Building Image of the Civil Service

57th Meeting of Directors General and Meeting of Directors General with TUNED

Warsaw
12-13th December 2011
Well-functioning public sector is necessary, but not sufficient for building trust in the public sector.

There is no evidence of a direct causal link between the performance of government, and citizens’ trust in government.

Negative opinions on public administration often coincide with positive evaluations of specific services.

Public perception usually refers to overall (often stereotypical) image of public administration.

Why PA image is important?
Why PA image is important?

- Strengthening trust capital is one of the best ways to increase public sector productivity, lower transaction cost, encourage politician to run key reforms.
- Restoring trust requires usually much more time, resources and efforts than planned and sustained efforts to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between public administrations and its publics.

If people perceived things as real they are real in their consequences.
Trust in the civil service and in politicians

Van de Walle S., Van Roosbroek S., Bouckaert G: 2005

Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union 2011
Perception of functioning of Public Administration I

- Majority believes public administration functions well
- However period of decline during political unrest (Fortuyn Murder)
National Quality Survey: General satisfaction levels by a service from 2003-2010

No major changes in the years in question (scale 4-10)
Employer Image Survey

- The perception of the public administration as an employer is very good based on resent studies. E.g. according to a survey made in April 2011 the Government (the State administration) is the most popular employer in Finland among the 106 employers studied in that survey.
  - The Government was also the most popular employer in 2010
The general framework: the image of the Italian public administration

Overall evaluation on the Italian public administration

- Some improvements in citizens perception on Italian public administration in the 2009-2011 period

In the last 3 years the general efficiency of public administration is...

- Worsened: 17.1%
- I don’t know: 0.1%
- Improved: 36.3%
- Nothing has changed: 45.9%

Source: FullResearch 2011, 1200 respondents, CATI methodology

- Only 36.3% of the respondents think that the general efficiency of Italian PA has improved in the last 3 years
Czech Republic

Public opinion on public servants

- 29%: Their work is absolutely useless
- 22%: They need to improve a lot
- 11%: As everywhere, there are good and bad employees
- 8%: Their work improved recently
- 2%: They are mostly experts in their field
- 28%: I have no opinion

http://is.muni.cz/th/68112/ef_m/?lang=en&id=185640
Poland
In 2004, 33% of Poles declared their trust in the civil service, in 2006 - 38%
Image of the civil servants

2006, 2009

Civil servants are one of the worst evaluated professional categories in Poland.

21% of Poles positively evaluated professional care and diligence of local council officials.

14% of Poles positively evaluated professional care and diligence of high state officials.

7% of Poles positively evaluated professional care and diligence of members of parliament.

71% of Poles perceived high ranked civil servants as persons obtaining unlawful benefits related with their job.

CBOS 2006, 2009
In 2011, Department of the Civil Service launched qualitative and quantitative research on image of the civil service.

– Focus Group Interviews.
– In-Depth Interviews with key stakeholders of the civil service.
– Content analysis of media coverage.
– Discourse analysis.
– Survey on a representative sample of Polish society.
Focus Group Interviews

12 group interviews
84 persons
age 20-60 years
Big and medium size cities
(Warszawa, Puławy, Poznań, Bielsko Biała, Białymstok, Reda)
Conducted July/August 2011
Rational level
• Very general knowledge
• Only experts and specialists well informed
• No clear distinction between:
  – Government and self-government administration
  – Public administration and politics
Public administration – knowledge

**Sources of knowledge:**

- Individual experiences (tax declarations, issuing of documents)
- Media coverage (usually negative)
Stereotypes and Direct Experience

- Stereotypes confronted with experience and changing reality

**GENERAL STEREOTYPE**
- overstuffed
- waste of time, red tape
- arrogant, not competent
- hermetic environment
- corruption
- relations with politics

**LIMITED INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE**
- friendly and competent service
- fast and easy access (phone calls, SMS, Internet)
- goodwill and assistance
- professionalism, knowledge

Procedures burdensome but necessary; provide sense of stability

Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union 2011
Planning a visit to the office – negative emotions

TIME

GATHERING INFORMATION, PLANNING

EMOTIONS

ANXIETY, FLUSTER, NERVOUSNESS resulted from lack of knowledge on procedures and rights

FEARS (resulted from stereotypes):

TIME + QUEUES + PROCEDURES = FRUSTRATION
At the office – positive emotions

REALITY – often pleasantly surprised, relief; sometimes – confirmation of anxiety

SATISFACTION, RELIEF, feeling of SUCCESS

Do not feel in control of a situation due to lack of standards and procedures
Civil servants – knowledge

• First associations – stereotypes:
  – Not absorbing and demanding work, usually low remuneration

• Further reflections:
  – Stressful work, requires professional knowledge and competencies
Civil servants – perception and emotions

- **Top level**
  - Managing and representing
  - Delegating majority of tasks
  - Supervising others, responsible for the office

- **advantages:** remuneration, prestige, unlimited working time

- **disadvantages:** responsibility
Civil servants – perception and emotions

- **Mid-level**
  - Managerial and specialist tasks

- **Frontline**
  - Service delivery, direct contact with clients

- **advantages:** working time limit, stability of employment, limited responsibility

- **disadvantages:** low remunerations, routine, boredom
Civil servants – perception and emotions

Director of Department, Director of Tax Office
permanence, power, prestige, authority, wisdom -
inaccessibility, distance

thorns – defence mechanism, can also prick
Civil servants – perception and emotions

Manager (Tax Office) / Inspector of Building Control

reliability, inflexibility, representation - resistance, barrier, thread, distrust

Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union 2011
Civil servants – perception and emotions

Frontline officer
short distance, usefulness -
reluctance, burdensome

Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union 2011
National survey

Representative sample
N=1003
Conducted in October 2011
Were you satisfied with the service during your last visit to the office?

- Very unsatisfied: 7.7%
- Rather unsatisfied: 10.9%
- Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied: 10.6%
- Rather satisfied: 42.6%
- Very satisfied: 28.2%

71% of Poles were satisfied with the way they were served during their last visit to the office.

N=317
Opinions on civil servants met during visit to the office

- Competent: 7% No, 9% Neither no or yes, 83% Yes
- Friendly and helpful: 11% No, 8% Neither no or yes, 81% Yes
- Served in professional and diligent way: 11% No, 8% Neither no or yes, 81% Yes
- Efficiently conducted all formalities: 14% No, 8% Neither no or yes, 78% Yes, 1% Difficult to say
- Were busy with dealing their private or work issues: 75% No, 4% Neither no or yes, 17% Yes, 4% Difficult to say
- Suggested you to give them a present or a bribe in order to deal the issue or speed up the procedure: 95% No, 1% Neither no or yes, 3% Yes, 1% Difficult to say

Majority of Poles were satisfied with the way they were served during their last visit to the office.
### General opinions on civil servants’ performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Definitely no</th>
<th>Rather no</th>
<th>Neither no or yes</th>
<th>Rather yes</th>
<th>Definitely yes</th>
<th>Difficult to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly to the clients</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolong to deal with clients’ issues, purposely delay decisions</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work diligently and thoroughly</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on solving clients’ problem not on their own comfort at work</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show their commitment, devote their attention to the clients</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union 2011*
Trust in state administration and in self-government administration offices

AVERAGE (1-5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very little</th>
<th>rather little</th>
<th>neither little nor big</th>
<th>rather big</th>
<th>very big</th>
<th>difficult to say</th>
<th>N=1003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State administration</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-government administration</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.75</td>
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</table>

Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union 2011
General evaluation of work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Bad</th>
<th>Rather Bad</th>
<th>Neither Bad or Good</th>
<th>Rather Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Difficult to Say</th>
<th>Average (1-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Administration Offices</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Government Administration Offices</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=1003
Opinions on the number of employees in the state administration

64% of Poles think that the state administration is overstaffed.
Opinions on the remunerations in the state administration

61% of Poles think that the state administration is overpaid
Has situation in state government offices changed in last 5 years?

- Rather improved: 21.9%
- Neither improved nor worsened: 46.5%
- Rather worsened: 8.9%
- Difficult to say: 17.6%
- Improved a lot: 3.5%
- Worsened a lot: 1.7%

N=1003
Is state government administration an attractive workplace for young people?

- Attractive: 19.5%
- Rather attractive: 41.7%
- Neither not attractive nor attractive: 19.1%
- Rather not attractive: 8.7%
- Not attractive: 2.9%
- Difficult to say: 8.1%

N=1003
Would you advise your friend to take a job in state administration office?

- Definitely yes: 25.4%
- Rather yes: 23.2%
- Neither no nor yes: 27.0%
- Rather no: 8.9%
- Definitely no: 3.0%
- Difficult to say: 12.5%
In-depth interviews with key stakeholders of the civil service

Top and mid-level civil servants,

Scholars, researchers from universities,

Trainers, lecturers conducting courses for civil servants,

Consultants,

Journalists,

NGO representatives,

Members of political cabinets

Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union 2011

N=30
Civil service as a workplace

Advantages

• Stability and Safety
  – Permanent job,
  – Protection from labour market fluctuations

• Additional Benefits
  – Access to persons and information
  – Opportunity to settle own individual matters
  – Fringe benefits

Disadvantages

• Relatively low remuneration
• Frustration
  – Routine, boring tasks
  – Continuous monitoring of changing legal regulations
  – Difficult clients
  – High level of stress
  – Responsibility
### Advantages

- **Professional Development**
  - Trainings
  - Promotion opportunities
  - Good work conditions (facilities, working time)
  - Contact with other people

- **Social Prestige**
  - Social recognition
  - Power

### Disadvantages

- **Frustration**
  - Helplessness (bureaucratic procedures, inconsistent regulations)
  - Political influence on career
  - Barriers in promotion

- **Lack of Social Recognition**
  (rarely indicated)
Career in the Civil Service - expectations

- **Prestige** – resulted not only from actual power but also from sense of belonging to professional elite.

- **Stabilisation and Safety** – profession protected from labour market turbulences (job stability, stable income, predictable career path).
Conclusions

Image of public administration

– Determined by a complex set of social, cultural, organizational and economic factors.

– Shaped both by individual, everyday experience, cultural patterns and external clichés and stereotypes.

– Difficult to modify but changing in a long term perspective.
Conclusions

Image of public administration – a multidimensional picture:

– Trust in public administration based on professionalisation and integrity – citizen perspective.

– Quality of public services – customers perspective.

– Attractiveness of public administration as a workplace - employees perspective.
Impact of economic crises – possible public reactions towards public administration:

– More state, more market regulations and social control.

– Protect standards of living. Preserving public services.

Thank you for your attention

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Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union 2011