

RECRUITING LOCAL PUBLIC SERVANTS IN ROMANIA AND BELGIUM

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Abstract: The paper presents how recruitment is done in the local public administration from Romania and Belgium (The Brussels Region) since this is one of the first steps an individual has to make in order to become a public servant and start a career in local public administration. The paper aims to show what the common points are when referring to the recruitment in the local public service in both countries.

Key words: recruitment, public servant, career.

Introduction

When starting the first job, every individual thinks on how this job could help him to achieve a successful career. The literature (Androniceanu, 2008, Hall, Moss, 1998, Mirvis, Hall, 1994, Osterman, 1996, Sullivan et al., 1998) shows that a typical career implies most often having different roles in multiple organizations, in large part because of globalization and advances in technology that have produced a turbulent environmental context (Quigley, Tymon Jr, 2006).

In the followings we will present what are the main steps implied by having a career in local public administration, focusing on recruitment. The authors will present what are the common points of the Romanian and Belgium local public servants when entering the public service.

Research methodology

The paper is based on a larger study made in 2010 and 2011 both in Belgium (the Brussels Region) and in Romania, the North-Western Region. Based on studying the legislation of both countries, consulting numerous articles and books and having interviews along with distributing questionnaires to local public servants on the matter we will present what starting a career in local public administration means in both regions.

The career in the public function

Some authors say about career that is a sequence of positions, in ascending order of prestige, through which employee pass in a certain order, after a predictable rule (Mathis et al., 1997). It also means career development, advancement, progress (Androniceanu, 2008).

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According to law (no. 611/2008), career in the civil service includes all legal situations and the effects that occur after the civil servants' work report starts until the termination of this report, as the law stipulates.

The 'career' concept shows the development in time of the public servants, from its recruitment to the public function until the end of its professional activity, or the time when it is released the administrative legal document which puts an end to the legal public function (Dogaru, 2007).

Regarding the steps of civil servants' career, in the opinion of some authors (Pastor, 2008), civil servants career is divided into four essential *stages*:

- the moment when the person enters the civil servants body;
- the completion in the public function, after the probation period;
- the promotion in the public function;
- the exit from the civil servants body.

In this study we will focus our attention only on the recruitment stage, the moment when a person enters the civil servants body.

The public function in Romania and Belgium (Brussels Region)

Within the European Union there are two public service management systems namely *the career system* and *the job system* also called the system of occupation public function.

The *career system* is applied in some countries such as France, Belgium, Spain. It implies stability and continuity in career, either within the same body of officials or by moving from one body to another. Once entered into the specific body of civil servants, the civil servant is ensured with the opportunity to remain in that body for lifetime and also with the right to develop a career inside the body.

The second type of system, *the job system* is based on an assembly of different functions or occupations (jobs). Civil servant are named into one of these functions and then have the possibility of being named into another function, without being invested with rights in this matter (Ioan, 2007). The main feature of this type of system is that recruitment and selection of civil servants are made in the exactly same manner as in the private sector. The job system is applied in countries like Great Britain, Denmark, Netherlands and Sweden.

In this study we will focus on Belgium, since it is among the countries that practice the career system just like Romania does and also due to the fact that we have had the opportunity to discuss and take interview to with civil servants from the Brussels Region. These interviews took place in 2010 in six communes of the region.

Belgium consists of three communities (Flemish, French and German), three regions (Flemish, Walloon and the Brussels-Capital/ the Brussels) and four linguistic regions (Dutch, French, German and bilingual). The Brussels Region is considered to be the smallest region, consisting of 19 communes/municipalities centered around Brussels: Anderlecht, Auderghem, Berchem/Sainte-Agathe, Brussels, Etterbeek, Evere, Forest, Ganshoren, Ixelles, Jette, Koekelberg,

Molenbeek/Saint-Jean, Saint-Gilles, Saint-JN = Saint-Josse-ten-Noode, Schaerbeek, Uccle, Watermae/Boitsfort, Woluwe/Saint-Lambert, Pierre Woluwe/Saint.

Unlike countries such as Spain, Portugal, France or Romania, Belgium has not adopted a unique status aimed at both central public function and the local one. In Belgium, the possibility of adopting a statute of staff employed in the public sector is considered an attribute of the autonomy each local collectivity has.

Despite the existence of federal settlements outlining general principles, *each community* and *each region* shall adopt its rules regarding the statute of its staff, subject to certain limitations (Van Bol, 2010). Thus, in addition to the Camu statute (referring to the states' civil servants –civil servants from central government), there also is a statute for the civil servants from the Walloon region, Flemish region, Brussels Region, French community, Flemish community, German community, etc..

As a result, *at the level of local public administration* that we are talking about, every commune has the power to adopt its own statute referring to its civil servants.

The fact that each commune has the autonomy to determine its legislation referring to its staff in administration does not mean that there is no control from superior authorities. Communal settlements that provide the local public function hide behind their disparity a uniformity, a ground arrangement that is revealed to those who seek their inspiration in the statute of state agents (Lambert, 1998).

The Social Charter

The best example to illustrate the effort to standardize the laws of communes by the regional level, at the Brussels Capital region level, is given by the existence of the 'Social Charter; (in its full name of "Harmonization of the administrative statute and general revision of scales related to local government staff in the Brussels-Capital Region "), signed in 1994 between the government of Brussels Region and big unions.

Introducing the Charter led to important changes in the statute of communal agents and it was an additional factor of unifying communes' regulations. It is the base for upgrading and adding value to the administrative, pecuniary and social statute of the local public function. However, the Social Charter has no legal binding it is more likely a recommendation, trying to integrate it them into the communal law (La Nouvelle Loi Communale). As a result, each commune sets its staff statute considering the provisions of the Charter, but which can be customized as required by case.

In the following, based on the information that we have had access to, we will present the main regulations on recruitment in the public function in Romania and then we will highlight these issues at the level of the Brussels Region.

Recruiting the local public servant in Romania

According to the Romanian Statute of Civil Servants public functions can be occupied by promotion, transfer, redistribution, recruitment and other ways stipulated by law.

Recruitment is defined according to law as all processes and procedures applied by public authorities and institutions, based on their competencies as stipulated by law in organizing and conducting competitions, processes meant for identifying and attracting candidates to fill vacancies or, if necessary, temporarily vacant public functions.

The recruitment in order to enter the Civil Service is done on contest within the limits of the vacancies of public functions. Vacancies are provided by the plan of occupying public functions. The contest is based in several principles, such as: open-competition, transparency, professional merits, competence, and equal access to public functions for each citizen who meets the necessary legal requirements. Usually the contest for recruiting civil servants is organized quarterly.

At the contest for occupying a public function may participate any person who meets the general requirements and conditions established by law to fill that public function. Based on the *job description* are established the specific conditions for participation in recruitment for vacancies. The contest implies three steps: the *selection of candidates files*, a *written test* (writing a paper and/or solving multiple-choice tests) and then an *interview*. The interview is organized in order to test the abilities, skills and motivation of candidates.

One of the limits of selecting civil servants through competitive selection is given by the possibility of appearing distortions in the organization of the contest, only to provide the job to a specific candidate chosen in advance (Moise, 2008).

According to the data provided by the central and local authorities to the National Agency of Civil Servants by, from the figure below it can be seen the evolution of staff numbers during the years 2005-2011 in Romania. It could be observed there was a reduction of the number, over the period. We could notice that central government public functions are the ones that prevail. In our opinion a cause for the fewer local public functions compared to the central ones, are the differences due to the fact that at central level the political influence is more pronounced than at the local level.

The candidate that passes the recruitment contest is named, according to law, in the public function.

For **Belgium, Brussels Region**, the staff recruiting is generally done through public appeal, but this is not a requirement. In Romania also when a public function is available this is published in the Official Gazette and also in a newspaper of general circulation at least 30 days before the date of the competition. Of course, in both countries, the vacancies shall be determined according to the plan of occupation of public functions.

Recruitment in the Belgium local public function can be done through an exam or contest. Usually the exam or contest has more parts:

- a written part of testing the general knowledge and/or judgment;
- a written and/or practical part for testing the professional knowledge;
- an oral part to test the maturity (most times it is an interview).

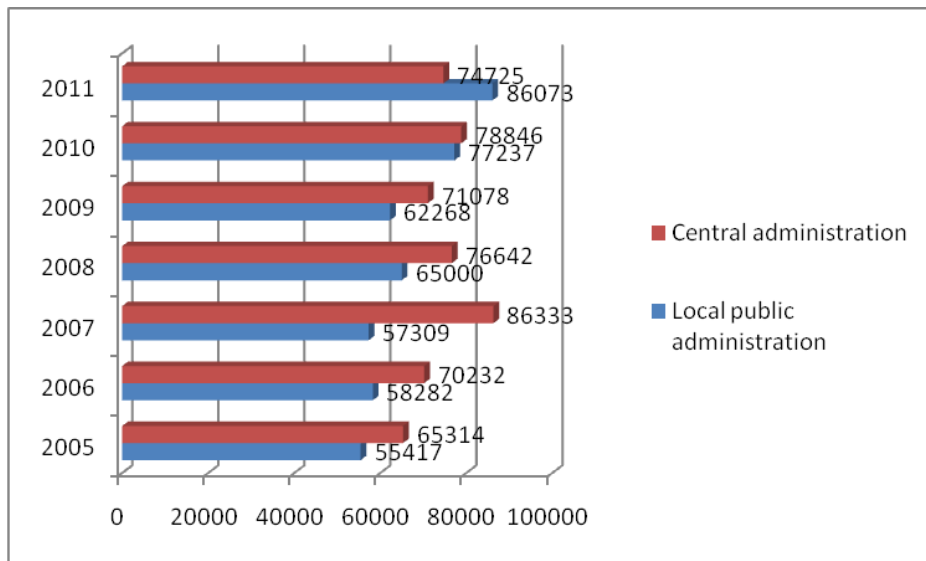


Figure 1. Evolution of the number of public functions in the period 2005-2009

In both cases, for the Romanian and Belgian candidates for the public functions are established a few conditions that need to be met, as it follows:

- they enjoy all civil and political rights;
- they must show a flawless conduct, life and morality (as a proof they have to bring the criminal record);
- minimum age limit is 18 years;
- evidence of normal physical abilities necessary in order to perform the job they candidate for (medical examination);
- they comply with the required studies for the public function for which they apply.

As regarding the citizenship condition, we believe the Belgian legislation is more permissive than the Romanian one, since it allows the candidates to public functions to have either Belgian citizenship or, if case, the citizenship of a country member of the European Union. Also the condition of residency in the commune where the available public function is vacant is established by each commune in part. In our country on the other side both citizenship and residence in Romania are mandatory. A special condition in the case of Brussels Region is related to the fact that it is mandatory for the candidates to have knowledge of two official languages (proved by a linguistic competency certificate). This is due mainly to the tensions that exist between the Belgian communes.

Table1. General conditions of recruitment for candidates at public function in both countries

Belgium (Brussels Region)	Romania
- Belgian or the citizenship of a EU member states	-Romanian
-residency-at the communes' choice	-residency- in Romania
-knowledge of two official languages	

Instead specific conditions of appointment are determined, in both cases, depending on the specifics of each public function.

As in Romania's case if the candidate has passed the exam/ the recruitment contest he is named in the public function. If the number of the candidates that have passed the recruitment exam exceeds the number of the available public functions, the ones who have not be appointed are registered in a reserve list that is kept by the institution that organizes the contest.

Passing the exam/contest with flying colors is the first step that future civil servants take in order to achieve a career in public administration, still in order to finally obtain the public function it is necessary to pass a probation period.

Conclusion

Entering a public function, by recruitment, is just one of the first steps that need to be taken in order to achieve career in public administration. To reach the end of the career in public administration, on the other hand, as this end is stipulated by law there must be also taken the rest of the steps. In both countries these steps are the next ones:

- the entrance in the Civil Servants' Body and the appointment of the civil servant;
- the probation period;
- the completion in the public function;
- evaluation, promotion and advancement;
- mobility;
- the exit from the Civil Servants' Body.

It can be observed a very high similarity of the issues presented, in terms of both countries. This similarity is due mainly to the fact that both countries apply the same management system of public function, even if at the level of territorial and administrative organization and management, the two states differ substantially,

mainly due to the pronounced local autonomy public administration has in Belgium.

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REKRUTOWANIE LOKALNYCH URZĘDNIKÓW PUBLICZNYCH W RUMUNII I BELGII

Streszczenie: Niniejszy artykuł prezentuje jak przebiega rekrutacja w lokalnej administracji publicznej w Rumunii i Belgii (Region Bruksela), jako, że jest to jeden z pierwszych

kroków, jakie osoba ma zrobić, aby stać się urzędnikiem publicznym i zacząć karierę w lokalnej administracji publicznej. Artykuł ma na celu przedstawienie wspólnych punktów odnoszących się do rekrutacji w lokalnej administracji publicznej w obu krajach.

Słowa kluczowe: rekrutacja, urzędnik publiczny, kariera.

招聘地方公务员在罗马尼亚和比利时

摘要：本文提出招聘如何完成在地方公共管理来自罗马尼亚和比利时（布鲁塞尔地区）因为这是个人有进行，以成为一名公务员和地方公共行政中开始职业生涯的第一个步骤。本文的目的是显示时指的在这两个国家的本地公共服务招募的共同点是什么。

关键词：招聘、公务员、职业生涯。