

ANALYSIS OF THE ROMANIAN PUBLIC  
POLICY PROCESS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT  
THE PRINCIPLES OF A MODERNIZED  
PROCESS

**Abstract**

This paper addresses from a conceptual angle the policy process, presenting the basic principles of a modernized public policy process. These principles developed by the Cabinet Office from London represent a descriptive model that highlights some important characteristics of an efficient public policies process.

The second part of the paper makes an analysis of the public policies process in Romania from the perspective of the model proposed by the Cabinet office from London, in order to identify the extent to which the proposed ideas are respected or not in practice in Romania.

**Keywords:** Long term vision, rigorous information, horizontal and vertical cooperation, early evaluation

**JEL CODES:** E61, J18, J38, J48, J58

## ANALIZA PROCESULUI POLITICILOR PUBLICE ÎN ROMÂNIA PE BAZA PRINCIPIILOR UNUI PROCES MODERNIZAT

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**Rezumat**

Această lucrare abordează dintr-un unghi conceptual procesul politicilor, prezentând principiile de bază ale unui proces modernizat al politicilor publice. Aceste principii elaborate de către Biroul Cabinetului din Londra reprezintă un model descriptiv ce scoate în evidență anumite caracteristici importante ale unui proces eficient al politicilor publice.

A doua parte a lucrării realizează o analiză a procesului politicilor publice în România din perspectiva modelului propus de Biroul Cabinetului din Londra, cu scopul de a identifica măsura în care ideile propuse sunt respectate sau nu în practica din România.

**Cuvinte cheie:** viziune pe termen lung, informații riguroase, cooperare orizontală și verticală, evaluare timpurie



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## 1. THE SHAPE OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE MODERNIZED PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS

The Cabinet office from London developed a model for public policy making process.

The model is „a theoretical representation of the modernized policy process”. The most important element of this one is that „it recognises the uniqueness of each piece of policy making yet is demanding in what it requires of policy makers and it has the capacity to be customised to reflect departmental priorities”. This model comprises “a total of nine core principles that/.../ together encapsulate all the key elements of the policy making process; definitions of the core principles, together with descriptions of the evidence needed to demonstrate each competency”. (Report United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1999).

The nine core principles that relate to each coordinate are the following:

Long term, forward looking public policy making – “takes a long term vision based on statistical trends and informed predictions, of the likely impact of policy”.

“Policy makers should look beyond the actions being taken now on, say, improving educational standards, reducing crime or reducing health inequalities, and think about what should come next. The outcomes being pursued are long term but the policies being used to achieve them will need to be adjusted over time, as lessons are learned about what works and as the world within which policies take effect itself changes”. (Report United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1999).

It is known that long term, forward looking projects represents a problem for ministers that need measures producing short term results because they are pressured by the electoral cycle. Another obstacle is represented by the long term vision uncertainties in the public policy making process. The most important instruments for identifying the key uncertainties are the scenarios that can be classified around areas with the greatest uncertainty and with the greatest impact for the future.

Developments in European and International level in public policy making process – “takes account of factors in the national, European and international situation and communicates policy effectively”. (Report United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1999).

The experience of other countries is very important in the public policy making process. Therefore, the policy makers need to build relationships with their foreign counterparts and exchange information by using the Internet, e-mail and other instruments that make such cooperation possible.

Change and flexibility in the public policy process – „Policy makers must be flexible and innovative, questioning established ways of dealing with things, encouraging new and creative ideas and where appropriate, making established ways work better. Wherever possible,/.../ they must be opened to/.../ comments and suggestions of others. Risks are identified and actively managed. Experimentation and diversity are encouraged through use of pilots/trials”. (Report United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,1999).

Identification of rigorous information and their efficient utilization – “uses best available evidence from a wide range of sources and involves key stakeholders at an early stage”. (Report United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 999).

Nowadays policy makers’ decisions should be based on the best information available from a wide range of sources: expert knowledge, national and international research, statistics, stakeholder consultation, evaluation of previous policies, new research, and internet. All information and relevant analysis provided by specialists must be comprehensible to policy makers.

Taking into account all affected parties – “takes account of the impact on the needs of all those directly or indirectly affected by the policy”. (Report United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,1999).

“In theory, it is indicated that all those who will be affected directly or indirectly by the decision to be taken should be involved in the public consultation processes. But in practice there are many factors that lead to various forms of representation: political interests, poor visibility or force aggregation of interests, low technical capacity to formulate requests to the political and bureaucratic system etc. Another important element in the consultation and public involvement in decision making process is to ensure representation of diversity (socio-demographic, residential, political orientation, etc.). If a process of involving the public does not take into account these things, there is the risk to neglect the interests of groups and to put the entire process into question. Those who organize such processes of public participation should take into account the representation of all those potentially affected by the decision”. (Profiroiu, Păceșilă and Manolache, 2009).

The institutional real, constant cooperation of institutions involved in the public policy making process – “looks beyond institutional boundaries to the Government’s strategic objectives of the ministry; establishes the ethical and legal base for policy”. (Report United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1999).

It is essential that policy makers have a holistic view, look beyond institutional boundaries and work collaboratively with the specialists in order to establish the ethical, moral and legal base for policy.

Early evaluation – builds systematic evaluations of early results in the public policy making process. The systematic evaluation of policy effectiveness is included in the public policy making process.

Review/Update – “keeps established policy under review to ensure it continues to deal with the problems it was designed to tackle, taking account of associated effects elsewhere”. (Report United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1999).

The policy makers should constantly review the public policy in order to be sure they are really dealing with the problems that have been designed to deal with, taking into account the associated side effects.

Capitalization on previous experiences – “learns from past experience what works and what does not./.../ This means that new policies must have evaluation of their effectiveness built into them from the start; established policies must be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are still delivering the desired outcome; and the lessons learned from evaluation must be available and accessible to other policy makers” .(Report United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1999).

## 2. THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED MODEL IN THE ROMANIAN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

In this paper I tried to analyze the public policy process in Romania using the model presented above. In this analysis I focused on principles of the modernized process of public policy because I considered that the way of improving public policy depends on cooperation between the departments involved, on the complexity of their responsibilities regarding public policies developed, on management culture, etc. The way these issues are understood and applied is very important, allowing the understanding of the larger context in which this process takes place. In the analysis below I also used the reports of the General Secretariat of Government. These reports contain information about the activities of ministries and government agencies in the public policy process.

### ***Long term, forward looking public policy making***

Lack of tradition in the public policy process and insufficient recognition of the importance of this practice area for social and economic transition determined the ministries to draft normative acts without pertinent analysis. Also, the public policy-making process depends to a large extent on political process and the number of public policies is very small during the election periods. However, because of this situation the programs and public policies developed lack the long term vision and performance, leading to loss of results and consistency in the efforts to an economy that can cope with competitive pressure and forces within the European Union. They are related to the social and political contexts, due to the

pressure from political parties' government and deliver short term results due to pressures of the election cycle.

All these have resulted in legislation without factual basis, which can be costly or difficult to implement, may cause resentment among the target group and require repeated amendments. This issue is considered important because policy making within the ministry is not limited to a small group of people. Policy making is the task of all departments of the ministry, so that training in policy analysis techniques can be applied in order to obtain results. Fortunately, such modules and courses (in which necessary skills can be learned) already exist.

Forced by the European Union, the Romanian specialists must think long term. Consequently, public policies that are being developed should aim at restoring and maintaining a reasonable and long term balance, between economic development and the integrity of the natural environment in ways that society can understand and accept.

At present, we consider that Romania needs coherent policies and long term development programmes, ensuring rule of law and strengthening civil society in a difficult period. There are also successful attempts in this regard, the best example being the strategies, as public policy documents. An example is the National Sustainable Development Strategy of Romania with horizons for 2013-2020-2030. For Romania, sustainable development is not one of the options, but the only reasonable prospect of becoming national. This leads to a new paradigm of development through the confluence of economic, social and environmental factors. This view is enhanced by the quality of member state of Romania in European Union.

Another key issue in the public policy process is the use of scenarios that would allow identification of key uncertainties related to a public policy area. The public policy making process in Romania does not foresee the use of scenarios, especially in those areas with a high uncertainty and a great impact for the future.

I can give an example of the public policy on An efficient way of integrating the public managers in the general civil service system, initiated by the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform. Considering the importance of this policy for public administration and civil service reform in Romania, it would be necessary to organize the ten-year scenarios focusing on the status of public manager. These scenarios would allow the identification of answers to questions like "what would happen if", leading to the generation of creative ideas for solving the uncertain situation regarding the status of public managers.

***Developments in European and International level in the public policy making process***

We consider that studying the experience of other countries may have a positive impact on policy-making process. The public policies developed in our country take into account the development of the European public sphere, but we can not make comparisons with similar interventions in other countries. Considering the three societal systems - the public sphere, the political sphere and the policy sphere – we can say that the Europeanization process begins with major changes in the political sphere, whatever the stage of integration is. The Conventions ratified, the Treaty of Accession and the Community *acquis* implemented in our country are the strategic policy frameworks for changes/innovation in public policy making process. The europeanization, beyond the multitude of definitions, can be regarded as a complex process involving the transfer of policy and the possibility of learning new ways of doing politics - methods, institutions, ideas, (good) practice - oriented to the players.

Surely, the experience of other countries can not be applied in all fields such as education, and even the social practices, because in some cases the different levels of development do not allow this thing.

However, there are examples where the experience and practices of other countries may be useful. In the context of public administration and civil service reform in Romania, and taking into account the uncertain evolution of civil servants' career in recent years, I recommend that in case of public policy *An efficient way of integrating the public managers in the general civil service system*, the specialists take for example the UK system. Here, public administration graduates can attend a program called Fast Stream (a similar program called Young Professional Scheme operated in Romania) preparing a nucleus of a new generation of public service leaders. They are politically neutral and professionally trained in the modern values and principles of public sector management.

In the United Kingdom, recruitment and promotion system for civil servants is a basic system functions. The recruitment process is open, and vacancies are accessible to a wider range of applicants, including in some cases, candidates from the private sector. Promotion is largely related to individual performance, and seniority does not affect in any way promotion.

Although the system of recruitment in the UK shows a clear trend toward the basic system functions, the Fast Stream programme can also be considered a remnant of the career system. The trend towards more open recruitment at senior level is a certainty, because 39% of 146 positions were filled by private sector applicants in 2002-2003. Wage growth and promotion is linked to a complex system of performance appraisal.

### ***Change and flexibility in the public policy process***

In recent years "significant progress have been recorded in the system of public policies management that aimed at strengthening government capacity for better monitoring their own political priorities and ensuring a more efficient regulatory environment". (Romanian Strategy, 2006).

In this context, the General Secretariat of the Romanian Government has initiated several measures in order to reform the policy formulation system at central level of government. These measures are aimed at enhancing the capacity of government institutions in developing and underpinning public policy initiatives. The purpose of this exercise consisted in changing the way the government initiatives are evaluated.

Initially, these initiatives were considered bureaucratic measures of the central level of government. They would have hampered the activity of the central public administration by increasing the time spent on the preparation of new policy initiatives. Gradually, these initiatives have become a useful policy tool available for public administration and their elaboration made it possible to reduce the implementation period, to increase the predictability and efficiency of governance and also made it possible for civil society to participate in decision making.

The General Secretariat of the Government has also elaborated a Manual for the preparation of Public Policy Proposals, establishing procedures for impact analysis. The purpose of this manual was to provide brief descriptions and an overview of methods that can be used for preparing the public policy proposal as an official policy document in decision making in the ministries and governmental institutions. The limits of this manual consist in the amount of information and level of detail on public policy analysis which is done before, during and after implementation. After discussions and consultations with other ministries and stakeholders, the General Secretariat of the Government has decided to present in detail the techniques and methods used in the public policy formulation process. This decision was also a consequence of the approval of the Strategy for improving the public policy system at central public administration adopted by the Government Decision no. 870/2006.

As a result of these initiatives, the public policy making process has been improved. This improvement refers to the following aspects:

- completing the section on the reason for enacting normative acts

The public policy on An efficient way of integrating the public managers in the general civil service system specifies in the fundamentation note on the draft normative acts - Emergency Ordinance on the status of civil servant called public manager – the reason for enacting the normative act: developing a

coherent system of public managers, based on merit and performance which attracts people with skills and potential in order to strengthen public administration capacity and public administration reform process in Romania. The main changes made by the legislative acts are also specified, being grouped according to career stages and issues.

- a very good identification of the future legislation effects on the legislation in force

The public policy on An efficient way of integrating the public managers in the general civil service system specifies that the solution recommended does not involve amendments to existing legislation on the Statute of the civil servants.

- an adequate knowledge of European legislation which affects the internal regulations

The public policy on Creating and implementing a national system of sustainable production and consumption, specifies that Romania, as EU member state and a member of the Commission's ETAP High Level Working Group, must provide to the European Commission the road map for implementing the Action Plan for Environmental Technologies. For this purpose, it was desirable to create an integrated system for sustainable production and consumption. Priority areas for eco-procurement and environmental technologies have been identified, being necessary budgetary allocations in order to support them.

However, there has been no remarkable progress in the quality of policy proposals, being necessary to continue the efforts for strengthening the central public administration ability to develop public policy proposals. Also, the credibility of governmental actors could increase if they would focus on risks assessment training at the public policy level. In any field the change involves risks and therefore, the policy reform process in our country requires taking into account the risk management issues.

### ***Identification of rigorous information and their efficient utilization***

One of the major problems referring to the coordination of ministries activities in Romania is the information asymmetry. This is caused by a lack of tradition in public communication and consultation and occurs in the relationship between actors, especially when their number is large. The information asymmetry between the different spheres of central public administration is the exclusive information held by an institution and its non-proliferation to other interested partners.

In our country, ministries have only slightly informed the interested government partners or civil society partners about public policy or legislative initiatives. They generally offer a short-term consultation and few opportunities for negotiation of mutually acceptable solutions. However, the Government Decision.

No 1361/2006 and the initiatives within the Strategy for a better regulation at the central level of public administration 2008 – 2013, they represented progress in solving such problems.

Also in the process of information collection and transmission, distortions may occur presenting a false picture of the realities in a certain area. The information distortion is due either to the pressure generated by the monitoring and evaluation results, or either by the time pressure involving the gathering of a large amount of accurate information in a relatively short time.

In terms of technical and scientific research, risk analysis, etc. it is necessary to translate them into an accessible form by the specialists from the departments. The Public Policy Units within ministries accomplish a technical function (according to Government Decision no. 775/2005), so it is recommended "to integrate in these units the staff members having the necessary expertise to formulate and monitor the public policies process and less the managerial staff of the ministry structure, whose function is to coordinate and approve the proposals prepared by the professional staff". (Romanian Report, 2007).

I also consider that ministries departments must generate and use information in order to get the best effect.

In areas such as education (for example the impact assessment on The implementation of the new structure on educational levels, used for developing the public policy on Restructuring the school system on educational levels, the impact assesment on The purposes and effects of the introduction of early education in the Romanian educational system used for developing the public policy on Early education - the first step of formal education initiated by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth), social services, community public services (for example The risk analysis on the consequences arising from the amendment of Law no. 371/2004 on the set up, organizing and functioning of the Community Police concerning all traffic police and public order structures of the Romanian Police which would be included in its composition) and criminal justice there are some researches, analyses, but the latter are insufficient and there is no consensus within the scientific community about the appropriate methodology or about the use of information obtained through research in practice. The examples of good practice in certain areas of public policy, the generation and use of information and research in policy making are not strong enough in order to support the government's pragmatic approach. Also, any department involved in the public policy making process is not really organized for the best use of science and technology in order to to achieve its immediate objectives and to formulate its long-term strategies. This is equally true for social and economic research.

In order to develop the expertise of the Public Policy Units' staff within ministries the Public Policy Department of the General Secretariat of the Government has organized a series of training programs. Through the World Bank technical assistance, training courses were conducted in June 2007 in the following areas: strategic planning, impact analysis, monitoring and evaluation. Also, with the support of SIGMA, the training programs initiated by the Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia together with the Public Policy Unit of the General Secretariat of the Government continued to unfold.

„The position of the Public Policy Units in the organization of some ministries was strengthened in 2007. A number of four ministries have made changes: in two ministries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Rural Development) the Units that had previously been under the direct subordination of the ministry had changed it with the subordination of the general secretary, ensuring the continuity of policy units activities and focusing on the technical side of its duties. In two other ministries (Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform and Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing), the Public Policy Units have been converted from the service, namely the steering group, into direction, namely general direction which translates into an increased stability of the structure”. (Romanian Report, 2007).

#### ***Taking into account all affected parties***

The main way of taking into account the interests of all parties involved is the process of consultation. For this purpose, the law no.52/2003 on the decisional transparency in the public administration has been published in our country.

This „establishes the minimal procedural rules applicable for ensuring decisional transparency within the authorities of the central and local public administration, elected or appointed, as well as of other public institutions that use public financial resources, in the reports established between them with the citizens and their legally constituted associations”. (Transparency in public administration, 2011).

In their annexes, Government Decision no. 775/2005 and Government Decision no. 1361/2006 establish the requirement to provide information on the public consultation process as part of the presentation and motivation documentation.

In our country we can not speak of a culture of communication between central public administration and stakeholders in order to facilitate the understanding of the rulemaking process. It is therefore necessary to improve the process of consultation and social dialogue by creating a mechanism and developing practices involving the stakeholders in the consultation process, before drafting the regulations.

For this purpose, according to the Strategy for a better regulation at the central level of public administration 2008 – 2013, the following aspects are considered:

- "The amendment of Law no. 52/2003 in order to establish the government institutions obligation to publicly argue the decision, to consider or not consider the proposals and recommendations made by the interested persons. Also, the scope of the law should be extended to public policy documents;
- Training courses for the staff responsables for civil society relations and legal consultation departments at the central public administration (methods, best practices);
- The introduction of programs in order to identify and promote best practices at central level;
- The initiation of pilot projects implementing best practices (in Romania and other European Union Member States and other countries);

The exchange of experience between central public administration institutions in Romania and other EU Member States;

- The organisation of a series of round tables and discussions with civil society representatives at central level /.../, being finalized in a framework document, containing information about the methods considered the most effective means of consultation at central level. /.../. There are also issues that do not require consultation with civil society, /.../ issues having a limited impact on society, or whose solutions are compatible with EU law". (Romanian Strategy, 2008).

The issue of public consultation in Romania is in a starting phase, and citizen participation in public policy decisions is viewed with suspicion and distrust. There are many situations in which citizens and nongovernmental organization are invited to different types of public consultation, more or less formal. Public participation and consultation are thus reduced to mere discussions, in a broad and inadequate framework, often without any prior training, representing only "consultation events" that must be put on administrative or political agenda.

Consultation is not carried out throughout the public policy process and in public administration it is used only in the final draft of the law.

This situation can be explained by the following reasons:

- a) the administrative tradition in Romania that has not valued and not value the input, the possible contribution of citizens in public resource allocation decision;

- b) the administrative decision is based on an excessive legal logicis, neglecting managerial logic elements, which requires the stakeholders' involvement in many stages;
- c) the slow implementation of public administration reform and the early-stage for using public consultation. (Romanian Report, 2010).

***The institutional real, constant cooperation of institutions involved in the public policy making process***

The institutional structure in Romania has a relatively tolerance of uncertainty and overlapping responsibilities. This reflects the government's inability to take clear-cut decisions, especially when it comes to reducing public expenditures. In our country, institutions created in different periods or get shaped by various international organizations providing assistance, coexist in a complicated and dysfunctional structure. The central public administration consists of layers of institutions that appear, gradually decay and finally become irrelevant, following the career of their political sponsors, but they are still persist for mysterious reasons even after their initial duties were reassigned.

However, the General Secretariat of the Government has shown professionalism and skills in coordinating the development and implementation of public policies at central level and in cooperation with other institutions in the external environment in order to achieve common objectives (for examples, the introduction of the public policy system and of the strategic planning). The results have been recognized over time, both at home and abroad and have steadily improved. The General Secretariat of the Government has managed to continuously develop cooperation with international institutions like UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), World Bank, European Commission Representation, SIGMA, various embassies in Romania, etc., and has attracted significant resources for implementing various proposed projects and strengthening public administrative capacity.

In addition, 11 councils have been established by the Government Decision no. 750/2005 on establishing the permanent inter-ministerial councils. The elaboration of this normative act aimed to improve the efficiency of inter-ministerial activity. These permanent interministerial councils are focused on solving problems in major areas for inter-ministerial cooperation. Committees and working groups are in their subordination in order to solve specific and clearly defined problems with precise deadlines.

Some important uncertainties regarding the coordination of projects are still present. Also, weaknesses in coordination between the General Secretariat of the Government and the Ministry of Finance in joint projects on strategic planning and budget programming may affect the results. In addition, there are difficulties in implementing the reform of public policy making process at central public administration.

This is due to resistance to change of ministries, (specialty departments' cooperation with public policy units for fundamenting public policies) and to directly develop of legislative acts without a public policy analysis. Despite these shortcomings, we can speak of a horizontal cooperation between ministries (for example between Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in elaborating the public policy on Integrating Information and Communications Technology in the university education system in Romania), and also a vertical cooperation (for example between Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and National Centre for Staff Training in Pre-University Education, specialized body with legal personality, subordinated to the ministry, in implementing the public policy on Restructuring the school system on educational levels).

Another factor that may influence the government policy decision making is the instability and changes of government. They can cause changes in key functions, sometimes jeopardizing the continuity and implementation of planned policies. At present the position of General Secretary of the Government is occupied by a senior civil servant and this may constitute a guarantee for stability and continuity of projects initiated by the General Secretariat of the Government, regardless of the changes that might occur in the structure of Government.

#### ***Early evaluation, review/update, capitalization on previous experiences***

Currently, the public policy process in Romania does not focus on learning from previous experiences. The main mechanism of learning from experience aimed at evaluating the current public policies and reviewing them regularly. In terms of policy impact assessments, the quality and their number is quite low.

In the European Union countries like the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK there is a widespread tradition of policy impact assessment and quantification of administrative burdens on citizens and companies. This concern was reflected in Romania by the laws and strategies adopted in this area. In recent years, the public institutions with responsibilities in this field (the Ministry of Public Finance, the Ministry of Administration and Interior, The General Secretariat of the Government) have benefited from training and technical assistance programs financed by the European Union, World Bank and other international donors.

However, the number of policies impact assessments (or regulations) that shows the effects of public policies on different groups is extremely low and their quality is weak. In fact, there is a danger that such instruments are formally adopted by Romania due to the pressure of international organizations. Their partial and formal application (as indicated by the experience) or their failure may not lead to any

change in the way policies are formulated and implemented. The underlying causes of this situation are the following:

- The lack of a clear intention at the managerial level in public administration because the cost-benefit analysis would not justify the opportunity to adopt public policies (many of the proposed draft normative acts would not have benefits that justify the economic and social costs, not only the financial cost);
- The ministries are reluctant to establish targets and performance indicators in order to reduce liability for the negative consequences that would involve an inadequate implementation or the unattained targets;
- The impact assessment is a difficult task for the public servants, because it involves revealing negative aspects and they have no incentive to make them known to the public;
- The exchange of information between ministries, coordination between them being usually weak;
- The institutions might have separate strategies partially overlapping;
- The existing legislation does not really offer the necessary prerequisites for simplifying the administrative procedures, and principles of ministerial responsibility require prudence in the evaluation of the administrative activity.

In Romania we can not speak of a systematic evaluation of policies and programs during their developmental stages. Monitoring and evaluation process has long been understood that "an obligation undertaken with respect of programs funded from the European Union and other international financial institutions (OECD, World Bank)", but only achieved at the end of their implementation. (Romanian Guide, 2009).

The ministries and other central authorities - institutions that coordinate the implementation of public policies – play an essential role in the monitoring and evaluation process. They are the main entities that can provide the necessary information in the monitoring process, being also the main beneficiaries of monitoring and evaluation activities. In most cases there is a monitoring and evaluation required as a condition for achieving the objectives and activities of internationally financed programs. As a result, most ministries can provide examples of good practice in monitoring and evaluation of the European programs, but they can not provide information about different kinds of activities financed by public funds.

"For this purpose, it is necessary to make a partial distinction between monitoring and evaluation process of European programs and monitoring and evaluation process of public policies at national level. European monitoring and evaluation program may serve as an example for the conduct of monitoring and evaluation process at national level. Monitoring and evaluation of national programs requires an additional effort to measure performance and to obtain the necessary information involving a high degree of complexity". (Romanian Guide, 2009).

However, we should not neglect this valuable experience gained by implementing EU-funded projects that require clear standards and procedures on monitoring and evaluation, in order to ensure transparency and efficiency in the disbursements. In most cases there are not sufficient human and financial resources allocated for monitoring and evaluation activities. Lack of financial resources makes it difficult to outsource the monitoring and evaluation process. Lack of human resources dealing with this type of activities is due to the fact that the demand and offer for technical assistance and training programs in this area is extremely low. Solving such problems needs to increase the level of training and funds (internal or external) allocated for monitoring and evaluation programs.

In addition, problems concerning the application of recommendations may arise in the analysis of monitoring and evaluation activities within ministries. The results of public policies monitoring and evaluation are useful for the conduct of future operations planning. Monitoring and evaluation reports are rather weak in terms of quality. This is due to the problems of collecting information and their accuracy. „In many ministries it has noted the lack of databases that contain information resulting from monitoring reports, but it happens sometimes that information is outdated. In some cases, these databases are poorly organized or are scattered in various departments, which do not offer a unitary view of reality. There is an apparent lack of an integrated circuit of public policy documents within the ministries. The lack of an integrated document workflow/.../makes it difficult both to access data and information on public policies of ministries and opportunities for inter and intra-institutional communication". (Romanian Guide, 2009).

Also, there are a lot of gaps in identifying the performance indicators that measure the public policy outcomes in the monitoring and evaluation processes. An example is the public policy on Integrating Information and Communications Technology in the university education system in Romania. This policy specifies that the indicators used will be those approved in the European Community, without specifying any of them. A similar situation occurs in the case of public policy on Restructuring the school system on educational levels: the performance indicators will be those established by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

When we talk of review/update, it is necessary to understand some aspects. There is an asymmetrical situation between ministries on draft legislation submitted to the preparatory meeting and on the number of requests for update/review. „In some ministries (for example Ministry of Foreign Affairs), although a number of 30 projects has been proposed, the most did not require a breakdown of the economic, social and budget impact, as there are ministries that have had fewer proposals (for example Ministry of Public Health - 15 proposals), a quarter of them being returned in order to rebuild them because of the importance of estimating the impact”. (Romanian Report., 2007).

Many of the success factors proposed are not respected when dealing with a request for the review of public policy. Even if the reasons for the refund of policies in order to be revised are clearly stated, however we can speak of a speedy and intensive process that has tight and realistic deadlines. Also, the public policy process does not focus on learning from past experience that should be assimilated and then efficiently applied. The support is not given to all those involved in this process because the government lacks the potential tools that can initiate a change of policy at central level if it considers that a public policy area needs a fundamental re-examination because of public administration or citizens complaints.

In order to improve this situation, we recommend the establishment of instruments/bodies dealing specifically with public policy revision/review. They should ensure permanent expert advice focused on a fundamental reform of the public policy issues. They are specialized long-term organizations, their experience in public policy area being quite extensive.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Improving public policy process at central level in our country depends on the actions of authorities involved and how they perceive the change. In Romania, this process can be improved by initiating internal and external researches, enhancing the information mechanism and facilitating discussions between different actors of public sector and civil society.

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