



070408/apm

“Supporting the reform process in local and regional government: Joint evaluation of the experience in different forms of service provision”

Joint CEMR/EPSU project

1. Background of the project

Local and regional authorities across Europe are responsible for the delivery of a wide range of services to the citizens, which include: public passenger transport, public utility services (water supply and waste water treatment, waste management), health and social services (health care, childcare, care of elderly people), public employment services, education and vocational training, cultural services, etc.

Local and regional government have to ensure that these services are provided to citizens and the principle of self-government allows them to choose the appropriate form of delivery, among a set of available options, which include:

- self-provision,
- inter-communal cooperation,
- public-private partnerships,
- outsourcing (by contract with a third, private party),
- in-sourcing
- privatisation (by sale of the property or the service to a private company).

The decision to change the form of delivery of a service can be motivated by various considerations and it can have substantial consequences on the organisation of work and the management of employees at municipal or regional level.

However, very little comparative information is available at European level on positive labour management practices to ensure a successful transition from one given form of service delivery to another. The lack of identified good practices in this area unables individual local and regional authorities and their employees to benefit from both positive and negative experience gained in other parts of Europe when dealing with complex issues such as: drafting tender specifications for the sub-contracting or a service or the setting-up of partnerships with public or private bodies for the shared provision of a service.

For these reasons, CEMR and EPSU affiliates have identified the evaluation of the experience gained to date in different forms of service provision as an important theme for joint action in the framework of their European sectoral social dialogue Committee, and they have expressly included the undertaking of a joint project on this topic in their work programme adopted for the years 2006-2007.

2. Aims and expected outcome of the project

The project aims to collect good practices on the joint management by the social partners of the consequences of changes in the form of service provision on employment and the organisation of work in local and regional government.



The project will more specifically seek to:

- Understand better the motivations for change, including the role played by EU competition and internal market rules and considerations relating to the quality of public services,
- Gather information on the process of change and on its impact on the composition, skills and working conditions of employees in the local and regional public sector;
- Identify cases of positive and negative practices in the adaptation of both employees and employers to the requirements of a changed form of service delivery;
- Identify those core services which are typically provided in-house by local and regional authorities and those that are most subject to changes in their delivery structure,
- Support social dialogue at sectoral level by highlighting cases of successfully managed transition to a different form of service delivery, which involved trade union representatives,
- Deepen the exchange of experience between CEMR and EPSU members across Europe.

The expected outcome of the project will be a comparative study (around 50 pages, including annexes) evaluating the experience gained to date in moving from one form of service delivery to another and the impact of such changes on the management of employees in our sector. Considering that this would constitute the first pan-European study ever produced on this topic of core importance to local and regional authorities and their employees, the final research would be published in three languages in 800 copies in total (in English, French and German), and widely disseminated among CEMR and EPSU national member associations and other interested circles.

Based on the findings on this study, EPSU and CEMR would furthermore consider adopting conclusions or recommendations on anticipating and managing the consequences of structural reforms in service provision on the organisation of work at municipal or regional level.

3. Steps of the project

The research study is undertaken in two stages:

- ✓ An initial investigation of the key trends and issues (July – December 2007): this first stage of the research was presented at the social dialogue workshop on 18 September 2007 and a second discussion was held at the meeting on 13 December 2007;
- ✓ The production of around ten detailed case studies (January 2007 – May 2008). It is expected that the case studies will be drawn from the following 10 countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Sweden and United Kingdom.

At the EU social dialogue committee meeting held in December 2007 the research team presented a first report¹ on the trends and drivers for change in service delivery in the selected countries² and presented the selection criteria for the case studies.

¹ An updated version of the report is available at the CEMR secretariat

² Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Sweden and the UK



Those should cover the following kinds of changes in services delivery:

- Contracting-out of services to the private or voluntary sector
- Externalisation of services – more significant hiving off of services to the private or voluntary sector
- Transfer of services to a newly created municipally-owned company or a company jointly owned by the municipality and the private sector
- Transfer of services to a co-operative organisation, involving former employees of the municipality
- Private finance initiative – long-term capital project involving transfer of services
- Provision of services through co-operation with other municipalities
- Decentralisation (including public-public cooperation)
- Internal strengthening (change within the organisation aimed to improve service delivery and efficiency)

4. Conference and final report

On 3rd June 2008, there will be a conference in Brussels, in the premises of the Committee of the Regions, where the results of the research will be presented.

The final research report will be completed after the conference to allow participants at the final event to feed into the report. A final version of the study will be available by the beginning of July 2008.

Contact persons at CEMR:

Cristina Sosa

Policy officer social policy and employment

Cristina.Sosa@ccre-cemr.org

Tel. +32 2 500 05 36

Languages spoken: English, French, Spanish

Angelika Poth-Mögele

Director of Policy

Angelika Poth-Mögele@ccre-cemr.org

Tel. +32 2 500 05 40

Languages: English, French, German

* * * * *

