

MEMORANDUM

of the participants in the meeting of the Committees on Public Administration and Regional Development of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, National Council of the Slovak Republic, Senate of the Republic of Poland, and National Council of Hungary held in Prague on 9 -10 May 2012.

All participants have assessed the state of the operational system of public administration in each of the V4 countries.

In their presentations and reports, they exchanged their experience on the operation of public administration and agreed that when it comes to the various models of operation of public administration – joined or separated – in each of the V4 countries, the term public administration is understood to mean service to citizens. Citizens have the right to good public administration as well as information and services in a comprehensible and simply operating system of public administration that, through its economic and effective approach and work, is able to satisfy citizens' requirements.

The following was stated as part of the above:

- The corner-stone of public administration is the municipality and the specific organisational levels of public administration.
- Pressure is being exerted on the various public administration authorities to decentralise, in a way that does not allow their areas of responsibility to overlap, but allows them to mutually complement one another and support the operation of local governments while adhering to the law of the country concerned.
- Agreement was reached in the area of modernisation of public administration, which the participants understand as the need for further economisation, computerisation, and rationalisation of public administration.
- The participants stated the important contribution of computerisation of public administration for improving services to citizens in the framework of performance of public administration and local government, **and support the further effective implementation of electronic public administration using EU resources, including the mutual exchange of experience and cooperation.**
- In the interests of rationalisation and economisation of public administration, it is necessary in each of the V4 countries to consider the optimal size of the municipalities that are able to observe all of the attributes of effective and efficient performance of public administration.
- The relationship between local government and the State in the area of public administration is always a political decision that should be so conscientious that changes in public administration are as infrequent as possible.
- The participants stated that the development of public administration is a never-ending process.

Following to discussion on the National Strategic Reference Framework, the participants paid attention to the need for a common, active approach to be taken by the Central European countries to the issue of utilising EU resources in the new period 2014 +. They agreed that cohesion policy should remain a strong and independent policy in the area of growth and jobs and consider this policy to be one of the main priorities in preparing the future multiannual

financial framework; it should ensure that the financing level from the EU funds will not fall, with the aim of providing the greatest territorial potential of the EU regions.

- The meeting participants stated that it is necessary to make use of the potential of a common approach of the Central European countries as part of **setting the system for implementation of EU cohesion policy after 2013** on the pan-European level for the future period; **for this reason, they request that any reduction in funding of the multiannual financial framework be directed proportionally at all expenditure headings of the EU budget.**
- It is necessary to increase emphasis on the strategic and conceptual levels of management **in the area of implementation of cohesion policy.**
- It is necessary to set the system of management and implementation of structural funds to minimise the risk of money being returned to the EU budget. At the same time, the utilisation of EU resources in the period 2014 + should reflect local needs **and their development potential** in compliance with the Europe 2020 strategy.
- It is necessary to increase utilisation of the potential for the mutual exchange of experience in the implementation of structural funds; **for this reason, the meeting participants in particular request the enshrinement of VAT as an eligible expense financeable from the structural funds and express a reserved stance to the conditionality of utilising EU resources in relation to so-called macro-conditionality.**
- With the aim of ensuring the presence of top-notch experts in public administration in national institutions working with the EU bodies but also in EU institutions, the possibility to create a common Central European training institute should be considered.
- **The meeting participants have agreed on the request that no special resources be earmarked from the EU funds, where such resources would be directed into the new Connecting Europe facility (of the infrastructure fund), and are against the transfer of EUR 10 billion from cohesion fund resources to this new instrument.**

Finally, the participants agreed that the meetings of the V4 countries would take place annually, or more frequently in case of need, in one of the V4 countries. After agreement of all participants of Prague's meeting the organising country in the year 2013 will be **Poland, where the representatives of the committees of the parliaments of the V4 countries shall meet in the next quarter.**