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**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**GOV/PGC/MPM/A(2006)1
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ANNOTATED AGENDA

Meeting of Senior Officials from Centres of Government on Leadership in Managing Risk

Vienna, 28-29 September 2006

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English - Or. English

ANNUAL MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM CENTRES OF GOVERNMENT

LEADERSHIP IN MANAGING RISK

28-29 September 2006

Vienna, Austria

ANNOTATED AGENDA

OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

1. The meeting of Senior Officials from Centres of Government offers a unique opportunity for participants to meet with their opposite numbers from the OECD member countries.
2. The 2006 meeting, in Vienna, has three main objectives:
 - To review how Centres of Government may strengthen their capacity to respond to new challenges in the **governance and management of risk** as part of decision-making.
 - To multiply the opportunities for **informal exchanges between participants** and strengthen ties between the members of this network of colleagues with similar responsibilities in their respective countries.
 - To launch an initial discussion of the issue to be discussed in detail at the 2007 Centres of Government meeting in Switzerland, indicatively entitled: **Strengthening public trust by delivering on promises: what role for the Centre?**
3. The annual Centres of Government meeting will also include two parallel workshops. Their purpose is to provide participants with the opportunity to discuss topics of their choice in smaller groups, followed by a report to plenary.
4. Finally, the meeting will provide an opportunity for a mutual exchange of information between participants and the OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate (GOV). Participants will be informed about GOV's work, and particularly that which has benefited directly from the discussions held by Senior Officials from Centres of Government in the past, and about OECD activities of interest to them. Participants will also be invited to indicate their priorities for the coming years, in terms of public management and governance.

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Wednesday 27 September 2006

19.00-20.30 **Welcome cocktail at the Astoria Hotel, Kärntner Strasse 32-34, 1010-Vienna**
 [Tel. +43 1 515 77; fax: +43 1 515 77 582]

Thursday 28 September 2006

Leadership in Managing Risk

Venue **Schloss Laudon**
Mauerbachstrasse 43, 1140-Vienna [Tel +43 1 53115 7225, Fax +431 53115 7244]

08.00 **Departure by bus from the Astoria Hotel**

09.00-09.30 **Opening of the meeting by Dr. Alfred Finz, State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Finance and Mr. Richard E. Hecklinger, Deputy Secretary General of the OECD**

A government's capacity to manage risks is increasingly used as a measure of its overall performance. Anticipating future risks, monitoring systemic vulnerabilities and managing crises are all part of risk management. Centres of Government play an important role in managing risk given their responsibilities for co-ordinating government action and providing support to decision-making.

This year's meeting of the Network of Senior Officials from Centres of Government (CoG) offers a new opportunity for members to discuss the challenging topic of integrating risk management in decision-making. Building on initial discussions held during the 2001 CoG meeting in Reykjavík, the Vienna meeting will allow members to explore risk management issues in more depth and to review innovations introduced over the past five years. Risk management was also one of the four cross-cutting themes identified by the 2005 OECD Meeting of the Public Governance Committee at Ministerial level in Rotterdam and this year's CoG meeting will contribute to shaping future work by the OECD Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development (GOV) in this area (2007-8). The meeting will build upon ongoing work by the OECD Secretary General's Advisory Unit on Multidisciplinary Issues (AU) and two recent expert meetings: 'Risk management and governance' (co-convened with the Prime Minister's Office of Finland, 17 March 2006) and 'Risk and regulation' (Working Party on Regulatory Management and Reform meeting, 24 April 2006).

The meeting will serve to explore the leadership role played by Centres of Government in scoping future risks, incorporating information on risks into decision-making and managing crises.

09.30-10.30 Session 1: Scoping future risks and vulnerabilities: what role for the Centre?

[Reference document: GOV/PGC/MPM(2006)1]

The nature of risks is changing. So is the context in which risks evolve and the response capacity of our increasingly complex, interconnected societies. Policy lessons drawn by the 2003 OECD report 'Emerging Risks in the 21st century: An Agenda for Action' will be presented by Dr. Michael Osborne (Director of the AU), as a basis for discussion. Together, participants will share their experience and recent innovations aimed at strengthening their capacity for scoping future risks.

Risks are increasingly interdependent, pervasive and transnational. How can Centres of Government ensure that they are aware of new and emerging systemic risks (e.g. critical infrastructure failures)? Do they receive regular updates regarding their country's systemic vulnerabilities and overall resilience to both policy risks (e.g. impact of escalating oil prices) and operational risks (e.g. infectious diseases, cyberterrorism)? How can they ensure that robust early warning systems and contingency plans are in place and are regularly reviewed?

This session will focus on the role of the Centre in ensuring government's capacity to detect and respond to emerging risks and identify systemic vulnerabilities.

10.30-11.00 (approx.) Coffee break

11.00-12.30 Session 2: Incorporating information on risk into decision-making

[Reference document: GOV/PGC/MPM(2006)2]

Risk management capacities are needed not only during crises, but also during times of normal decision making. Risks cut across ministerial boundaries, requiring integrated risk management and a whole-of-government perspective. They also reach beyond the boundary between the public and private sectors and, increasingly, across national borders. In short, there is a growing need for Centres of Government to ensure co-ordination within government, with the private sector and internationally. They must also collect information on risks, conduct quality control and help political decision-makers respond effectively to risk – which entails weighing up the potentially significant economic costs and political risks of action or inaction.

Adequate attention to risk and vulnerabilities is needed in 'everyday' decision-making. How do Centres of Government ensure co-ordination between ministries, across levels of government and with the private sector in monitoring and mitigating risk? Given the flood of incoming information, how can Centres of Government assist decision-makers to focus upon signals of impending risk against the background 'noise'? What is the relative weight and respective role of civil service and political advisors in shaping decisions to act upon risk warnings?

This session will examine how information on risk is incorporated (or ignored) in everyday decision-making at the Centre of Government.

12.30-12.40 **Conclusions** of the morning's discussions

12.40-14.30 Lunch hosted by the Austrian authorities at the meeting venue

14.30-15.30 Session 3: Parallel workshops**WORKSHOPS**

As in previous years, the purpose of the parallel workshops is to provide participants with the opportunity to discuss topics of their choice in smaller groups, followed by a report to plenary. The first workshop will allow for the in-depth discussion of a specific issue related to the main theme of the meeting, while the second workshop will have no pre-established topic, allowing for ‘free’ discussion on issues of mutual interest.

- **Workshop 1:** Crisis management: lessons from the private sector (with the participation of Dr. Rudolf Scholten, Executive Director, Oesterreichische Kontrollbank AG, former Minister for Education and Culture and former Minister for Infrastructure and Science)
- **Workshop 2:** a ‘free’ session (e.g. on the daily challenges of managing the Centre of Government)

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-16.30 **Reports to plenary: highlights from the parallel workshops**

16.30-18.00 **Session 4: Leadership during crisis**

[Reference document: GOV/PGC/MPM(2006)3]

Governments are judged according to their ability to anticipate and mitigate risks, as well as their capacity to demonstrate leadership in times of crisis. At such moments, Centres of Government may play a crucial role in supporting decision-making under conditions of significant pressure and incomplete information. They may contribute to ensuring rapid reaction in mobilising national resources, international networks and private sector actors. Finally, they play a role in the way in which governments inform, communicate with and involve members of the public in the management of risk – all of which has a major impact on the level of public trust in leaders. Discussions will be based on concrete country examples of how leadership – at the political and administrative levels – has played a key role in the successful management and resolution of crises (e.g. following a tsunami, major flooding, terrorist attacks). An honest examination of those cases where governments have failed to handle crises will provide as many, if not more, insights into the factors determining success.

How do Centres of Government rapidly mobilize, filter and deliver timely and useable expert advice to political decision-makers during a crisis? How can decision-makers ensure flexibility and rapid response to crises (e.g. by suspending cumbersome public procurement rules) without undermining accountability and transparency in the long run? How can appropriate communication strategies be designed and adapted to changing circumstances as a crisis unfolds? Can leadership training improve the capacity of senior politicians and officials to manage crises?

This session will assess the relative importance of leadership from the Centre of Government when managing crises.

18.00-18.30 **Conclusions of the day’s discussions**

19.00 **Transfer to dinner venue**

19.30–21.30 **Official dinner** hosted by the Austrian authorities in the historic Congress Hall of the Austrian Federal Chancellery [Ballhausplatz 2, 1014 Vienna].

Friday 29 September 2006
Exploratory discussions for 2007

- Venue** **Schloss Laudon**
Mauerbachstrasse 43, 1140 Vienna [Tel +43 1 53115 7225, Fax +431 53115 7244]
- 08.00** **Departure by bus from the Astoria Hotel**
- 09.00-09.45** Opening remarks by Mr. Richard E. Hecklinger, Deputy Secretary General of the OECD, and presentation of OECD and GOV work
Discussion.
- 09.45-10.45** **Session 5: Strengthening public trust by delivering on promises: what role for the Centre?**
[Reference document: GOV/PGC/MPM(2006)4]

This session will focus on how Centres of Government can contribute to strengthening public trust in government by helping political decision-makers deliver on their policy promises. The discussion will contribute to selecting the key questions to be debated at next year's Centres of Government meeting to be held in Berne, Switzerland on 4-5 October 2007.

Centres of Government operate at the political-administrative interface, play a coordinating role across central government, and maintain relations with parliament, other levels of government, civil society and the media. They are at the hub of a complex network of relations through which they exercise their functions of managing the government's legislative agenda and monitoring its implementation. Given their unique position, Centres of Government may play an important role in reconciling conflicting interests, calendars and time horizons (e.g. political pressure for immediate results versus pursuing long-term reforms).

How can Centres of Government ensure that policy delivery is in line with the government's political agenda? How do Centres of Government manage relations with line ministries, parliaments, local governments, civil society and media in delivering elected governments' policy programmes? What is the relative weight of civil servants and political appointees in guiding government policy implementation? What tools, including those offered by e-government, are available to the Centre in monitoring progress in implementation?

This session will serve to identify the key points of interest to Centres of Government as basis for developing an agenda for next year's annual meeting on implementing government policy agendas.

- 10.45-11.15** Coffee break
(approx.)
- 11.15-12.00** **Continuation of the discussion** followed by presentations and announcements by members (as necessary).
- 12.00-12.30** **Conclusions of the morning's discussions and general conclusions of the meeting**
- 12.30-12.45** **Closing of the meeting, followed by a lunch hosted by the Austrian authorities**
(approx.)
- 14.00-16.00** Official guided tour of the City of Vienna organised by the Austrian authorities.
(approx.) *NOTE:* The Austrian authorities would welcome the presence of participants' spouses during the official events (welcome cocktail, official dinner, guided tour of the city) and will propose a programme for accompanying spouses.