

Focus

Public Management Gazette Number Seven

This newsletter is prepared by the Public Management Service (PUMA) with the guidance of the Public Management Committee of the OECD. It appears quarterly: March, June, September, December.

Creating an effective ethics infrastructure

A symposium organised by PUMA on 3-4 November provided a forum for exchanging views and experiences on how best to promote ethical standards and prevent corruption in the public sector. The discussions shed light on common problems and practical solutions.

Compliance versus integrity

There are two general approaches to ethical issues. One focuses on strict rules to be followed, sanctions for wrongdoing, and control systems to ensure that rules are respected. The other is an integrity-based approach promoting ethical behaviour and providing incentives for good conduct. To be effective, an ethics framework must incorporate both of these elements and use them in a complementary and balanced way. Regulation is essential, but not sufficient.

Cultural diversity

There is no general blueprint for creating an ethics framework. Countries have their own cultural, administrative and political traditions. An effective ethics infrastructure should take into account these national elements, but it should also be the result of

systematic thinking and consideration of a few key questions.

Impact of reforms

Public management reforms undertaken in most OECD Member countries are changing traditional behaviour in the public sector. One result of these changes is the increased interaction of the public sector with the private sector. This development has reinforced the need to find effective ways to promote the traditional public service values of accountability, political neutrality, equity and fairness.

Standards and values

It is especially important that issues of ethics and standards of behaviour are given a high priority in a modern public service. There is a need to integrate clear ethical principles into

Ethics checklist

PUMA presented a draft checklist at the symposium. Participants welcomed it as a useful instrument for developing an ethics system. It is under review now by the Public Management Committee. Once endorsed, it will serve as a point of reference for countries to build their own systems. It is not proposed as a model to be followed, but as a thinking tool for reviewing ethics systems and for balancing the various elements to arrive at a consistent and effective framework suiting national circumstances. Once approved, the final checklist will be distributed to readers as a supplement to a future issue of *Focus*.

the managerial and accountability structures of organisations to help those who are not by background familiar with public service values.

Citizens have a role to play

The public has the right to know how public institutions apply the power and resources entrusted to them. The conduct of officials is therefore subject to scrutiny. In this sense active transparency and access to public information are essential to democratic governance, but citizens need to be further empowered to play a role in public affairs.

Monitoring progress

Ethical issues cannot be handled with one-off interventions. Continuing efforts and systematic approaches are needed. Sharing ideas and experiences among officials of various countries can provide valuable input to national work, and monitoring progress on the development of ethical frameworks can be part of this learning process.

For more information on the symposium, including executive summaries of all documents, consult the "Ethics Symposium Folder" on the PUMA Web site: <http://www.oecd.org/puma/gvrnance/ethics/symposium>. ■

The symposium was attended by around 120 participants, including delegates from 35 countries and representatives from international organisations (IMF, UN, European Union, Council of Europe, UNCTAD/WTO, World Customs Organisation). The Symposium was opened by D. Johnston, Secretary-General of the OECD, followed by the keynote speech by Lord Nolan, Chairman of the United Kingdom Committee on Standards in Public Life. The sessions in the symposium were chaired by J. Soderman, Ombudsman of the European Union; C-H. Ro, Chairman of the Presidential Commission for Administrative Reform, Korea; and S.D. Potts, Director, US Office of Government Ethics.

Public management reform in Denmark

This month we cover the main trends of reform in Denmark. The text below summarises selected points of the presentation made at the October meeting of the PUMA Committee by Adam Wolf, Head of the Department of Public Management and Personnel Policies, Ministry of Finance, Denmark.

Reform on the move

The major reform achievements of the 1970s concerned local governments, which were regrouped and reduced in number (municipalities from 1 400 to 275, counties from 25 to 14). Some key responsibilities (such as schools and hospitals) were shifted to them. In addition, central government functions were rationalised.

Crisis shaped the agenda

A deep economic crisis was the driving force behind a new wave of reforms in the 1980s. Budgetary reform shifted responsibilities from ministries to agencies. Priority was given to improving the interface with citizens. Personnel policies were modernised, and some work was conducted to simplify regulations. More substantive regulatory reform came later in the context of the European Union.

Current themes

The climate is different now: there is sound economic growth, including some expansion in the public sector. Nevertheless, reform work continues building on previous initiatives. Performance contracts are being introduced to ensure well-defined results. The

performance pay concept is being considered. Concern for quality is on the agenda.

Performance contracts

Two- to three-year contracts are signed between ministries and agencies. One-year individual contracts are also made with the heads of agencies. Some agencies have begun to develop internal contracts to define the relationship between the central entity and its units or regional offices. These are not legally binding, and do not include formal sanctions, but performance pay will introduce an indirect sanction. However, performance pay is a new initiative. Its integration with the contracts system is seen as a real challenge. Agencies must publish annual reports that show the content of contracts and yearly results and that are available to the public.

What are the results?

The first results indicate that agencies were able to accomplish the targets established in performance contracts. Contracts improved dialogue between agencies and ministries. They also increased the provision of information to the public and made govern-

Major trends in public sector development

1970s

- Reform of the structure and tasks of municipalities
- Decentralisation
- Rationalisation and planning

1980s

- Budgetary reform
- Service management
- Modernisation & regulatory reform

1990s

- Results and contracts

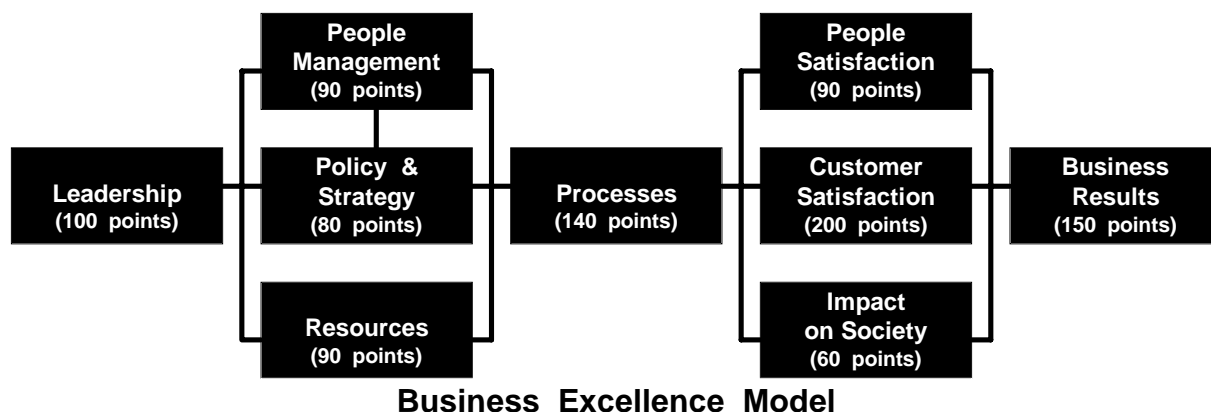
ment actions more transparent.

Quality awards

The first quality awards were recently presented. The objectives were to set examples by highlighting best performance, to create a legitimate framework for rewarding excellence, and to increase awareness for quality. This initiative is backed by the concept of the European Foundation for Quality Management's "business excellence model". Evaluation is carried out by an independent body. The best public units score 650 points in this 1000-point system, while European private enterprises tend to score up to 700-800 points.

Pilot projects

More substantive changes are being introduced in the regulatory field. Two pilot projects review administrative burdens placed on individual citizens (families with young children, the elderly) and on enterprises (see



●Barometer of satisfaction

Belgium is working on measuring the satisfaction of public service users. *Le Bureau Conseil ABC* (ABC Consultancy Bureau) of the Ministry for the Civil Service conducts a public opinion poll. Citizens are asked which "products" they use and how they evaluate them (accessibility, timeliness, quality, effectiveness, rapidity, etc.). Environmental factors that have an impact on service quality but that are beyond the units' control are also evaluated. A measurement system will be made available to all units and used systematically once a year. Its results will shape the work on improving service quality.

●Managing quality

There is a move in the **German** federal administration towards "service orientation". Quality management plays a key role in this change, and is being introduced in some units on an experimental basis. The process takes place in various stages. First, the concept is presented, followed by information meetings. Staff interviews are used to analyse the situation in each unit. This leads to the development of a quality management system. The findings of this experiment are being used to develop guidelines that will be made available to all government units.

●Quality customer service

In May 1997 the **Irish** government launched a "quality customer service initiative" and published a set of principles to govern quality service delivery. Units are asked to develop and announce their standards of service and the implementation plan that would ensure targets are achieved over the next two years.

●Taxpayers' ombudsman

Is the tax administration functioning in a legal and user-friendly way? This is what the taxpayers' ombudsman will ensure in **Portugal**. Created by the Ministry of Finance, the post has wide powers to deal with citizens' complaints related to tax collection and assessment. One important goal is to encourage and guide the administration in simplifying procedures and speeding up the examination of requests.

●Service quality in public hospitals

The University of Dijon (**France**) launched a quality project in its hospital. The aim was to better inform patients on procedures, costs, risks, pain, possible impact of interventions, etc. People with different functions formed a project team. First, patients were interviewed on the quality of information they received. Then, hospital staff were asked to comment on the information to be provided to patients. Using the results of these surveys, staff discussed what could be done, and introduced new initiatives. This project improved transparency and accountability.

•REPORTS FROM CAPITALS •

●Report from Budapest

Reform work continues:

- To improve responsiveness to citizens, the Administrative Procedures Act was amended. It gives new powers to units to intervene when a unit reporting to them fails to effectively handle a procedure, and to decide on the case or ask another unit to handle it.
- In July 1997, a new system of support and co-ordination became operational to assist regional units.
- The one-stop-shop concept is being tested in a county. It provides administrative information to citizens, who can also obtain information of a commercial nature.
- Work is also under way to improve service quality.

●Report from Tokyo

Reform efforts are under way. The reform package includes changes in the administration, fiscal structure, social security, economic structure, financial system and education. Recent reform work includes:

- reorganising ministries and agencies;
- strengthening the role of the cabinet;
- rationalising public corporations;
- introducing a new public service personnel system;
- reducing the burden of procedures;
- under the administrative inspection programme, rationalising public enterprises and corporations;
- ensuring that decentralisation functions effectively.

*The complete texts provided by countries, on which these summaries are based, appear in **Focus On-Line** on PUMA's Web site: <http://www.oecd.org/puma/focus>. There, check out the **Focus Hot File**, updated monthly. If the item you are looking for is not there, you will find it in **Focus Compendium**. For further information on initiatives reported, consult the supplement for contact names and addresses in countries.*

Strategies for improving regulatory quality

	Australia	Austria	Canada	Finland	Germany	Iceland	Japan	Mexico	Netherlands	New Zealand	Norway	Portugal	Sweden	Switzerland	U.K.	U.S.A.
Establishing explicit Reg.Ref. policy	■		■		■		■		■				■	■		■
Removing anti-competitive regulations		■		■			■		■			■	■			■
Establishing quality standards			■		■				■			■				■
Developing registry or codification		■				■			■			■				■
Establishing permanent Reg.Ref.units	■		■						■				■			■
Establishing <i>ad hoc</i> commissions	■			■		■	■		■			■			■	
Administrative/Reg. procedure law			■						■			■				■
Reg. impact analysis programme	■	■							■			■				■
One-time review of existing regulations			■						■			■			■	
Systematic review of existing Reg.			■						■			■				■
Review of new Reg. proposals	■		■						■			■			■	
Harmonisation and mutual recognition	■	■		■	■				■			■		■		■
Use of alternatives to regulation			■						■			■				■
Regulatory planning processes			■						■			■				■
Public consultation programmes	■		■						■			■				■
Accountability at high levels for Reg.Ref.	■		■						■			■				■
Building reform skills in Reg.bodies			■						■			■				■

Legend

Reg. = regulation / regulatory

Reg.Ref. = Regulatory reform

■ Implemented or expanded to some extent

■ Implemented comprehensively or to a large extent

Experience in OECD countries shows that governments face three basic tasks in reforming their regulatory systems, which parallel the three stages of regulatory reform (deregulation, regulatory quality improvement and regulatory management):

They must establish regulatory management capacities for promoting reform, initiating change, and co-ordinating cross-cutting issues. In the longer term,

The table on this page is from The OECD Report on Regulatory Reform published in October 1997. The first volume of this two-volume publication includes sectoral studies; the second covers thematic studies.

The OECD Report on Regulatory Reform : Synthesis is a separate document describing the conclusions of this work. These publications are on sale at OECD sales points.

the regulatory management units will be responsible for continuing adaptation and improvement of regulatory systems as external conditions change, information becomes available, new problems arise. Governments need a capacity for diagnosis, to identify problems and opportunities for improvement more quickly.

They must reform the processes for developing new regulations to ensure that regulation is used only when necessary and that the continuing stream of needed regulations meets high quality standards. They must upgrade the quality of the enormous inventories of rules and formalities that have survived without serious examination for years or even for decades. Deregulation will be required in some areas.

This does not suggest that there are universal administrative structures for regulatory quality. The capacities to produce good rules can take many organisational forms. The table above presents an overview of how several OECD Member countries used 17 of the most common strategies from 1980 to 1997. ■

●Bottom-up review of regulations

Regulation reviews conducted by central government bodies do not always lead to substantive changes for users. This is why the **Danish** Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Business and Industry have jointly initiated "bottom-up" reviews based on the experiences of citizens and enterprises. In order to develop an appropriate methodology, ministries have launched pilot projects and are studying administrative burdens placed on the elderly, on families with young children and on businesses in connection with control and compliance procedures.

●Easing the burden of regulation

In **Australia**, the Small Business Deregulation Task Force made recommendations for easing the regulatory burden on businesses, and the government responded with a series of initiatives. Two important elements of this response are:

- the requirement to prepare regulatory impact statements for regulatory changes affecting business; and
- the requirement to develop customer service charters by all government bodies.

●Promoting deregulation

In **Japan**, the Deregulation Action Plan identified 2 823 measures covering 12 areas of economic and social life. In the economic field, the aim is to make regulations as rare as possible. In the social domain, it is to maintain only the minimum amount of regulations required to serve legitimate policy objectives. In administrative matters the aim is to move from an *ex ante* approach to an *ex post* system.

●Reducing regulatory burdens

In **Korea**, a new law will become effective in December 1997. It aims to remove unnecessary administrative regulations proven to be an obstacle to fair competition, and encourage the freedom and creativity of economic activity in the private sector. The new law introduces regulatory impact analysis, and creates a presidential committee on regulatory reform.

●Less bureaucracy

How can one remove bureaucratic burdens from building and investment legislation? This is the question asked in the **Czech Republic** by the Commission for Removing Bureaucratic Burdens, established a year ago by the Prime Minister. The Commission recently evaluated its mandate and work, and decided to concentrate on these two sectors.

●Public servants and economic activity

The **Polish** Parliament has restricted economic activity by public officials. A new law bans them from holding stocks or shares in private companies and obliges them to declare their financial assets, property and business capital.

●Making the best use of "senior" staff

In **Finland**, persons who are over 45 or have over 20 years of experience are considered "seniors". By the turn of the century, around 50 per cent of staff will be in this category. Within the next 15 years, 40 per cent of today's employees will retire, taking with them valuable qualities such as loyalty, morale, reliability and care for cultural traditions of organisations. The Ministry of Finance has developed "Policy Guidelines for Senior Staff" to encourage and help government bodies devise policy programmes for seniors. The input and potential of seniors are vital for an organisation's cultural tradition.

●Chief executive remuneration

Chief executives, who play a key role in **New Zealand**, are the leaders with whom ministers contract to achieve both the normal business of government and strategic change. The remuneration policy affecting them was recently changed to increase flexibility and responsiveness, to provide greater incentive and reward for performance, and to ensure that performance is properly aligned with the government's strategic priorities. Further information is available in *Focus On-Line*.

●Readjustment and personnel policies

The **Norwegian** Ministry of National Planning and Co-ordination has revised its guidelines for personnel policies within the context of administrative readjustment. It aims to ensure that the readjustment process addresses both the administration's demand for efficiency and the employees' need for security (i.e. avoiding redundancies as much as possible).

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●Looking at the future

The **New Zealand** State Services Commission organised a seminar on "Future Issues in Public Management" in response to a suggestion made by Prof. Allen Schick. In a recent study (see *Focus* No. 4), Prof. Schick said that reform processes needed to be refreshed. Five issues emerged from discussions at the seminar:

- consolidation – embedding the first generation of changes in all units;
- innovation – the emergence of a second generation of reform issues (governance, strategic management, service quality, etc.);
- achievement – meeting expectations that the public sector will deliver results in line with strategic priorities;
- connection – linking each part of the public management system to the much larger national enterprise;
- vigilance – not letting reform become "business as usual".

●Decentralisation of government

An important power shift is occurring in the **United Kingdom**, but, instead of a uniform model, a variety of schemes are envisaged. In Scotland a parliament and in Wales an assembly will be established. In England, Regional Development Agencies are planned. This may lead to the creation of elected regional governments. London may acquire a strategic authority and a mayor, both directly elected. This will be the subject of a referendum in May 1998.

The Focus Hot File (<http://www.oecd.org/puma/focus/hot.htm>) is published on the second Monday of each month. Upcoming issues will be available on: January 12, February 9 and March 9, 1998. Items from previous issues are stored in the **Focus Compendium** for 18 months.

●Recruiting managers

In **Portugal**, the recruitment of directors general and their deputies is left to the discretion of the government. However, division heads and service directors are now subject to a competitive selection process. Posts are announced and a selection board conducts interviews. A committee monitors the process.

●Training in supranational affairs

The **Czech Republic** launched a series of training programmes in co-operation with the European Union. This is mainly related to the start of negotiations for EU accession. Most of the, programmes are backed by the EU and are run in collaboration with training institutions in Europe.

●Public management research

In **Ireland**, a long-standing committee on administrative research was revamped through extended membership and became the Committee for Public Management Research. It identifies and commissions research on issues that arise from the government's programme of change. In October, it launched discussion papers on expenditure programme reviews, the use of rewards in the civil service, team working and performance management.

●Electronic transfers

In the **United States**, two new programmes are replacing paper processing. Under EBT (electronic benefits transfer) the federal government and the states teamed up to deliver benefits electronically through a single-card system, instead of issuing checks, vouchers and coupons. This provides the elderly and other needy people with a safer way to access benefits. It also cuts processing costs. Savings are estimated at around \$424 million.

Under EFT (electronic funds transfer), around 50 per cent of federal payments are made through electronic means, replacing cheques and cash payments. By 1999, all payments (except tax refunds) will be made electronically. It is calculated that savings will reach \$500 million over five years following full implementation of the scheme.

●For greater transparency

In **Portugal**, new databases will be offered to the general public, covering information on administrative decisions made by public bodies at all levels. Citizens will be able to consult them through electronic means and learn who received a specific public contract, subsidy, grant, incentive, fiscal benefit, tourism or shopping centre licence, or a flat in social housing programmes.

●Accrual approach replaces cash system

During the past four years, **Iceland** has introduced important changes to its accounting and budgeting systems. This was prompted by the shift towards performance monitoring. One main change is to present the budget on an accrual basis instead of only on a cash basis. A detailed report on this reform is in *Focus On-Line*.

●"Central Government in Transformation"

Changes in the **Swedish** administration have accelerated recently. Parliament therefore asked the Agency for Administrative Development to keep it informed of developments annually. This year's report, *Central Government in Transformation*, covers various subjects including staff composition, education, salaries, productivity trends, recent changes in structures and management policies, an international survey on public management trends, the impact of European Union membership, and the use of information technology.

Declaration by the Federal Government delivered by Federal Chancellor Victor Klima to the Nationalrat, Vienna, January 29, 1997

(45 pages)

"Austria faces major challenges." In his presentation of the new government, Federal Chancellor Klima named some of these challenges and outlined the principal thrust of the government's work. In the field of public administration, the civil service portfolio has been reallocated, and a State Secretary has been seconded to the Ministry of Finance to deal with the issues raised by the transformation of the public administration. Available from:

Federal Press Service,
Federal Chancellery
Ballhausplatz 2
A-1014 Vienna
Electronic order form available on the Web at: <http://www.austria.gv.at/e/service/publikationen.htm#Pol>

For recent PUMA publications, see <http://www.oecd.org/puma/pubs/index.htm>

Report of the Special Parliamentary Committee for the Future

Finland (75 pages, ISBN 951-53-1378-3, May 1997)

The Parliament of **Finland** has asked the government to submit a report on the future once each parliamentary term. Such a report defines a perception of the country's future and of the measures that will be needed over a timespan of 5-15 years. In October 1996, the government submitted the report "Part I: Finland and the Future of Europe". Parliament then appointed a committee to deliberate on the government's report. The deliberations covered success factors (such as globalisation, information and technology, the human aspect in innovation, and governance), European values and the European model of society, the economy, and science and technology. After deliberation in the full session of Parliament of the committee's report as issued in May 1997 and any further amendments, it will become a resolution of Parliament binding on the government. Available on the Web at <http://www.eduskunta.fi/fakta/vk/tuv/fcrep1.htm> and from:

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Annual Report: National Public Service, March 1996-March 1997

Ministry for the Civil Service, Reform of State Structures and Decentralisation, France
(414 pages, ISBN 2-11-003849-7)

This annual report describes various actions undertaken or promoted by the Minister for the Civil Service from March 1996 to March 1997. A statistical annex contains the most recent information on national civil servants, presented by theme: numbers, working time, training, pay, pensions, industrial relations, social policy, etc. Bibliographical references are also included. Available only in French from:

La Documentation française
29, quai Voltaire
F-75344 Paris Cedex 07
Telefax:+33-1-40.15.72.30

Tercer Informe de Gobierno, Poder Ejecutivo Federal, Mexico, Septiembre 1997

(307 pages, plus annex of 590 pages, ISBN 968-820-677-6)

This third Government report to the Mexican Congress gives a description of activities undertaken by the federal public administration between September 1996 and August 1997, according to the National Plan for Development 1995-2000. Themes covered include sovereignty, the rule of law, democratic development, social development and economic growth. Statistical tables are included. A specific chapter is devoted to government and public management reform. Available only in Spanish from:

Talleres de la Coordinación de Apoyo Gráfico
de la Presidencia de la República
México D.F.

Jornadas sobre Ética Pública, Madrid, 15 y 16 abril 1997

Ministerio de Administraciones Públicas, Spain
(143 pages, ISBN 84-7088-674-6)

Ethics and standards in public life now figure in the framework of public sector reforms in many countries. This publication is a collection of papers from the conference organised by the National Institute of Public Administration and the Ministry for Public Administration of Spain. The main purpose of the conference was to develop a Declaration on Ethics in Public Operations and the need for ethics training for public servants. Available only in Spanish from:

Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública
C/ Atocha, 106, Madrid
Tel:+36-1-349.32.11

What is Y2K? Is Century Date Change an issue? What do we do about the Year 2000 problem?

The computer time bomb

Y2K stands for Year Two Thousand and refers to something that seems to be a nightmare. Computers record years with two digits; for example, 97 means 1997. This is the basis of complex computer calculations. However, what will happen in year 2000, when computers start dealing with 2000 as if it were 00?

You may ask "so what?"

As a result, computers will not be able to deal with date-related matters, and will either stop functioning or start producing wrong information. Possible outcomes look grim: delivery failures, no cheques issued, transactions blocked, lawsuits, bankruptcies, etc. This will affect the tax administration; customs, payroll, pension, social benefits and procurement systems; and many others.

Are we ready?

A study sponsored by the Parliament of an OECD country a year ago showed that only 25 per cent of government units had started doing serious work on this problem. According to an analyst, the total cost of required interventions by governments world-wide is somewhere between \$20 to \$250 billion. All software in use needs to be reviewed one by one and line by line, in order to assess the impact of the millennium problem. There is not much time, and the limited availability of trained computer experts has created a bottleneck.

A management problem

There are extremely difficult technical problems. For example, how do you ensure that your cleaned system will not get a "00 virus" sent by somebody else during a data transfer, which is so common nowadays? However, it would be a grave mistake to consider this as a technical issue to be left to information technology experts. Y2K is

24 months to Year 2000

a management issue and requires full involvement of top management.

Want to know more?

To learn more, consult the various Web sites on the subject, including:
<http://www.year2000.com>
<http://www.y2k-info.com>
<http://www.ita.org/year2000.htm>

Only 24 months left

Y2K is only one millenium problem that public bodies are preparing for. Starting with the next issue, *Focus* will report on "millennium projects"

related to public management. The first country we will visit is Canada.

Focus in the year 2000

At *Focus*, we also have a "millennium project": we will shift our priority from paper to electronic publishing. Since we expect that most readers will by then have access to the Internet, *Focus-On Line* will become our major product in January 2000. It will provide more information in a more timely manner. The paper version will be a smaller leaflet announcing what is available in the electronic newsletter. ■

• SURFING THE INTERNET •

<http://www.psmpc.gov.au/about/spmonline.htm>

Do you want to have access to good practice in the field of human resources? Here is the address of a good source of information. It was established by the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission of **Australia**. It covers topics such as innovative ways to organise people, initiatives to achieve a high-performing organisation, good practice networks, etc.

<http://www.psmpc.gov.au/about/emonline/emonline.htm>

Go to this address to find a new scheme introduced in **Australia**: the Workplace Diversity Programme. The term diversity refers to a variety of differences in people including race, gender, ethnic background, age, religion, disability, etc. This programme is established as a mechanism to provide equal employment opportunity and assist organisations in using the diversity to improve productivity and outcomes.

What's new on PUMA's Web site?

<http://www.oecd.org/puma>

This site is growing in size and scope. New pages have been added; new topics are being covered. Recent additions include:

- *A special folder on the Ethics Symposium held in early November, with executive summaries of all papers.*
- *A detailed report on recent budgetary developments.*
- *New elements on benchmarking.*
- *A report by Korea on developments in that country.*
- *A summary of OECD's work on regulatory reform.*
- *And, of course, the January issue of Focus On-Line.*

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