

Comparative research on challenges
for public sector human resource development in
economic downturn

The case of Republic of Serbia

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Cost-cutting and down-sizing measures

Plan for economic stabilization of Republic of Serbia prescribes saving in public sector, that is to be performed in the following manner:

- 1) Through introduction of new taxes and increasing of the existing ones,
- 2) Through decreasing of expenditures,
- 3) Through introduction of different fees,
- 4) Through decreasing of the costs of salaries.

Transformation of civil service

Regarding the issue of the civil service transformation in Republic of Serbia, the following has been achieved:

- 1) Every civil servant who is to become unemployed will be entitled to a dismissal wage,
- 2) The Government adopted Package of social measures, which prescribes the following:
 - linking of the working drawing,
 - providing of the health insurance,
 - extension of duration of the paid leave,
 - monetary aid and other benefits to the most vulnerable categories.

Signals of strengthening/weakening the politicization

- In the Republic of Serbia, significant level of professionalization of the public administration has been achieved;
- That practically means that, except the persons who are on the top positions in the concrete institution (heads of the institution/bodies), other persons on the other top management positions are experts in the respective area

Evolution of performance management practice

- Law on determination of the maximal number of the employees in the republic administration has been adopted
- This Law prescribes the following:
 - 1) Number of the employees is determined by the Act on systematization;
 - 2) Heads of the public administration bodies are obliged to perform verification of the work performance of the employees (evaluation);
 - 3) Employee who is graded with the “not satisfactory” mark ceases to be a civil servant and its employment ceases;
 - 4) Civil servant who stays undisposed (without its working position) will be provided with the dismissal wage.

Changes in HRM policy making

- Human Resources Management Service takes care of conducting the “General program of professional specialization of the civil servants” within the public administration reform
- According to the Law on civil servants, the central human resources evidence is formed, and it contains data related to the human resources/staff in the public administration
- Besides the mentioned evidence, important competencies of the HRM Service are also: conducting of process of staff selection, and taking care on evidence of the internal labor market

Role of social partners

- With respect to the role of social partners in the Republic of Serbia, it should be noted that syndicates are generally involved in providing initiatives for the adoption of laws and bylaws within the area of human resources

Does crisis drive innovation in HRM?

- According to our best knowledge, so far, the crisis has not lead to any innovative or beneficial developments in the field of public sector HRM
- We suppose that only at the moment when crisis is to be overcome, its full impact and consequences could be noticed and realized

The main challenges for the HRM policy planner during the economy downturn

- At this moment, the main challenge is to see whether the Plan for economic stabilization of Republic of Serbia will be properly implemented and will it give expected results
- Further, one of the challenges will be the question whether the Law on determination of the maximal number of the employees in the republic administration will achieve expected results
- Finally, the main challenge that we are facing now is the question whether all the measures that are performed in the process of public administration reform will give results regarding achievement of more efficient work performance of the employees in the public administration