



Dear Commissioner, ambassadors, ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here in Brussels to introduce the Principles of Public Administration to such a prominent audience, particularly key decisions makers who implement public administration reform.

I think we all know very well that good governance does matter. It has a significant impact on government performance and is therefore essential in building trust in government and delivering necessary structural reforms. In recognition of this, governance issues have moved to the centre of policy debates in the OECD and its member countries in recent years.

Defining public administration reform as one of the key pillars of fundamental reforms required in the EU accession process is a great step forward. I am particularly pleased that the Principles of Public Administration have been developed jointly by the OECD and the European Commission through SIGMA, which has been a partnership initiative of the two organisations for more than two decades.

I would like to thank our colleagues in DG Enlargement, in particular the Regional Co-operation and Programmes Unit and the Strategy and Policy Unit, for the excellent co-operation which has made it possible to combine EU accession process dynamics with OECD governance expertise and to converge decades of experience from both OECD countries and EU member states, including former accession countries.

The Principles of Public Administration provide a detailed definition of good public administration that countries should be aiming for. And I should emphasise that they only outline basic and fundamental requirements that must be in place, not what some would describe as the “nice to have”.

It may sound easy, but we all know that the implementation of these reforms is a paramount task; it takes time, and requires dedication and persistence from the political and administrative leadership of the country.

The Principles offer a monitoring framework for governments and policy makers which will enable them to follow the application of reforms over time. It also provides tools to analyse what has been achieved and whether the outcomes of the work of the administration have improved.

There are 48 Principles presented in both the booklet that you have all been given and the more comprehensive publication in your pack of material. I would like to highlight some key elements which help to determine the success of reforms.

First, public administration reform can be successful only if the Government is trusted by its citizens. Implementation of the Principles has a direct impact on trust in government. In particular, recent research by the OECD illustrates that levels of corruption, openness, inclusiveness and reliability in a country determine whether or not citizens have trust in their Government. These are the cornerstones of the Principles and, when implemented, they help to avoid reform roadblock, created by poor levels of trust.



Second, we recently held discussions with top decision makers from the centres of government of OECD countries on how strong leadership is crucial for successful reforms. As ministers responsible for these reforms in your own countries, it is in your hands to guide and deliver reforms and to motivate others in your own administration. To achieve that, it is necessary to create an environment which promotes innovation and a degree of risk taking, and rewards top managers who are successful in the implementation of reforms.

Third, successful reforms take into account the financial circumstances and are designed to be financially sustainable, especially after donors' assistance is phased out. Therefore, proper planning of implementation costs and a close link between policy planning and management of public finances is crucial.

Ladies and gentlemen, through the strong focus on implementation and collection of evidence on government performance, the Principles are not only a set of requirements but are also a defined framework that I really believe can assist you in designing and implementing a public administration reform vision.

If you feel that you need assistance, do not hesitate to ask – the OECD/SIGMA is here to help you with your reform delivery. I would like to give the floor now to the Head of SIGMA, Ms Karen Hill, who will provide further insight to the Principles and the role of SIGMA in the process. Thank you very much.

Mari Kiviniemi

Deputy Secretary-General, OECD