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**MASTER'S DEGREE IN POLITICS AND ECONOMICS OF  
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**MA DISSERTATION**

**“Europeanization and public administration reform in old and new  
European Union member states:  
Greece, Portugal, Czech Republic and Romania in comparative  
perspective”**

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<sup>1</sup> Date of accession in EU

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

As Knill (2001) argues, with the enlargement of the European Union, the Europeanization of national administrations issue is put back to the fore, since the national administrations of “old” and “new” member states are expected to harmonise their legal systems, functions, procedures and standards, according to the EU *acquis communautaire*.

Accession to the European Union implies, at its very roots, a profound change in the administrative structures and processes. The success of the “integration story” depends largely on the successful Europeanization of public administration (Mihai, 2005). In the context of the European Union the responsibilities of the national public administrations, as they become key players in the European policy-making mechanism, previously limited to the national level, are extended to the implementation of EU policies and legislation, and, equally important, to the management of EU funds.

However, unlike most political and socioeconomic aspects, there is no *acquis* chapter on public administration. The European Union has chosen in this case not to resort to harmonization and to maximize, instead, the benefits coming from the coexistence of different administration models in Europe (Mihai, 2005).

## **2. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: SOME THEORY AND HISTORY**

### **2.1 What is Public Administration and why it matters**

We follow the definition of Public Administration provided by the Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Institutions. Public Administration in the lower case (p.a.) refers to institutional arrangements for the provision of public services, whereas in the upper case (P.A.) means the study of those arrangement. “Institutional arrangements” is a general term to denote the complex of agencies, authorities and enterprises, the formal rule structures, mixes of instruments and conventions of behaviour which describe the organizational means of public services (Toonen, 2003).

Pierre (1995, p. 9) argues that “we conceive public administration as the key output linkage of the state towards civil society. However, the interface between public administration and public society is a two-way street, including public policy implementation as well as policy demands from private actors towards policy makers.”

Public administration represents the backbone of any political system. Involved at all stages of the policy-making process, it also plays the role of an interface between citizens and the political system.<sup>2</sup> Its role goes, thus, beyond that of a pure bureaucracy, into that of an efficient catalyst for the process of transferring political measures towards society (Mihai, 2005).

Historically speaking, the public administration's main task has been to implement and communicate political decisions to society. Public administration matters and is central to the process of governing society. Legislature and political executives may pass all the laws they wish, but unless those laws are administered effectively by the public bureaucracy, little or nothing will actually happen (Peters and Pierre, 2003). On the other hand, the majority of the employees of government is not the paper pushers one usually associates with the public administration, but rather are responsible for delivering public services to the public. Many public administrators in central governments are responsible for promoting services, but on average local and provincial public servants are even more so (Peters and Pierre, 2003).

## **2.2 Reform of the Public Administration**

Public administration reform aims to improve the quality of executive decisions taken by government officers. A first approximation in order to define what is public management reform is that *public management reform consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to run better* (Pollit and Bouchaert, 2004, p.8).<sup>3</sup>

According to Toonen (2003), reform is about bringing about change. Reform is about becoming better through the removal of faults and errors, by abolishing or correcting malpractice, especially of a moral or political or social kind. Reform is therefore about values and quality. Administrative reform is about

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<sup>2</sup> According to Peters and Pierre (2003) the work of public administration may be less visible than that of other aspects of government, yet at the same time it is the major point of contact between citizens and the state. The average citizen will encounter the postal clerk, the tax collector and the policeman much more frequently than their elected representatives. This contact between state and society has two important consequences for government. One is that the implementation of laws by the lowest echelons of the public service defines what the laws actually mean for citizens. The second impact of the lower echelons of government is that these face to face interactions often define what government is for citizens. The bureaucracy is therefore important in creating an image of government in the popular mind.

<sup>3</sup> Process change may include the redesign of the systems by which applications for licences or grants or passports are handled, the setting of quality standards for health care or educational services to citizens or the introduction of new budgeting procedures that encourage public servants themselves are recruited, trained, appraised, promoted and disciplined (Pollit and Bouchaert, 2004).

the administrative quality, constituted by administrative values, of public sector institutions, of public policy decision-making processes and of public organization and management. On the basis of a reconstruction of the history of administrative argument, Hood (1991) has identified three “families” of related administrative core values, which may represent the value-oriented Public Administration concern in studying administrative reform.<sup>4</sup> 1. Responsiveness and satisfaction.<sup>4</sup> 2. Integrity and trust.<sup>5</sup> 3. Reliability and confidence.<sup>6</sup>

Public Administration Reform is usually thought as a means to an end, not an end in itself. To be more precise we should perhaps say that it is potentially a means to multiple ends. These include making *savings* in public expenditure, improving the *quality* of public services, making the operations of government more *efficient* and increasing the chances that the policies will be *effective*. On the way to achieving these important objectives, public management reform may also serve a number of *intermediate* ends, including those of strengthening the control of politicians over the bureaucracy, freeing public officials from bureaucratic constraints that inhibit their opportunities to manage and enhancing the government’s *accountability* to the legislature and the citizenry for its policies and programmes (Pollit and Bouchaert, 2004).

### **2.3 Public Administration Reform historically**

Capitalist and liberal economies adopted bureaucratic public administration, classically described by Max Weber as a rational-legal form of domination, in order to replace patrimonial administration, the traditional form of bureaucracy that achieved its full character in Europe with the absolute monarchies. In patrimonial administration, public and private patrimonies were essentially fused. This lasted until the nineteenth century, when the Prussian

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<sup>4</sup> The first group of values stresses parsimony and economy. These values reflect the concern in all organization theory for “efficiency and productivity” and belong to the world of public management (Hood, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> The second group of administrative core values, in terms of Hood (1991) are: fairness, equity and rectitude. They relate to the mission “to help government be honest and fair”. These values refer to the world of public governance.

<sup>6</sup> The third set of administrative values according to Hood (1991) includes robustness, resilience and sustainability. The mission is “to keep government robust and resilient”. The administrative values in this group serve to secure the reliability of the administrative system in order to secure the reliance of citizens and the confidence of society in governmental institutions. As a concern for administrative reform, this domain constitutes a difficult category because public reliance is like (social) capital or the stock market: once confidence is lost, it is difficult to get it back (Toonen, 2003).

bureaucracy slowly ceased being dynastic (or patrimonial) and became civil service<sup>7</sup>.

Civil service reform, the process of bureaucratization or rationalization is a historical phenomenon deriving from the superior character of bureaucratic public administration vis-à-vis patrimonial administration. At that time, it was the best way to increase efficiency, eliminate nepotism and reduce corruption. Civil service reform and the emergence of bureaucratic administration, based upon centralization, clear hierarchical lines, rigid routines, step by step control of administrative procedures, impersonal methods of recruiting personnel and secrecy is a way of guaranteeing property rights and contracts.

According to Pereira (2004), the assumption of efficiency, upon which the civil service reform rests, did not prove sound. Bureaucratic public administration proved to be slow, expensive, self-centred, authoritarian, not geared to meet citizens' demands. Since the end of the 1970s the entire Western world appears to have moved into an era of severe administrative reforms, that all tend to be more or less managerial reforms. The trend in the direction of New Public Management (NPM) is primarily apparent in the United States, Great Britain and other Western European countries, but also in the other side of the globe as well, i.e. in Australia, New Zealand and other Western countries (Kickert, 1992). Regarding the necessity of reforms, there are several explanations<sup>8</sup> for the fact that the 1980s and 1990s have been the "golden age" of administrative reform throughout the Western World (Wright, 1994), namely the economic crisis of the 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Civil service reform came about because patrimonial administration proved inconsistent with industrial capitalism and liberal political parliamentary regimes, which appeared in the nineteenth century. The rule of law and a clear-cut separation between state and market are essential to capitalism. Business activities require institutions guaranteeing the rule of law or property rights and contracts. Entrepreneurs will invest only if they can count on regulated markets and a predictable political environment, so that their profits will depend principally on the competitive advantages that they achieve. Bureaucratic public administration was one of those institutions (Pereira, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> According to Löffler (2003) apart from the budgetary squeezed, other forces with a dramatic effect upon public management practice included a) the social value change that has seen core values of "public duty" and "individual responsibility" being replaced by values of individual self-realization and rights (Klages, 1993) b) Rising expectations both of citizens and staff in the public sector which has led to an "expectation gap" on the part of the public (Davis, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> The economic recession after the oil crisis of the 1970s resulted in enormous deficits of the public budgets and the Western Welfare state proved unaffordable. The need to cut back in the public sector led to drastic reforms in the structure and functioning of Western governments and administrations (Kickert, 1992).

## 2.4 From old public administration to New Public Management (NPM)

According to Hood (1998), much of what used to be called “public administration” has been renamed “public management” in the title of numerous college courses, university chairs, papers, books, journals and conferences (see Chandler 1991). De Leon (1997) states that Hood in his inaugural address at the London School of Economics, presented his widely known definition of “new public management” based on the OECD review (Hood, 1991). It includes:

- hands on professional management
- standards and performance measures
- output controls
- disaggregation of units
- competition
- private sector style management and
- discipline and parsimony.

According to De Leon (1997), over the past decades this new paradigm for public management has contested with the older bureaucratic model. The contest is not yet decided, although the new paradigm has won over many academics and practitioners. Reform continues to have its critics,<sup>10</sup> whom its advocates should not ignore, for they raise important and difficult issues.

In particular, whereas introducing (private sector) management principles in the public sector in the 1980s meant realizing the three “E’s” –economy, efficiency and effectiveness- the focus shifted to quality and customer orientation in the 1990s (Walsh,1995). At the beginning of the new century there is a much bigger concern about institutions and other administrative values. To the original three “E’s” another three “E’s” can be added “ethics, equality and equity” (Loffler, 2003).

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<sup>10</sup> Critics of administrative reform have made a variety of arguments against it. One can mention some. “Customer” is not an appropriate concept for the people served by government (Swiss, 1992), prescriptions for reform are based on “best practice” and anecdotal evidence rather than solid research (Overman and Boyd, 1994), some of the anecdotes are not quite accurate (Fallows, 1992, Glastris, 1992) and the innovations in the reform literature have not always worked in the longer run (Novothy, 1992). Moreover, Dunleavy and Hood (1994) argue that splitting up public bureaucracies into many different “businesses” (a hallmark of many contemporary reforms) may have the unintentional effect of increasing the level of successful problem-solving. Dunleavy and Hood (1994) argue that over-emphasis on management can worsen policy-making quality by deflecting attention from large-scale substantive problems to endless reorganization.

## 2.5 The role of external environment in Public Administration Reform

It is argued (Hadjiisky, 2009) that the process of public administration reform has traditionally been solely within the domain of national sovereignty. However, another important dimension in public administration reform is the degree to which actors and institutional structures from the international environment can influence decision making. According to Konig (1996) public administration may be interpreted as a social system existing and functioning in accordance with its own order, but, on the other hand, it also depends on environmental conditions in a complex and changing society (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2004). Keridis and Triantaphyllou (2001) argue that national interest, to the degree that it is not limited to the existential survival of the state, is not determined and static, but rather it is constantly negotiated among political actors with different views and preferences. European Integration demands the re-conceptualization of national interest and the pooling and sharing of national sovereignty (Keridis and Triantaphyllou, 2001).

According to Dimitrakopoulos and Passas (2003), crucial is the role of international organizations as promoters of administrative reform at the national level. The importing and exporting of public management ideas and practices has been greatly facilitated by international and supranational bodies such as the Public Management Service of the OECD (PUMA), the World Bank<sup>11</sup> and the European Commission (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2004).

Convergence<sup>12</sup> is a powerful rhetorical theme, because by providing apparently convincing backing for the claim that the same thing is happening

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<sup>11</sup> According to Dimitrakopoulos and Passas (2003) the key feature of the World Bank's role in the diffusion of New Public Management amongst borrower countries is the conditional nature of these loans. In other words, the loans are disbursed on condition that specific reforms will be implemented according to a fixed timetable ("conditionality principle").

<sup>12</sup> The most widely used empirical proof for the statement that managerial reforms are the dominant trend in the Western World are the reviews of the OECD (1990,1993) on public management developments. From these reviews, it appears that more or less the same kind of developments have occurred in all the OECD member countries. In an analysis of public management reforms (OECD, 1995), it is concluded that notwithstanding differences in nature, size and approach to reforms, a common agenda has developed, "a new paradigm for public management has emerged, aiming at fostering a performance-oriented culture in a less centralised public sector" (Kickert, 1992). One difference between the current wave of public management reform and earlier phases is that this one has taken on an explicitly international dimension. An international vocabulary (an English one) has developed, actively fostered by organizations such as PUMA, SIGMA, the World Bank and the IMF, as well as through national governments and academic and professional associations. Terms such as "privatization", "agentification", "contractualization", "continuous quality improvement", "efficiency gains", "activity-costing", "regulatory impact assessment" and "performance management" are part of this international lexicon (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2004).

everywhere, it suggests that running with the herd must be the best –or at least the only- thing to do. It is thus hardly surprising that both domestic reformers and international agencies like OECD and the World Bank tend to lay heavy stress on “convergence” (Hood, 1998). Indeed, the international organizations are almost by their “*raison d’etre*” committed to a view of international convergence on some single “best-practice” model which it is their role to “benchmark” and foster, helping the “laggards” to catch up with the best-practice techniques of the vanguard (Hood, 1998).<sup>13</sup>

Since 1989 the OECD has developed a wide range of activities in administrative reform through its Public Management (PUMA) programme directed by the Public Management Committee, which consists of senior national officials. Moreover, one can identify other forms of coercive pressures in the activity of another OECD group, Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries (SIGMA). SIGMA advises transition countries on improving good governance and administrative efficiency and helps to build up indigenous capacities at the central governmental level to face the challenges of globalization and to prepare the first team’s accession to the EU (Dimitrakopoulos and Passas, 2003).

Regarding external pressures and public management reform, according to Toonen (2003), the best explanation for reform is still the need to cope with some kind of crisis, deficit, failure or external pressure. The economic problems of the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s forced governments in the Western World into a series of institutional and budgetary reforms. Since then, within the domestic process, international developments, or “Europe” (or the *acquis*) are consistently used to legitimize reform and overcome resistance to reforms that, according to many specialists, would have had to take place anyway.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> In the extreme, a debtor country has to submit to structural adjustment, privatization, management measures as well as macro-economic policies in exchange for loans. There are also slightly more subtle pressures as small states follow policies that were formed outside the country in which they are being implemented. The mechanisms for this are technical solution missions which import ready-made solutions such as down-sizing, outsourcing, privatization, and so on, prior to diagnosis of the specific problems. (Flynn, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Hadjiisky (2009) argues that “national” actors often appeal to “European” actors in many ways according to their interests, their frames of interpretation and relevant historical national and international precedents.

### **3. EUROPEANIZATION AND NATIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM**

#### **3.1 The concept of Europeanization**

Europeanization can most generally be defined as domestic change caused by European integration. Hix and Goetz (2000) define Europeanization as “a process of change in national institutional and policy practices that can be attributed to European integration”. The Europeanization function is the process by which governance structures at national and sub-national levels adapt both their institutional and policy components to meet the requirements of the rapidly changing European environment. The Europeanization of public policy constitutes a rather enduring and longstanding challenge to the administrative structures of member-states and it is viewed as a positive external shock for promoting institution- building, learning and policy-making innovation at national and sub-national levels, even if the pre-existing institutional infrastructure was poor (Paraskevopoulos, 2001, p.41).

According to Featherstone & Kazamias (2000) we can examine Europeanization when we look at the misfits and fits of the new member states and their domestic settings in comparison to the EU commitments and focus on their response according to EU commitments (Featherstone, 2000).

Europeanization is often related to the notion of modernization (Paraskevopoulos and Leonardi, 2004). Modernization, however, is also a rather ambiguous concept that may take several connotations and mean different things to different people (Hood, 1998). Keridis and Triantaphyllou (2001) argue that Europeanization forces the modernization of backward polities and most importantly it has focused the attention of policy makers and has provided useful roadmaps, linkages and trade offs for painful institutional reforms. Ultimately, it has initiated a learning process spreading values, mentalities and behaviours from Europe’s north-western core to its periphery. However, the model to which EU candidate states must adapt is not only a moving target in time, because of the constant unfolding of the integration process, but also a heterogeneous reality across space (Nikolaidis, 2001).

#### **3.2 EU Principles for public administration**

The EU must be convinced that the country in question for EU membership has the institutional and normative apparatus to enforce the aquis communautaire in practice, from regulatory agencies to judiciary panels. The capacity to put in place such an apparatus depends not just on resources and

technical assistance, but also on the cultural traits and normative beliefs of all those who work directly or indirectly for the state, argues Nikolaidis (2001). Issues of corruption, transparency, fairness and discrimination are all part of the picture.

SIGMA Paper no.27<sup>15</sup> attempts to identify the standards to which EU candidate countries are expected to conform in order to align their public administrations with those of EU member states. According to this paper, over time a general consensus on key components of good governance has emerged among democratic states. These components include the rule of law principles of reliability, predictability, accountability and transparency, but also technical and managerial competence, organizational capacity and citizens' participation. Despite the lack of an *acquis communautaire*, this consensus has established principles for public administration shared by EU member states with different legal traditions and different systems of governance. Over the course of time these principles have been defined and redefined through the jurisprudence of national courts and subsequently, the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice<sup>16</sup>.

Shared principles of public administration among EU member states constitute the conditions of a "European Administrative Space" (EAS). The EAS includes a set of common standards for action within public administration which are defined by law and enforced in practice through procedures and accountability mechanisms. Although the EAS does not constitute an agreed part of the *acquis communautaire*, it should nevertheless serve to guide public administration reforms in candidate countries.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, the constant interaction among officials of member states and between the latter and those of the European Commission contribute to spreading and sharing a set of common administrative principles and ways of management, which in turn helps to pattern<sup>18</sup> a shared ideal role model<sup>19</sup> for the

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<sup>15</sup> SIGMA is a Joint Initiative of the OECD and the European Union and was principally financed by the European Union's Phare Programme.

<sup>16</sup> The case law of the European Court of Justice can establish principles of a more general nature and this leads to modifications in the way principles of administrative law are understood within a member state. This allows us to record a sort of Europeanization of administrative law as an outstanding element of recent legal developments (SIGMA Paper no.27)

<sup>17</sup> If we attempt to systematize the main administrative law principles common to Western European countries, we could distinguish the following groups 1) reliability and predictability 2) openness and transparency 3) accountability and 4) efficiency and effectiveness. The principles enumerated above can be found in administrative laws across all European countries (SIGMA Paper no.27)

<sup>18</sup> For example the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a result of the co-operation among the EU Ministers responsible for Public Administration. It works in close cooperation with the network of CAF national correspondents. The CAF is an easy-to-use, free tool to assist public-sector organisations across Europe in using quality management techniques to improve their performance. It is especially designed for public-sector organisations, taking into account their characteristics (EIPA-Topics/CAF-Common Assessment Framework, <http://www.eipa.eu/en/topic/show/&tid=191>).

behavior of civil servants throughout the Union. Radaelli (2000) argues that although the EU may not be a “centre of gravity” for administrative structures, Brussels may nonetheless provide a transfer platform through which administrative innovation travels from one country to others.

### 3.3 The European Union and the reform of national public administrations

EU membership entails a significant informal pressure for administrative reform (Dimitrakopoulos and Passas, 2003). The need for reform is an indirect consequence of EU membership. It stems primarily from the twin necessities of effective participation in policy making and the implementation of common policies. The issue of the pressures that national administrations face as a result of membership in the EU is not new (Wallace, 1971). The so-called “convergence/adaptation” thesis (Borzel, 1999) -also known as the “Europeanization” thesis, whereby national administrations are thought to converge towards a similar structure (or even “model”) as a result of membership in the EU- according to Dimitrakopoulos and Passas (2003) is attractive, but not convincing. Arguably, more subtle and theoretically informed analyses of administrative reform at the national level (Goetz, 2001) convincingly establish that

1. The pace of reform is slow (that is, incremental change prevails)
2. The direction of reform remains path-dependent (that is, national administrations evolve along the lines of previously established patterns) and
3. *Learning* is the mechanism that drives this process whereby member states come to identify the type of pressure that they face, but they then go on to “respond” *individually*.

Olsen (2002) firmly dismisses the hypothesis of NPM leading to global administrative convergence. Although NPM may be part of the administrative rhetoric and practice in several countries, perspectives as to specific principles of reform widely differ. However, Olsen does believe in a slow advancement towards converging administrative practices especially at the European level, rather than at a global level.

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<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the Ministers of Public Administration agreed in November 1998 that new methods should be developed for sharing knowledge between the EU Member States on quality improvements of public sector. This led to the decision of organising a public sector quality conference where best practice cases from all member states are presented. Ever since the best practice cases have remained to be the core of the quality conferences. All member countries and co-operative countries and the European Commission nominate their respective best practice cases by using their own independent selection processes and methods.

EU penetrates domestic institutions in a different degree in each member state. That is because it does not dictate specific forms of institutional adaptation, but leaves considerable discretion to domestic actors. For example, the EU does not prescribe particular models of civil service reform.<sup>20</sup> After all, the EU's focus in each area is limited to the functions that need to be standardised to EU norms, not a complete blueprint for the public administration. The EU's own diversity undermines its efforts to export a single model of governance (Grabbe, 2001).

Mihai (2005) argues that despite the fact that none of the *acquis* chapters deals explicitly with the public administration reform, this topic is practically included in every chapter. However, the EU did not choose to reach this goal by imposing on the candidate countries specific indicators and targets. Instead, some guidelines and general expectations were put forward, leaving to the national level the power to decide by which means these criteria can be better fulfilled<sup>21</sup>.

The organization of national administrations, in principle, is not within the scope of the EU. Nevertheless, the White Paper published in 1995 regarding the preparation of the candidate countries insists on the necessity for these countries to not only harmonise their legislations, but also to equip themselves with an administrative capacity to implement the *acquis* (Hadjiisky, 2009). The latter specification potentially covers almost all public domains, as well as the operational rules of national and regional administrations (Grabbe, 2001).

According to Goetz (2000), authors working on the effects of the accession process on central public administrations have drawn inspiration from the studies of "Europeanization" in the Member states, in order to assess the institutional evolutions caused by EU candidacy. There can be direct effects when they are binding, e.g. the power of injunction, or indirect in the case of the spill-over effects from EU structures or administrative practices at national level, e.g. the power of influence (Radaelli, 2000). Hadjiisky (2009) argues that EU in the field of public administration managed to exercise a power of influence, rather

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<sup>20</sup> By contrast, the OECD (through its SIGMA Programme) and the World Bank have been more active in providing specific advice on developing public administration more generally.

<sup>21</sup> According to SIGMA paper 1999 candidate countries need to transpose EU legislation into the domestic legal order and then implement and enforce it. No *acquis communautaire* exists for setting standards or horizontal systems of governance or national public administrations. Targets and orientations for public administration reform in the perspective of EU accession are therefore less distinct.

than that of injunction, which was more easily accepted since it gave the opportunity to national actors to use it in various manners.

According to Bastos and Schneider (2001) no single model of public administration can be identified within the member states of the European Union, but it can be stated that there is a certain trend towards convergence. As a rule, EU-membership increases the need for executive coordination<sup>22</sup>. Although the EU recognizes that the substance of administrative reform should be left to the individual country to decide, applicant countries are encouraged to explore the solutions adopted in other European countries. Overall, administrative change is generated in a subtle way, through the administrative impact of sector specific policies or court decisions, rather than by imposing a unitary solution (Knill, 2001, Olsen, 2002).

### 3.4 Europeanization and regionalization

The assumption is that the more decentralized and autonomous the decision-makers are, the more competent-more consistent with the objectives will be the decisions taken (Pereira, 2004). According to Pereira (2004) decentralization -delegating authority to lower levels- is crucial to managerial public administration. People in public administration for a long time used to identify reform with decentralization, public and private. Through decentralization, organizations search to overcome the diseconomies of scale inherent in their growth (Pereira, 2004).

Moreover, Europeanization seems to lead to what has been termed the model of “multi-level governance” according to which “decision making competencies are shared by actors at different levels rather than monopolized by state executives” (Jorgensen, 1997). One can observe a variety of adaptation processes and stages of Europeanization in different member states.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The European Union’s administration itself may be modest in terms of staff and budget, but the European integration process leads to the development of “complex networks across sectors and levels of governance involved in a joint exercise of coordination and authority” (Olsen, 2002). A growing number of civil servants in the member states participates in the policy-making process at supranational level, is involved in the implementation of programmes sponsored by the European Union. Therefore, there is an increased co-operation of national, regional and local authorities with the European bureaucracy. This increased level of interaction and exposure to each others’ administrative thinking and solutions is expected to contribute to administrative convergence (Olsen, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> Four stages have been identified in the Europeanization process of sub-national governments (John, 1994). A) The first stage could be characterized a minimal Europeanization, where sub-national authorities simply implement EU directives and regulations. B) The second stage is a stage where financial Europeanization is reached by those sub-national governments who are able to gain access to EU funding and use these resources to promote local economic development. C) The third stage involves the development of network linkages between local organizations from the private and public

EU accession and the influence of EU regional policy was an important positive pressure leading the governments to prioritize regional policy in response to the availability of EU structural funds. According to Paraskevopoulos (2006), Europeanization of regional policy in particular and especially in the cases of Greece and the other Cohesion countries at large, is viewed as an independent variable that crucially affects and challenges well-established structures within the domestic systems of governance and plays an important role in the administrative restructuring<sup>24</sup> and devolution processes within the member states by enhancing the institutional capacity at the sub-national level (regional and local). Kohler-Koch (1996) argues that the deepest impact of EU policy is cultural. Specifically, EU regional policy, for example has transformed the notion of what governance is all about.<sup>25</sup>

The EU has also advocated greater decentralization and regional development in what had been strongly centralized states under communism. The combination of these two incentives has provoked some large-scale decentralizing measures across CEE, including the creation of new sub-national units in most countries. However, the outcomes vary considerably between countries particularly because the EU has no clear model of regionalism (Grabbe, 2001). Grabbe (2001) argues that empirical research on CEE demonstrates the wide differences that have persisted in policy-making. For example, in regional policy the candidates for EU membership in the most recent enlargements have reacted differently to the EU's requirement that they establish sub-national administrative structures (Hughes et al., 2001, Fowler, 2001).

#### **4. CASE STUDIES: OLD AND NEW EU MEMBER STATES**

##### **4.1 Southern European countries: patterns and challenges in the process of integration**

Regarding Western and Southern Europe, Sotiropoulos (2006) argues that West European countries plus Italy made their transition to democracy at the end of World War II, whereas Greece, Portugal and Spain followed several decades

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sector through their joint involvement in EU programmes or initiatives. D) Finally the full Europeanization stage signals the shift from the reactive to the proactive policy approach towards the EU, through the participation of sub-national institutions in trans-European collaborative networks in order to influence the policy making process of the Commission.

<sup>24</sup> A “misfit” or “mismatch” between the “supranational” and domestic levels of governance is ultimately expected to exert high adaptational pressures, which in turn lead to domestic structural change (Paraskevopoulos, 2006).

<sup>25</sup> Propositions like this can be tested by examining the difference between the belief systems of domestic civil servants involved in the administrations of EU funds at the regional level in comparison with the beliefs of civil servants engaged in regional policy without a EU dimension (Radaelli, 2000).

later<sup>26</sup>. At the same time, Southern European economies didn't manage to follow West European countries in the post war economic boom according to Sotiropoulos (2006). Countries in Southern Europe are also characterized by relatively greater importance of agriculture and services (Kevin Featherstone and George Kazamias, 2000). The modern bureaucracies of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain have developed along the lines of the Napoleonic state tradition, but they have also differed from this tradition.<sup>27</sup>

Other Western and Northern European bureaucracies had become modern and accustomed to function within democratic regimes. They had embarked on a process of adaptation to the diffusion of new technologies and methods of management. On the other hand, the Southern European bureaucracies of both Greece and Portugal, for example, had to confront all of these tasks simultaneously –organizational modernization, democratization, adaptation to European integration and to new international environment. Because of their delayed economic development and, especially, democratization and adhesion to the EU, the state mechanisms of Greece, Portugal and Spain had no alternative but to confront all of these challenges at the same time (Sotiropoulos, 2006).

According to Sotiropoulos (2006), public opinion data indicate that contact with the public administration leads to widespread feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction among citizens in Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal.<sup>28</sup> Southern Europeans have often felt more like subjects than as citizens endowed with constitutionally guaranteed rights. To some extent, such beliefs may be attributed to extensive periods of authoritarian rule.

Also, there are structural administrative characteristics that these countries had in common: the extended politicization of the top administrative ranks. In addition, they shared similar patronage patterns in recruitment in the public sector along with an uneven distribution of human resources. Some traits that are characteristic of Southern European countries are according to Sotiropoulos (2006) political clientelism<sup>29</sup>, the uneven character of the public

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<sup>26</sup> Greece, Spain and Portugal had similar features with regard to the political system: recent authoritarian regimes. That is why they began with the same motivation of intended Europeanization in order to integrate into the European Union. Through this way they wished to hinder their authoritarian regimes and move on to socioeconomic modernisation and democratization (Ioakimidis, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Portugal and Greece belong to the “latecomers” group, which comprises mainly of the cohesion countries (Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Greece) that are considered as traditional unitary and centralized nation states.

<sup>28</sup> Poll data collected in 1985 in Portugal, for example, show that Portuguese citizens believed that central public had worsened since 1974 (Graham, 2001)

<sup>29</sup> By clientelism we mean “a particular made of social and especially political organization, whose typically structural element and characteristic building block is the patron-client dyad” (Maurogordatos, 1983:51).

sector<sup>30</sup>, legal rigidity and excessive legalism<sup>31</sup>, lack of an institutionalized administrative elite<sup>32</sup> and widespread political corruption<sup>33</sup> in the lower ranks of the administration.

Countries in Southern Europe are also characterized by late industrialization processes compared to Northern European countries (Garofoli, 1992). Mouzelis (1986, p.31) argues that in Western Europe, capitalist industrialization was one of the main procedures which lead to the transition from the oligarchic system of governance, based on political clubs, to a system based to organized political parties with broad popular support and participation,<sup>34</sup> whereas in the countries of the parliamentary semi-periphery, the transition from the political clubs to the political parties occurred before these countries have been industrialized in large scale.<sup>35</sup>

However, the example of the Europeanization of Southern Europe -Spain, Portugal and Greece- is often cited as a case of the effective EU impact on the late-developing countries of advanced capitalist Europe. Southern Europe stands out as a hopeful case of successful democratization and economic development brought about largely by EU membership. Europeanization in the Southern European cases is associated with the consolidation of democracies and the adaptation of pluralist norms and practices through intensive enlargement with EU procedures and systems.

#### **4.1. a) The case of Greece**

Keridis and Triantaphyllou (2001) argue that for Greece, that achieved EU membership in 1981, (and Turkey) the driving force of modernization and globalization has been the demands of European Integration: participating in European structures has meant democratic and market reforms and the spread of Western European liberal values. Most of the domestic changes that Greece (and

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<sup>30</sup> There is uneven distribution of personnel and one can find services that have an excessive number of employees while other public services have remained understaffed (Sotiropoulos, 2006).

<sup>31</sup> Meaning that there is an overproduction of laws and decrees (Sotiropoulos, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> In Southern Europe, particularly in Greece, there is no such thing as a typical European administrative elite (Cassese, 1993, Sotiropoulos, 1993). However this trait may not apply to Portugal where higher civil servants enjoy some power and prestige and are often members of the social elite of their respective societies.

<sup>33</sup> For example in Italy, as in Greece there is a disproportionate number of disability pensions issued by state-run medical committees (Sotiropoulos, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> Mouzelis (1986, p.31-32) argues that along with the development of the industry and of the national communication networks and markets, a procedure of political motivation took place in large scale, which brought more and more people into the national political arena, transforming people from “subjects” to “citizens”. This procedure, the author argues, had as a result the expansion of the bureaucratic state and the enlargement of the political involvement.

<sup>35</sup> This applies to the Balkan states, as well as to Greece (Mouzelis, 1986).

Turkey) are experiencing today are directly or indirectly linked to the demands and benefits of European Integration (Keridis and Triantaphyllou, 2001).

According to Ioakimidis (2000), the Greek stage was huge, but not effective, described as “a colossus with feet of clay” by Sotiropoulos (1993:49). Ioakimidis describes the country as the “most centralized unitary state in Europe in the early 1980s” in terms of its organizational and functional capabilities. Against this background, Europeanization has deeply penetrated the Greek political system, delivering change in a wide range of areas. The Greek state was forced to assume new functions and develop policies that otherwise it might have not developed at all.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, according to Ioakimidis, Europeanization also had a lasting effect on Greece’s territorial organization. The EU’s structural policies generated the dynamics and conditions for introducing a systematic policy of regional decentralization and reinforcing the powers and autonomy of the regions.<sup>37</sup> As Ioakimidis maintains, most, if not all, of the reforms pertaining to local governance were introduced as a response to the requirements and impact of EU membership<sup>38</sup> because it lacked the decentralised regional structures required by the EU as partners in the execution of the structural policy.

One should also not underestimate the role EU membership has played in the creation of new institutions for the protection of the citizen i.e. the Ombudsman<sup>39</sup>, as well as in conferring new rights upon the Greek citizens (European citizenship, protection of minority rights, protection of personal data e.t.c.) and also in providing better services<sup>40</sup> to the citizens.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The Greek state administration had to start dealing with new policies in a consistent way, in particular, with regard to structural policies, the environment, vocational training, research and technology, consumer protection and cross border co-operation, areas where virtually no policies had existed (Ioakimidis, 2000).

<sup>37</sup> The initial reforms began in 1986 when 13 administrative regions were formed and were further extended in 1994 when elections at the prefecture level were held for the first time (Ioakimidis, 2000).

The creation of new municipalities through the compulsory merger of the communes (the so-called “Kapodistrias Plan”) in 1997 should be viewed as another step in the same direction, namely improving levels of efficiency (Paraskevopoulos, 2006). In spite of some original hostile reactions, the Kapodistrias reforms were eventually carried out, leading to the rationalization of the regional administrative system (Paraskevopoulos, 2006).

With the phrase “the end of an era for the most centralised state in Europe” the minister of interior, I.Ragousis presented the law draft with the name “Kallikratis” at the Council of Ministers in April 2010. 325 strong municipalities are introduced which are endowed with new responsibilities, formerly exerted by the prefectures, thirteen self-government administrative regions with clearly developmental character and seven administrative regions. The law that was passed by the Greek Parliament aims to bring about a more effective and efficient public administration and to combat public embezzlement (Nikolakopoulos Dimitri (2010), “Kallikratis, poor but honest”, To Vima online, <http://www.tovima.gr/default.asp?pid=2&artid=329160&ct=1&dt=01/05/2010>)

<sup>38</sup> The 1986 reforms came about after Greece had discovered that it was not in a position to implement the IMPs (Integrated Mediterranean Programmes) (Ioakimidis, 2000).

<sup>39</sup> The Greek Ombudsman is a constitutionally sanctioned Independent Authority, founded in October 1998. The Greek Ombudsman investigates individual administrative actions or omissions or material actions taken by government departments or public services that infringe upon the personal rights or violate the legal interests of individuals or legal entities (UN 2004, Greece Public Administration Country Profile)

According to Paraskevopoulos (2006) the shift from participation towards greater transparency and efficiency in the management of the funds was accompanied by significant institutional creation in order to strengthen the capacity of central state administrative structure. Thus, the need to allocate responsibilities for planning, management, payment and evaluation led to the enhancement of the role of the relevant administrative institutions and the involvement of technocrats (independent consultants, experts) in policy making and implementation at both the national and sub-national levels of administration.

Overall, Europeanization undoubtedly has constituted an external shock for the domestic governance and policy-making structures in Greece. However, its impact is crucially dependent on the learning capacity of the pre-existing institutional infrastructure and, in that respect, Greece's poor institutional capacity has fundamentally influenced the pace of domestic change (Paraskevopoulos, 2006). Paraskevopoulos (2006) argues that despite the serious efforts to combat clientelistic practices and create trust in public institutions<sup>42</sup>, statism or more specifically the centralised and simultaneously weak administrative structure accompanied by the predominance of political clientelism in the policy process, still remains the main feature of the institutional infrastructure in public policy-making in Greece.

#### **4.1. b) The case of Portugal**

For a country that had spent the previous five centuries mainly focused on its colonial possessions, the accession to the European Union in 1986 was a major challenge (Soares, 2009). The decision to join the Union was preceded by a long route of democratic consolidation that is firmly linked with the course of Europeanization according to Soares (2009).

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<sup>40</sup> Some examples regarding improved services to the citizens in Greece include the citizens' centers, which according to Thalia Fotinopoulou, General Director for Administrative Modernization in the Ministry of Interior were created by the Ministry in the framework of an Integrated System for Public Service Delivery in order to confront the situation of citizens' dissatisfaction by waiting many hours to be served and to improve and offer better services to citizens.

<sup>41</sup> Another example of "Europeanized" quality improvement of the public sector in Greece, that moreover featured in the 4th Quality Conference for Public Administration in the EU in Tampere, Finland, in 2006, among the best practice cases is the standardised operational procedures using the survey of European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) "European Performance Satisfaction Index" for measuring customer satisfaction in the case of Athens' Metro. The contribution of this "Europeanized" quality system to the Metro's efficient function is decisive.

<sup>42</sup> Such as the establishment of ASEP-Higher Council for Personnel Recruitment or sustained efforts that have also been made to modernise and enhance the transparency and scrutiny of the Greek administrative system, which have resulted, inter alia, in the passing of Law in 1997 establishing the Public Administration Inspectorate (Paraskevopoulos, 2006).

In Portugal the centralized nature of the state structure made the implementation of an effective regional development policy difficult. When Portugal joined the EU there was no national regional policy tradition. The EU's regional policy, particularly the 1988 reforms and the 1993 Delors II package, increased pressure on Portugal to adapt its approach to regional development. It also prompted a limited degree of administrative reorganization at the national level, but otherwise EU regional policy led to little institutional change at the regional level (Paraskevopoulos and Rees, 2006).

In a similar vein to Greece, the learning process in Portugal has resulted in significant and rather extensive institution building at the central state and regional levels since the early 1990s. It is debatable, though, to what extent this process should be exclusively attributed to the influence of the EU (Paraskevopoulos and Rees, 2006).

Claro (2005) argues that in Portugal major reforms of public administration have occurred as a consequence of constitutional change<sup>43</sup>. Claro argues that Portugal complies fully with common parameters for public administration and integration within the so-called "European Administrative Space". According to the author, rationality of administrative action depends on the law, but implies, above all, a change in attitude. This change of attitude involves proximity to the general public, while also defending the public interest as determined by the democratically legitimised political authorities.

In 2003 the Portuguese government issued a set of discussion papers setting out proposals for reform of the public administration with the aim of making it more flexible, covering the organisation of the direct state administration, the status of management personnel in the public administration and a new framework law for public institutes. The objective of the proposed reform was to create a more flexible structure in order to enhance development and improve productivity. The new public administration organisational model is based on defining roles and objectives, more flexible structures, a slimmed down decision-making chain and less bureaucracy, encouraging systematic cooperation between government departments, knowledge sharing and proper information management. (Ferreira, 2003).

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<sup>43</sup> In the 1976 Constitution, which institutionalized a democratic system following the 1974 Revolution, provides for the codification of administrative law. Since the 1960s, there had been incessant calls for a general administrative procedure law to reform public administration in Portugal. However, only in 1991 the Portuguese Administrative Procedure Code, which seeks to regulate all administrative activity, was published (Claro, 2005).

Corte-Real (2008) addresses the question of the influence of the public administration tradition and the politico-administrative context on the formulation and implementation of public management reform in Portugal. The author concludes that there has been no lack of great reforms, yet acknowledges the existence of a recurrent problem with public expenditure and increasing public employment in Portugal. Corte-Real argues that however public administration in Portugal has managed to cope with the process of change while maintaining a key orientation towards the citizen and society.

Portugal has made important steps towards modernisation of the country's public administration, especially in the field of e-government. Portugal has managed to develop an effective e-Government policy<sup>44</sup>. Portugal along with Austria belong to the leading e-Government countries in the European Union, ranking third and first respectively, in terms of full online availability of public services, and fourth and first with regard to online sophistication<sup>45</sup> (Rodousakis and Mendes dos Santos, 2008).

#### **4.2 Central and Eastern European countries: patterns and challenges in the process of integration**

There are four main general problems of public administration in central and Eastern Europe: fragmentation, instability, human resource problems and accountability (Verheijen, 2003). According to Verheijen (2003), the public administration in central and Eastern Europe, which was inherited from the previous communist regime, lacks human resources most critically in two aspects: policy-making and management.

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<sup>44</sup> Innovation in e-government policies are encouraged in order to improve the relationship between the administration and citizens, to improve public management, to simplify procedure making them less bureaucratic, to promote and to improve quality of services delivered. In line with this general tendency to encourage the development of e-government, Portuguese public administration has experienced significant changes since the end of the '90s. A new Portuguese e-Government strategy, the Action Plan for E-Government was designed with the purposes of increasing transparency and democratic participation, focusing public services on the needs of citizens and enterprises and rationalizing communication costs (CAIMED, Centre for Administrative Innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean Region, Best Practices in the European Countries, Portugal).

<sup>45</sup> Also the Portuguese Government created an electronic market place for all public sector employment opportunities. The Public Employment Marketplace (BEP) portal and database enables civil servants to request a change of function or location and their profiles are matched with job openings from across government. This marketplace is also accessible to the public for government jobs open to external competition. BEP aims to promote career development and mobility within Public Administration and is helping to develop a more professional and flexible civil service. It also helps to create a more open and transparent recruitment process and give both civil servants and public in general access to what is the largest job market place in the country. The case featured as best practice case at the 4th Quality Conference for Public Administration in the EU in Tampere, Finland, in 2006.

The basic feature that characterizes the communist approach is the permeability (up to the point of disappearance) of the boundaries between politics and politicization of public administration. The public apparatus was transformed to a mere mechanism used in order to implement the dominant party's will. Dominating for almost half a century, these structures had a deep influence on public life and, at the same time, on the mindset of the entire society. Therefore, once the communist regime fell apart, one of the most difficult reforms to be achieved was in the field of administration. A brand new legislation and institutional structure had to be introduced, doubled by a transparent human resources policy (Mihai, 2005).<sup>46</sup>

According to Meyer-Sahling (2004), although civil services have been functionally defined in public law, empirical research suggests that the adopted formal-legal frameworks lack the capacity to prevent the politicization of human resource policy in post-communist central executives, because the boundaries between politics and administration have remained highly permeable. The record of civil service reform in post-communist Europe suggests that civil service developments are characterized by reform delays, failures to implement legislation and the continuing politicization of personnel policy processes (Nunberg, 1999)<sup>47</sup>

According to Goetz (2001), two main perspectives dominate in the study of central state administration in post-communist CEE: modernization and Europeanization. Post-communist administrative development is part of a comprehensive "belated" or "catching-up" modernization.<sup>48</sup> "Modern" public administration was until recently largely synonymous with Weberian public bureaucracy. However, for the last two decades or so the Western modernization discourse has not been about Weberian public bureaucracy<sup>49</sup>, but about the remoulding of public administration according to the precepts of the new public management (NPM). Although New Public Management (NPM) is often

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<sup>46</sup> Administrative Europeanization in CEE involves the domestic consequences of the need to adopt and implement the *acquis communautaire* and to prepare for the "European administrative space" (SIGMA, 1998, 1999) (Goetz, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> According to Goetz and Wollman (2001) progress in executive reform may have been uneven, modernization still partial and compliance with European norms and standards yet incomplete.

<sup>48</sup> Europeanization has evolved as the second major perspective on administrative development in the region (Grabbe, 2001). Europeanization is not a rival approach to modernization, with which it shares many basic assumptions. Rather, it is a complementary perspective. However, it differs from the modernization perspective in that it gives systematic attention to the consequences of the institutional development for the supra-national level.

<sup>49</sup> According to Meyer-Sahling Jan-Hinrik (2004) the point of reference for the reform of the state is a specific type of public administration that shares the features of a Weberian public bureaucracy including a permanent civil service staffed with trained experts, appointed on the basis of competitive examinations, whose members are protected from political dismissals, receive a regular salary and have some prospect of a career within the administration (Weber, 1980).

presented to governments in central and Eastern Europe as the panacea for a sick public administration, Verheijen in his (1998) study argues that the NPM medicine has often been prescribed without an adequate diagnosis of the symptoms of the sick patient and of its medical history.<sup>50</sup>

Modernization in the sense of creating a managerialist administration along the lines of NPM models has, so far, hardly featured in the CEE reform discourse.<sup>51</sup> Kovacs (2007) argues that the recommendation formulated by research programmes of OECD and the European Union labelled as SIGMA (1998) could simply provide some reference points for the accession states whereas the execution of the NPM reforms was carried out mainly for the sake of foreign experts and only symbolically.

The conclusion to be drawn is that in much of CEE, administrative development has not advanced “according to plan”. A list of widely recognized obstacles to effective root-and-branch reform, includes, inter alia, the weight of communist legacies, chronic resource shortages, be they financial, organizational or human, which hamper effective reform implementation and perhaps most importantly inevitable time lags between formal organizational change and deeper institutional transformation affecting informal rules, norms and values (Goetz, 2001).

#### **4.2. a) The case of Czech Republic**

As a relatively poor new (since 2004) member state, the Czech Republic was a major recipient of EU funding. However, institutional and administrative difficulties have hindered the efficient use of allocated cohesion policy funding, raising questions about absorption capacity (Marek and Baun, 2008). Moreover, according to Kovacs (2007), the Czech Republic local government system was traditionally fragmented.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> If one takes into account the structural problems of CEE states, serious doubts are cast upon the suitability of reforms based on New Public Management theory. Breaking up the administration in a number of small task oriented units is likely to aggravate existing co-ordination problems. The introduction of public management reforms is still considered to have substantially reduced the capacity for coordination in British public administration, in particular in relation to policy implementation. CEE states already face serious problems with the coordination of policy implementation, which might simply be aggravated by the introduction of NPM reforms (Verheijen, 1998).

<sup>51</sup> As a recent World Bank study of administrative change in Hungary, Poland, Romania and Russia has noted, the CEE countries ...have steered curiously clear of the NPM approach. The implicit systems and models adopted so far have been the centralized hierarchies of the Weberian tradition (Nunberg, 1999).

<sup>52</sup> In the communist era the number of municipalities was first reduced from 11.000 to 4.100 by the year of 1989, and therefore, subsequently to 1989, several settlements opted for separation. Thus, their number increased by 2001 (Davey, 2003). Currently there is a total of 6.249 municipalities (Czech Republic, Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative). The second cause of fragmentation was the dissolution of medium tier governance in 1989, mainly for political reasons (Kovacs, 2007).

A specific feature of the Czech territorial public administration is that instead of the usual dual structures, the central state administration and the elected local government were merged into one single organizational framework. This organizational “integration” would eventually be the source of conflict in the political sphere, rather than offer a rational solution to the lack of coordination of the operation of elected and de-concentrated actors (Kovacs, 2007). According to Jablonski (1997), one of the main difficulties of modernization of the public administration in Central Europe is a lack of consensus among political elites, as well as professional experts<sup>53</sup> concerning the question of a rational equilibrium between the centralism, regionalism and localism and a lack of a clear vision of territorial organization of the state.

According to Goetz and Wollmann (2001), in the communist era the central state apparatus was strongly politicized in terms of personnel policy. Therefore, the thrust of civil service reform has been to establish the institutional prerequisites for a professional central administration. The authors argue that communist legacies regarding institutional arrangements are still in evidence in particular in the Czech Republic. The governmentalization of post-communist executives, in the sense of strengthening policy-making capacity at the centre has progressed little in the Czech Republic, much less than in Hungary and Poland (Brusis and Dimitrov, 2001, Goetz and Wollmann, 2001).

In June 2002 a Civil Service Act was adopted by the Czech Republic and its full implementation was achieved in 2007<sup>54</sup>. The Civil Service Act provides for an improved legal framework for the civil service and guarantees the status and independence of civil servants by providing for open and merit-based competitions (UN, 2004, Czech Republic Administration Country Profile). Before the enactment of the new public administration law on 1 January 2004, the status of civil servants was still governed by the General Labour Code.

Hadijsky (2009) argues that whereas the Czech political and social actors were precociously involved in the problem of the “de-communisation” of administrations, during the 1990s the role and the organisation of the Central

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<sup>53</sup> It is argued (O’ Dwyer, 2006) that in the Czech Republic as in Slovakia and Poland, the political class have always been more interested in regional reform than the general public, who were concerned with (to them) more relevant issues like health care. O’Dwyer (2006) argues that the substance of regional governance reform in the Czech Republic nicely illustrates the limits of Europeanization and throws the impact of domestic political considerations into sharp relief. The coalitional politics faced by the government undertaking regional reform have been the primary factor shaping institutional outcomes according to O’ Dwyer (2006).

<sup>54</sup> Meyer-Sahling (2004) argues that the Czech Republic began to implement the Civil Service Act only in January 2004. However, even when civil service legislation has been adopted, political interference at the top of the civil service continues to contradict attempts to establish professional civil services insulated from politics in post-communist Europe.

Government remained a neglected subject. The focus of the entire public debate to the question of political purification was masking the serious problems of performance, training and autonomy that plague current post-Soviet administrations (Hadjiisky, 2004). Hadjiisky (2009) argues public authorities continued to neglect the subject of central administrations during the initial years of Czech independence (1 January 1993) to the point of labelling their disregard as a “strategy of non reform” (Hadjiisky, 2004).

Hadjiisky (2009) argues that there was no specific pressure -i.e. from academia, the media or trade unions- on the governments to prioritise central administrations reform. In this context, pre-accession negotiations were an important reason for the emergence of a public debate on central public administrations reform. The attention paid to the issue progressively increased with the annual publication (after 1996) of the Commission’s *Regular Reports* on the Czech Republic’s progress toward accession. Each year the Reports insisted on the importance for the Czech Republic to “have a law on public administration”, presented as essential to establish “the independence, the professionalism and the stability” of the State administration.<sup>55</sup>

The constant pressure from the European Commission on the Czech Republic<sup>56</sup> since its official application to the European Union in January 1996 played a crucial role in the reform process influenced the outcome of the legislative process and the vote on a public law status for State employees.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> European Commission, Regular Report 2002 on the progress of the Czech Republic toward accession, B-1, COM (2002) 700 final

<sup>56</sup> Besides the Regular Reports, the Commission had recourse to other means of influence. After the dissolution of the Office for Legislation and Public Administration by governmental decision in 1996, the Czech Republic no longer possessed a single body in charge of the co-ordination of administrative reform. Faced with this deficiency, the Delegation to the European Commission in Prague launched a project known as the “improvement of public administration”. This project was entrusted to a Czech foundation, the Popular Education Fund, created in 1994 with the Support of the European Commission.

<sup>57</sup> It is indicative of the focus on civil service reform in the Czech Republic that the Czech Republic exhibits as best practice case in the 4th Quality Conference for Public Administration in the EU in 2006 (Building Sustainable Quality, Tampere, Finland) the Training centre for Public Administration of the Czech Republic (FALA) which is an NGO whose mission is to provide training for local and regional authorities staff and elected representatives of local and regional government in order to implement and reinforce sound, sustainable and democratic approaches and good methods of governance.

## 4.2. b) The case of Romania

Romania joined the EU January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 is among the poorest member states.<sup>58</sup> A great deal of Romania's transition has taken place following the international models recommended by outside actors. Thus, IMF, World Bank and the EU offered economic models, while NATO and the EU offered democratization and security models. Romania's EU accession was, according to CPRE<sup>59</sup>, more than a political process. It was a national obsession. Romanians' expectations related to EU were very high. This was not just Euro-enthusiasm, that was determined to certain extent by the violent ending of the previous regime.<sup>60</sup> It was a kind of Euro-dependence. "Catching up with the West" has been the national obsession of the last two centuries.<sup>61</sup> According to a series of Euro-barometer studies, trust in EU is at its highest<sup>62</sup> in Romania compared to the rest of the EU countries. Although in a descending slope, the figure remains exceptional for a society traditionally characterized by chronic cynicism.<sup>63</sup> However, the much expected integration did not match the old inflated expectations.<sup>64</sup>

Romania benefited from EU's assistance in the public administration field since 1992, long before becoming an official EU candidate country. Nevertheless, the support was strengthened after 1998, when Romania started being monitored by the European Commission, through its annual Regular Reports. The main objectives were to achieve European standards of transparency, predictability, accountability, adaptability and efficiency.<sup>65</sup> The public administration reform in Romania was launched and developed in strong connection with the country's process of accession to the European Union. As the administrative principles and structures had to be virtually rebuilt, efforts were put into drafting appropriate legislation, on the grounds of which the new

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<sup>58</sup> With GDP per capita reaching only about 35 per cent of the EU average in 2005 (Benedek and Horvath, 2008).

<sup>59</sup> CPRE, Romanian Center for European Policies claims aiming to be a transformative actor in post-accession Romania by advocating accountable and transparent public administration.

<sup>60</sup> According to Rose et al (1998) "The fall of totalitarian systems implied the need for identifying alternatives, in a short time and under unexpected circumstances".

<sup>61</sup> CPRE, Romanian Centre for European Policies-Debating Europe, Providing Expertise, 1 March 2009

<sup>62</sup> Only the Army and the Orthodox Church enjoy a higher level of trust than the EU (CPRE, March 2009).

<sup>63</sup> CPRE, Romanian Centre for European Policies-Debating Europe, Providing Expertise, 1 March 2009

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Some of the most important initiatives in this field were 1998 PHARE Programme for Romania "Support to designing and implementing Public Administration Reform", PHARE 2001 Programme "Strengthening the administrative capacity", 2002 PHARE National Programme and others that followed.

administration would function properly.<sup>66</sup> The new legal framework is compatible with the similar provisions in other EU member states and constitutes the premise for an efficient functioning of the administration system.<sup>67</sup>

Deriving from the new laws, specific institutions were established with the purpose of conducting the reform process and putting into place a stable new administrative structure. However, the inflation of units and departments was seldom doubled by the attribution of real authority and adequate resources (Mihai, 2005)<sup>68</sup>. Romania has the lowest number of civil servants per inhabitant in Eastern Europe –over four times less than the Czech Republic.<sup>69</sup>

Ionita (2005) argues that the constant interaction and most often pressure of the European arena is exerting a positive influence on the emancipation of Romanian public administration from the control of the political corps. However, the public administration reform in Romania<sup>70</sup> has followed a rather top-down approach. Although this approach has certain advantages such as a uniform and quick implementation, it presents certain disadvantages such as instability of the reform process, since different governments have different ideas of reform.<sup>71</sup>

The 2006 monitoring report for Romania mentioned the need to increase administrative capacity to absorb EU funds since the greatest challenge for regional policy in Romania is the country's limited capacity to absorb EU assistance. The role of regions was strengthened by EU-mandated regionalization, however there is evidence that what has emerged is a

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<sup>66</sup> Since 2005 the Central Unit for Public Administration Reform (CUPAR), a General Directorate within the Romanian Ministry of Administration and Interior, has started the process of introducing Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in Romanian Public Administration, both at the central and local level (Ministries, Prefectures and County Councils). A CAF team was established and its overall objective is to introduce CAF in the public administration common practice as the main self-assessment instrument. This was Romania's best practise case exhibited in the 4th Quality Conference for Public Administration in the EU (Building Sustainable Quality, 2006, Tampere, Finland).

<sup>67</sup> The Civil Servants' statute (November 1999), the Law on Liability of the Ministers (1999), the Law on the Organisation and functioning of the Government (February 2001) and the regularly revisited Strategies for Public Administration Reform (2001, 2003, 2004) are a few examples of documents issued with the aim of building a comprehensive and updated legal background for the reform process (Mihai, 2005).

<sup>68</sup> According to Mihai (2005) what we notice in the case of Romania is an administration characterised by a lack of service and administration culture still struggling to defeat the old mentality dating back from the communist times. Although the Europeanization is visible as far as structures are concerned, government structures are in need of a coherent coordination strategy, while the Human Resources management in the civil service sector is characterized by important gaps between well-designed patterns and practice still in need of essential improvements.

<sup>69</sup> One can see here a real dilemma as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been requiring a four per cent decrease in the number of civil servants, on the purpose of reducing the budget deficit, while the EU is demanding reinforced recruitments (Mihai, 2005).

<sup>70</sup> A public administration reform strategy was launched in May 2004 covering areas of civil service reform, decentralisation and deconcentration and policy coordination.

<sup>71</sup> Policy-making in Romania is still performed at the level of political elite. This process has been aggravated by the fact that the political system in Romania is still based on competition, rather than on consensus, as in the case of Western Europe (Ionita, 2005).

hierarchical, top-down pattern of multilevel governance<sup>72</sup>, where collaboration and partnership is rather formal and declarative (Benedek and Horvath, 2008).<sup>73</sup>

According to Matei, Lucica and Iancu, Diana Camelia (2009) it was the adoption of the community acquis that has given the public administration corps the possibility of asserting itself against the political arena. However, the authors argue that the political apparatus has integrated and thus subordinated the administrative apparatus that should have been from the start a distinct one with its own authority in right.<sup>74</sup>

## **5. EUROPEANIZATION AND NATIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OLD AND NEW MEMBER STATES**

According to Featherstone and Kazamias (2000), different countries are treated differently by the EU. The EU's influence on candidates in the context of eastern enlargement was arguably indeed greater than on member states and induced a certain extent of convergence. However, according to Grabbe (2001), we may expect a large number of parallels with the impact that Europeanization has had on less-developed member-states<sup>75</sup>, but also some contrasts.

### **5.1 Similarities**

Grabbe (2001) argues that particularly important are the potential parallels of the CEE with the Southern EU member-states in the impact of importing political philosophies, of advancing small circles of actors (and reinforcing a democratic deficit) and privileging technocrats, of penetrating state administration practices and of aid-dependence. Europeanization has had the effect of empowering modernisers to change specific policies and also to reform political

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<sup>72</sup> Kovacs (2007) argues that the changes in the public administration of the territory after 1990 have not resulted in real decentralization and therefore the institutional system of regional policy was built in parallel to public administration. The new European style of regional policy is only in its earliest phase in Romania and that its chances of having a positive impact are hindered by the unchanged and mostly centralized administrative and political structures (Kovacs, 2007).

<sup>73</sup> For example the NUTS 2 regions are only statistical regions and basic units for implementing EU cohesion policy (Benedek and Horvath, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless politicians in Romania widely used the term technician to describe the transformation of the role of the civil servant from partisan one to a technician in order to show the progress of the public administration reform in Romania is technocrat. A deeper analysis though shows a different situation altogether as civil servants did not become less partisans, but rather have shifted their interests to a different area, the European one (Matei, Lucica and Iancu, Diana Camelia, 2009).

<sup>75</sup> Goetz (2001) argues that “maybe the East will go South only to arrive West”, implying that the characteristics that both regions appear to have in common provide for useful lessons and patterns from the Southern European countries for the CEE to learn from.

Institutions. CEE and many Latin administrations share the experience of “enclaves” of professionalism<sup>76</sup> and technocratic excellence.<sup>77</sup> Administrative Europeanization in the Member States tends to ensure the predominance of executive power, as well as the legislative power of senior officials who specialize in European issues, which reinforces the technical nature of public policies (Hadjiisky, 2009). According to Hadjiisky (2009) these reports have led a group of researchers to the conclusion that one effect of the eastern enlargement may be the exportation of the EU’s democratic deficit<sup>78</sup> to these young democracies .

According to Ioakimidis (2000), the EU is credited with playing a pivotal role in assisting the consolidation of democratic institutions and processes. As a result, the EU is seen not only by Greece, but also by Portugal and even the east European countries as a powerful force for building democracy and a pluralistic society. EU is, therefore, regarded as exporter of democratic governance. Moreover, Ioakimidis argues that Europeanization in the cases of Greece, Portugal, as well as for those of Eastern European countries seem to conform to the model of intended Europeanization, as opposed to the responsive Europeanization<sup>79</sup>.

According to Getimis, Paraskevopoulos and Rees (2006) regarding the interaction between Europeanization of policy-making and domestic governance structures in the Cohesion and CEE countries the following conclusions and lessons can be drawn. First, all the participating countries are facing significant adaptational pressures, albeit to different degrees. Second, in the field of regional policy in all countries under consideration, Europeanization has led to considerable administrative restructuring and institution building. Third, although regionalization has been dominant, the gate-keeping role of the central state has remained unchallenged and prominent in both the Cohesion and CEE countries. Fourth, regarding the social capital indicators notably corruption and clientelism penetrating public administration, Greece demonstrates similar characteristics

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<sup>76</sup> However, whilst “enclaves” exist, it is uncertain what they imply for the longer term future. In a best-case scenario, at least for modernizers and Europeanizers, they act as catalysts for the comprehensive modernization and Europeanization of Central administration. In a worst-case scenario, they further add to institutional fragmentation (Goetz, 2001).

<sup>77</sup> They have been observed, in particular, in the fields of budgetary, economic and fiscal policy (Goetz, 2001).

<sup>78</sup> According to Grabbe (2001) the danger for democracy in the enlarged Union is that only the top layer of central state officials will have become “Europeanized”, while the public remains excluded from European integration-reducing the prospects for a pan-European demos to emerge and exacerbating the democratic deficit.

<sup>79</sup> Responsive Europeanization refers to cases where no or little conscious effort is being made by the political actors to introduce into the political system the logic and norms of the EU-Europeanization results from the interactive osmosis between the national political system and the EU system on the other, since EU imposes upon them a model of governance reflecting the values, norms and principles upon which the EU system and those of its member states are constructed (Friiss and Murphy, 1999).

with the CEECs, while the situation though far from ideal is much better in Portugal.

According to Goetz (2001), taking note of the experience of administrative development in the Southern European democracies is helpful in understanding some conspicuous characteristics of contemporary CEE state administration. The most obvious, but also perhaps the most important, points to note are the similarities in the most frequently cited “pathologies” of the central state in the two regions.<sup>80</sup> These empirical parallels suggest that many of the current features of state administration that the CEE-centred literature associates with the legacies of communism and specific post-communist circumstances are, in fact, fairly typical of democratizing setting in comparatively poor countries (Goetz, 2001).

## 5.2 Differences

One good reason to expect that the transformative power of European integration on national administrative systems in CEE is more pronounced than in the case of Western European countries is that whereas in the case of Western Europe, EU adjustment has been a long-term process, in CEE the time frame is more compressed<sup>81</sup>. The applicant countries are expected to achieve full EU compatibility before accession rather than subsequent to full membership (Goetz, 2001).

It has been argued (Grabbe, 2001) that the process of post-communist transformation may make CEE more receptive to EU institutional paradigms than existing member states, because EU models are being presented at the same time as CEE policy makers were seeking institutional models to replace or to create new structures. Grabbe (2001) argues that because of the development of eastern accession conditionality<sup>82</sup>, the pressures on CEE for adaptation and policy convergence are considerably greater than those on previous enlargements, for example comparably with those on Mediterranean applicants in

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<sup>80</sup> They include, in particular, widespread corruption, clientelism, nepotism, various forms of party-political patronage, low public trust in state authorities and their personnel, both political and administrative (Goetz, 2001).

<sup>81</sup> Kovacs (2007) also argues that in the East European countries, the changing or reform processes in public administration have to be implemented in a much shorter time and under much stronger external pressure than in the former member states.

<sup>82</sup> Claro (2005) argues that the key issue for the case of CEE seems to be the conditionality under the promise of EU membership (Demetropoulou, 2002). The principle of conditionality -one of the key components of the EU’s strategy in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe- is widely acknowledged to be the driving force behind the process of enlargement-led Europeanization.

the 1970s and 1980s. In the case of the most recent two enlargements, the conditions are set in advance and national governments have to meet them before they can join.<sup>83</sup> The expectations of the European Union for the public administration of the countries involved in the last round of accession were much more definite<sup>84</sup> than during any other previous enlargement phase<sup>85</sup> (Kovacs, 2007). Flows of aid to CEE have been much less than those to the main recipient member-states as a proportion of GDP (Grabbe, 2001).

According to Getimis, Paraskevopoulos and Rees (2006), a crucial variable that explains differences in adaptational pressures between the Cohesion and the CEE countries may be the duration of authoritarianism. In this respect former communist countries are under severe adaptational pressure, given their past inheritance and the much stricter conditionality criteria for entry when compared with those from the previous waves of enlargement states.<sup>86</sup>

One can conclude, Getimis, Paraskevopoulos and Rees (2006) argue, that the expansion of the list of the conditionality criteria for the CEECs negotiation to entry to include fighting corruption, institution building etc<sup>87</sup> was of great importance. Unlike in the case of previous enlargement waves, where public administration did not play such a specific role, as far as the Eastern (and most numerous) enlargement is concerned, the European Union modified to a certain extent its pre-accession strategy. Enhancing the administrative capacities of the new member states is now regarded as a top priority (Mihai, 2005).

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<sup>83</sup> Ioakimidis (2000) in his study “The Europeanization of Greece” finds that Europeanization changed the Greek state thoroughly, but only as of the mid-1990s, more than a decade after membership. Nikolaidis (2001) also argues that in the case of Greece, an EU member state since 1981, changes preceded accession, continued with significant delays during the first decade after that and picked up speed in the 1990s. Unlike the new member states which had to change before they could enter the Union, Greece was admitted to the EU as a largely unreformed country and thereby had little incentive to reform. This changed, Ioakimidis (2000) argues when Greece feared to be left out of a new important club, the Euro-zone. The benefits of membership as a credible incentive, combined with strict criteria triggered the biggest reform drive in modern Greece.

<sup>84</sup> However, Kovacs (2007) argues that these expectations are hardly more than a loose framework and are not even consistent.

<sup>85</sup> What was expected of accession countries in the domain of public administration can be seen in the Copenhagen criteria on the one hand, and in the country reports issued by the European Commission since 1997, on the other (Kovacs, 2007).

<sup>86</sup> However, Greece may be viewed as a case comparable to the CEEs in the sense that despite the creation of formal institutional structure of territorial governance, the process of substantial institution building started in the mid 1990s. It is clear that authoritarianism matters, but other crucial variables, such as culture and pre-existing institutional infrastructure, may be more important in accounting for variation in the degree of adaptational pressures.

<sup>87</sup> Compared to the previous waves of enlargement, where negotiations were primarily dominated by economic and political criteria, namely functioning democracy and human rights (Getimis, Paraskevopoulos and Rees, 2006)

## 6. CONCLUSIONS/DISCUSSION

Europeanization is frequently used as a means of legitimizing institutional frameworks in CEE and often the question is raised of whether the EU is dominant force for change or just one among several (Grabbe, 2001). Grabbe (2002) argues that using the concept of Europeanization it is particularly important not to over-estimate the EU's influence.<sup>88</sup> The interaction between EU-driven change and other dynamics<sup>89</sup> is central in determining the extent and direction of Europeanization. However it is extremely hard to draw a clear distinction between the effects of membership of the EU and those of other concurrent developments upon national administrations (Dimitrakopoulos and Passas, 2003).<sup>90</sup> Regarding how consistent and compatible are the different external sources of influence and advice, tensions can emerge where there are different logics lying behind general development of administrative capacity and the specific demands of EU membership (Nunberg, 2000).<sup>91</sup>

Moreover, Hadjiisky (2009) argues that it would be wrong to deduce that public administration reform is only the result of external pressure. The "Europeanization" hypothesis often underestimates the importance of the interactions between exogenous international and domestic actors and has limits. Even where apparently strong conditionalities are at work, external direction alone is unlikely to lead to more comprehensive institutional adaptation, for it is regularly "filtered" through domestic political institutions (Grabbe, 2001). As a result, whilst both foreign models and foreign pressure have often acted as catalysts of executive development, most basic institutional choices have been "home grown", both in terms of their substance and the decision making processes that led to them (Goetz and Wollmann, 2001).

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<sup>88</sup> It is easy to do so, the author argues, when a study is looking for evidence of the EU's effects. Moreover, there is a tendency in parts of the literature on transition to exaggerate the EU's impact. Although the EU has enormous potential influence, scholars should not pre-judge the extent to which the EU has shaped governance overall according to Grabbe (2002).

<sup>89</sup> The World Bank, OECD-SIGMA and more recently the EU have all been involved in major programmes aimed at improvements in central executive capacity.

<sup>90</sup> Such developments include most notably the advent of New Public Management that is promoted either directly, by organizations and international fora such as the WTO (Dimitrakopoulos and Passas, 2003).

<sup>91</sup> Hadjiisky argues that moreover, the Commission's intervention had the effect of relaunching the debate on the status of public administration on the basis of historically different, Western European ideas that are generally considered as positive. Until now, the main external points of reference were American or British (Thatcher) and anti-statist in nature. Thanks to this other European point of reference, certain arguments, which would have normally been interpreted as archaic, have begun to take on a new sense of "modernity". The Commission strengthened the arguments in the debate that tended to favour the "return" to civil servants-oriented administrations.

According to Getimis, Paraskevopoulos and Rees (2006), although the Europeanization process plays a key role in the transformation of the domestic systems of governance, domestic institutions and especially specific features of the pre-existing institutional infrastructure at the national and sub-national levels of government matter for adaptation. The convergence between public administration proceeds alongside different needs, power structures and values. It is generally recognised as a UN report states<sup>92</sup> that top-down managed supply oriented reforms are usually not successful. If knowledge transfer can not meet the needs of the recipient country it will be unable to provide sustainable results (Kovacs, 2007).

Empirical research aimed at the evaluation of the signs of convergence emphasized that there is no need, and no intention on the part of the member states to unify public administrations, thus the variety of public administrations was maintained<sup>93</sup> (Bossart, 2001). As Grabbe (2001) points out, there is little chance that European integration will lead to the emergence of a uniform model of public administration amongst the applicant countries. Persistent differences amongst the administrative systems of long-standing member states make such an outcome unlikely.<sup>94</sup>

The general impression is that there are doubts as to whether the EU is a major independent variable changing administrations across Europe (Radaelli, 2000). A recent survey of the effect of EU dynamics on central ministerial administration concludes that the literature is inconclusive and that the EU can be at best an intervening variable in administrative change (Goetz, 2000). Goetz observes that, instead of assuming that Europeanization is a potential source of change and looking at its impact dichotomously, political scientists should account for its relative importance alongside other variables.

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<sup>92</sup> Globalisation and the state, UN 2001

<sup>93</sup> According to Featherstone and Kazamias (2000) still the broader patterns suggest that diversity persists, both between eastern and western Europe and within the new member states.

<sup>94</sup> However, EU-compatibility is seen as the decisive yardstick for evaluating pre-accession administrative arrangements (Goetz, 2001).

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