) the public administrations of EU member-states, as well as those of accession countries.

The Administrative Convergence is governed by the following principles and values:

- ◆ democracy and the rule of law;
- ◆ impartiality and neutrality;
- ◆ awareness and transparency;
- ◆ independent and professional state services;
- ◆ responsibility.

The practical manifestation of the administrative convergence consists in the following similar administrative

units in the various US member-states will function in a similar way; any employee from any unit should face no problems when working in an analogous unit in another US member-state.

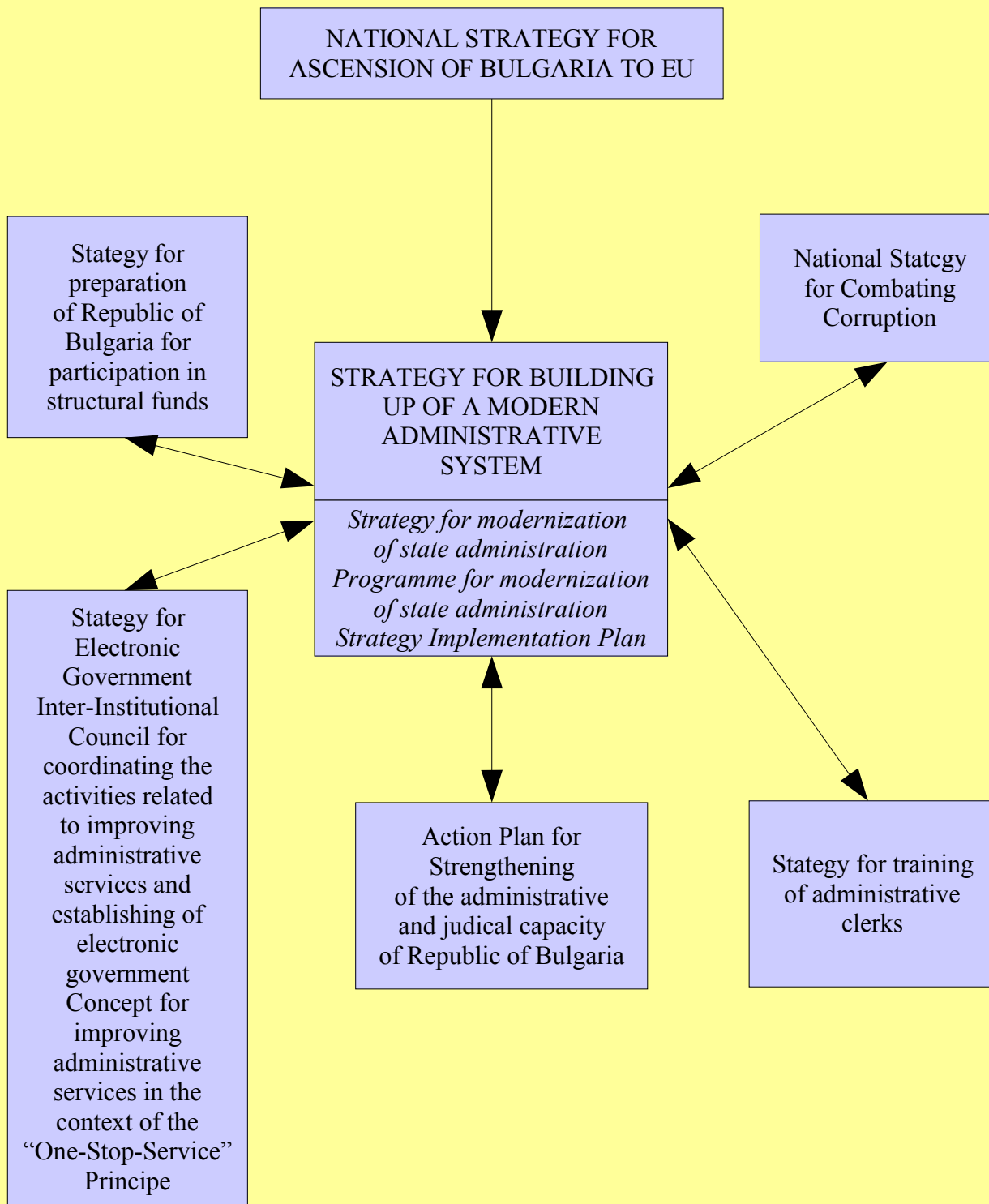
**REGULAR REPORT ON BULGARIA'S PROGRESS
TOWARDS EU ASCENSION
(October 2004)**

"...FURTHER SUSTAINED EFFORTS NEED TO BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THE CAPACITY OF THE BULGARIAN ADMINISTRATION..."

"...BULGARIA'S EFFORTS SHOULD NOW FOCUS ON PROCEEDING WITH PLANNED MEASURES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY IN KEY MINISTRIES AND IMPROVING THE CAPACITY OF OTHER RELEVANT BODIES, SUCH AS THE INTERMEDIATE BODIES, AND OTHER RELEVANT PLAYERS NOTABLY AT REGIONAL AND CENTRAL LEVEL..."

MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

- ◆ PROFESSIONAL AND RELIABLE ADMINISTRATION PREPARED TO FUNCTION WITHIN THE COMPLEX POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
- ◆ WELL-DEVELOPED SYSTEM OF RESPONSIBILITIES
- ◆ CLEARLY-DEFINED ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES
- ◆ ADEQUATE FUNCTIONS OF HORIZONTAL MANAGEMENT



**STRATEGY
FOR MODERNIZATION OF STATE ADMINISTRATION-
FROM ASCENSION TOWARDS INTEGRATION
(main priorities)**

- I. Strengthening of the capacity of state services.
- II. Strengthening of the administrative capacity for fulfillment of the responsibilities related to EU membership.
- III. Strengthening of the administrative capacity for participation of Bulgaria in the structural funds.

III. WHAT IS CHARACTERISTIC OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS AS A FOCUS OF TRAINING?

MUNICIPAL CLERKS AS A FOCUS OF TRAINING

(Data is from the Report on the State of Administration, 2003)

Total of 21 015 people:

- ◆ 1/3 - STATE SERVANTS;
- ◆ 2/3 - EMPLOYEE UNDER LABOR CONTRACT;

A. AGE-GROUP STRUCTURE

- ◆ 58% are between 30 and 50 years old
- ◆ 32.5% are over 50 years old
- ◆ 9.5% are up to 30 years old

B. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- ◆ 42.8% have higher education degree, among those:
 - With master's degree - 34.5%
 - With Bachelor's degree - 4.6%
 - With "Specialist in ..." degree - 3.7%
- ◆ 53.3% are with secondary education
- ◆ 3.9% are with lower than secondary education

C. DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CLERKS

ACCORDING TO HIGHER EDUCATION SPHERE

HIGHER EDUCATION SPHERE	%DISTRIBUTION
TECHNICAL SCIENCES	36.50%
OF WHICH:	
ENGINEERS	74.00%
CONSTRUCTION TECHNICIANS	22.00%
ARCHITECTS	4.00%
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND LEGAL SCIENCES	31.60%
OF WHICH:	
ECONOMISTS, ACCOUNTANTS AND FINANSIERS	73.00%
LAW	25.00%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	2.00%
OTHERS	14.10%
HEALTHCARE AND SPORTS	6.00%
NATURAL SCIENCES, MATHEMATICS AND	
COMPUTER SCIENCES	5.00%
HUMANITIES	0.80%

TRAINING OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS IN 2003

(Data is from the Report on the State of Administration, 2003)

In 2003 there was training provided to 10.8% of clerks in the territorial (regional and municipal) administration, which is 11% less compared to 2002. Of the total number of trained clerks:

- ◆ 31% attended trainings in the institute of public administration and european integration;
- ◆ 51% - in other institutions, such as European Center of Communications, National Union of Legal Advisors, British Council, French Cultural Center, National Association of Municipalities, Foundation for Local Self-Governance Reform, other foundations, nongovernment organizations, private companies and so on;
- ◆ 18% - training courses at local level;
- ◆ Less than 1% of trained territorial administration clerks attended training courses of over 1-month duration;
- ◆ The highest number of municipal clerks were trained in financial management, whereas the smallest number were those who received training in foreign languages;
- ◆ The most attractive topics of planned training in 2004 were those of:
 - budget accounting, budget process and audit;
 - management of state and municipal property;
 - preparation, assignment and control under the Public Order Law;
 - project management;
 - internal organization and activity management of administration.

UTILIZED FUNDS FOR TRAINING OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS

(Data is from the Report on the State of Administration, 2003)

Training is an important priority of the programme for administrative reform, the changes in the state servants to be used for training purposes.

Number of municipalities where there was conducted training of municipal clerks in 2003	% of utilized funds for training
39	100.00%
17	between 50% and 100%
65	under 50%
Total 121 (45.8% of all municipalities)	

RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION IN 2003 BY THE MINISTER OF STATE ADMINISTRATION

(april 2004)

To improve the knowledge and information of the heads of municipal administrations concerning available training opportunities, with the aim of increasing the participation of municipal administrative clerks in the training process;

The heads of administrations should undertake necessary measures for more complete and efficient utilization of provided financial resources for specialized training of clerks.

IV. WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO THE TRAINING OF ADMINISTRATIVE CLERKS?

ADAPTIVITY AND ADEQUACY OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS

Municipal clerks should evolve as highly professional administrators capable not only of successfully adapting themselves to:

- ◆ the changing, conflicting and confrontational environment;
 - ◆ the challenges that globalization poses in front of state governance and local self-governance;
 - ◆ the requirements of civil society for an "administration with a human face",
- but also to possess adequate knowledge, skills and competence for in-advance reaction to challenges brought about by the changing realm of administration.

All these challenges define the activities of municipal administration as administrative "risk management" in a conflicting confrontational environment.

"The conditions of service of local government employees shall be such as to permit the recruitment of high-quality staff on the basis of merit and competence, to this end adequate training opportunities, remuneration and career prospects shall be provided."

(article 6, item 2 of the european chapter of local self-government)

STRATEGY OR TRAINING OF ADMINISTRATIVE CLERKS

(Decision No.85 of the Council of Ministers from 14 february 2002)

AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

1. Strengthening of the Bulgarian state service and administrative capacity for introducing and applying the ACQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE through training that provides:

- ◆ Professional development of administrative clerks;
- ◆ Career development of administrative clerks;
- ◆ Establishing of a new administrative culture oriented towards society needs.

2. Activ participation of administrative employees in the transformation process through:

- ◆ Introduction of personal plans for professional and career development;
- ◆ Introduction of practices for informing and consulting the employees in state administration about opportunities for career and professional development;
- ◆ Providing equal opportunities for access to state service and for career and professional development.

PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR TRAINING OF STATE ADMINISTRATIVE CLERKS

Adequacy of training:

- ◆ Adequacy of training consists in providing balance between 1) the general goal of state governance - continuity of administrative activities for servicing of the public interest and 2) the necessity for continuous improvement of the modes of administration of public relations.
- ◆ Interlinking training with the assessment of work performance and with the professional and career development of employees.
- ◆ The interlinking of training with the overall assessment of work performance is also related to the process of planning of training funds and their efficient utilization.
- ◆ Up-to-dateness of training

Training should correspond to the challenges in front of political and economic development of the country, as well as to provide:

- reliability and possibility to foresee the activities of state administration, on the basis of the principles and spirit of legal state and supremacy of the law;
- openness and transparency of the activities of state administration, which should provide public access and control.

TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE CLERKS

The building up of a professional and efficient administration consists in the formation of competent, motivated and independent employees dedicated to the service of public interest.

The professional development of state servants consists in improving and increasing their skills and qualifications for the implementation of their professional duties. This is accomplished through career promotion and is needed when there is:

- necessity of additional knowledge and skills due to undertaken modifications (e.g. updating, development) of job descriptions;
- introduction of new models and/or technologies for implementation of specific administrative activities or working processes.

TRAINING FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE CLERKS

Career development is linked with employees' promotion in working position.

This training provides sustainability and continuity of state service work through preparation of employees for occupying and carrying out respective functions in this field.

The main role of training for career development consists in adapting of the skills and qualifications of all newly-appointed clerks (or candidate applicants) to the principles and practice of the administrative activity.

INDICATORS FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPETENCE OF ADMINISTRATIVE CLERKS IN BULGARIA

(In compliance with the degree about the conditions and order

Types of competence required for managing positions:

- ◆ Managing competence;
- ◆ Competence related to knowledge and use of normative documents;
- ◆ Communication competence;
- ◆ Competence about changes and their management;
- ◆ Competence related to working with customers;
- ◆ Computer competence.

Types of competence required for expert positions:

- ◆ Competence related to knowledge and use of normative documents;
- ◆ Organizational competence;
- ◆ Communication competence;
- ◆ Competence about changes and their management;
- ◆ Competence related to working with customers;
- ◆ Computer competence.

CURRENTLY REQUIRED SKILLS OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS

(analysis of best administrative practices)

Knowledge and skills for implementation of PUBLIC PROJECTS

- ◆ Skills for applying EXPERT - ANALYTICAL METHODS, such as:
- ◆ Brainstorming, Delphi Method, Scenario Method, Morphological Analysis, Prognosis Graph, Communication Analysis, etc;
- ◆ TEAMWORK skills;
- ◆ Skills of establishing EFFICIENT PARTNERSHIPS - with citizens and the media;
- ◆ Skills for acquiring GOOD ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES.

V. WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES AND PREREQUISITES FOR EFFICIENT TRAINING OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS?

OBSTACLES IN FRONT OF THE EFFICIENT TRAINING OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS

External (with respect to administration)

- ◆ Politicizing of municipal clerks;
- ◆ Shortage of funds for training;
- ◆ Ratio between centralized and decentralized training.

Internal (related to the quality of administrative staff)

- ◆ Necessity for changes in the value system of municipal clerks;
- ◆ Lack of psychological preparedness for action training;
- ◆ Lack of motivation (due to lack of guarantees for sustainable administrative career as well as inadequate reimbursement).

PREREQUISITES FOR EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT TRAINING OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS

- ◆ Systematic assessment of training needs and requested training themes;
- ◆ Establishing – through training – of the educational profile of the municipal clerks (which will be incorporate, on the one hand, the profile of respective administrative position no matter who occupies it, on the other hand, the necessary educational background of the particular individual in this position);
- ◆ Transfer of the methods and formats of training of business managers into the type of training provided to public administration managers;
- ◆ Establishing of objective mechanisms for accurate attestation of those who have successfully completed respective training forms;
- ◆ Establishing of a system for professional development on the basis of results from the attestation of municipal clerks as well as for planning of their individual career;
- ◆ Assessment of the degree of efficiency of the introduction of a normative requirement for possession of a legalized certificate as a precondition for professional development of municipal clerks, and inclusion of that normative requirement in the job description (section "Educational Background") for specific positions in the municipal administration structure.

FORMS OF TRAINING OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS

(could be provided in various combinations):

- ◆ Away from working place – training provided at various training units and, in particular, at a certification institute for training of municipal clerks;
- ◆ “In-House training” for municipal clerks – i.e., training at the working place alongside the so-called Internship Programmes;
- ◆ Distance learning (on-line) dialog training via Internet

ACTIVE METHODS OF TRAINING

1. Trainings:

- Role Plays and Situation Games;
- Games, following the Dialogue Principle and “Action Training”;
- Business games using expert-analytical methods such as “Brainstorming”, “Delphi”, etc.;
- Case studies, and others.

2. Tests:

- “Convergence” tests (with only one correct answer);
- “Divergence” tests (requiring alternative thinking and alternative versions of possible answer, according to respective situation).

CONCLUSION

As a way of conclusion we should emphasize that the building up of a highly professional, stable, depoliticized municipal administration is among the key prerequisites for development of municipal self governance as well as a major condition for achieving of adequate administrative capacity in the process of Bulgaria's ascension to EU.

The newly-established Certification Institute of Municipal Clerks in Central and Eastern Europe is of especial significance for the successful realization of that goal. This Institute is based in Bulgaria and is the newest and very perspective unit in the system of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.