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PUMA/M(98)1



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**PUBLIC MANAGEMENT SERVICE
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17TH MEETING
OF THE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
26-27 MARCH, 1998**

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**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17TH MEETING
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Item 1--Adoption of the Agenda

PUMA/A(98)1

1. The agenda was adopted without change.

Item 2 -- Election of Officers

2. On the proposal of **Denmark** and endorsed by **Ireland**, all four Committee officers were re-elected for 1998. They are:

- Dr. Benita Plesch, Chair, the **Netherlands**, Director General, Development of the Senior Public Service, Ministry of Home Affairs;
- Mr. Len Early, Vice-Chair, **Australia**, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Finance;
- Ms. Nicole Jauvin, Vice-Chair, **Canada**, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council and Counsel;
- Dr. Jorge Chavez Presa, **Mexico**, Deputy Secretary for Energy Policy and Development, Department of Energy.

3. **Derry Ormond**, Head of Service, briefed the Committee on the current state of the budget and reform of the OECD. Though final approval of the 1998 budget had not yet occurred, PUMA's budget is largely set, and will involve 7 percent overall. Secretariat restructuring is under consideration. A new Committee for Co-operation with Non-Members has been created. The Organisation is reviewing management of staff, the budget and information systems including moves to decentralise. PUMA Service is studying closely how best to perform in this environment.

Item 3 -- Approval of the Summary Record of the Previous Meeting

PUMA/M(97)2

4. The summary record of the Committee's 16th session held on 30-31 October, 1997 was approved without amendment.

Item 4 -- Principles for Managing Ethics in the Public Service

PUMA(98)1

5. The Committee agreed on a set of **Principles for Managing Ethics in the Public Service**, to be presented to the OECD Council [C(98)70] for consideration as an OECD Recommendation. Some re-drafting occurred during the meeting to reflect the suggestions made in the first round of discussions,

before the Committee endorsed the Principles at the end of the meeting. This consensus was achieved as countries agreed that they shared common principles involving a combination of approaches, but that each had to find the right balance adequate to their own national circumstances.

6. Sixteen countries spoke in support of the Principles, with many delegates urging prompt Council consideration and publication for use in Member countries (the Council approved the Principles as 23rd April). An ethics handbook providing practical examples of how the principles are being used in Member countries will also be developed as a follow-up. Under the proposal to the Council, PUMA would collect, analyse and provide information on country experience in reviewing their own ethics management systems using the Principles as a guide, and draw up a Report to the Council in 2000.

Item 5 -- Improving the Performance Orientation of Government

5a)--Improving the Performance Orientation of Government: Challenges and Priorities PUMA(98)2

7. The Committee endorsed a new orientation for PUMA work on performance management, including a shift from “how to” undertake use of different performance management instruments to an emphasis on “what works and why.” This will include a framework for country reviews of budgeting and management, cross-country comparative work on the use of policy instruments, work on benchmarking, and a stronger emphasis on the links between performance management and addressing particular policy problems.

8. The policy relevance of performance management was particularly stressed, including the need to assess and demonstrate the actual results of performance management practices on policy outcomes. It was also agreed that the Secretariat would report back to the Committee in October on a pilot country study of Sweden’s budgeting and management practices, and on a proposed framework for future country studies, which would provide an opportunity for further input into how such studies should be undertaken.

5b) -- Best Practice Guidelines for Evaluation

PUMA(98)3

9. The Committee approved a set of Best Practice Guidelines for Evaluation, and urged their dissemination as soon as possible as a **PUMA Policy Brief**. Suggested modifications would be incorporated, including finding the balance between ex post and ex ante evaluation; allowing for a range of evaluators, rather than just academic professionals; and clarification of the appropriate role for those who are actually being evaluated to be distinguished from other stakeholders.

Item 6 -- Reports by Chairs on Discussion Group Sessions

PUMA/A(98)1/Annex

10. Two parallel sessions were held on issues of emerging interest to the Committee. **Jonathan Breul of the United States** chaired and reported on the discussion group on **Public Confidence in Government: How Can it be Improved?** **Terje Dyrstad of Norway** chaired and reported on the conclusions of the second group, addressing **Information Technology and Reform: a Catalyst for Change?**

11. Participants in the discussion on public confidence in government tended to agree that it is indeed declining, based both on available data and their own country experience. But they also noted that public confidence is a complex issue which can be measured in many different ways, and that results will

differ depending on what questions are asked. For example, Denmark has conducted surveys showing an increased level of satisfaction with public services among those who use the services, but lower confidence among those who do not. The public does not necessarily see "government" as a single body, and may differentiate between the political and the administrative level, between levels of government and between different types of activities and services. Even if some measures indicate declining confidence, others show stable or even growing confidence. This does not suggest that "confidence" is not an important issue. Perceptions of decline, risks of loss of confidence, or actual decline in confidence need to be monitored and responded to. Conclusions on the nature of the problem depend on varying factors, such as history, the political environment, fiscal environment, and regional differences. Answers also differed depending on whether one spoke of the government as a whole, politicians, or civil servants.

12. Participants in the discussion on information technology and reform raised a number of key issues that potentially could merit further study. These include addressing the risks involved in developing "big systems" such as those used for administering Social Security programmes; how countries are balancing concerns about protection of individual privacy with the efficiencies gained by sharing data across different government programmes; the use of information technology to increase government transparency; the increased opportunities IT provides for benchmarking comparisons to improve public programmes; and the growing use of IT as an interface between the government and citizens. Important issues were also raised regarding the management of information, including how information should be priced; how to ensure its quality; determining ownership of information, who has rights to access it, and how to ensure its accessibility; and questions of responsibility for maintaining and disseminating it.

Item 7 -- Public Management Reform in Austria

13. **Emmerich Bachmayer**, Director-General for Central Personnel Co-ordination in the Austrian Ministry of Finance, made a presentation on Austrian public management reform, and responded to questions. Details of his remarks are provided in the attached Annex.

Item 8 -- Programme Policy and Planning

8a) PUMA Annual Report

PUMA(98)4

14. The Committee approved the PUMA 1997 Annual Report, to be presented to the OECD Council and disseminated on the OECD Web site. The introduction was to be strengthened to incorporate some of the examples cited in the Programme of Work discussion on the specific impacts that PUMA work has had in Member countries on their legislation and reform initiatives.

8 b) Programme of Work and Budget

PUMA(98)5

15. The Committee advised the Secretariat on country priorities and clarifications needed in the proposed 1999-2000 PUMA Programme of Work. Support was expressed for the overall thrust of the Programme, but shifts in focus in particular activities were suggested. In response, the Secretariat will develop a revised Programme and proposed priorities to be circulated in writing to the Committee in May. The Committee's views will be forwarded as advice to the Secretary-General on development of the overall OECD Programme of Work and Budget. The Secretariat would also explore the possibility of organising a new Ministerial-level meeting on public management issues, and will report back to the Committee on this in October.

16. Deputy Secretary General **Joanna Shelton** asked the Committee to consider what the OECD could do that governments themselves cannot do, and what value in particular the OECD could add. Several delegates (e.g. **Austria, Australia, Greece, Iceland, Italy**) responded by citing particular examples of how PUMA work provided extra information or impetus beyond what existed in their own countries, directly influencing legislation, governmental re-structuring or other public management and policy reforms. They noted in particular PUMA's ability to draw policy conclusions from across the "stove pipes" of different ministries and departments; and to provide a forum for officials from central management agencies to learn from each other -- both formally and informally -- to help them as they pursue reforms in their own countries. PUMA was cited as a unique and timely source of international expertise and provision of comparative data on issues of concern to central management agencies, and a reflection space that helps bring "intelligence to change."

17. The **Chair** concluded by stressing the importance of making PUMA work policy relevant. This could be achieved by doing less on central management and more directly on particular policy areas, such as case studies from other departments, to emphasise how public management can contribute to outputs and delivery, not just central machinery of government. More work could be done on cross-cutting issues, such as sustainable development, for example. She also noted the support expressed for work on human resource management issues, and work addressing the future of government.

Item 9 -- Exchange of Information on Promising Practices

PUMA/RD(98)1

18. Exchanges occurred on efforts to harmonise public management across Europe in anticipation of the European Monetary Union (initiated by **Italy**); the introduction of a Values Commission in **Norway** to promote community-wide values and democratic participation; and a discussion of how governments are addressing the year 2000 "computer bug" problem (initiated by **Belgium**). To facilitate the flow of information on this last issue, the Committee requested that the Secretariat develop a list of contact points in OECD countries with responsibility for addressing the year 2000 problem and report back to the Committee.

Item 10 -- Programme Update

PUMA/RD(98)2 and PUMA/RD(98)3

19. The PUMA Communications Group recommended several actions to improve PUMA communications (*PUMA/RD(98)2*):

- Greater use of OECD electronic discussion groups, currently used as a virtual forum by Communications Group members, by other PUMA networks and the Committee itself, to be supplemented by faxes for those who do not have access to the Internet;
- Rationalising presentation of country information on the PUMA Web site, and dividing Country Factsheets into two main categories on new developments and promising practices;
- Establishment of Communications Guidelines detailing main requirements that PUMA outputs should meet to promote effective dissemination and impact.

20. The Communications Group was asked to report back on promising approaches for ensuring effective communication and co-ordination of PUMA-related work within Member governments.

21. Updates were provided on PUMA participation in OECD **horizontal work** on **regulatory reform**, and on **ageing populations**:

- Comprehensive reviews of regulatory reform including regulatory management systems are being launched in four Member countries: **Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands**, and the **United States**. The peer review process will involve the PUMA network on Regulatory Management and reform, and results will be reported to the PUMA Committee in October. Reviews of another 4-5 countries will follow in 1999 with the goal of ultimately reviewing all Member countries;
- The April OECD Ministerial meeting will be presented with a report on “**Maintaining Prosperity in an Ageing Society**.” In addition to policy recommendations, the analysis includes a chapter on “Achieving Reform,” which highlights issues of budget management in support of long-term fiscal health, developing a strategic framework, and implementing and sustaining reforms. A working paper by David Mathiasen on “The Capacity for Long-Term Decision-Making in Seven OECD Countries: the Case of Ageing Populations” supported the PUMA contribution.

22. A group of Asian and Latin American countries, previously designated as the “Dynamic Non-Member Economies” (DNME) will be invited to a PUMA-led workshop. The DNME programme is winding up, so that the workshop will now be considered as part of the “Emerging Market Economies Forum.” Officials responsible for public management improvement in OECD Member countries will be invited to participate in this discussion with officials from these economies. The original **date of 2-3 July has been changed to 10-11 December, 1998**. A second meeting, on regulatory reform issues, involving Asian countries will also be organised late in 1998.

23. The **Strategic Review and Reform** activity (*described in PUMA/RD(98)3*) is being launched with two “expert group” meetings on particular aspects of the problem, followed by a full-scale Symposium on the issue on 1-2 February, 1999. This is addressed to Agency Heads responsible for public management improvement and “Chief Reformers.”

24. Another important upcoming meeting will involve **the Human Resource Management network** on emerging HRM issues, scheduled on 25-26 June, 1998. Delegates were encouraged to ensure good participation.

25. **Derry Ormond** announced his plans to retire end October, 1998.

26. The next PUMA Committee meeting will take place **28-29 October, 1998**

ANNEX I

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REFORM IN AUSTRIA

1. **Emmerich Bachmayer**, Director-General of Central Personnel Co-ordination, Ministry of Finance, Austria, presented an overview of the recent public management reforms in **Austria**. After a large-scale “administrative management” project in the late 1980s, and a period of cost-cutting programmes from 1995 to 1996, the issue of administrative reform gained fresh impetus in 1997.

2. In an environment of scarce financial resources, modern management concepts and restructuring measures are increasingly perceived by public-sector administrators as a key to solving the problems that need to be addressed. Administrative reform has been taken up as an issue both by policy-makers and by the top-level managers in government administration.

3. With a large budget deficit in 1995, and requirements to reduce the deficit in order to join the European economic and monetary union, efforts to reduce the budget over the last two years have had to take priority over quality improvements and long term reforms. Austria reduced its programmes by about 20 billion schillings, resulting in significant cuts in public services. Last year, before launching the administrative reform programme, there was also a major discussion of pension reform for all pensions, but especially for civil servants. At the end of last year, Austria focused its full attention on a new approach to administrative reform.

Innovations in the Federal Administration (V.I.P.-Verwaltungsinnovationsprogramm)

4. On 3 December 1997, the Federal government (the Federal Chancellor and all the Federal Ministers) adopted a comprehensive administrative reform programme.

Aims

5. The aims outlined in the V.I.P. programme (*Verwaltungsinnovationsprogramm*) clearly demonstrate that the theoretical and practical debate at the international level on New Public Management in New Zealand, Effective Governance in Switzerland, or the new German Steering Model, have all influenced the definition of objectives in Austria.

6. The aims are:

- **To reorient the role of the state from a regulator to a service provider.** Government administration is becoming increasingly client oriented, though still following the law and required procedures, and ensuring that unpopular decisions and claims are enforced by sovereign power, if necessary. In this context, client orientation should not be interpreted as an end in itself, but in the sense that the services needed or required are performed in a way which perfectly satisfies the client's needs ("the state as a service provider"), for an open economy and society.
- **To achieve an annual productivity rise of 2-3 per cent in government programmes, ensuring high-quality performance with the given scarce resources.** This objective can be met, for instance, by encouraging people to move towards quality by e.g. participation in

contests, such as the international "4th Speyer Quality Contest 1998", in which public administrations from Germany, Switzerland and Austria are participating. Moreover, the development of performance indicators fosters competitive thinking and encourages comparative analysis at the national and also international levels.

- **To gradually introduce effective, outcome-oriented governance by “steering” (separating strategic management from operational tasks) through agreed objectives and targeted performance.** The implementation of “steering” models such as “performance agreement” or “contract management” allow leading policy-makers and government managers to concentrate on their **prime tasks** (setting of objectives, orientations and programmes, and controlling their realisation) and to leave the practical implementation to the operative administrative units.
- **To develop product catalogues.** This is very important: the **definition of products** (services) and **required standards** is a fundamental prerequisite for an efficient and effective steering of government administration; it keeps the administration working towards outcomes in their everyday work.
- **To bring about transparency of costs and results.** The introduction of cost and results accounting enhances cost awareness and can be used as a basis for effective budget controlling: from cost accounting and results accounting, the required data for governmental accounting can be easily generated.
- **To introduce phased decentralisation of resource accountability and structural reform of public-sector administration.** This is aimed at an increased decentralisation and a concurrent development of “controlling” tools. The decentralised units are endowed with management and decision making powers. This is to bring about changes in organisational **culture**, in which accountability by empowerment in combination with adequate performance incentives is characteristic. Corporatising state activities requires well trained auditors, targets and controlling instruments.
- **To introduce efficient human resource management,** in order to exercise empowered management in a professional manner, and ensure a flexible use of staff consistent with their qualifications.

Strategy

7. The V.I.P. strategy is based on a holistic approach, relies on the **involvement of as many staff** members as possible, covers all ministerial departments, and tries to counter unwanted developments at an early stage through pilot projects. The project is conceived as a joint effort undertaken by policy-makers and administrators.

Priority Areas

8. The programme of work focuses on three major priority areas:

- **Reforming the scope of tasks and processes:** the measures include the implementation of corporatisation projects on a priority basis, a reform of the scope of tasks performed in the

federal ministries (starting with the Federal Chancellery and the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs as pioneer departments), and the installation of exemplary government offices (in the district police) in public services and administration.

- **Human resource management:** the priorities in this area focus on the elaboration of a new “Vision for the Public Service”, which is to include state-of-the-art training for entry-level civil servants, and a restructuring of the salary system , as well as the development of a policy statement for public-sector service and of strategic objectives for each department as a basis of human resource planning, and to all for more mobility between the state and private sectors.
- **Use of instruments to modernise government administration:** The development of a system of performance indicators for the federal administration (for which a first result will be the preliminary version of the performance review in April 1998), the introduction of results-based review and supervision (“controlling”), and the increased use of electronic data processing in government administration are some of the items under this heading. "HELP.GV", for example, is a project in the Department of Central Personnel Co-ordination, Ministry of Finance, where citizens may access government administration via the Internet (<http://www.help.gv.at>).

9. The V.I.P. project was launched on 1 January 1998 and is to run until June 1999. Dr. Wolfgang Ruttendorfer, the Under-Secretary of State who is responsible for administrative reform, concluded the negotiations with all ministers on corporatisation projects, and on measures to implement the go-ahead given by the Council of Ministers to the V.I.P programme.

10. More emphasis will be put on involving senior public service managers - which should give the reform a more stable basis. In the last three months, there have been discussions with ministers to keep it running.

11. The main projects are:

- **Performance Review.** The preliminary version of the performance review was to be ready in April 1998. All Federal Ministries and the Federal Chancellery took part in the process of creating a performance indicator system. This preliminary version covers a great part of the Federal Administration: 77.5% of all civil servants and 50% of the budget. The next step is to extend the review to include the whole Federal Administration. Austria is very interested in international comparison and in exchanging experience in the International Benchmarking Network of the OECD. The performance review has been especially successful at the agency level.
- **Showcase Government.** One stop shops (for example in the district police) should be implemented, product catalogues and cost accounting systems should be developed, and decentralised budget responsibility should be piloted.
- **Help.gv.** The “Government Help” information technology project is the beginning of the one-stop shop for citizens (<http://www.help.gv.at>). The Internet combines agencies and their tasks together, to help citizens to communicate with the administrative bodies. It is similar to a one-stop shop, but does not alter the structure of the federal state. The “Government Help” system is structured according to subject matters which reflect the citizens’ interests. Information available so far covers areas such as marriage, birth, and divorce. The citizen is

given information on which forms have to be filled in and which documents have to be taken to which administrative body. In the next stage, it is planned that forms and fill-in help will be available on-line.

- **Core activities for central administration.** Core activities are defined for central administration, connected with cost accounting, alternatives are sought for those core activities which are very cost intensive.

Programme Management

12. An interministerial V.I.P. group will support a well co-ordinated approach and a mutual exchange of experiences. The group is made up of project co-ordinators from all ministries. As a first step, it will compile a programme manual with the help of external experts, and draft a programme structure plan.

13. Professional management of the projects should provide the best chances of success. Concomitant evaluation will support the project activities and enhance the findings derived from the V.I.P. project.

14. In any case, innovation-minded civil servants who are interested in modernising government administration have the opportunity to take an active part in these developments, and to prepare government administration for the next millennium.

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17ÈME SESSION/17TH SESSION
26-27 MARS 1998 / 26-27 MARCH 1998
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