



Regional School of Public Administration (Phase 1)

A Joint Initiative of the European Union
and the OECD, principally financed by the EU



RESPA/SC(2007)3/004

NETWORKING RESPA WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

27th International Congress of Administrative Sciences

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 9-14 July 2007

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Introduction

At the invitation of the ReSPA Secretariat the reporter took part at the 27th International Congress of Administrative Sciences, which was held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 9-14 July 2007. The purpose of the ReSPA presence at this international meeting was to support ReSPA's gradual integration in key professional networks. The main theme of the Congress was "Global Competitiveness and Public Administration".

The Congress was working into three Workshops, six Working Groups, and several panels each focusing on different aspects of public administration in the context of globalization. The reporter was scheduled to participate at the sessions of Workshop B - Making Globalization Ethical: the 21st Century Public Administration as well as at the sessions of the Working Group I - Education and Training Programme: Aligning Missions and Quality. In addition the reporter had a possibility to listen to some selected presentations in other working groups or workshops.

Some excerpts from the content

The work at the Workshop B presented several papers which addressed the issue of ethics and corruption. One observation of the reporter resulting from the presentations is the trend of higher political interference with the administration, both horizontally and vertically. The impression is that more we discuss further and deeper professionalism and transparency of the administration less we have it happening particularly at higher levels. In other words, one could observe that the politics is trying to spread its influence as much as possible at lower level of decisions making. Two good examples of this could have been seen presented in the papers of:

- MADUREIRA César & RODIGUES Miguel, National Administration Institute (INA), Research and Development Department (Portugal), *Portuguese public managers and administrative reform in the global context of competitiveness*
- OLIVIER C. D. Central University of Technology, Free State (South Africa), *Political Interference: the effective killer of efficiency. A Global Perspective*

The former concludes that even if the "trust" factor is at the origin of managers' choice in all western countries, unless their recruitment system is associated to an evaluation model that defines with absolute clarity their objectives, goals and performance indicators as well as the real consequences of success or failure, such system will never fulfil its intention to provide clear and transparent visibility to public management practices. On the long run, managers in public service delivery organisations are likely to concentrate on their institutional relationships and pay more attention to operational aspects of management, overlooking what should be their major concern: providing efficient and effective service, thus contributing to the economic and social development and competitiveness.

The later, on the other hand, summarizes that, the comprehensive powers allocated to the executive authority, regarding all the career aspects of public servants, makes it possible for them to become involved in the personnel administration and the day to day operations of a department, or even worse - to interfere in a negative sense. Posing the question of political interference as a global reality, the author is doubtless - yes political interference is a reality all over the world and many examples are available.

The work of the Working group I presented several papers related to the globalization and its impact on the public administration in the context of training and education; also interesting papers on the research and development in the area and few case studies from around the world.

One very interesting paper was presented by **HAMZA** Enayat, University of Western Cape (South Africa), *Competition, Co-operation or "Co-opetition", South African Tertiary Institutions and the South African Management Development Institute*. In essence the author is discussing the relationship between the private and public institutions in the area of training and education.

Without diminishing the importance and results of the public institutions he conclude that the main problem is the absence of a coherent and well coordinated national institutional framework to guide and integrate their work, to organize and mobilize them around a set of common standards and sense of purpose, and to ensure effective quality assurance. In addition it seems that the existing system is stimulating competition rather than cooperation leading to duplication and inefficient use of available resources.

One interesting panel held in the framework of the congress was on the *Standard of Excellence in Public Administration Education and Training*. The panel presented the work of the joint Task Force established by the IASIA and UNDESA. The panel concluded that the work done is satisfactory on track and it should be continued in order to develop the respective standards of excellence.

Conclusions and Recommendation

A general observation of the reporter on the content and participation of the Congress is its high theoretical inclination which is not always or sufficiently linked with the practice. Yet this is not diminishing the values of the presented papers where one could identify good examples which could be considered for implementation in particular public administrations.

However, the reporter is of an opinion that the Congress as this one is a fine opportunity for exchange of experiences among different institutions from different regions of the world. Therefore, the reporter would like to suggest that the Steering Committee consider the possibility of application for membership in the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration.

In addition, the reporter is of an opinion that ReSPA should closely watch the work on the development of the *Standards of Excellence in PA Education and Training*, as those are one of the priority interests of it.

Last but not least, the reporter would like to express its gratitude to the Steering Committee and the Secretariat of ReSPA for the trust and support given to him related to the participation at the Congress as ReSPA representative.