
20th Session of the Public Management Committee, Château de la Muette, Paris
28-29 October 1999

For further information, please contact Geraldine Byrne-nason,
Tel (33-1) 45 24 80 29, e-mail: geraldine.byrne-nason@oecd.org
or Frédéric Bouder, Tel (33-1) 45 24 90 75, e-mail: frederic.bouder@oecd.org

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19TH MEETING
OF THE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
25-26 MARCH, 1999

Item 1 -- Election of Officers

1. The Committee agreed to the Secretariat’s proposal that Benita Plesch, the Netherlands, would still chair this meeting and that the newly elected officers would start their duty at the end of the meeting.

2. On the proposal of Norway and endorsed by Spain, four Committee officers were elected or re-elected for 1999. They are:
   - Mr Adam Wolf, elected as Chair, Denmark, Assistant Permanent Secretary for Public Management, Ministry of Finance;
   - Mr. Jonathan D. Breul, elected as Vice-Chair, United States, Senior Advisor to the Deputy Director for Management;
   - Ms Nicole Jauvin, re-elected as Vice-Chair, Canada, Deputy Clerk and Counsel, Privy Council Office;
   - Dr. Pia Marconi, re-elected as Vice-Chair, Italy, General Director, Civil Service Department.

3. Dr. Jorge Chavez Presa, former Vice-Chair, Mexico, made a farewell intervention to conclude his contribution to the work of the PUMA Committee. He stressed the importance of PUMA’s central role, to promote sound governance mechanisms to face economic and financial crisis and the need to enhance the quality of governance through proper policies for the delivery of public services.

4. Committee Members agreed on expressing their thanks and appreciation to Len Early.

Item 2 -- Adoption of the Agenda

5. The agenda was adopted without change.

Item 3 – Approval of the Summary Record of the Previous Meeting

6. The summary record of the Committee’s 18th session held on 28-29 October 1998 was approved without amendment.
Item 4 – Presentation by the Director, Mr. Jean-Jacques Noreau

7. Mr Jean-Jacques Noreau, the new Director of PUMA, delivered general remarks on the development of PUMA and updated the Committee on the budget situation. In particular he underlined:

- The greater stability of the OECD budget after a phase of budget cuts and the “political commitment” to ensure that the Organisation’s work programme will no longer be impacted by budget cutbacks.
- The need for PUMA to contribute to the efforts of the OECD to address forthcoming challenges, e.g. how the Organisation relates to the rest of the world. In the future greater attention will be given within the Organisation to the third pillar of the paradigm developed by the Secretary General, i.e. “good governance”. This offers an opportunity for PUMA to contribute its expertise to an important issue with implications for the Organisation’s broader work programme. Mr. Noreau also underlined his intention to work closely with other Directors on selected cross-cutting horizontal projects.
- The possibility of establishing an eminent Persons Group to examine governance issues is under consideration.

Mr. Noreau stressed the need for the Committee to agree on a new mandate for 2000-2006 (see item 7).

Item 5 – Approval of the Annual Report to Council

8. The Committee approved the PUMA 1998 Annual Report, which will be presented to the OECD Council, requesting that the text be made available to the public on the PUMA web site. The Committee also endorsed the suggestion that the report be presented to the OECD Council by one of the Committee Officers. The introduction should be strengthened to present the forward looking effort that PUMA has undertaken over 1998 to “reinvent” its programme of work and prepare future orientations in a difficult budgetary context. One country requested that information on the SIGMA programme developments be enhanced.

9. Countries also expressed the wish that in future, the annual report should be a means of accountability to provide evaluation on the delivery of the Programme of Work.

Item 6 – Programme Management

10. Pia Marconi, Vice-Chair, reported on the PUMA-TUAC consultation of 24 March 1999. She indicated that TUAC praised the relationship with PUMA. They welcomed the future orientation of PUMA to strengthen its capacity to address global issues such as governance. TUAC would like to add value to PUMA work on Ethics, Regulatory Management and Reform, and on strengthening government-citizens connections. They would like also to see a representative from the trade unions side to be involved in the Eminent Person’s Group. They expressed some doubts about attempts to compare public and private efficiency; additionally they suggested that the Best Practice Guidelines on Contracting Out, issued in 1997, be revised to show examples where public contracting has failed.

11. The Secretariat suggested the creation of a new service for the Committee Members. So as to respond better to the requests for information PUMA regularly receives, it was proposed to establish a “question and answer” system. This system will ensure that requests are followed up, processed and
answers provided [PUMA/RD(99)2]. Committee Members generally agreed on the usefulness of this new resource but some expressed concerns about practical implications of its management both within the Secretariat and in capitals and its place in the hierarchy of actions under PUMA’s new mandate. On the proposal of Denmark, Committee Members agreed to ask the Secretariat to explore alternative scenarios for this new service.

12. The Committee was briefed on the preparation of the next meeting of Senior Officials from Centres of Government. The meeting will be hosted by Italy and will take place early October on the basis of a slightly renewed formula. This new design will encourage more active exchange of views and will include a “free” session initiated and led off by a Member of the Senior Officials.

13. The Secretariat made a brief presentation on the programme for the PUMA Symposium scheduled 14-15 September 1999 on Government for the Future: Getting from Here to There. Attendance is by invitation to high-level reformers across OECD Member countries (2 per country). The PUMA Committee members agreed to identify names of suitable participants for the Symposium.

a) Questionnaire on Ethics

14. The Committee noted progress on the preparation of the survey on the implementation of the Recommendation on Improving Ethical Conduct in the Public Service. The survey will result in a report which will be sent to the Council at its meeting at ministerial level in 2000.

b) Questionnaire on Consultation with Citizens Groups

15. The Committee confirmed its strong interest in the new activity on “Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections”, which will address government policies and practices for providing citizens with information and involving them in both public consultation and participation mechanisms. The Committee noted the importance of these issues in PUMA’s future work on governance, and as a crosscutting subject of relevance to the work of other parts of the OECD. The Committee focused inter alia on issues of information, consultation and participation. Provided that citizens are also consumers of public services, one issue is how much attention should be paid to citizens’ expectations concerning the design of the delivery mode of public services. More specifically, another issue was whether the close link established between general issues on strengthening government-citizens connections and more specific indicators of government use of information technology should remain in that form, or be addressed, for more clarity, in a separate questionnaire.

16. Noting the need to build up information in these areas incrementally, the Committee suggested that the proposed written questionnaire be further focused and tested on volunteers from Member countries before being more widely disseminated. Three Member countries volunteered during the meeting (Canada, Portugal and the United Kingdom). The Committee also confirmed its interest in the results of the country case studies that are planned for more in-depth investigations.

c) Note the Calendar of Meetings

17. The Netherlands expressed their preference, along with the preference of the HRM network, for keeping regular meetings of the network of the Senior Civil Service.
18. Mr. Noreau presented the background document “Governance and Public Management” together with some strategic orientations and questions of substance to be considered by the Committee, considering that PUMA should identify policy areas where it could add most value. He suggested that one of the main challenges of the new PUMA mandate is to find the right balance between:

- exchange of practices and experience;
- adding value to some of OECD’s other substantive work;
- contributing to debates on governance that have an impact “in a globalised world”.

19. Committee Members agreed on the suggested orientations, paying more attention to broader issues of governance and integration of OECD core goals into the PUMA work programme. However they pointed out that such efforts need clarification. The creation of an Eminent Persons Group on Governance could bring a valuable contribution in this respect. France also requested that information on how to define “governance” be provided.

20. The Committee considered the Hierarchy of Action depicting more or less directive forms of action resulting from the work of the PUMA Committee. Committee Members asked that the presentation be revised in order to avoid the impression that PUMA should be too prescriptive. Although OECD Recommendations should remain exceptional, it was agreed that PUMA should provide more direction through identification and dissemination of best practices. Consideration should also be given to Outreach activities but strategic choices must first be made concerning PUMA value-added in this area.

21. Additionally, the discussion identified two promising orientations for PUMA. PUMA should continue to provide support to “government modernisation”, e.g. by evaluation of privatisation/corporatisation measures, developing further work on the Role of Citizens, Ethics and Human Resource Management, and by paying more attention to risk management. However, PUMA should increasingly tackle “forward looking” issues where policy decisions are needed. Possible themes include the management of: natural disasters, crime, terrorism, environmental problems, ageing, multiculturalism and globalisation/localisation.

22. The Committee agreed on the process to follow for the elaboration of the mandate proposal to be discussed at the October meeting of the Committee. The Secretariat indicated that they would begin to work on a revised version of the document “Governance and Public Management” [PUMA(99)1]. Before circulating another version, Members would be invited to submit any additional ideas with respect to emerging issues. The ongoing work will aim to give a “strategic lift” to the document in order to move closer to issues of interest to decision makers. Prior to the October meeting of the Committee, a meeting of the Committee Officers will take place to finalise the draft. In the mean time, greater involvement of the Committee will be assured.

23. Professor Patricia Ingraham presented the Government Performance Project an initiative undertaken in the United States under her leadership by the administration of the Maxwell School’s Allan K. Campbell Public Affairs Institute.
24. The Government Performance Project aims to improve both the understanding and practice of government management throughout the United States at the city, county, state and federal levels. This will be accomplished through better understanding of the roles and dimensions of management in government; it will enhance public accountability for the quality of public management.

25. Professor Ingraham presented the five main management areas being evaluated. A description of each follows.

- Financial Management evaluation is designed to measure the extent to which governments engage in sound financial management practices, including: budget preparation and execution; cash, contract, debt and revenue management; accounting and financial reporting procedures; and the overall financial management system is linked to the achievement of strategic goals and objectives.

- Human Resources Management evaluation is designed to measure the effectiveness of human resources management (HRM) systems. Information regarding the structure of the HRM system, the degree to which it is integrated with other systems in pursuit of the mission, and the ability of HRM structures and procedures to adapt are emphasized. The goal is to determine the characteristics of effective HRM strategies through an examination of both the environment in which HRM systems operate and the content of those systems.

- Information Technology evaluation is designed to assess the extent to which information technology contributes to effective management. The focus is on the usefulness of technology for management, rather than simply on the management of technology itself. The evaluation covers various aspects of the technology process, including planning, acquisition, development, training of users, and usefulness of information.

- Capital Management evaluation is designed to measure the extent to which the government engages in meaningful, long-range capital planning, including: consideration of the impact of capital projects on future operating and maintenance expenses; assessment of asset condition and replacement/overhaul forecasting; development of accurate information on future needs, cost analysis; prioritization and tracking of capital projects.

- Evaluation of managing for results is designed to measure the extent to which the government is managed, with a focus on the results of policies. This "managing for results" focus implies substantive strategic planning and self-evaluation, the measurement of outputs and outcomes, use of performance measures in management and resource allocation, and the use of forward-looking needs assessments in program management.

26. For more information see the Government Performance Project website at: www.maxwell.syr.edu/gpp. See also Background document [PUMA(99)2].

27. Following her presentation, Professor Ingraham responded to questions.

**Item 9 – Trends in Public Sector Human Resource Management**

28. The Secretariat presented megatrends of the Public Sector Human Resource Management. The presentation focused on the interface between Public Sector and Private Sector labour markets.
29. Interface between public and private sectors is increasing in many OECD countries. Managers and decision-makers in the area of public personnel management are generally incorporating this new dimension into their management strategies.

30. The presentation stressed the need to:
   • identify emerging practice in the management of public employees;
   • explore the share of certain exogenous and endogenous factors in the impact on changes in employment relations in the public sector (e.g. conjectural, national and institutional/structural, and general factors); and
   • draw the attention of decision-makers in HRM to the new challenges they will face in the future.

31. The report presented various scenarios concerning the functioning of the public labour market in OECD countries (e.g. do the “megatrends” observed in the economy impact on public labour markets? or are concepts like flexible organisations, change mastering, tendency to individualisation are relevant to the public labour market? One issue is about the limits to the current public sector trends in flexibility and terms and conditions of employment). The Secretariat suggested that future work should consider Employment status in the Public Service as well as examination of the comparability in employment flexibility in the private and public sectors in OECD countries. Recent development in people management in public services in OECD countries were also presented.

32. The Secretariat suggested that comparative analysis of HR systems in OECD countries will be based on both qualitative and quantitative changes in the area of personnel management and related employment practices in the public sector.

33. The Committee praised PUMA work in this area, the current approach being both promising and forward-looking. Some countries (Denmark, United States) underlined this work would be highly relevant for the new mandate. One major aspect of discussion was how to attract and keep the most competent people in the Public Service.

Item 10 – Contracting for Performance and Partnerships

34. The Secretariat informed the Committee on progress of PUMA’s outputs concerning the work on Public sector contracting and the work on Contracting for intergovernmental partnerships [PUMA/RD(99)4]. Committee members expressed their high interest for this work which was regarded as a good example of successful activities that PUMA should keep doing in the context of the new mandate. The importance of dealing with management issues across levels of government was highlighted.

Item 11 – Governance issues emerging from the Regulatory Reform Activity

35. The Secretariat briefed the Committee on preliminary conclusions of importance to governance issues arising from PUMA’s work on regulatory management and reform. An update on the OECD horizontal activities in this area was also provided.

36. The country reviews and other work on regulation suggest some themes of potential interest to governance:
• Improving capacities for dynamic policy change may be just as important as ensuring optimal policy design at a point in time. Governments spend considerable effort improving new policy content and design, but less time questioning the value of current government actions. Technological change and globalisation will increasingly reward dynamic regulatory efficiency. Hence, flexibility and capacity for regulatory adaptation are important in today’s regulatory regimes.

• Improved policy co-ordination is essential to constructing the policy framework for market performance. Co-ordination continues to be important as countries monitor the impact of reforms, and carry out mid-course corrections that may cut across jurisdictions and be time-sensitive.

• Transparency of the public administration is a core factor for economic performance, yet the concept is poorly understood. Transparency in regulatory decisions and application helps to cure many reasons for regulatory failures: capture and bias toward concentrated benefits, inadequate information in both public and private sectors, policy rigidity, uncertainty, corruption, and lack of accountability. More attention may be needed to identify the key administrative factors in transparency, and approaches for improving transparency in relations with market actors.

37. Countries supported the promising initiatives in this area and wished to be more closely associated, in the future, to the work on Regulatory Management and Reform.

**Item 12 – Contribution to OECD horizontal activities**

38. The Secretariat briefed the Committee on horizontal projects on the Links between Trade, Investment and Development and on Sustainable Development.

39. PUMA’s contribution to the OECD Ministerial report on the links between Trade Investment and Development focused on issues of policy coherence such as improving co-ordination (i.e. cross-departmental co-ordination between levels of government, good political and administrative interface) and improving access to quality information for decision-makers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALLEMAGNE/</td>
<td>Mr. Wolfgang STÖCKL</td>
<td>First Counsellor</td>
<td>Permanent Delegation to the OECD</td>
<td>Tel:</td>
<td>Fax:</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:stocklw@aol.com">stocklw@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERMANY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 rue Léonard-de-Vinci</td>
<td>(33-1)</td>
<td>(33-1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. Ralf WEYDT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Permanent Delegation to the OECD</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75116 PARIS</td>
<td>16 05</td>
<td>01 29 77</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stocklw@aol.com">stocklw@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIE/</td>
<td>Ms. Glennys PURCELL</td>
<td>Permanent Delegation to the OECD</td>
<td>4 rue Jean-Rey</td>
<td>Tel:</td>
<td>Fax:</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:glennys.purcell@dfat.gov.au">glennys.purcell@dfat.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75724 PARIS</td>
<td>(33-1)</td>
<td>(33-1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Elisabeth DEARING</td>
<td>Division for Administration Development</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance</td>
<td>Tel:</td>
<td>Fax:</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:elisabeth.dearing@bmf.gv.at">elisabeth.dearing@bmf.gv.at</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTRICHE/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wollzeile 1-3</td>
<td>(43-1)</td>
<td>(43-1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRIA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1010 WIEN</td>
<td>514 33/71 48</td>
<td>(43-1) 514 33/7490</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr. Emmerich BACHMAYER  
Director General  
Department for Personnel Coordination  
Ministry of Finance  
Ballhausplatz 2  
A-1014 WIEN  
Tel: (43-1) 53155 / 2260  
Fax (43-1) 53115 / 2461

BELGIQUE/ 
BELGIUM

M. Jean-Marie MOTTOUL  
Chef de Corps des Conseillers de la Fonction publique,  
Bureau Conseil ABC  
Ministère de la Fonction publique  
Résidence Palace  
Rue de la Loi 155  
B-1040 BRUXELLES  
Tel: (32-2) 287 4007  
Fax: (32-2) 287 4010  
E-mail: jeanmarie.mottoul@mazfp.fgov.be

M. Léo VICTOR  
Secrétaire général  
Département Affaires générales et finances  
Ministère de la Communauté flamande  
Boudewijnlaan, 30  
B 1000 BRUXELLES  
Tel: (32-2) 553 51 71  
Fax: (32-2) 553 50 21  
E-mail: leo.victor@azf.vlaanderen.be

M. Johan DEGRAEVE  
Directeur général  
Département Affaires générales et finances  
Ministère de la Communauté flamande  
Boudewijnlaan, 30  
B 1000 BRUXELLES  
Tel: (32-2) 553 50 30  
Fax: (32-2) 553 50 28  
E-mail: johan.degraeve@azf.vlaanderen.be

PAYS-BAS/ 
NETHERLANDS

Dr. Benita PLESCH  
(Chair)  
Director-General  
Development of the Senior Public Service  
Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations  
Postbus 20011  
NL-2500 EA DEN HAAG  
Tel: (31-70) 302 73 38  
Fax: (31-70) 302 68 68  
E-mail: benita.plesch@minbiza.nl
LUXEMBOURG

M. Tom WEISGERBER
Attaché de Gouvernement
Ministère de la Fonction publique et de la Réforme administrative
B.P.106
L-2011 LUXEMBOURG
Tel: (352) 478 31 16
Fax: (352) 478 31 22
E-mail: tom.weisgerber@mfp.etat.lu

CANADA

Ms. Nicole JAUVIN
(Vice Chair)
Deputy Clerk and Counsel
Privy Council Office
Langevin Block
80 Wellington St.,
OTTAWA, Ontario K1A 0A3
Tel: (1-613) 957 5696
Fax: (1-613) 957 5367
E-mail: nmjauvin@pco.gc.ca

Mr. Scott WADE
Permanent Delegation to the OECD
15 bis rue de Franqueville
75116 PARIS
Tel: (33-1) 44 43 20 12
Fax: (33-1) 44 43 20 99
E-mail: scott.wade@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

CORÉE/

KOREA

Mr. Dong Hoo MOON
Commissioner
Government Personnel Appeals Commission
Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs
77 Sejong-ro, Chongro-ku
SEOUL 110-760
Tel: (82-2) 720 44 43
Fax: (82-2) 37 03 33 22
E-mail: dhmoon@mogaha.go.kr

Mr. Mankyu LIM
Deputy Director
Administrative System Division
Administrative Management Bureau
Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs
77 Sejong-ro, Chongro-ku
SEOUL 110-760
Tel: (82-2) 37 03 46 64
Fax: (82-2) 37 03 55 31
E-mail: lmk0011@netian.com
Mr. Suk-bum PARK  
Counsellor  
Permanent Delegation to the OECD  
2-4 rue Louis David  
75016 PARIS  
Tel: (33-1) 44 05 20 56  
Fax: (33-1) 44 05 21 75  
E-mail: sbpark79@wanadoo.fr

DANEMARK/  
DENMARK  
Mr. Adam WOLF  
(Vice-Chair)  
Assistant Permanent Secretary for Public Management  
Ministry of Finance  
Christiansborg Slotsplads 1  
DK-1218 COPENHAGEN K  
Tel: (45) 33 92 42 70  
Fax: (45) 33 15 01 27  
E-mail: awo@fm.dk

Ms. Nina CLASEN  
Head of Section  
Ministry of Finance  
Christiansborg Slotsplads 1  
DK-1218 COPENHAGEN K  
Tel: (45) 33 92 48 14  
Fax: (45) 33 15 01 27  
E-Mail: nhc@fm.dk

ESPAGNE/  
SPAIN  
M. Emilio CASALS PERALTA  
Conseiller au Secrétariat général technique  
Ministère des Administrations publiques  
Paseo de la Castellana 3  
E-28046 MADRID  
Tel: (34-91) 586 10 65  
Fax: (34-91) 586 10 18  
E-mail: ecasals@galiano.subs.map.es

ÉTATS-UNIS/  
UNITED STATES  
Mr. Jonathan D. BREUL  
(Vice-Chair)  
Senior Advisor to the Deputy Director for Management  
Office of Management and Budget  
Executive Office of the President  
Rm 10235 NEOB  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503  
Tel: (1-202) 395 56 70  
Fax: (1-202) 395 6974  
E-mail: jonathan_d_breul@omb.eop.gov
FINLANDE/ FINLAND

Mr. Jorma KARJALAINEN
Director General,
Public Management Department
Ministry of Finance
P.O.Box 286
SF-00171 HELSINKI
Tel: (358-9) 160 3201
Fax: 358-9) 160 3225
E-mail: jorma.karjalainen@vm.vn.fi

Ms. Marja PAAVILAINEN
Director
Ministry of Finance
Personnel Department
P.O Box 286
FIN-00171 HELSINKI
Tel: (358-9) 160 49 60
Fax: (358-9) 160 48 39
E-mail: marja.paavilainen@vm.vn.fi

Mrs. Katju HOLKERI
Senior Adviser
Ministry of Finance
Public Management Department
P.O.Box 286
00171 HELSINKI
Tel: (358-9) 160 3258
Fax: (358-9) 160 3235
E-mail: katju.holkeri@vm.vn.fi

FRANCE

M. Marc CABANE
Chef de mission
Délégation interministérielle à la réforme de l'Etat
72 rue de Varenne
75700 PARIS
Tel: (33-1) 42 75 88 43
Fax: (33-1) 42 75 80 59
E-mail: m.cabane@dire.pm.gouv.fr

M. Remi FRENTZ
Chef de mission
Délégation interministérielle à la réforme de l'Etat
72 rue de Varenne
75700 PARIS
Tel: (33-1) 42 75 89 13
Fax: (33-1) 42 75 80 59
E-mail: r.frentz@dire.pm.gouv.fr
Mme Françoise WINTROP
Chargée de mission à la Délégation interministérielle à la Réforme de l’Etat
DGAFP
32, rue de Babylone
75700 PARIS
Tel: (33-1) 42 75 72 07
Fax: (33-1) 42 75 83 85
E-Mail: fwaintrop@dire.pm.gouv.fr

M. Pierre Laurent SIMONI
Direction du Budget
Bureau 1B
Ministère de l’Économie, des finances et de l’industrie
139 rue de Bercy
75572 PARIS CEDEX 12
Tel: (33-1) 53 18 70 54
Fax: (33-1) 53 18 71 39
E-mail: pierre-laurent.simoni@budget.finances.gouv.fr

GRÈCE/GREECE
M. Vassilis ANDRONOPOULOS
Directeur général
Gestion des ressources humaines
Ministère de l’Intérieur, de la Fonction publique et de la Démcentralisation
Secrétariat de l’administration publique
15, Vassilissis Sofias Avenue
GR-10674 ATHENS
Tel: (30-1) 339 33 11-15
Fax: (30-1) 339 33 00
E-mail: yap@ath.forthnet.gr

HONGRIE/HUNGARY
Dr. István BALÁZS
Conseiller principal du Gouvernement
Chargé du développement d’administration publique
Office du Premier Ministre
V. Kossuth ter 4.
1357 BUDAPEST
Tel: (36-1) 268 32 01
Fax: (36-1) 268 32 18
E-mail: i125@mehi.meh.hu

Dr. Zsófia CZOMA
Counsellor for International Affairs
Prime Minister’s Office
V. Kossuth ter 4.
1357 BUDAPEST
Tel: (36-1) 268 32 17
Fax: (36-1) 268 32 18
E-mail: zsofia.czoma@meh.hu
ISLANDE/ ICELAND
Mr. Gunnar BJÖRNSSON
Director-General
Department of Personnel Policy
Ministry of Finance
IS-150 REYKJAVIK
Tel: (354) 560 93 00
Fax: (354) 562 36 90
E-Mail: gunnar.bjornsson@fjr.stjr.is

IRLANDE/ IRELAND
Mr. Eric EMBLETON
Assistant Secretary
Centre for Management and Organisation Development
Department of Finance
Lansdowne House
Lansdowne Road
DUBLIN 4
Tel: (353-1) 604 50 56
Fax: (353-1) 668 21 96
E-mail: eric_embleton@cmod.finance.irlgov.ie

ITALIE/ITALY
Dr. Pia MARCONI
(Vice-Chair)
Direttore Generale
UPEA
Dipartimento della Funzione Pubblica
Via del Sudario 49
00187 ROMA
Tel: (39-06) 68 99 75 15
Fax: (39-06) 68 99 74 11
E-Mail: p.marconi@pcm.it

Mr. Vincenzo SCHIOPPA
Conseiller diplomatique du Ministre de la Fonction publique
116 Corso Vittorio Emanuele
00186 ROMA
Tel: (39-06) 68 99 75 59
Fax: (39-06) 68 99 72 45
E-Mail: schioppa@esteri.it

JAPON/JAPAN
Mr. Yutaka KUBUSHIRO
Director
Policy Planning Division
Director General’s Secretariat
Management and Coordination Agency
3-1-1 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku
TOKYO
Tel: (81-3) 3581 1118
Fax: (81-3) 3507 0956
Mr. Nobuhiro FUKUOKA
First Secretary
Permanent Delegation to the OECD
11 Avenue Hoche
75008 PARIS
Tel: (33-1) 53 76 61 40
Fax: (33-1) 45 63 05 44
E-mail: fukuoka@deljp-ocde.fr

Dr. Jorge A. CHAVEZ PRESA
(Vice-Chair)
Deputy Secretary of Energy Policy
Ministry of Energy
Insurgentes Sur 890
Col. Del Valle
CP03100 MEXICO, D.F.
Tel: (52-5) 448 6070
Fax: (52-5) 448 6325
E-Mail: spyde@energia.gob.mx

Mr. Gerardo LOZANO
Minister for Social Affairs and Public Management
Permanent Delegation to the OECD
4 rue Galliéra
75116 PARIS
Tel: (33-1) 53 67 86 14/00
Fax: (33-1) 47 20 07 91
E-mail: glozano@worldnet.fr

Ms. Liliana MEJIA
Counsellor for Economic Affairs
Permanent Delegation to the OECD
4 rue Galliéra
75116 PARIS
Tel: (33-1) 53 67 86 00/01
Fax: (33-1) 47 20 07 91
E-mail: shcpmeji@worldnet.fr

Mr. Odd BØHAGEN
Deputy Director General
Ministry of Labour and Govt. Administration
Akersgt. 59
Postboks 8004 Dep.
N-0030 OSLO
Tel: (47) 2224 4820
Fax: (47) 2224 4889
E-mail: odd.bohagen@aad.dep.telemax.no
Mr. Terje DYRSTAD  Deputy Director General
Ministry of Labour and Govt. Administration
Akersgt 59
Postboks 8004 Dep
N-0030 OSLO
Tel: (47) 22 24 49 75
Fax: (47) 22 24 48 14
E-mail: terje.dyrstad@aad.dep.telemax.no

Mr. Derek GILL  Branch Manager
State Sector Development\State Services Commission
100 Molesworth Street
PO Box 329
WELLINGTON
Tel: (64-4) 495 66 63
Fax: (64-4) 495 66 99
E-mail: derek.gill@ssc.govt.nz

Dr. Jacek CZAPUTOWICZ  Deputy Head of the Civil Service
Office of Civil Service/Urzad Sluzby Cywilnej
Al. J.Ch. Szucha 2/4
00582 WARSZAWA
Tel: (48-22) 694 6395
Fax: (48-22) 694 6791
E-Mail: jacek_czaputowicz@usc.gov.pl

Mr. Robert CZARNECKI  Director General
Office of Civil Service/Urzad Sluzby Cywilnej
Al. J.Ch. Szucha 2/4
00582 WARSZAWA
Tel: (48-22) 694 6395
Fax: (48-22) 694 6791
E-Mail: robertc@usc.gov.pl

Mr. Jacek PILATKOWSKI  Counsellor
Permanent Delegation to the OECD
86 rue de la Faisanderie
75116 PARIS
Tel: (33-1) 45 04 60 20
Fax: (33-1) 45 04 35 89
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Position/Role</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Facsimile</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PORTUGAL</td>
<td>Mme Graça POMBEIRO</td>
<td>Deputy Director</td>
<td>Secrétariat à la Modernisation Administrative</td>
<td>Tel: (351-1) 392 15 37</td>
<td>Fax: (351-1) 392 15 99</td>
<td><a href="mailto:graca.pombeiro@sma.pt">graca.pombeiro@sma.pt</a> / <a href="mailto:sma@sma.pt">sma@sma.pt</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Rogério PEIXOTO</td>
<td>Chef de Division</td>
<td>Direction générale de l’Administration Publique</td>
<td>Tel: (351 1) 397 21 49/395 53 20</td>
<td>Fax: (351 1) 397 30 53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mme Maria Cristina SERPA DE ALMEIDA</td>
<td>Représentant permanent adjoint</td>
<td>Délégation permanente auprès de l’OCDE</td>
<td>Tel: (33-1) 45 03 31 00</td>
<td>Fax: (33-1) 45 03 22 03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RÉPUBLIQUE</td>
<td>Ms. Olga VIDLAKOVA</td>
<td>Advisor to the Deputy Minister for Public Management Reform</td>
<td>Ministry of the Interior Public Administration Reform Section</td>
<td>Tel: (420-2) 21 10 12 23</td>
<td>Fax: (420-2) 24 22 61 91</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vidlak@csu.notes.cz">vidlak@csu.notes.cz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZECH REPUBLIC</td>
<td>Mr. Daniel TRNKA</td>
<td>Unit for EU Matters</td>
<td>Ministry of the Interior Public Administration Reform Section</td>
<td>Tel: (420-2) 21 10 12 24</td>
<td>Fax: (420-2) 21 10 13 49</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dtrnka@csu.notes.cz">dtrnka@csu.notes.cz</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ms. Blanka FAJKUSOVA
Delegation of the Czech Republic
to the OECD
40, rue de Boulainvilliers
F-75016 PARIS
Tel: 01 45 20 35 14
Fax: 01 45 20 35 54
E-mail: csdeleg002@olis.oecd.org

Mr. Barry FORRESTER
Cabinet Office
Horse Guards Road
LONDON SW1P 3AL
Tel: (44-171) 270 1989
Fax: (44-171) 270 1973
E-Mail: bforrest@cabinet-office.gov.uk

Ms. Eleanor GOODISON
Cabinet Office
Horse Guards Road
LONDON SW1P 3AL
Tel: (44-171) 270 63 00
Fax: (44-171) 270 57 69
E-Mail: egoodison@cabinet-office.gov.uk

Mr. Håkan FÄRM
Director
Public Management Division
Ministry of Justice
Rosenbad 4
S-103 33 STOCKHOLM
Tel: (46-8) 405 1598
Fax: (46-8) 4117169
E-mail: hakan.farm@justice.ministry.se

Mr. Per HÖGBERG
Head of Section,
Public Management Division
Ministry of Justice
Rosenbad 4
S-10333 STOCKHOLM
Tel: (46-8) 405 14 36
Fax: (46-8) 411 71 69
E-mail: per.hogberg@justice.ministry.se
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title and Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUISSE/</td>
<td>Mme Elisabeth ADAM</td>
<td>Juriste Collaboratrice personnelle du Chancelier Chancellerie fédérale Palais fédéral ouest CH-3003 BERNE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWITZERLAND</td>
<td>Mr. Beat BÜRGI</td>
<td>First Secretary Permanent Delegation to the OECD 28 rue de Martignac 75007 PARIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURQUIE/TURKEY</td>
<td>Mr. Ali KÖPRÜLÜ</td>
<td>Minister-Counsellor Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Delegation to the OECD 9 rue Alfred-Dehodencq 75116 PARIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Ilgin KUKNER</td>
<td>Head of Section Foreign Relations Department Prime Ministry Mesrutiyet Cad. No. 24, Kat. 5 Kizilay 06640 Ankara Tel: (90 312) 419 11 01/94 or 96 Fax: (90 312) 419 11 56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>