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RESEARCH REPORT

Towards European Administrative Space?

NISPAcee as a change agent: public administration and
governance structures in a state of flux in Central ad
Eastern Europe between transition and the EU Enlargement

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This research report is the result of an intensive course of work and commitments over the past few months. The project derives from my personal strong belief in European project and primarily in potential and importance of third sector in bringing about political and societal change. My background and underdeveloped research in the filed of public administration and governance directly affected my choice of topic and geographical scope of this study. Socio-political laboratory of Central and Eastern Europe provides great opportunity for academic investigation in relatively unexplored filed of public administration. Undoubtedly, I find it as an advantage however serious academic enquiries are under true scrutiny.

Success of this research proceeds only through the goodwill and generosity of others. I owe my enormous debt to a number of individuals and institutions, first of all to my academic supervisor, Frans van Nispen for his encouragement, comments and reliance in my endeavours; Harry Daemen for the final assessment and valuable comments. Furthermore, I am grateful to the individuals who participated at various stages of this project among others Ludmila Gajdosova (NISPAcee), Nicolas Dubois (OECD/SIGMA), Christopher Pollitt (Erasmus University), Theo Toonen (Leiden University) and Derry Ormond. I appreciate the many important comments and criticisms they raised, though my response to them remains incomplete. Moreover, I thank Erasmus University for substantial grant that allowed me to gather empirical data; and finally NISPAcee for its openness and support.

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Rotterdam, July 2006   Rafał Rudzki

Abstract

Dynamic context of the post-Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe provides a unique opportunity to investigate problems inherent in comprehensive and holistic modernization process of state structures including public administration and governance issues. Underdeveloped state systems, low level of professionalisation in public services and in later stage Europeanization and democratization created adaptational pressure for domestic change. This paper argues though that pressure does not always constitute a necessary condition for change. However, there must be mediating factors enabling, catalyzing or prohibiting domestic change. Explaining administrative transformation is mainly a study of institutions and institutional change in a highly complex and dynamic social setting as it occurred in the Central and Eastern Europe between transition and the EU Enlargement. The case study on the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe assumes that this organization can be certainly perceived as a change agent. Its role, activities, identity and patterns of interaction mobilize in the domestic contexts of the CEES various actors to redefine their interests and identities. It may well observable and measured when it comes to creating in public sectors and various institutions related to public administration good atmosphere for change. It results in one of the most profound achievements of the network, which is institutionalisation of professional public administration of the CEE states.

Keywords: *domestic change, impact, democratization, Europeanization, non-governmental organisation, public administration, governance, European Administrative Space, case study.*

3

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'…*Central and Eastern European countries requires an analytical capacity in which, in principle, it is possible to think unthinkable and, potentially, recognize the efficiency of inefficient approaches.*'
(Theo Toonen 1993, p. 157)

Table of Contents

5

3 Case study: NISPAcee

4 Analysis

5 Conclusions

6 Recommendations

References/Bibliography

Appendix

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abbreviations

CEES	Central and Eastern European States
CS	Civil Service
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
EAPAA	European Association for Public Administration Accreditation
EAS	European Administrative Space
EC	European Commission
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
EGPA	European Group of Public Administration
EPAN	European Public Administration Network
EU	European Union
HR	Human Resources
IASIA	International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration
IIAP	International Institute of Public Administration
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Polices for Pre-Accession
MS	Member State
NASPAA	National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration
NISPAcee	Networks of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Easter Europe
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OMC	Open Method of Co-ordination
PA	Public Administration
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy
PrM	Prospective Members
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
SAPARD	Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Development
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries
TEC	Treaty on European Community
TEU	Treaty on European Union
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNPAN	United Nations Public Administration Network
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

1 Problem analysis

This opening chapter aims in clarifying the scope of the study and research methods applied to it. Particularly, it introduces context of the research and primarily the central research unit by developing a variables scheme in order to specify theoretical considerations in the light of underlying research problems. Finally, this section presents the structure of the research and the following report.

1.1 Introduction

Dynamic context of the post-Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe provides a unique opportunity to investigate problems inherent in comprehensive and holistic modernization process of state structures including public administration and governance issues. Past fifteen years, between collapse of the Soviet Union and the EU Enlargement, have been marked with significant achievements in development of modern and professional state structures. Though, even in eight states of the region that joined the European Union in 2004 developments are far from being completed yet. Deliberate building of democratic societies and state systems in the context of Europeanization requires effective methods, processes and involvement of various actors. This research assumes that modernization process in that particular context is a reality of institutional transformation and institution building. While examining policies, politics or polities a misfit between developments at national level and supra-nationally accepted base-lines constitutes adaptational pressure for change. However, there must be also intervening factors enabling, prohibiting or facilitating change. The ability of change agents to intervene in modernization processes is directly related to their position within socio-political context they exist in and resources available at their disposal. This study therefore focuses on the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee) as a change agent regarding developments in the filed of governance and public administration issue in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

1.2 Research context

Developments within public sectors of Central and East Europeans states alongside other modernization processes are of the core interest of this study. Among the variety of researches concerning CEES, those related to *readiness for Europe* addressing issue of administrative and institutional transformation are complex and less developed. Therefore, this study aims to study emergence, transformation and impact of an organization on the process of public sector professionalisation and creation of favourable conditions for administrative change at the level of politics, policies and polities in the CEE region.

Presence and activities undertaken by the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe give room for research on the institutional aspects of modernization in the post-Communists states that could be relatively easily differentiated from influence of other international actors. Moreover, complexity of activities and organizational infrastructure of the organization challenge as well as demand extensive multi-disciplinary research

approach. This qualitative study is however unable due to methodological and timing limitations to provide an encompassing account of impact of the organization in formative context over the last fifteen years. Though, it is meant to be rather a preparation for more extensive quantitative research that should be certainly conducted on demand of the NISPAcee in the near future (see section 1.5).

The organization established in the mid-1990s has become one of the most recognizable and professional association of this kind in the region and beyond. As an independent, non-for-profit and nongovernmental organization focused on administrative challenges in the CEE region, the NISPAcee is perceived as an excellent platform for training, development, networking and building-up expertise in the field. Therefore, this study places the organization in a focal point of its interest trying to explain its account to transformations in governance and public administration in the region.

There are a few reasons why NISPAcee seems to be highly interesting and relevant as a subject of this investigation. Firstly, to the best knowledge of the author and the organization itself, as yet there has been no single piece of research strictly focused on the institution and trying to assess the relevance and impact of its activities. Secondly, its activities have international character and concern broadly understood governance issues and public administration matters what it is with line with requirements set for this research. Additionally, according to gathered evidences needs of the members and specific regional context helped in developing a unique approach to administrative transformation and professionalisation distinct from those advocated by the other international organizations. Process of professionalisation and creating good climate for administrative transformation serves as bridging mechanism, method of developing and facilitating core process of transfer of experience, changing modes of organization and governance, and finally means of knowledge utilization. Finally yet importantly, this case study challenges qualitative research methods and tries to combine empirical study at micro-level with conceptual framework developed at macro-level. From those perspectives, NISPAcee is undoubtedly exciting and challenging topic of empirical research in a broad socio-political context. However, this study narrows down possible angles of enquiry to the one trying to assess whether the NISPAcee can be perceived as a change agent complying with a new-institutionalism approach explaining domestic change and impact of modernization processes upon national public systems.

1.3 Research problem

A fundamental re-orientation of the role of the state and public sectors in the CEES is a fact. However, reforms and modernization efforts bring about multiple effects, which firstly vary from country to country and secondly are appreciated in different ways. This particular context of constant and immense change allowed emergence and development of various social actors that facilitates and to some extend explain domestic change at the level of policies, politics and polities in regard to governance and public administration.

1.3.1 Central research problem

Administrative systems of the CEES were inadequate for providing the framework-setting for well-functioning market economy and democratic state. Underdeveloped state systems, low level of professionalisation in public services and in later stage Europeanization and democratization created adaptational pressure for domestic change. This paper argues though that pressure does not always constitute a necessary condition for change. However, there must be mediating factors enabling, catalyzing or prohibiting domestic change. Explaining administrative transformation is mainly a study of institutions and institutional change in a highly complex and dynamic social setting as it occurred in the Central and Eastern Europe between transition and the EU Enlargement.

More precisely this case study attempts to answer the question: *To what extend (if at all) the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe complies with a model of a change agent in a broad framework of domestic change between transition and the EU Enlargement* (main research question)?

Figure 1.1 (see below) maps relation between the variables. Focal point of the research is NISPAcee as an intermediate variable linking corresponding outcome (domestic change) with formative context of modernization of state and social structures of the CEES (cause). NISPAcee is perceived as one of change agents or norm entrepreneurs that have had impact on governance and public administration transformations between transition and the EU Enlargement in Central ad Eastern Europe. Mediating factors influence the degree to which through collective learning and knowledge utilization as well as socialization new norms of functioning of state and professionalisation of public administration are internalized causing the change at institutional level.

However, the compliance of NISPAcee with the change agent model is research within specific time and scope frame. Time limitation is set up upon the period of existence of the organization which is from 1995 until now. Geographical scope covers basically all countries of Central and Eastern Europe that are of the focus of NISPAcee. That stands for 8 Central European states that joined the European Union in 2004: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia (New Member States, NMS); The Balkans with a special attention to the West Balkan states (Prospective Members, PrM); Eastern Europe proper incl. Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and the Trans-Caucasus. Nevertheless, collected data mainly concerns the New Members of the EU and some of the candidate countries what may be perceived as a limitation of the study preventing external validation of final results.

Furthermore, methodologically correct enquiry requires separation between intermediate and interfering variables. At the conceptual level, empirically observable impact of NISPAcee is differentiated from direct impact of other actors which activities and presence in the region brought about the change regarding governance and public administration issues. However, in practice it is extremely difficult to distinguished impact of one actor from another since individual and institutional members of NISPAcee are involved in other networks or perform other duties at various levels of governance both in the national and supra-national domains.

Figure 1.1 Variables scheme
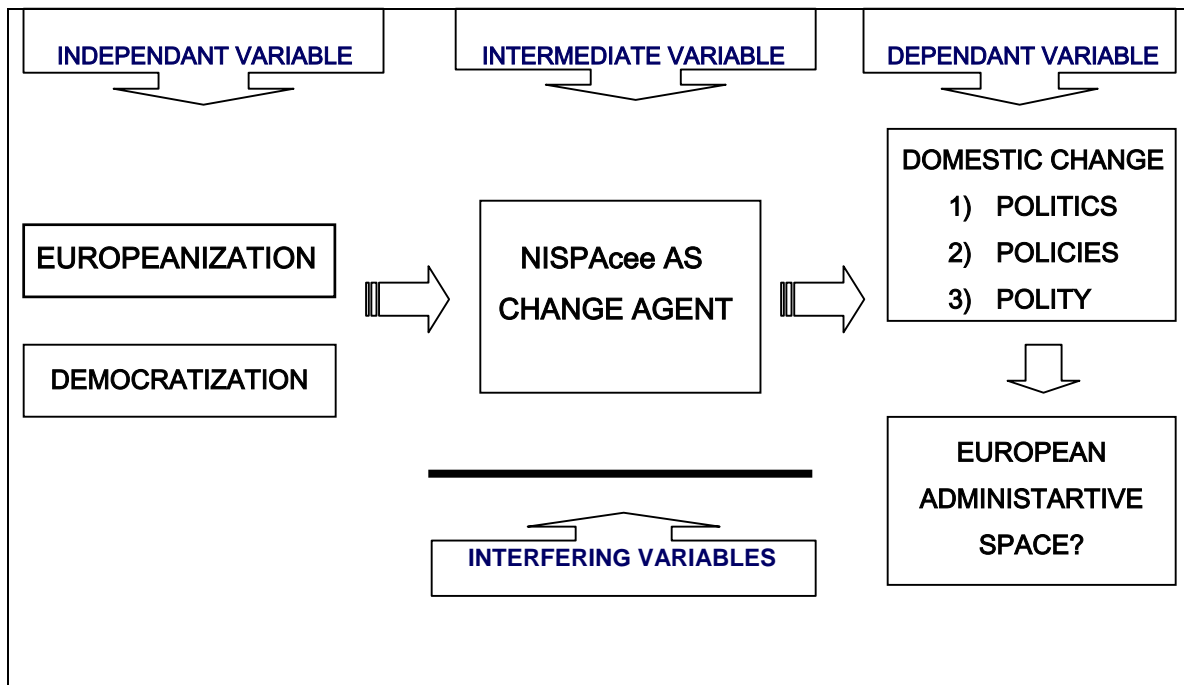
Source: Personal elaboration (2006).

1.3.2 Research units

Central research problem is a complex one. That is why hypothesis evaluation must be divided into more approachable research units. This approach allows focusing on specific issues and relations within variables scheme and therefore gets into conclusions that are more reliable.

Studying an organization requires mapping social context in which it operates. That is the reason why processes of transition, democratization and Europeanization are studied here as to picture causes of administrative transformation in CEES. Additionally, some of the features of public administration reforms must be analyzed since lessons learned in the CEE region are different from experience with management reforms in other parts of the world.

Moreover, occurrences in social sciences are rarely mono-casual. Thus, it seems to be reasonable to map the relation between various actors (other mediating actors) active in the field in period of research. That allows getting to know interests and achievements of each of them and therefore to differentiate observable impact of NISPAcee.

Not only context and dynamics of change have changed over time but also the organization itself has evolved. Those internal changes in terms of organizational management, finances and portfolio of activities as well as geographical focus have direct impact on the overall influence of the organization.

13

Additionally, it is also crucial to describe role of both supranational and non-governmental actors in bringing about change and influencing modernization in the CEES after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Thanks to specific mission objectives distinct from portfolios of other stakeholders, NISPAcee plays a role of change agent differently and therefore delivers various outcomes through its activities facilitating domestic change at the levels of politics, policies and polities.

Apart from this, closer look at the activities of NISPAcee, opinion concerning its activities and overall operation in the field of public administration and governance gives room for initial assessment of over a decade of activities of the organization. And what is crucial for research in public administration and public management the study aims in giving some recommendations for governing bodies of the organization as well as tries to point put main challenges ahead.

Last but not least, modernization processes and institutionalization of professional public administration in the CEE region may be perceived as a part of a broader process of convergence towards a European Administrative Space. However, this approach raises at least few questions as to mention: Through what process have convergence taken places and what instruments can be used to explain the change? At what levels and what aspects of public and state systems converge and towards what? What are the baselines or assessment criteria of the European Administrative Space?

Very generic main research problem of this inquiry focused on the compliance of NISPAcee with a change agent model must be related to investigation related to both more specific and general issues in terms of modernization processes and functioning of non-governmental organizations in the formative context of CEE. As already mentioned this research refers to the concept of institutional change resulting from high adaptational pressures of Europeanization and democratization. In order to evaluate the role and degree of compliance of the organisation to this model, it is necessary to examine the domains and dimensions of functioning, relation to other actors and conditions influencing their operation. Moreover, it is reasonable to reflect on its portfolio, governance structure and delivered products as well as on more generic characteristics of common values and identities related to operation of public administration across the continent.

In short, this case study deals with a set of more detailed questions in order to examine the main research hypothesis presented in the previous paragraph:

1. Are the institutions vital part of the context of domestic change in terms of public administration and governance in the CEE region?
2. What are the necessary and sufficient conditions inducing domestic change?
3. Does NISPAcee comply with the model of a change agent in a conceptual framework of domestic change?
4. Is professionalisation the only researchable link between adaptational pressures, functioning mediating factors and domestic change?
5. What is the role of a change agent in delivering pubic good in a formative context?

6. What is the role of non-profit sector in terms of domestic change and what sort of social infrastructure is therefore provided?
7. Does domestic change in the CEES contribute to the overall convergence towards the European Administrative Space? The way foreword or a myth?
8. What can be recommended to NISPAcee in terms of a) structure, b) management and c) portfolio d) professionalisation in order to cope with challenges in the CEE region after the EU Enlargement and in turn increase impact of the organisation on domestic change?

1.3.3 Aims of the research

This research report aims besides investigating the main research hypothesis, namely the compliance of NISPAcee with a change agent model, it also have other aims that might have academic and practical relevance for the potential findings:

1. Academic aims

- research NISPAcee for the first time in a possibly comprehensive manner,
- test methods of inquiry in research in international public management that can be used for examination of transformation and eventually impact of an organisation,
- try to combine micro-level investigation with a conceptual/theoretical frame developed at the macro-level,
- assess and prove necessity of functioning of non-governmental actors in terms of contribution to delivery of public goods (reliable public administration – professionalisation),
- examine dimension of domestic change and relevance of professionalisation as a instrument to accelerate the change,
- draw more general conclusions related to domestic impact of adaptational pressures (Europeanization and democratization) on public administration and governance structure in a formative context.

2. Practical aims

- gather data and opinions about NISPAcee from multiple sources,
- deliver knowledge about the organisation to a broader audience,
- examine activities of the organisation and their possible direct/indirect impact (some examples),
- prepare a ground for more extensive and quantitative research on this organisation,
- and finally provide practical recommendation focused on 1) structure, 2)management, 3) portfolio, 4) professionalisation in order to improve functioning and impact of the organisation on domestic change in the CEE region.

1.4 Assumptions

The logic of sociological new-institutionalism underlying this research points out that external or highly dynamic pressures within particular socio-political context and norms or attitudes attached to them exerts adaptational pressure at the domestic level patterns due to the fact that they do not comply with domestic norms or collective understandings. Last fifteen years of socio-political experiment in the CEE region gives a fantastic opportunity for researchers to observe and trying to assess institutionalisation processes within public and social domains. Modernisation pressures including Europeanization have had already significant impact upon the change of domestic processes and institutions, especially when it comes to the EU New Members. However, according to this theory, there must be mediating factors that influence the degree to which such misfit results in redefining norms and interests and acquiring new institutional structures (Börzel & Risse 2003; SIGMA 1998a; Toonen 1993; Knill 2001).

The case study on the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe assumes that this organization can be certainly perceived as a change agent. Its role, activities, identity and patterns of interaction mobilize in the domestic contexts of the CEES various actors to redefine their interests and identities. It may well observable and measured when it comes to creating in public sectors and various institutions related to public administration good atmosphere for change. It results in one of the most profound achievements of the network, which is institutionalisation of professional public administration of the states within the region. It is also assumed that NISPAcee as a facilitating actor (broker) try to mobilize and generate resources contribute to production and delivery of public/collective good that otherwise would not be delivered; in this context – professional public administration.

Finally, it such a complex and formative context it is relatively difficult to differentiate impact of a single actor upon institutional arrangements in certain countries. It is due to multiple identities of organizations, enormous number of initiatives undertaken, resources and capacities available, character of governing arrangements and tradition in particular states and finally specific mission of the organization. However, the study assumes that the role of NISPAcee has been changing over last ten years as well as its functions and volume of impact. Due to specific organizational structure, patterns of leadership and objectives NISPAcee is recognized by various supranational actors and its achievements are recognized in a global network of practitioners and researchers of public administration and political sciences. In addition to that, functioning of this organization and delivered outcomes suggest way of thinking about administrative convergence rather than give a detailed answer about the scope and effectiveness of European/EU convergence.

1.5 Research design and methods

In previous section the author presented conceptual basis as well as context and assumptions of this study. However, this vital part of

introduction gives an overview of research design and specific enquiry tools, methods and approaches used in purpose of this research. This section is based on a review of the latest literature on research methodology in social and organizational sciences. Terminology and instruments available have been adapted in order to be instrumental and effective for the research format.

1.5.1 Introduction

Investigation in social sciences is basically concerned with examination of relationship between variables. It does so by addressing firstly, empirical relationship between independent variable (cause) and (effect) dependant variable. Secondly, it is to assess if these relationship is causal. The final step is concerned with construct validation that answers the question whether results of empirical findings represent their respective conceptual variables. Once the examination has been performed, it is of interest to know if the results generated can be generalized beyond the particular case.

Researches conducted in the field of public administration or international public management alongside their ordinary purposes aim also in providing utilization focus outcomes. Examination of development of organizational structures and undertaken activities in a broad theoretical context provides governing bodies of particular institutions and their members with better means for improving functional and managerial capacities, learning from past experience, better planning and allocating resources and finally improving their external relations and public image. Undoubtedly, this piece of research has mainly qualitative character and employs various methods in order to include mentioned above outcomes into the final research results (Schwab 2005; World Bank 2005).

1.5.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research as such is not based on a single, unified theoretical concept, nor does it follow a single methodological approach. It rather encompasses a variety of theoretical approaches are aim in understanding a phenomenon under study. To achieve qualitative study objectives, researchers analyze the interaction between parties involved within certain context. These interactions are studied in their context and then subjectively explained by the researcher. Several different techniques of inquiry may be employed for gathering data, including observations, participation, interviewing and document analysis (McNabb 2002). Flick (2006) identifies a number of characteristics of qualitative research that differentiate these methods from quantitative approaches:

- Variety of approaches and methods
- Reflexivity of the research and researcher
- Diverse theories underlying the approach,
- Diverse perspectives of the participants,
- Construction of reality as a basis for research,
- Use of text as empirical data.

Broadly speaking this qualitative research falls into a category of study techniques called interpretive research. The main goal of this kind of research is to build up understanding between the object(s) studied and the researcher. Therefore, interpretative study focuses on rules, standards, norms held in common and how these influence social interaction. The primary objective of interpretive research is to establish the meaning of a circumstance, event, or social situation. It goes beyond simple description or explanation in aiming to enhance people's understanding of the symbols, artefacts, meanings or attitudes of the people in the study situation. Specific method of enquiry used in this research is a single case study that aims in answering the question what is distinct about particular organization in given context.

1.5.3 Case study and its features

A case study is traditional mode of qualitative analysis. This method involves an in-depth, longitudinal examination of a singe instance rather than using large samples to examine a limited number of variables. This method provides a systematic way of looking at an issue under investigation and in this particular case is deployed to test hypothesis in set theoretical framework. This research report follows a number of steps in planning, analysis and presentation presented in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 Developing a case study

```
Frame the case
(What specifically is to be studied?)
        │
        ▼
Operationalize relevant themes,
issues, concepts
        │
        ▼
Select and define case units of
analysis
        │
        ▼
Gather case data
        │
In-depth interviews    Analyze documents and other    Naturalistic observation
                       materials
        │
        ▼
Analysis and interpretation of data
        │
Group data by key constructs  ◄─►  Identify key bases for
                                   interpretation
        │
        ▼
Develop
generalizations
        │
        ▼
Test alternative interpretations
        │
        ▼
Form and/or refine theory from
the case
        │
        ▼
Develop and present report of
the findings
```

Source:(McNubb 2002, p.292)

This particular case study reveals however specific features in order to serve as the most effective method of investigation at hand. First of all it emphasizes development/process of an organization in rapidly changing socio-political context. Secondly this case study has some features of both illuminative and process evaluation. The first one respectively offers an adaptable strategy of three stages: observation, focused enquiry and explanation. The aim is to produce a rich description of an organization in action, rather than its formal structure, goals and outcomes. That gives understanding of people and organizations in context that emerges through open-ended, detailed, descriptive and data collecting through direct contact with the organization and its members. Moreover, it allows incorporating perspectives (views, concerns and priorities) of stakeholders into research and enabling them to reflect on their activities. The other attempt is to unpack the black box of impact evaluation by seeking to understand, and so to evaluate, the context in which certain activities are performed. Understanding these internal processes is crucial for helping develop both governing bodies of the institution successful strategies for program implementation what is in focus of researches in this field. Chosen approach seems to be an alternative to impact

evaluation which key features could be described as summative and quantitative. The reason to for using qualitative research of this kind is to employ the richness of interviews and observational data in reaching the understanding of the process of how organization and its activities affect other parties or what institutions as such means to the members and participants. However qualitative evaluation does not necessary imply a total rejection of quantitative research methods, as mixed strategies is increasingly common (McNubb 2002; Hall & Hall 2004; Peters & Pierre 2003).

1.5.4 Collecting data

Data collection is a vital part of social science research and can be conducted in many ways. This research makes use of three basic and one supportive technique, which are participation/observation, in-depth interview, internal sources analysis and desk research. The selection of diverse data gathering techniques is one of the hallmarks of complete case study and primarily ensures that relevant data is not missed. As mentioned earlier, despite the fact the research is basically of qualitative nature, the classification of data sources used in this study (see Figure 3) shows that some of quantitative sources have been incorporated into analyzed data.

Figure 1.3 Classification of data sources

```
I. Qualitative data sources
      A. Existing documents
            1.  Books,  periodicals,  published   reports,
journals
            2. International organizations reports
            3. Academic research reports
      B. Primary sources
            1. Interviews
            2. Case studies
      C. Internal sources
            1. E-mails
            2. Digital recordings of interviews
II. Quantitative data sources
      A. Internal sources
            1. Organization annual reports
            2. Human resources records
            3. Program & project reports
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Source: Personal elaboration on (McNubb 2002, p.57).

1.5.4.1 Desk research

Desk research as a supportive technique to main data gathering process is of crucial importance to both the researcher and the study. Various steps taken within this part of preparation made possible framing the concepts and techniques that later were instrumental for research execution.

Library research in a number of places e.g. Brussels or Krakow and extensive literature review (see Appendix 1) that take place between early winter 2005 until May with the pick in March/April 2006, helped not only in identifying the basic research problem but also in finding appropriate methodological instruments and approaches to conduct proper academic research. Reference list prepared for this research includes not only academic books, but also periodicals, published reports, international journals and some of the internal documents of the organization (see References/Bibliography).

Furthermore, as a part of study preparation, the author consulted provisional findings and additional content-related issues with a number of well-recognized researchers in the filed of public management and administration as well as political sciences. The meetings took place in the spring 2006 in Brussels, Leuven, Leiden, Rotterdam and Ljubljana (see Appendix 2 & 6). For that purpose a meeting agenda was prepared as to structure both meetings in person and electronic correspondence. Those meetings were of a great added-value to a final design and execution of research giving new insights and identifying limitations and assumptions of the research.

1.5.4.2 Participation/Observation

Case study approach to research requires both participation/observation and personal interviewing. The latter one is described in details in the forthcoming paragraph. Participation is fundamental in qualitative inquiry since it gives opportunity to discover and frame complex interactions in natural social setting. With generous support of Erasmus University Rotterdam, the author took part in the annual conference of the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee) that took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia in May 11-13, 2006. Presence at this conference gave the opportunity to broaden knowledge about the organization, its activities and indirectly about its role in governance and public administration issues in the region and beyond (see Appendix 6). Nevertheless, the main objective of the participation was to conduct in-depth interviews with members of the network as well as with external actors involved in the activities of the organization.

1.5.4.3 In-depth interview

The author of the study conducted fifteen key informant interviews posed to individuals selected for their knowledge and experience in a topic of interest (interview time varies from 20 minutes to 1 hour) and received two questionnaires in written form. The list of interviewees and an answer sheet example are attached to this report (see Appendix 3 & 5).

The main questionnaire was prepared in advance after completing desk research preparations and consultations on the investigation content (see Appendix 5). Questionnaire is a measuring instrument with which research participant is asked to respond to particular questions. In this case, it had a form of self-report, in which respondent is supposed to provide information about oneself i.e. describing and evaluating externally visible characteristics of an organization and activities performed. Moreover, the questionnaire had open-ended response format that allows the interviewee to provide ones own answers. Questionnaires were administered mainly as interviews and recorded digitally in order to be available for further investigation. Final outcomes of interviews conducted have written form and are used for the purpose of this research as non-attributed (World Bank 2005; Hewson *et al*. 2003).

1.5.4.4 Internal sources analysis

The analysis of internal sources of an organization is supplementary to main desk research and more important qualitative techniques such as interviews and participation. These sources in that case are organization records concerning financial matters, certain activities and membership issues and internal organization reports acquired with help of the Secretariat of the organization. The technique concerns basically content analysis, which in this case is both qualitative and quantitative.

1.5.5 Data analysis and research report

Crucial part for research process is reducing the volume of gathered data and primarily its analysis. Data of qualitative and quantitative nature is processed during the whole study period. Having collected information, the author started to identify bases for interpretation and then develop some generalization testing given hypothesis. Furthermore, alternative interpretations are tested and finally the concluding outcomes of the research are presented.

The final step of the research is producing a comprehensive research report in which relation between key concepts and study main objectives are addressed. The report has a written form and is constructed according to high academic standards in the collection and presentation of evidence and arguments. On the top of that, the author is trying through presentation of this case study demonstrate some aspects of originality and above all made significant contribution in the field of broadly understand public administration sciences (McNubb 2002; IMP 2005).

1.5.6 Research design: its advantages and limitations

Research design and methods applied in this study within theoretical framework and availability of data are certainly of benefit of overall outcomes of the research. The methods have been utilized in the study to the best knowledge of the author. However, application of models in public administration and political sciences emphasizing development over time and processes in rapidly changing social context, have their limitations and must be taken into account.

Qualitative approach with various instruments of enquiry in this research tries to prove that independent and dependant variables are meaningfully related. And furthermore that there is reasonable causal explanation for the observed relationship and there are not plausible alternative explanations for it. More precisely, framework used in that research certainly helps in mapping design of complex activities; providing qualitative understanding of social change i.e. highly interactive social, situations or people's attitudes; drawing lessons from past experience for improving design and management of future activities; assessing outcomes and impact of undertaking activities and differentiating them from the influence of other factors and developing the understanding of power relationships, influence and interests of the various stakeholders involved. Nevertheless, this study is not designed as impact evaluation study that provides the systematic and mainly qualitative identification of effects and impacts of the organization, since so far social sciences do not have precise instrument to do so. It rather aims, through testing theoretical framework, in preparing ground for more advanced organization investigation in future.

Even though the research is trying to answer basic question of to what extent the organization under investigation is making difference, the methods used have their significant limitations. Firstly, qualitative studies are less valid, reliable and credible than extensive formal surveys and therefore findings relate to specific region and usually are difficult to generalize. Secondly, some of the methods used were time-consuming (e.g. interviews) and therefore less efficient. And finally, it is a weakness of political sciences vis-à-vis organizational studies, when a theory, as it is in this case, is developed on macro-level of analysis and extremely difficult to apply to micro-level studies. Nevertheless, the final report and a theoretical frame itself are design to give a comprehensive and academically correct picture of research issues as well as provide with recommendations that might be utilized by the research organization (World Bank 2005; Hall & Hall 2004; Hantrias & Mangen 1996; European Commission 2005; Provan & Milward 2001).

1.6 Conclusions

This extensive introductory chapter aimed in providing necessary information regarding conceptual and operational basis for this research as well as context of the study and its preliminary assumptions. The sections concerning research design and methods of enquiry belong to vital parts of the first chapter. They help to conceptualize theoretical considerations of this investigation as well as present limitations of this study. Moreover, the chapter introduced international dimension of the research and combination of various methods that are meant to be instrumental for proper conduction of this inspection. Nevertheless, complex nature of this enquiry also requires solid and comprehensive presentation of theoretical basis. The forthcoming chapter provides conceptual frame for this research.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

Administrative transformation seems to be highly relevant and popular topic of research in recent years. Growing number of comparative studies analysing managerial practices in public sector is being published. However, these kinds of reforms are not the central focus of this investigation. Dynamic socio-political context of Central and Eastern Europe is giving though an unprecedented opportunity to study how democratization, transformation and accession to the European Union affect governance and public administration issues of countries in the region. Those shifts of political, social and economical origin have had so far significant impact on institutional and administrative change in the region. However, they have not yet been extensively measured and assessed. Therefore, this study tries to answer the question to what extend administrative change in a broad perspective can be explained by existence and activities undertaken by the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (Knill

2001; Rosenbaum & Gajdosova 2003; Stone Sweet, Sandholz & Fligstein 2001).

This chapter provides an extensive theoretical background of the research. This section is meant to constitute a conceptual framework for empirical research and analysis of qualitative findings. It is based on review of existing literature from various branches of social sciences available at the time of conducting this study. Moreover, it also presents some background information concerning modernization processes that have taken place in the region of CEE between the beginning of transition and the EU Enlargement.

2.2 Conceptual scope and its limitation

Bearing in mind that explaining administrative transformation is mainly matter of studying institutions and institutional change that is why institutional arrangement as NISPAcee is at the heart of this study. Broader framework of new institutionalism does not constitute a single body of theory, but comprises various streams of argumentation. Although sharing a basic assumption that institutions do matter. Nevertheless there is no agreement of how, why and to what extent they make a difference. Agency-based approach of new institutionalism explains institutional developments (continuity or change) less deterministic as institutional-based approach, since the former one perceives them as intervening variable between formative context and interaction of actors and corresponding outcomes. In this approach, an institution is a variable structuring strategic interactions. Needless to say, that this approach accounts for high empirical complexity.

Taking into account very complex conceptual background potentially applicable for this research, this study is not concerned with the impact of European policies on national administration and patterns of administrative transformation at the national level. Neither is it the research on supranational institution-building and policy-making. Hence, the patterns of domestic change at the national level are the dependant variable for this research. It is more focused how the change can be explained and to what extend the mediating factors such as NISPAcee contributed to that process. Though, the causes of domestic change analyzed here are not only of institutional character since democratization and socio-political transformation are included into cluster of independent variables.

An important feature that distinguishes this research from other already conducted earlier in that field is its exclusive focus on a mediating actor as a sufficient condition enabling, prohibiting or facilitating domestic change. Facilitating factors provide the basis for corresponding responses to the adaptational pressures, such as changing beliefs and preferences of domestic actors. Additionally, specific regional context enables to explain the dynamics of the administrative systems in question. Trying to assess the impact of democratization processes and impact of preparation for the EU accession there is a need to distinguish a number of dimensions of adaptational pressure:

1) *sectoral dimension* – 'fit/misfit' of existing sectoral styles and structures corresponding to the EU implications,

2) *institutional dimension* – institutional embeddedness of challenged sectoral arrangement into the general core defined by national administrative traditions,
3) *dynamic dimension* – national capacity for administrative reform indicating the potential for substantial changes in national administrative traditions (Knill 2002, p.47; Blom-Hansen 1997; Börzel & Risse 2000).

2.3 Conceptualizing reforms

There is no clear distinction between modernization of public administration and administrative reforms and moreover the frontiers between these two processes are unstable.

Administrative reform can be defined as a significant change of missions, functions roles, objectives and structures of public administration institutions. It should affect principles functioning and its core values. Moreover, it is supposed to reshape public administration arrangements at macro-organizational level of at least one of its basic institutions. Generally speaking, it is both politically or ideologically driven and often related to important modifications within a whole governance system.

On the other hand, public administration modernization is in principle based on the idea of progress. It aims in raising performance efficiency, quality, etc. in realization of public administration objectives. Modernization has its roots in the introduction of the best practices, new instruments and technologies into its practice exploiting recent advancements of research in the filed of public management and administration. In contrast to administrative reform, modernization does not aim in fundamental change of governance system. However, incremental advancements contribute to overall performance gains within a public sector. In practice though, administrative reforms often comprising modernization processes and the later ones involve the necessity or usefulness of reform measures.

Due to the fact that impact of the NISPAcee is indirect and due to debatable definitions of these two terms, this research is concerned with governance and public administration as a more general term including all process leading to change. This term emphasizes its reference to state-governmental context and corresponds to the whole sphere of public administration and management. Governance and management are complementary modes of organization-managerial and administrational activity meaning they coexist and interact within communities, international and organizational settings. This is certainly true in the context of transitional states in the CEE region. These complementary modes are embedded in a concept of good governance. Good governance in that sense implies not only that the governance process is conducted based on democratic principles (see also 2.5), but also that it respects the principles of effectiveness and efficiency. This means that societal problems should be addressed timely and with a minimum use of available resources. Good governance is therefore a combination of democratic and effective governance. Systems of public administration are one of the key factors that determine what type of governance system develops in a state. Ideally PA should be a bridge between politics and society, effectively channelling societal inputs into policy options, delivering public goods and services fairly and

effectively and providing the necessary regulatory framework for economic activities.

Success and speed of domestic change as a result of modernization processes defined in this study as dependant variables is largely dependant on mediating factors such as institutional arrangements (e.g. NISPAcee). Therefore, this study argues that professionalisation of governance systems should be of key interests while researching reforms within the given region (Mikułowski 2002; Toonen 1992, 1993, 1998; Nunberg 2000; Goldschmidt, *et al.* 2005).

2.3.1 Administrative/managerial reforms

Modernization processes in the CEE region are taking place in a wider context of so called administrative/managerial reforms in public domain. In the past two decades, governments of well-developed countries (primarily) have been preoccupied with bringing about the change. However, the reality of experience of the OECD members and beyond manifests a large variety of models of applied reforms. In the most generic understanding, reform is about a change in administrative quality constituted by administrative values of public sector institutions, decision-making processes and of public organisations and management arrangements. The call for reform is often highly politicized response to external or internal pressures such as crisis, disaster, conditional arrangement or just a fashion.

No single solution to the problems of public administration results in various techniques, models and modes applied throughout public sectors. Among many others, public management reforms associated with New Public Management have attracted many governments and have been advocated by international/supranational organisations (to lesser extend nowadays). Public management reform among other factors has a direct impact of government operation that is why there is a need for a basic understanding of its nature. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004, p.16) argue that public management reform concerns 'deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to perform better'. In addition to that the reform implies a beneficial shift from less advanced to more advanced state of affairs. Although some of the reforms are not successful, the main goal to introduce them is to create a more desirable form of governance with more efficient and effective, transparent and legitimated government (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2004, pp.6-7; Peters & Pierre 2003).

Since early 1980s a new managerial approach to public sector and government can be observed. A great intensification of the commitment in this field characterizes 1990s. There were a few reasons why governments themselves come up with the new ideas concern more effective management of their services. As Hughes (1998, pp.65-66) argues the late 1970s brought decline in tax revenues and governments were short of resources available at their disposal. Moreover, they could not resign, from various but mainly political reasons, from delivery of certain services. It simply means that governments were asked to provide the same or increased amount of services but with decreasing amount of resources. In addition to that, there was a direct link between modernization of economies and improving management capacities within public sector. Both

of the commitments were a driving force for one another. Finally though, the ideological and intellectual climate facilitated the initial changes in public sector. All in all, the changing economical and political context from the 1980s on suggested that there is a need for a new kind of a bureaucracy that will focus on outputs, increase managerial accountability and will focus of efficiency and effectiveness gains.

The major characteristics of this paradigm were comprehensively described by Hood (1991). He identified seven major issues concerning this managerial approach: 1) *output control* – the need to stress results rather than procedures; rewards and resources allocation is linked up with the measurable performance scheme; 2) *competition* – as a market-like instrument establish rivalry as the precondition for lower costs and higher standards resulted in public sector tendering and contracting out; 3) *discipline in resources usage* – in search of efficiency; decreasing direct expenditure and raising labour discipline and specialisation; 4) *market-like management* – flexibility in hiring and rewards; 5) *organizational management* – accountability and good performance require portfolio clearly assigned tasks and responsibilities; a need for active and professional management at the top; 6) *performance measurement and standards setting* – evaluating of performance; clear definitions of goals and objectives preferably expressed in quantitative terms; 7) *disaggregation* – breaking up monolithic structure of public domain creating flexible and manageable units according to products and service delivery based on resources assignments.

This mode of reforming public administration has constituted a kind of paradigm shift affecting (positively or negatively) old processes, values, principles and mechanism of state and bureaucracy. Nevertheless, other modes of administrative reforms have been also popular and applied such as so called New-Weberian State (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2004) more compatible with continental model of state system. All in all reforms bring about multiple effects evaluated in different ways. Understanding of patters of administrative or governance change well depends on various factors such as political choices, external pressures, logic of change, administrative traditions or institutional constrains. That is why administrative/managerial reforms lead at the same time to convergence and divergence among sates. In this context changes in the CEE countries seem to be extraordinarily interesting, since they add to this trends unique local factors.

Having presented the conceptual scope of this study and some of the limitations and also defining focus of this enquiry, there is a need to frame sources and consequences of domestic change as well as its explanation within a single conceptual frame which in this case is institutionalism.

2.4 Institutionalization of Europe

Various processes related to the emergence and institutionalization of European space can be observed nowadays. Sources, consequences and explanations of institutionalization as a socio-political process became a challenge for researchers, especially when taking into account highly dynamic context of the Central and Eastern Europe, where institutionalization is a result of not only of Europeanization or

influence of global trends regarding governance or economy, but also of transformation processes that begun in the early 1990s.

According to Stone Sweet *et al.* (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz & Fligstein 2001, p. 3) institutionalization in European context means the process through which European/EU political space comprising supranational policy arenas or sites of governance which are structured by the EU rules, procedures, values represented and other activities of the EU organizations evolves over time. However, for the purpose of this research this definition is too narrow since domestic change in the CEE region resulted not only from various forms of relation with the European Union but also democratization in a broad sense. Therefore, institutionalization in this regard would also encompass development of democratic state setting and evolvement of governance structures at political and societal level. Moreover, institutionalization comprises transposition of values, beliefs and instruments related to effective functioning of modern state and society. In this project then, broad conceptual frame of institutionalization of political and administrative spaces is the concern and changes within public administration and governance in the CEE region is the empirical focus.

2.4.1 Social sciences and institutions

Institutional approach in social sciences defines an institution as a complex set of rules and procedures that constitutes and governs a given collection of human interactions (Hall & Taylor 1996). There are three basic levels of institutionalization 1) *macro level* – rule systems (institutions); 2) *meso level* – groups of people more or less formally constituted, who pursue a set of collective purposes (organizations) and 3) *micro level* – individuals undertaking actions (actors).

Institutions constitute the structure for social interactions in contradiction to random encounters and pattern behaviour in particular way. What is crucial for administrative change and democratization in that context, sociological approach to institutionalization suggests that institutions provide opportunities affecting behaviour and eventually change through internalization of shared categories, beliefs or paradigms.

Majority of human activities take place or are facilitated through organizations. Those are specific arrangements in time and place with identifiable members and certain amount of resources. In regard to governance, organizations are among other things designed to purse and execute collective actions. Governance means in this research the authority to make, interpret and enforce rules in a given socio-political context.

And at the micro level, those are individuals who take actions. In the context of this study it seems that the most appropriate explanation is grounded in logic of appropriateness. The basic idea is that actions undertaken by individuals are the result of matching situations to behaviours that fit them. Actors recognize and develop rules of appropriateness through socialization and some other organizationally grounded processes often resulting in change (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz & Fligstein 2001, p. 6-8; March & Olsen 1989).

Alongside this explanation, social sciences offer another insight into understanding of organisations, institutions and institutionalisation as such, what is highly relevant for this study.

The term institutionalization is widely used in social theory to denote the process of establishing or creating making something (e.g. a social role, particular values and norms, or modes of behaviour) become embedded within an organization, social system, or society as an established custom or norm within that system. It is particularly important for transformative process in social spheres as mentioned earlier.

It is also crucial to emphasize vital differences between notions of organisation and institutions in more details. Institutions (macro level) are social structures and social mechanisms of social order and cooperation governing the behaviour of two or more individuals. Institutions are identified with a social purpose and permanence, transcending individual human lives and intentions, and with the making and enforcing of rules governing cooperative human behaviour. The term, institution, is commonly applied to customs and behaviour patterns important to a society, as well as to particular formal organizations of government and public service. As structures and mechanisms of social order among humans, institutions are one of the principal objects of study in the social sciences, including sociology, political science and economics.

On the ther hand, in sociology a organization (meso level) is understood as planned, coordinated and purposeful action of human beings in order to construct or compile a common tangible or intangible product or service. This action is usually framed by formal membership and form (institutional rules). Sociology distinguishes the term organization into planned formal and unplanned informal (i.e. spontaneously formed) organizations. Sociology analyses organizations in the first line from an institutional perspective. In this sense, organization is a permanent arrangement of elements. These elements and their actions are determined by rules so that a certain task can be fulfilled through a system of coordinated division of labour.

By coordinated and planned cooperation of the elements, the organization is able to solve tasks that lie beyond the abilities of the single elements. The price paid by the elements is the limitation of the degrees of freedom of the elements. Advantages of organizations are enhancement (more of the same), addition (combination of different features), and extension. Disadvantages can be inertness (through co-ordination) and loss of interaction.

Though, it is also important to mention that in social sciences the macro level is often referred to as the constitutional level as to draw a clear distinction between institution building (constitutional level) and institution functioning (institutional level). The first one refers to a process of creating institutions within the framework of established rules and principles by which an organization is governed defining fundamental political, managerial, etc. principles and establishes the power and duties of each entity. This study however refers to the first distinction described in this paragraph (Weber 1947; Kivisto 2003; Sztompka 2004).

2.4.2 Institutional change

Those three levels of institutionalization are exposed to ongoing transformations and changes since socio-political constantly evolves due to various adaptational pressures. Some of the theorists also tend to perceive relations between institutions, organizations and individual as dynamic ones and between other sets of institutions too. Institutionalization as a process therefore constitutes a unique system of tight interdependence in which one influences another and leads to gradual change.

Social sciences provide at least three relevant for this study approaches to institutional change. The first one emphasizes institutional change as a function of how organizations and individuals react to exogenous change (e.g. collapse of the Berlin Wall). Shocks may result in searching for new models, policy innovations or other instruments once implemented leading to institutional change. The other one consequently asserts on relation between various stakeholders at the meso level that constitute a domain of recurrent interactions among those involved in specific kinds of social processes (e.g. interactions among individual and organizational members of a network organizations resulting in synergy). The argument is that certain models and behaviours are diffused among them influencing formative context and therefore leading to institutional change. Finally, third approach focuses on the role of policy entrepreneurship and skilled actors (e.g. recognized and active organizations or highly creative and committed individuals). The later ones can be defined as those who engage cooperation among various stakeholders by providing shared sets of beliefs and identities. Dynamic social context internally or externally to organizations creates room for generating new frameworks of cooperation leading to a greater influence and coherence in terms of undertaken activities. In the context of this study institutional approach seems to be extremely relevant since it points out that organizations constitute privilege sites of institutional due to the fact that institutional evolution (e.g. domestic change) results from changing over time relationship among actors, organizations and institutions (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz & Fligstein 2001; Blom-Hansen 1997; Veenswijk & Hakvoort 2002).

2.4.3 Evaluating institutionalization

Political and social space of Europe is becoming more and more complex due to deepening and widening of the EU and internal modernization processes taking place in the CEES. By the same token, social and political arenas both at domestic and supranational level are becoming more institutionalized. Nevertheless, fact of broadly understood institutionalization needs to be somehow assessed in order to realize complexity, implications and eventually introduce some improvements. Evaluation of such a complex social process is extremely challenging though can be achieved at least partially through conceptualization of what is the subject of the process, to what degree or extent institutionalization brought about the change and finally through what mechanisms or processes has institutionalization taken place (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz & Fligstein 2001). In this case, a conceptual and analytical framework of Europeanization developed by T. Börzel and T. Risse (2000, 2003) will serve for this purpose, however extended of another source of adaptational pressure which is democratization. That

is why before providing detailed description of this approach both democratization and Europeanization processes need some explanation.

2.5 Democratization

Democratization in general terms is defined as a transition from authoritarian systems to democratic political systems in which universal suffrage is practiced, elections take place regularly, there is established and freely functioning civil society, all actors oblige the rule of law and an independent judiciary. However, democratization in terms of public administration and governance in the Central and Easter Europe means in principle devolution of decision-making powers and de-concentration of the responsibilities of implementation. Systemic change in this regard appeared firstly when constitutional provisions with general rules were established and secondly when a mixture of newly established and remaining institution emerged (Peters & Pierre 2003; Toonen 1992).

Transformation of state system comprises also social and economical changes, however this study is focused exclusively on shifts within public administration and governance structures. Obviously, every single country in the region performed differently in terms of domestic change. Thus transformation of national public administration is a complex process and depends very much on the peculiarities of existing structures as well as on the society, external influences or timing. Those processes that started in the early 1990s are still in early consolidation stage even though have already reached generally agreed standards and were of sufficient significance that some of the countries of the CEE were invited to join the EU and other international organizations. Nevertheless, other states of the region are still undergoing democratic transition however in those cases very often without clear direction. This way on another, patterns of change and at the same time obstacles on the way seem to be similar and undoubtedly they caused adaptational pressure for existing institutional structures at the domestic level. The public administration reforms in the CEES resulted from a combination of external challenges, pressures and assistance, activities of mediating factors bringing about the change as well as privatization that served as a key instrument for structural differentiation between public and private spheres. However for the purpose of this study, institutionalisation and professionalisation of the public administrations remain the most important issues.

Europeanization, that will be described in details in the forthcoming section, has recently introduced additional dimension into the transformation process in regard to administrative capacity building and so-called readiness for Europe. Regardless the effectiveness of transformation process, the challenges ahead in public administration reforms are still tremendous both in policy and political terms. There is easily observable gap between the demand for a significant role of the public administration in managing democratic transition or consolidation at the level of administrative capacity of most well-developed states. At the very generic level there are two main issues related to public administration reforms as democratization processes. The first concerns transformation of the institutional side on the one hand and personal side on the other combined with two key assumptions of

decentralization and professionalisation (Peters & Pierre 2003; Nunberg 2000; Verheijn 2000; Kassim 2003; Hesse 1998).

2.6 Europeanization

Europeanization might be perceived as an entry-point for understanding of crucial shifts within society and politics. At generic level, it is a 'process of structural change, variously affecting actors and institutions, ideas and interests. In a maximalist sense, the structural change that it entails must fundamentally be of a phenomenon exhibiting similar attributes to those that predominate in, or closely identified with Europe. Minimally, Europeanization involves a response to the politics of the European Union' (Featherstone & Radaelli 2003, p.3). Even this short introduction reveals the complexity of those processes present not only the Member States, but also candidates and other actors. Additionally, broad scope of those shifts certainly cause adaptation pressures on domestic structures leading to domestic change.

There are a few important dimensions of this process, also crucial for this study:

1) *Europeanization as a historic phenomenon and cultural diffusion* – in this regard, the process is perceived as export or exchange cross-nationally of cultural norms and patterns in a broad sense and refers to institutional organization and practices, social and cultural beliefs, values and behaviours.
2) *Europeanization as institutional adaptation* – that is the most common understanding of this process related directly or indirectly with the EU. This perspective comprises change and fusion of national and the EU institutions in the policy cycle, though only partial convergence of state and political systems. It is also identified with adaptation of other institutional actors at the domestic level and beyond and emergence of a network mode of governance.
3) *Europeanization as policies and policy processes* – inevitably the EU policies have implications on the public policy processes of its members. That requires transformation within policy-making process as well as it has direct impact on institutionalization of policy processes (Featherstone & Radaelli 2003).

Europeanization though is not a stand-alone conceptual framework but exists within more general theoretical frames such as new institutionalism. One of the approaches sees Europeanization as political institutionalization what involves the development of formal and informal rules, procedures, norms and practices governing practices at all levels. The changes concern various levels of governance among others: institution-building at the supranational level, the impact of *acquis communautaire* at the national level (incl. administration capacity building) and a response to globalization (Cowles *et al*. 2001). This is a broad perspective that allows focusing on specific impacts especially at the domestic level.

Europeanization alongside with democratization as research agenda constitutes a general analytical framework for investigating the ramifications of those processes in terms of domestic institutional setting. Both of them entail absorption, accommodation and

transformation of this setting in response to adaptational pressures related to socio-political demands of transition and the EU membership (Cowles *et al*. 2001; Featherstone & Radaelli 2003). Risse and Börzel (2003) through incorporation of rationalist and sociological institutionalism managed to combine focus on actor interests and ideas following the logics of appropriateness and consequentialism still having in mind importance of norms, rules and procedures.

2.7 Conceptualizing impact of democratization and Europeanization on domestic change

Theoretical framework developed by Börzel and Risse (2000, 2003) is instrumental for this study since it helps to answer how do Europeanization and in this case also democratization affect domestic change at the level of policies, polities and politics of the member states and beyond. Two conditions must me satisfy in order to expect domestic changes in respond to complex processes of Europeanization and democratization. The frame used for this research has been expanded and also encompasses democratization process as source of adaptational pressure and therefore domestic change (see also 2.5 & 2.6). Firstly, there must be some degree of misfit between processes, institutions or practices between domestic level and those already in place at supranational level of governance. This misfit results in adaptational pressure which is perceived as a necessary but not sufficient condition for expecting domestic change. The second condition is that facilitating factors of institutional or individual nature respond to the adaptational pressures, thus inducing the change at the domestic level.

Sociological approach explaining domestic change concentrates on processes related to persuasion and emphasizes logic of appropriateness. Policies developed by the EU but also instruments and values attached to them as well as conditions related to functioning of democratic state and society exert adaptational pressure on the domestic level, because they do not match with state of affairs domestically. This paper argues that operation of a change agent/norm entrepreneur (NISPAcee) influences the degree to which such misfit results in the internalization of new norms or mechanisms. This approach suggests that those two processes eventually lead to domestic change through collective learning process and socialization affecting development and internalization of new identities.

2.7.1 Dimensions of domestic change

Domestic change takes place at three dimensions on which processes can be track down and analyze. Indication of such transformation can be observed at the level of policies, politics and polities. Evidences at the domestic level affirm that democratization and Europeanization have impact upon structures however differential. In particular this research focuses on professionalisation of public administration that in turn affects those three dimensions of change. This approach explains the role of mediating factors when it comes to Europeanization and modernization processes. Figure 2.1 presents structure and components of those three dimensions of domestic change (Börzel 2005; Cowles *et al*. 2001).

Figure 2.1 Dimensions of domestic change: polity, policy, and politics
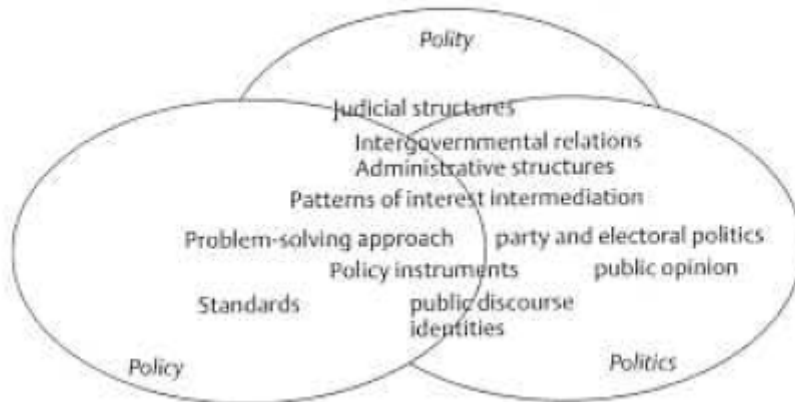
Source: (Börzel 2005, p. 49).

2.7.2 Facilitating factors as sufficient condition for domestic change

Emerging European system of governance as well as consolidation of democratic state structures in the CEES have implications on domestic change concerning adaptation of processes, policies, institutions, norms and other rules (Olsen 1996). According to sociological institutionalism actors are driven by collectively accepted behaviours and norms in a given socio-political context. This approach perceives Europeanization and democratization as the emergence of new rules, institutional arrangements and mechanisms to which states under influence of those processes adopt them to their internal structures.

Agency-based version of sociological institutionalism suggests that there are differences in the degree to which domestic norms and institutions change in response to international institutional arrangements and promoted by them ideas or required conditions. This approach concentrates though on socialization process as a potential explanation for domestic change (e.g. in a filed of public administration or policy process). Through internalization and incorporation of new norms or collectively acceptable modes of functioning, states cumulate capacity to become members of certain communities or be perceived as states in good standing. However, not only misfit between those levels but also mediating factors is necessary to make it happen.

This approach recognizes two types of facilitating actors: change agents/norm entrepreneurs and political culture. However this paper argues that the former one has played a significant role when it comes to professionalisation of public administration influencing domestic change within the region of Central and Easter Europe. Change agents through their existence and undertaken activities exercise influence on domestic structures. They engage process of social learning (e.g. professionalisation) and therefore persuade them to change (gradually) their interests and identities. Two following types of change agents are recognized:

1) *Epistemic communities* – can be characterized as networks of actors that provide with scientific knowledge and experience about casual relationship and therefore legitimate new norms

that might be implemented causing domestic change at various levels of governance. Epistemic communities are influential in inducing change especially when there is a consensus on what values and instruments promote and when efforts made are highly institutionalized (see Figure 2.2).

2) *Advocacy issue networks* – this type of change agent is characterized rather shared values and beliefs than consensual knowledge. Those networks refer to collectively shared norms or ideas underlying principles of e.g. democratic state or effective public sector and try to persuade other actors to reconsider their goals and reconstruct their attitudes or identities. Persuasion and advocacy embedded in clearly defined activities not only lead to social learning but in turn may well influence policy making or institutional transformation.

Figure 2.2 Characteristics of epistemic community

TABLE 1. *Approaches to the study of policy change*

Approach	Level of analysis and area of study	Factors that influence policy change	Mechanisms and effects of change	Primary actors
Epistemic communities approach	Transnational; state administrators and international institutions.	Knowledge; causal and principled beliefs.	Diffusion of information and learning; shifts in the patterns of decision making.	Epistemic communities; individual states.

Source: (Haas 1992, p. 6).

Taking everything into account, change agents affect the extent to which European norms as well as those related to functioning of a democratic rue of law state which does not comply with those at the domestic level are internalized by domestic actors inducing domestic change. This logic of institutional change at domestic level emphasize vital role of mediating factors. Thanks to advocacy, learning and socialization they cause redefinition of interests and identities bring about the change (Börzel 2005; Börzel & Risse 2000, 2003; Hass 1992).

2.7.3 Outcome of domestic change in response to adaptational pressures

Domestic structures respond to adaptational pressures in different way and degree. Börzel and Risse (2003) propose three degrees of domestic change:

1) *Absorption* – is characterized by low level of change. Certain state incorporate the EU policies (or principle of those if not a member) or ideas into their structures respectively but without significant modifications of processes, institutions and policies already in place.
2) *Accommodation* – medium degree of domestic change is described as adaptation of existing processes, institutions and policies however without changing their essential features and attached to them collective understandings.
3) *Transformation* – degree of domestic change is high. It means that domestic structures (processes, institutions and policies) are replaced by substantially different ones or are alter to

extent that underlying ideas, values or mechanisms are fundamentally changed.

Sociological institutionalism argues that in such a dynamic and complex context and with existing high adaptational pressures it is very likely that domestic change will be prevented by strong flows of institutional inertia. The process of incorporation or harmonization new rules, procedures and instruments does not simply mean replacement. Significant change occurs only under external coercion or systemic change (e.g. transformation). In any other condition, actors are more willing to change if new norms are at least partly compatible with already existing once. That is the reason why it is predicted that medium pressure for adaptation (accommodation) is the most likely scenario especially in a long-term perspective. Domestic change is anyway channelled through already existing institutional paths (Börzel 2005; Börzel & Risse 2000, 2003; Cowles *et al.* 2001; Olsen 1996, 2002).

While researching domestic change and impact of the EU and democratization processes various analyses tend to emphasize convergence or divergence of policies and structures as the final result of those processes. The issue of convergence is problematic and extremely hard to assess from both empirical and theoretical point of view. Especially, when it comes to the focus of this research which is public administration and governance issues, convergence may occur if at all but only to a limited extent and scope. Therefore so-called European Administrative Space rather suggests way of thinking about administrative change more than gives firm answer about the extent to which convergence has been achieved. Various sources of ideas, methods of transpositions of certain instruments or context of change are among other factors crucial for analysis administrative convergence. Nevertheless, some of the features of the European Administrative Spaces will be presented and used in a section concern with analyses of empirical findings of this study (Olsen 2000; Pollitt 2001; SIGMA 1998a).

2.8 Role of mediating factors in the modernization processes in the CEE

The growth of the non-profit organizations and other institutional arrangements belongs to one of the great social innovations not only in the post-Communist countries but in the other part of the world too. The boom is expressing the need to belong to something, to change something or take party in something. Non-profit organizations are enormously different form each other in their size, scope and filed of activities, resources and scale of impact. Civil society and its organizations heavily influenced development of society as such but also the way in which the government functions and delivers services.

The role of various factors in post-Communists transitions in Central and Eastern Europe continues however to be underrated. This section argues that the sates within the region have been influenced by international or supranational organization, individual governments and non-governmental organizations such as NISPAcee. They acted as transmitters of modernization-related models and ideas bringing about

the change in regard to governance issues and public administration. Nevertheless, this study focuses on mediating factors of non-profit structure. Moreover, this section gives the insight into roles, functions and infrastructure of NGOs in modernization process between the transition and the EU Enlargement (Zaborowski 2002; Fric & Butora 2003).

2.8.1 Context

Undoubtedly the combination of various factors influenced and facilitated modernization processes in the region. Some of them were of coercive or forceful nature, however as it is in the case of NISPAcee, the ideas are transferred voluntary. Amalgamate of domestic and external influences and often their elusive nature constitutes a difficult setting for research both in empirical and theoretical terms. There is a number of studies concerned with the impact of the supranational organizations (e.g. the EU) on their member states. Though, the less forceful manifestations of international dimension of modernization process remain under-conceptualized. Even though, the international dimension of modernization processes in CEE seems to be difficult to address since they remain highly politicized and complex phenomena, it is vital for understanding domestic change in the CEES. The questions seem to address issues such as what is the international and formative context of those changes, what is the role of mediating factors and how to measure their influence or how it interacts and impact domestic institutional structures (Peters & Pierre 2003).

2.8.2 External actors and forms of external influence

Three main categories of actors that have had impact on modernization process in the CEE region can be distinguished:

1) *International and supranational organizations* - A growing number of international institutions and regimes have been involved in CEE since 1989. Whilst the Council of Europe and NATO have been involved in promoting democratic institutions, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have influenced the restructuring of CEE economies by way of attaching certain conditions to their loans. The impact of the OEC and especially the EU on post-Communist transitions is probably both the widest and the deepest as, on one hand, Brussels has encouraged the broadest range of reforms and, on the other hand, it has been often closely involved in their implementation.

2) *Individual governments* - Western governments, in particular the U.S. and Germany. U.S. interests in the region are part of its post-Cold War global strategy, and as such they are no different from its interests in other parts of the world under transition, such as Turkey, South-East Asia and the area formerly belonging to the Soviet Union. In contrast to this, Germany interests in CEE are of a particular nature emphasizing direct interest within the region of both political and economical nature.

3) *Non-governmental organizations* (both domestic and international) – those can be divided at least into a few categories such as A) know-how agencies (such as the USAID), (B) Western political parties, operating sometimes, but not always, through their foundations (such as the Ebert Foundation, representing German

Social Democrats or the Westminster Foundation linked to British parties), (C) foreign policy and reconciliation-related foundations, such as the German-Czech forum or the American Ford foundation and (D) regional or domestic NGOs supported from various international resources operating within a specific field e.g. NISPAcee. These categories of actors have affected post-Communist reforms acting through a variety of methods, ranging from the voluntary transfer of policies and ideas to more coercive ways of shaping the reform agenda in CEE (Zaborowski 2002, p. 10; Mikułowski 2002, Peters & Pierre 2003).

As it has been already mention a number of times, this study focuses only on non-governmental sector. The other groups of actors having influence over modernization processes have been defined for the purpose of this research as the interfering variables. The following sections focus explicitly on roles, functions and infrastructures within non-governmental sector.

2.8.3 Non-governmental organization

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a non-profit group or association that acts outside of institutionalized political structures and pursues matters of interest to its members by lobbying, persuasion, or direct action. The term is generally restricted to social, cultural, legal, and environmental advocacy groups having goals that are primarily non-commercial. NGOs usually gain at least a portion of their funding from private sources. Scope of functioning of NGOs is very often international. Obviously, transitional states of the CEE region and beyond have their own regulations concerning legal traditions, taxation, restrictions or accountability issues; however they comply with the definition provided in this section (Zaborowski 2002; Fric & Butora 2003).

In the context of this research, the interdependence theory underlines the importance of mediating structures in bringing about change at domestic level. This theory does not perceive the reasons for origin and functioning of NGOs in terms of market and state failure and certainly refuses an inherent assumption of an inevitable conflict between a state and civil society institutions. It can though find elements predetermining the state and NGOs to cooperate on both sides. It can be said that joint help compensates for heir drawbacks and therefore they are inter-dependent and effective institutional change requires both sides to co-operate with one another.

For one thing non-profit organizations often mobilize their resources in a field before government is ready to respond. They often aim in developing expertise, structures and experience that government or other public institutions can draw on in their own activities. Besides that, NGOs very often mobilize political support needed to stimulate government involvement. Finally, for all the advantages of mediating actors, NGOs have their own significant limitations that constraints their ability to respond to public problems. That shows how both sides may benefit from each other activities and moreover how important the NGOs are when it comes to modernization processes (Fric & Butora 2003; Salamon & Anheier 1996).

2.8.4 The role of non-profit sector in society

Generally accepted view in social sciences underlines that non-profit sector is one of the three main pillars of modern society with its own identity and social functions. Its role is irreplaceable because it constitutes a separate social and institutional subsystem. A number of crucial functions of this sector can be distinguished:

1) *Advocacy/social change function* – NGOs are supposed to protect and represent their members facing violations of their right through operation of the government, majority groups or other actors. They are also a mechanism for gathering people and passing social change, which are in their common interest, respectively in the broader public interest. The act as a mediator between individual and the world of high politics or between domestic and international arena what encompasses various processes of change.
2) *Innovative function* – NGOs take risks related to implementation of unknown procedures. Moreover, they serve as an incubator of new ideas or as a hub for information and experience exchange. By identifying and effort to solve unnamed problems, they constitute new ways of handling certain issues and often work as pioneers in certain branches.
3) *Service function* – NGOs provide a wide variety of services not only for their own members, but also for society as such. They offer to tale on responsibilities towards citizens, which would otherwise have to be initiated by the government. They also provide services in the areas on non or very low profit in which business would not be interested to operate anyway.
4) *Expressive and leadership development functions* – NGOs offer self-expression of their members both in individual and group sense. Various interests, attitudes, values, etc. are expressed and people learn how to understand and express them within institutional framework of the organization.
5) *Community-building and democratizing functions* – NGOs support pluralism in terms of expressed opinions, interests and traditions. They also strengthen feelings of solidarity and community in people. They are also hubs in which social capital is accumulated and developed. And finally, people thanks to their organization gain expertise in certain filed and therefore often join public policy making or at least learn how to influence policy-cycle (Fric & Butora 2003, p.159).

This short section aimed in presenting basic concepts related to non-governmental organizations and their functions in modernizations processes in the region. It shows the importance of non-profit sector in transition processes both in terms of functions and as institutional arrangements explaining domestic change.

2.9 Change agent and delivery of public good

Finally, change agents as mentioned above, not only provide social infrastructure, but in more general sense mobilize and generate resources contributing to delivery of collective/public goods. This research assumes that professional public administration is a public good that without functioning of non-governmental actors would not be

otherwise delivered. Therefore functioning of change agents is vital allowing and accelerating (in some cases prohibiting) domestic change in terms of public administration and governance issues. This short paragraph aims to provide some understanding of collective action and public goods in economical and sociological discourse.

Public goods are goods or services that can be consumed by several individuals simultaneously without diminishing the value of consumption to any one of the individuals. This key characteristic of public goods, that multiple individuals can consume the same good without diminishing its value, is termed *non-rivalry*. Non-rivalry is what most strongly distinguishes public goods from private goods. A pure public good also has the characteristic of *non-excludability*, that is, an individual cannot be prevented from consuming the good whether or not the individual pays for it. In this context, it is a professional public administration, but could be for example fresh air, a public park, a beautiful view or national defense.

Public goods are a special concern to economists because there can be market failure[1] in the private market provision of both pure and impure public goods. The primary cause of market failure involving public goods is non-excludability. Non-excludability means that the producer of a public good cannot prevent individuals from consuming it. Non-excludability is a relative, not an absolute, characteristic of most public goods. A good is usually termed non-excludable if the costs of excluding individuals from consuming the good are very high, especially when it comes to those goods delivered by the government – high price and need for comprehensive manner of providing certain goods like professional administration.

Public goods produce a very important example of market failure which is *free rider problem*. Free riders are actors who consume more than their fair share of a resource, or shoulder less than a fair share of the costs of its production. The free rider problem is the question of how to prevent free riding from taking place, or at least limit its negative effects. Because the notion of fairness, when it comes to public goods is controversial, free riding is usually only considered to be an economic problem, when it leads to the non-production or under-production of a public good.

Public goods issue is inevitably related to collective action and its logic. Collective action is the pursuit of a goal or set of goals by more than one person. The economic theory of collective action is concerned with the provision of public goods (and other collective consumption) through the collaboration of two or more individuals, and the impact of externalities on group behavior. Theories of collective action emphasize how group behavior can, in some sense, be linked to

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[1] Also *government failure* is the public sector analogy to market failure and occurs when a government does not efficiently allocate goods and/or resources to government consumers. Such consumers are typically citizens, but may be non-citizens in certain contexts. Just as a market failure is not a failure to bring a particular or favored solution into existence at desired prices, but is rather a problem which prevents the market from operating efficiently, a government failure is not a failure of the government to bring about a particular solution, but is rather a systemic problem which prevents an efficient government solution to a problem.

social institutions. Mancur Olson (1965) develops a theory of political science and economics of concentrated benefits versus diffuse costs relevant for this study.

The book challenged accepted wisdom in Olson's day that 1) if everyone in a group has interests in common, then they will act collectively to achieve them; and 2) in a democracy, the greatest concern is that the majority will tyrannize and exploit the minority. He also argues that individuals in any group attempting collective action will have incentives to free ride on the efforts of others if the group is working to provide public goods. Individuals will not free ride in groups which provide benefits only to active participants.

Hence, without selective incentives to motivate participation, collective action is unlikely to occur even when large groups of people with common interests exist. He also notes that that large group will face relatively high costs when attempting to organize for collective action while small groups will face relatively low costs (NISPAcee and its advantages). Furthermore, individuals in large groups will gain relatively less per capita of successful collective action; individuals (and affected environments) in small groups will gain relatively more per capita through successful collective action. In the absence of collective incentives, the incentive for group action diminishes as group size increases, so that large groups are less able to act in their common interest than small ones (Samuelson 1954; Varian 1992; Olson 1965; Knoke 1990).

2.10 Change agent model as an evaluation criterion

Having described details related to institutional change, impact of domestic change and the role of mediating factors in modernization processes in the CEES, it is reasonable to emphasise that the notion of a change agent is vital for this study. Centrality of this concept has been clearly presented in the main research question. To certain extent, change agent model presented in the previous sections stands for a broad criterion on which basis performance of NISPAcee perceived as a non-governmental actor is being assessed (see Chapter 4).

Preceding paragraphs on institutionalization, Europeanization and democratization, the role of the mediating factors and public good issue relate to each other and in a broader perspective presenting the characteristics of a change agent. This short section though aims in describing some of the characteristics of a mediating actor in the context of this study.

As already described, state and its mechanisms in a highly dynamic context of CEE is not able to cope with all the problems related to society and itself resulting from various adaptation pressures. That is why, it seems that other actors or facilitators are necessary in order to facilitate, induce or/and accelerate the change, that would not be possible otherwise. In terms of governance and public administration, certain models and behaviours are diffused among various levels of actors influencing formative context and therefore leading to institutional change. Nevertheless, professionalisation as a mechanism used by the research organisation (see 2.11) to improve performance of its target group and indirectly capacities of state structures of the

CEES, requires more holistic and long-term approach that can be only provided and sustain as argued in this study by mediating/facilitating actors. Thus, professionalisation in particular is a long-term commitment engaging a number of actors and it requires a generic and encompassing approach to education, research and training in public administration in the broadest sense.

A change agent (see 2.7.2; e.g. recognized and active organizations or highly creative and committed individuals) can be defined as an actor that engages cooperation among various stakeholders by providing shared sets of beliefs and identities. Dynamic social context internally or externally to organizations creates room for generating new frameworks of cooperation leading to a greater influence and coherence in terms of undertaken activities, setting up at the same time social infrastructure. Change agents through their existence and undertaken activities exercise influence on domestic structures. They engage process of social learning (e.g. professionalisation) and therefore persuade them to change (gradually) their interests and identities.

Especially in the case of modernization process in public domain, change agents seems to have a crucial role, thus through their activities they affect weather certain sets of norms, ideas, collective understandings (in this case related to Europeanization and democratization as adaptational pressures) that do not resonate with those at domestic level, are internalized by domestic actors (primarily at meso and macro level) giving rise to domestic change. The sociological logic of domestic change stressing importance and certain characteristics of a change agent (i.e. epistemic community) points out that through various mechanisms of socialization and social learning (e.g. professionalisation) new norms and identities emanating from Europeanization and democratization processes are internalized by domestic actors and lead to new definitions of interests and of collective frames of reference at the same time generating broad social infrastructure.

2.11 In search of excellence in public administration: professionalisation

Taking into account conceptual and theoretical frame for this research and their limitations as well as specific regional context, professionalisation seems to be the most approachable angel or being more precisely operational instrument on which basis domestic change in public administration can be analyzed. Moreover, professionalisation seems to be the only researchable linkage between adaptational pressures, functioning of mediating factors and domestic change at the levels of politics, policies and polities.

The notion of professionalism is Anglo-Saxon and Western tradition is definitely well-developed, however before the transition in the CEE profession and professional organizations did not get enough attention and to some extended was abandoned. The power of professionals who poses high knowledge and expertise was a source of threat for the Communist-style of governance. It was absolutely crucial to eliminate any kind of professional institutions (especially in the filed of public

administration) that could produce professional culture, power and influence. The result of this process was destruction of mechanisms for the accumulation and reproduction of professional experience and culture. That is why search of excellence especially in public sphere became crucial in order to raise the quality of services, meet demands and expectations of well-organized and performed democratic state. Conceptual framework provided for this research emphasizes the role of mediating factors, in this case non-governmental sector, as the carriers of professionalisation.

Formative context of the CEE region and the closest neighbourhood presents the process of reproduction of systems of governance and public on the basis of the previous ones. Even though, the collapse of the Soviet Union and demand for systemic change was extremely high, generally speaking besides establishment and consolidation of basic democratic structures what was rapid, professionalisation and institutional capacity building are time-consuming and cannot be establish rapidly. This long process has been facilitated by various domestic and international actors and there is still a lot to be done. Professionalisation is not only about specification of procedures, creating codes of professional ethical behaviour or human and administrative capacity building. This process encompasses gradual change of beliefs, values and identities that are firstly, identified with European socio-political space (obviously with regional differences) and secondly allows state and social structures to operate more effectively. Professionalisation is a complex social process that has its own speed and logic and moreover can be achieved in many ways. The case study of NISPAcee reveals those various methods of contribution to professionalisation of public administration in the region (Zaborowski 2002; Fric & Butora 2003; Van Stolk 2002; Veenswijk & Hakvoort 2002 ; Verheijen & Connaughton 2003).

2.12 Conclusions

Underlying message of this research is that at virtually every single point between transition and the EU Enlargement various processes related to democratization and Europeanization have been significantly conditioned by existing institutional arrangements. Dynamic relations between actors, organizations and institutions in a given formative context combined with administrative capacity building and professionalisation of public administration resulted in incremental but complex transformations within governance structures and public sector. Institutionalization as a process constitutes the outcome to be explained and at the same time partially provides with insights how to understand and analyze this phenomenon.

Institutionalization creates a common ground for exercising collective governance based on accepted rules and using various instruments that allow efficient functioning of state systems and societies. This account is extremely relevant for transitional countries where democratization and Europeanization processes forged casual linkages between activities, values, mechanisms and instruments that take place in otherwise distinct

social and political spaces bringing about domestic change with regard to governance and public administration.

Approach applied to this research also notices and points out feedback loops connecting individuals, organizations and institutions and vice versa. They are perceived as generic mechanisms of innovation, institutionalization and implementation of rules and other instruments leading to more effective operation within socio-political spaces. This conceptual framework combined with various methods of inquiry aims in principle to answer the question of to what extend the NISPAcee comply with a model of a change agent explaining professionalisation of pubic administration and in turn domestic change at the levels of policies, politics and polities.

3 Case study: NISPAcee

This chapter presents the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe as a case study examining the hypothesis of this research. The main goal of this section is to provide rich description of an organization in action but also picture its formal structure, goals and outcomes. Description of NISPAcee was prepared while using three basic and one supportive empirical technique of enquiry, which are participation/observation, in-depth interview, internal sources analysis and desk research. Combination of methods allows incorporating various perspectives (views, concerns and priorities) of members and external actors. Gathered information creates basis for analytical part that is presented in the forthcoming chapter.

3.1 Background information

The Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe originated from the genuine effort of people and institutions from the region and beyond, to share the knowledge and skills and unite efforts to cope with challenges of transformation and

in later stage accession to the European Union regarding public administration and governance issues.

The very first attempt to engage co-operation was made by Anita Weiss-Gänger from Austrian Academy of Public Administration supported by Austrian Government. In early 1993, a number of representatives of schools and institutes of public administration from neighbourhood countries were invited for a meeting aiming in setting up regional co-operation in the filed of public administration. The main goal of that meeting was discussion of how those schools could operate and eventually exchange information in a completely new socio-political context of systemic transformation. Participants agreed upon a proposal of Alena Brunovska, at the time a director of Academia Istropolitana, that next meeting would take place in Bratislava. As a matter of fact nothing important happened between those two meetings, though the later one brought together around 35 representatives in comparison with a previous one that hosted around 10. Finally, at the end of the meeting in Bratislava, various actors decided to establish more formal co-operation that at first will be very modest comprising exchange of information and perhaps later exchange of foreign academics between schools in the region. Initial ideas were very modest but networking was a priority. It is to be added, that there was a few representatives of Western organizations and supranational organizations such OECD/SIGMA. It was also suggested that Academia Istropolitana could host a secretariat that would facilitate communications. Moreover, participants of that meeting recognized a need for sort of steering committee that would meet more often guiding co-operation and a newsletter would serve as a communication instrument to keep all interested parties up-date. Finally, the organisation was established in 1994 as an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation focused on the public administration challenges facing Central and Eastern European countries. In October 1995, due to political instability in Slovakia as well as raising expectations of its members, NISPAcee become an independent legal entity registered in Slovakia as an international organisation (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006).

3.2 Environment

From the very beginning NISPAcee activities were devoted to institutions, schools and training centres with emphases on the NISPAcee member institutions as well as to public servants responsible for training and education. However, the scope of various activities has grown and started to encompass wider and more diverse range of people.

The political change in the region brought about the challenge of transforming governments, which created the need for new curricula in teaching and training public administration. Previously established programmes, courses, students and faculty recruitment procedures, and methods of teaching quickly became obsolete in the already existing institutions and the new institutions are facing the immense task of finding answers to such problems. Not only those organizations, but also individuals involved in reforming state systems were interested in this kind of co-operation. The existence of NISPAcee has shown that opening up national boundaries and getting institutions to communicate with each other can help to identify, articulate and find suitable solutions for the difficulties and dilemmas that members face.

Institutions concerned with public administration and governance issues in Central and Eastern Europe differ from country to country. They are organised differently. Some of them are autonomous, whilst others are units of a larger organisation. They also differ in their history meaning that some are newly established after the political transition while others have a long-standing history. Some of them are run by the state or regional authorities whereas others have been established as non-profit organisations. They show differences according to their target groups: some offer regular college or university undergraduate education, others are graduate schools only, while some offer just in-service training, still others offer all these programmes. There is also a considerable sub-regional variety of experience, approaches, levels of professionalism and goals (such as accession to the EU in foreseeable future).

While such differences exist, all institutions share common interests and have both short term and enduring concerns. Many institutions are still grappling with fundamental questions concerning national priorities in public administration training and education, with basic questions about institutional structure and curricula, and with practical questions concerning the recruitment of students and faculty. They are subject to a vital but often disorganised flow of information, advice and outright intervention by well-meaning Western counterparts. They generally have limited contact with other institutions in the region, and few mechanisms for learning from the successes and mistakes of each other, despite the fact that the transitions affecting their countries and institutions have many fundamentally similar elements.

Well-established institutions have an important political role to play, because they carry the foundations of the national administrative culture on which a new education and training system will have to be built. Public administration reforms in many CEE countries require a new generation of public administration officials who are educated and trained in these institutions. Similarities cut across not only new programmes, but especially across the reform of public management. Most of the countries in the region are too small to have the critical mass of public administration, management and policy experts. Learning from successes and failures of member institutions can speed up professional development.

The public administration profession is in a turbulent period in a whole Europe. It is crucial to create public administration systems in CEES including the educational and training institutions which serve the systems, which are able to cope with change, satisfy the present and accommodate the future tasks of governments serving their citizens. This includes the transformation of the public administration at the national and local level to become transparent. Translated to education and training, this implies readiness to discuss the future and to include public sector management concepts and practice in curricula, even if their application is non-existent yet in practice.

There is still a considerable deficit in the amount of knowledge concerning present state of national public administration systems as well as requirements for their reform in the region. Public administration reform proposals, implementation efforts, and the content of teaching should be based on a solid mass of empirical evidence. That

is why facilitating and the fostering of research, analysing all facets of public administration systems, should be promoted.

From the very beginning NISPAcee with its established networks has been well positioned to help improve public administration by relying on East-East co-operation and Western insights. Advocating certain guidelines for training inputs in the region and helping information exchange in managing Western assistance to training and education in public administration, NISPAcee takes a leading role in pointing out as well the deficiencies sometimes observed in East-West co-operation (Zaborowski 2002; Rice 1992; Newland 1996; Hesse 1998; Mikułowski & Koźmiński 2001; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.3 Mission

NISPAcee has been established as a platform for East – East collaboration through assisting, mediating and facilitating joint research, educational and training programmes and discussions between instructors, civil servants, trainers, public sector managers and politicians. This approach shall promote both human capacity building and institutional development in public administration through mutual learning and bring about considerable synergy effect to all member institutions. NISPAcee in principle fosters co-operation within the region, however it has established tight links with the Western organizations.

The core activities comprise promotion the development of public administration disciplines and training programmes in post-Communist countries. This means increasing the quality of instruction and research and assisting in school/institute development on international, regional and national levels. Overall, the network aims in raising level of excellence within organizations and of individuals whose professional focus is on governance issues and public administration as such. That eventually leads to professionalisation

Part of the mission is also to foster the development of civil service human resources by spreading the practices of good professional public management, public policy and governance and assisting in the overall political and economic transition through effective public service. Most important is the creating of conditions for increased professionalism of the civil service especially through the facilitation of contact between government representatives responsible for public service and representatives and consultants from member institutions. In addition to the advantage this will give the countries involved, it will also help strengthen the position of schools and institutes in these regions as well as NISPAcee as an organisation.

3.4 NISPAcee governance structure

Initial modest project of regional co-operation and in later stage expansion in scope and organizational growth of NISPAcee required also development of the organisation needs a management which will guarantee its further sustainability. Moreover it will help in managing all challenges of fast changing formative context in which NISPAcee operates.

In order to achieve the above, the top management of the organisation have to be very well professionally equipped, flexible, expert and geographically diversified, nationally and internationally recognised. Therefore, in addition to legally listed bodies in the Bylaws, new structures have been recently launched with following responsibilities (see Figure 3.1 and Appendix 7):

1) Legal representatives stated in the Bylaws:

- *The General Assembly* - is the principal governing body of NISPAcee with the rights listed in the Bylaws.
- *The NISPAcee President and the Steering Committee* is responsible for all the tasks listed in the Bylaws and mainly focused on the strategic issues of the organisation. A geographical balance should be reached within the members of the Committee to represent the different needs of different CEE sub-regions of the organisation.
- *The Executive Director and the Secretariat* is responsible for all the tasks listed in the Bylaws mainly dealing with the execution of NISPAcee functions and programmes.

Figure 3.1 NISPAcee governance structure

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐               │
│              │          GENERAL ASSEMBLY            │               │
│              └──────────────────────────────────────┘               │
│                               ⇕                                     │
│                   ┌──────────────────────┐                          │
│                   │     PRESIDENT &      │                          │
│                   │  STEERING COMMITTEE  │                          │
│                   └──────────────────────┘                          │
│             ↙                  ⇓                  ↘                  │
│   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐        │
│   │  TASK    │   │ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & │   │ FLEXIBLE     │        │
│   │  FORCE   │   │     SECRETARIAT      │   │ MODELS       │        │
│   │          │   │                      │   │ OF REGIONAL  │        │
│   └──────────┘   └──────────────────────┘   │ COOPERATION  │        │
│                                              └──────────────┘        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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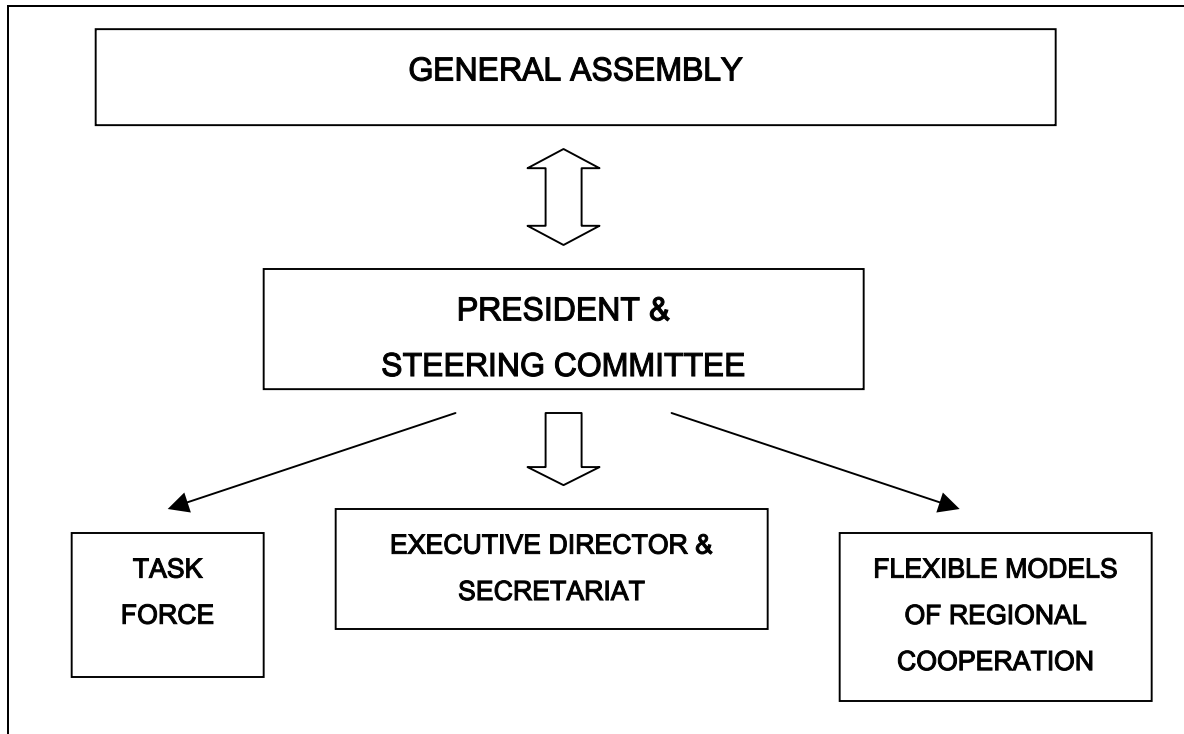
Source: Personal elaboration (2006).

2) Enlarged governing structures:

- *Task Force* – in order to extend the capacity of the organisational management in specific directions, the Steering Committee can appoint problem solving oriented groups. Such a group consists of individuals from NISPAcee member institutions to work on e.g. the development of projects or implementation of projects with responsibilities defined by the Steering Committee or by a project already approved by the superior body. A leader of such a group will report to each Steering Committee meeting about a progress in a matter delegated to the group.
- *Flexible models of regional co-operation* – NISPAcee fosters flexible models of national and regional co-operation of institutional members in order to meet specific needs of sub-regions.

3.5 Resources

Since the very beginning NISPAcee struggles with financial issues. That is why its major long term objective is to achieve financial sustainability. In order to follow this objective NISPAcee has already launched membership fees and would create the necessary financial reserves of the organisation. The aim is to make a significant progress in a five-year period. So far annual budgets seem to be quite modest for such a range of activities and geographical scope of the organization (see Figure 3.2). However, the growth of the budget is significant over past 10 years from about $120 000 (incl. fees of $5800) in 1996 to $700 000 (incl. fees of $23 000) in 2006 (NISPAceeInt 2006).

Figure 3.2 Budget of NISPAcee

Budget of the NISPAcee 1996-2005 (x 1000 USD)
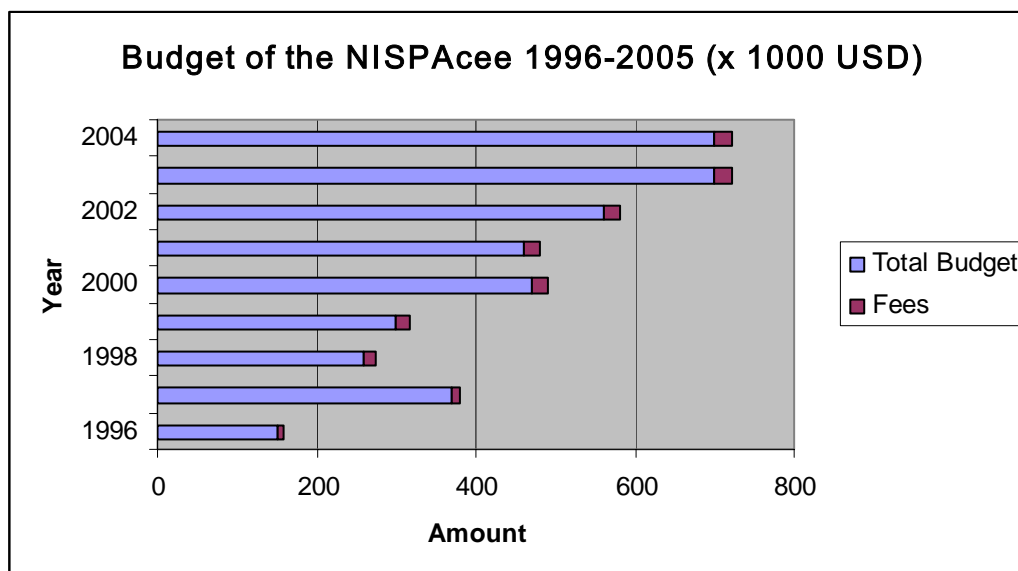
Nevertheless, in 1997 governing bodies of the organization decided to introduce membership fees as a tool to express the commitments towards the organization and to increase income of the organization. Membership fees structure has evolved over years alongside changing scope and focus of the organization itself. Table 3.1 summarizes membership fees structures. However, gathered data shows that membership fees stand for very modest contribution to overall budget. Therefore, from 2007 on there are new fees thresholds and very soon governing bodies plan to introduce changes very shortly.

Table 3.1 Membership fees structure 1995-2007

Membership fees structure 1995-2007			
Year	Institutional Members	Associate Members	Other
1995-1998	NO	NO	-
1998-2000	100 USD	300 USD	-
2000-2005	150 USD	300 USD	-
2005-2007	150 EUR	300 EUR	-
2007-…	250 EUR NMS* 150 EUR NNMS*	350 EUR	100 EUR Individual Members from Western states 70 EUR Individual Members from Easter Europe

NMS – EU New Member Sates ** EU Non-Member States

Specific mission of NISPAcee and systemic transformation throughout the region helped in engaging various stakeholders in supporting in financing various activities as well as daily operation of the secretariat. The following list presents not only donors and partners but primarily points out complex environment and agendas in which

NISPAcee functions. That also gives some ideas concerning involved interests and advocated values or instruments of excellence and professionalism in public administration. Several donors and partners support NISPAcee activities since inception of the organization:

- The Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative and Higher Education Support Programme, Open Society Institute, Hungary;
- The Austrian Federal Chancellery through the Austrian Federal Academy of Public Administration;
- SIGMA, France (SIGMA - Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries is a joint initiative of OECD and the EU mainly financed by the EU/PHARE);
- The Pew Charitable Trusts, the USA through the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), USA;
- USAID, through the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), USA;
- French government through International Institute of Public Administration (IIAP), France;
- Activities organised by EIPA (European Institute of Public Administration), funded by the European Commission and the Dutch Government;
- United Nations Development Programme, Slovakia;
- In kind contributions of member Institutions in addition to the annual fees (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.6 Membership

Not only number of activities has gown over time encompassing wider public and geographical areas, but also significant growth can be observed in participation in various activities as well as in membership in NISPAcee. Table 3.2 summarizes structure of membership between 1995 and 2005. NISPAcee membership encompasses Institutional Members and Associate Members. Individuals can apply for a status of an Observer. At present (data for 2005), the NISPAcee enlists 126 Institutional Members representing 23 countries, 32 Associated Members from 19 countries and finally 231 Observers of 36 nationalities. In total it is 389 members of all categories from about 45 countries. However, certain activities such as annual conference bring together higher number of participants. What seems to be extremely beneficial and challenging from managerial point of view is growing representation of countries from the region and relatively stable paste of membership growth in total numbers within certain membership categories.

Table 3.2 NISPAcee Membership Structure 1995-2005

NISPAcee Membership Structure 1995-2005							
Year	Institutional Members	Countries represented	Associated Members	Countries represented	Observers	Countries represented	Members in total
1995	30	-	-	-	-	-	30
1996	57	17	13	11	54	26	124
1997	70	17	19	11	79	26	168
1998	83	20	21	13	115	27	219
1999	93	17	23	14	140	27	256
2000	113	21	32	16	197	27	342
2001	113	21	31	15	232	35	376
2002	121	24	31	17	224	36	376
2003	116	23	31	17	224	36	371
2004	126	23	32	19	231	36	389
2005	126	23	32	19	231	36	389

Source: Personal elaboration on (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006).

Moreover, membership divided into three broad categories helped in differentiating backgrounds of certain representatives and therefore fees. Though, benefits and commitments vary regardless those divisions. Institutional membership is open to appropriately designated academic units with larger educational institutions to independent educational and training centres conducting programmes in public administration, management or governance (incl. think-thanks or governmental agencies). Associate Membership on the other hand, is open to academic granting-degree institutions, agencies of government, foundations, professional associations, and academic institutions offering diplomas or certificates, independent research or training organizations from the CEE region. Individuals from these institutions can also apply for observer status. Finally, status of an Observer can be granted to professionals from the CEES and beyond who are mainly involved in teaching, research, training and practice in public management and/or administration whether they represent an Institutional Member or not. Though, all the groups have some benefits deriving from membership what includes i.e. receiving copies of various publications, participation in activities at a reduced rate, contribution to NISPAcee publications or maintenance and publishing databases on the webpage (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.7 Functions and main objectives

The execution of the mission of NISPAcee is based generally speaking on five fundamental functions. Main objectives of the organizations are associated with these functions. The core activities of NISPAcee along with ad hoc tasks comply with major dimensions of functioning which are:

1. Networking,
2. Facilitating training and education,
3. Fostering research,

4. Developing consultancy and
5. Supporting advocacy.

The following section aims in presenting those five functions in order to picture complexity of activities undertaken by the organizations and therefore some limitations that derive from specific regional context of modernization and readiness for Europe.

3.7.1 Networking

NISPAcee in principle serves as a well-functioning platform for exchange of ideas, skills, and relevant information. In doing so, the organization acts as an effective clearing house to assist, mediate and actively encourage members in all activities conforms to its mission. In particular, NISPAcee has been set up to:

- improve co-operation between various schools and institutes of public administration throughout the region, and between individual educators, students and practitioners in the field,
- disseminate and encourage the utilisation of knowledge and practices developed by its members through joint efforts,
- strengthen various partnerships and networking to meet both supra-regional (international, East-West), regional and sub-regional challenges,
- help schools and institutes within individual countries to improve institutional capacity building, especially to foster process of setting up professional associations at the national level and
- use appropriate networking techniques such as web site, data sets made available to member institutions, disseminating a newsletter, organizing conferences and conduct joint projects.

3.7.2 Facilitating training and education

NISPAcee aims not only in networking but also serves as an institutional basis for facilitating training and education in public policy, administration and governance. This fundamental function is vital for professionalisation in the filed in the CEE that is why NISPAcee undertakes various activities in order to:

- strengthen individual schools and institutes of public administration education and training in Central and Eastern Europe by an assistance adjusted to individual needs,
- develop textbooks, teaching and training materials adjusted to specific conditions of the region,
- make specific effort to assist developing new curricula of advanced academic programmes,
- initiate quality assessment procedures (including accreditation) in the region and assist in their preparation and implementation at national level,
- stimulate the engagement of young professionals in training and education and
- facilitate exchange teaching activities among member institutions.

3.7.3 Fostering research

Besides networking and facilitating teaching and training activities, NISPAcee supports development of genuine research capacities in the filed of its activities as yet underdeveloped in the region. In particular NISPAcee shall:

- help to develop public administration theory, especially as it is able to respond to transition efforts within the region towards fully democratic governance, functioning of a market economy and preserving social cohesion,
- cultivate the skills of rigorous research methodology, including validity and reliability of applied research,
- establish and maintain its own permanent or occasional research working groups, related to common research interests among academics and practitioners active in the field of public administration in Central and Eastern Europe and other countries to investigate specific subjects and problems of interest and importance to member institutions,
- encourage comparative and international studies and
- publish regularly good quality occasional papers (with further prospect to establish a fully professional scientific journal).

3.7.4 Developing consultancy

NISPAcee aims in becoming not only a platform for research and sharing expertise but undoubtedly tries to become a natural facilitator of implementation of theory and methodology into the practice of public administration. Objectives of this function can be met through:

- facilitation of the application of innovative ideas concerning administrative behaviour, specific technologies and regionally generated knowledge developed by member institutions in the regular operation of civil service,
- dissemination of information about *best practices* and most typical failures (lesson-drawing) and
- elaborating database of regional experts in various fields of expertise available for consultation.

3.7.5 Supporting advocacy

Finally, NISPAcee thanks to its non-profit, neutral status and reputation to advocate the need of raising the quality of public administration in the region aims in:

- strengthening working contacts with supranational governance bodies, especially the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development,
- facilitating links with individual Central and Eastern European national governments, especially by dissemination of NISPAcee products and by promoting public relations activities,
- organising standing discussions of how to deal with the ongoing public administration reforms engaging top executives, scholars and teachers from regional, sub-regional, national and local levels of governance and

- developing its own Public Relations to strengthen the international as well as national awareness and recognition of NISPAcee within political and administrative circles.

Those five fundamental functions of the network can be only executed by efficient steering, co-ordinating and administrative activities of NISPAcee secretariat as well as member institutions. Formative context of the CEE region embedded this organization with highly complex agenda which seems to be vital to bring about the change at domestic level of individual countries. The following section presents core activities of NISPAcee that help in fulfilling the mission of the organization and respond to the needs of the region (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.8 Core activities

NISPAcee as it was mentioned before started with very a modest portfolio of activities. Nevertheless, in a first few years of functioning and generous support of various stakeholders as well as commitments of its members, the organization has enormously grown successfully expanding the scope and quality of undertaken activities. At present, the network represents large resource of expertise, experience and information. Moreover, it managed to build up its public image and therefore nowadays is recognised as an important international organisation, not only within the region but globally. Involvement of supranational or international organization and other professional network and associations contributed to these efforts significantly.

NISPAcee continues to conduct its core activities and develop new ones which should be directed to meet shared needs of its members. Those activities are continuously funded by various organizations. Specific regional context causes the need for seeking of support externally. Still Western philanthropic or governmental sources belong to the main supporters of NISPAcee. However, economic development within the region in a short term may result in obtaining some financial contributions from various stakeholders based in the CEES. It is expected that NISPAcee will shortly diversify sources of its financing and therefore become more sustainable. Needless to say that implementation of the listed activities will depend in a great deal on the success of the organisational management and high level of commitments among its members.

Core activities of NISPAcee include among others:

1. Annual conferences,
2. Workshops and training programmes,
3. Information and publications,
4. Exchange programmes and development of PA programmes,
5. Research,
6. Civil service forums,
7. Information services and public relations,
8. Alena Brunovska Award.

3.8.1 Annual conferences

NISPAcee from the very beginning continues to organise its annual conferences for the members and external actors each year. It is one of the most complex and profound activities on the agenda. Besides two first meetings (1994 and 1994) of representatives of schools and institutes of public administration from the CEE region that were focused on setting up the co-operation, the annual conferences have their specific topics that address issues relevant for public administration and governance of CEES. Over a past decade, a number of participants has grown from about 75 in 1995 to almost 300 in 2006. That indicates high interests in the issues of governance and public administration but also expansion of the network in terms of countries represented (see Table 3.2 & 3.3). Topics of those meetings are related to the core mission of NISPAcee and engage discussions and sharing of expertise when it comes to issues of challenges and prospects of professionalisation of public sector, establishing democratic state-systems or improving relations between private and public sector and business (see Appendix 8).

Table 3.3 Participation in the NISPAcee Annual Conferences 1995-2006

Participation in the NISPAcee Annual Conferences 1995-2006												
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Participants	75	50	90	140	120	180	180	240	250	280	300	280

Source: Personal elaboration on (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006).

Annual conferences of NISPAcee are basically a forum to encourage the exchange of information on developments in the theory and practice of public administration. They also provide room for exchange of ideas how to adapt available models of management ad governance in public sector to specific needs of the region and individual countries. Moreover, conferences help in establishing co-operation among members that aims in research but also facilitation of the application of innovative ideas, methods and techniques in public administration.

Those meetings therefore are addressed to experts, scholars, and practitioners who work in the field of public administration in Central and Eastern Europe. Raising excellence among those groups leads in turn to development of new approaches to functioning of public administration in CEE with flexible organisational models and a new public management culture.

Annual conferences are crucial not only in terms of functions of the organization, but also when it comes to management and strategic planning. That is why NISPAcee Annual Business Meetings and General Assembly are hold as part of the annual Conferences. This gives an occasion for educational administrators to get together with researchers and presenters.

Finally, annual conferences host the meetings of permanent and ad hoc Working Groups (see more in 3.7.5) and other specialised meetings. It is so, to provide unique opportunities for partners of different projects, working groups as well as sponsors to meet, discuss joint projects and further activities, or establish new projects and co-operation (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.8.2 Workshops and training programmes

Workshops and training programmes organize by NISPAcee aim to develop both the personnel of member institutions as well as public servants from various organizations from the CEE region. The network offers three activities of this kind: summer school, workshops and training programmes.

Summer school sessions directly promote the main objectives of NISPAcee by supporting the development of teaching methods and skills in public management and public policy. Moreover, they help in developing teaching curricula, evaluation schemes of instruction and research and finally teaching materials. Summer schools are addressed to teachers, lecturers, trainers, academics and researchers from Member Institutions and occasionally external actors. As yet, NISPAcee managed to organize eight successful summer courses workshops and will continue with this activity in the coming years. The topics of this activity vary from year to year but certainly have international and comparative dimensions concerning i.e. assessment methods of governance quality or public finances.

Alongside summer activities mentioned above, NISPAcee organizes various workshops devoted to academics as well as practitioners in the public service. These workshops focus on issues related to challenges and prospects for public administration and governance at the time of transition and Europeanization. Those activities have direct impact on individuals who contribute to professionalisation as well as administrative capacity building in their countries. Some of the workshops were focused on demands of the EU membership on national administrations and the role of training or PHARE Programme and organized with co-operation with organizations such as IASIA or UNDESA.

Training programmes which NISPAcee organizes aim in bringing together prospectus young civil servants and other representatives of member institutions in order to develop their expertise that can directly affect decision-making process or introducing changes within their organizations e.g. development of consultancy and advisory skills instrumental for work their work at various units of government (see more in 3.8.1). At the moment, NISPAcee designs new programmes that will have more regional focus and will be based on specific needs of individual sub-regions or countries e.g. accession or candidate countries (see more in 3.8.2; NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.8.3 Publications

Publications of NISPAcee enable the exchange of information among member and non-member institutions from the CEE countries, and also provide relevant information for Western experts who wish to learn about public administration in transition countries.

One crucial task is to develop study materials and textbooks for public administration studies written by experts from CEE often with co-operation with Western colleagues, which will reflect the specific features of countries in transition. There is still a gap in the literature available for teachers in the field of public administration in the region. The goal of NISPAcee is to fill in this gap since so far majority of study materials used while teaching public administration or related subjects is based on original Western books or their

translations regardless specific context of transitional and accession countries.

NISPAcee with generous support of various organizations established publication programme encompassing various activities such as:

- quarterly published informative *Newsletter* (from 1994),
- quarterly published series of academic papers *Occasional Papers in Public Administration and Public Policy*. Medium term objective of this project is to publish a professional journal of public administration in the CEE countries,
- publication of proceedings of NISPAcee events such as conferences, summer schools, workshops etc. (so far more than 20 titles),
- development of textbooks that may well be used in teaching of pa (so far 11 titles e.g. *Public Finance - Theory and Practice in the Central European Transition),*
- other publications e.g. monographs and books according to needs, possibilities and ideas of the member institutions,
- translation of relevant (both Western as well as regional) literature into CEE national languages.

3.8.4 Exchange programs and development of PA programmes

There is a great variety of financial instruments and programmes supporting West-East exchanges, nevertheless there are very limited possibilities of mobility within the CEE region. In principle, these exchange programmes enable scholars, professors, and students from the region to understand and develop their knowledge of how systems of public administration function in Central and Eastern Europe. Raising awareness of common successes and failures, good practices may well contribute to the development of participants' home organizations and more generally professionalisation of public sector in their respective countries. This would be only accomplished by utilising experiences and knowledge about successful experiments or failures from other countries undergoing transition and preparing for the accession.

NISPAcee between 1996 and 1999 implemented a programme of East-East exchanges that consisted of three projects: *Visiting Scholar's Programme, Invited Speaker's Series* and *Students' Exchange Programme.* Those activities were of significant value for their beneficiaries.

Future East-East exchange programmes continues with an aim to spread out knowledge and experience from more developed institutional members and programmes of NISPAcee to those just emerging and developing, mainly in the Balkan region and the Caucasus. The new project called *The Provision of Technical Assistance to Developing NISPAcee Institutions by Partnered NASPAA and More Developed NISPAcee Institutions* is an important means in this regard for the upcoming period. The project activities provides support to assist emerging NISPAcee institutions to build their curricula, establish and evaluate missions, advertise their academic programmes, develop teaching materials and undertake other curricular and academic activities with generous support of more developed NISPAcee member institutions in co-operation with NASPAA.

Taking into account some managerial changes within the organization, similar projects will be developed according to the needs of member

institutions or potential members (institutions just being established), and available resources and will not focus on all members (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.8.5 Research

Unquestionably Europeanization and transition result in various reforms within public administration as well as in other sectors in the CEE countries. Policy-making process could benefit great deal from a comparative research that provide analyses of contemporary problems and possible solutions, models and methods of public administration and public policy with assessments of empirical evidence from regional experience. Moreover, the quality of education received by students strongly depends on the quality of research carried out by instructors. This is the reason why NISPAcee has a strong interest in fostering research activities with a comparative and international focus. Research teams that operate within the structures of NISPAcee are composed of researchers from several CEE countries mainly from NISPAcee member institutions as well as academics from the West.

Importance of research has been recognized from the very beginning of existence of NISPAcee (from 1998 on). Focus of the Working Groups reflects the needs in the area of education and training in public administration, public administration reforms and innovations in public management, etc. of the CEE region. At the moment NISPAcee has nine working groups and there are some initiatives to set up a few more (e.g. on the role of external technical assistance in promotion of professional public service). Existing Working Groups concentrate enquires among other issues on ethics in governance, better quality administration for the public or politico-administrative relations. Working Groups could be proposed by NISPAcee members and approved by the Steering Committee according to the members' proposals and available resources.

Alongside ongoing research efforts, NISPAcee engages ad hoc activities. *Applied Policy Research* project (2002-2004), a joint initiative of NISPAcee and NASPAA was one of important steps in fostering research in the region and simultaneously in strengthening public policy making. The project aimed in building mechanism for partnership between government and NISPAcee members within a respective country. The primary activity of this project is designed to allow NISPAcee schools to work in co-equal partnerships with government officials in the country of the NISPAcee institution on important public policy problems jointly defined by the host country government officials and the relevant NISPAcee institution. Final results of various research projects and programmes are being published and serve as basis teaching materials and great source of comparative knowledge from the region with a strong international dimension (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.8.6 Civil Service Forums

Alongside activities available for wider audience, NISPAcee also organizes meeting for highly specified target groups. Since 1997, the network is also a platform of discussion among high-ranks representatives of Civil Service Offices from the CEE countries. Those biannual NISPAcee Civil Service Forums endeavour to strengthen civil service responsibilities by establishing a forum for senior civil servants and officers responsible for civil service to meet with representatives of educational and training institutions and to exchange their views. This creates a room for discussion and co-operation to be operational between educational institutions, civil servants and politicians. NISPAcee intends to continue in organising similar meetings, seminars or workshops that would provide a platform for governments, civil servants and educational and training institutions to meet and establish closure co-operation and co-ordination of programmes. Bringing together senior officials and researchers together have advantage of spreading knowledge and good practices that may have direct impact on decision-making process in represented countries.

3.8.7 Information services and public relations

Fundamental functions of NISPAcee are closely related with its core information services. Therefore, the network facilitated by the secretariat serves as a clearinghouse for knowledge and information. NISPAcee creates a forum for exchange of ideas, skills, and all relevant information from the CEE region and beyond linking East and West. Over past ten years, the organisation has been developing its public image in order to become recognizable and reliable professional institution. With no doubts, information services provided by NISPAcee as well as various public relations strengthen recognition of the network within political, administrative and academic circles both nationally and internationally.

NISPAcee plans to engage new instruments, alongside those already existing, in order to become more effective regarding information services and public relations:

- publishing and distribution of the *Newsletter* and other core publications,
- developing the website (thanks to generous support of the UNPAN),
- enhancing database of member institutions and regional experts,
- distribution of available teaching, training, and research materials and relevant announcements and circulars,
- advancing online communication tools (e.g. forum),
- creating a catalogue of all NISPAcee publications,
- publishing comprehensive brochure about the organisation,
- representing the network at various venues raising awareness and recognition of the organization,
- enhancing co-operation with national networks of public administration already existing in some of the CEE countries and fostering the establishment of such networks in other countries,
- continuing and developing working relations with other professional institutions, networks and associations operating in CEE region and beyond such as EIPA, EPAN, EAPAA, IIAS, IASIA, EGPA, etc. in order to co-ordinate possible joint activities, to avoid overlapping activities, activities, to advocate specific

interests of the members and to provide members with relevant information about activities of these organisations,

- strengthening working contacts with supranational governance bodies, especially the European Union, Council of Europe, the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in order to attract the attention of these organisations to the role and the potential of the NISPAcee in the filed of public policy and public administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.8.8 Alena Brunovska Award

Alongside various activities described above, NISPAcee also recognizes outstanding achievements in teaching and research in the field of public administration within the member institutions by launching prestigious *Alena Brunovska Award for Teaching Excellence in Public Administration.*

The award has been launched in memory of Alena Brunovska, former director of Academia Istrpolitana Nova and one of the founders of NISPAcee and the first Chair of the NISPAcee Steering Committee. Simultaneously the award should attract attention of academics and teachers to an increase in the quality of their programmes, courses, teaching and research methods, what should contribute to the overall quality improvement in teaching public administration in the Central and Eastern European region.

Candidates are assessed on the basis of their performance in the filed of teaching excellence and leadership in pedagogy. However, contribution to the practice of public administration and applied research in the filed are also taken into account. Since 2001, the award was presented among others to Prof. Wolfgang Drechsler, Prof. Martin Potucek and Prof. Tiina Randma-Liiv (NISPAceeWEb 2006).

3.9 Bringing about the change: professionalisation in public sector

Previous sections described overall mission of the organizations and some of the activities that aim in fulfilling objectives of NISPAcee. However, in order to have a better insight into how NISPAcee contributes to professionalisation of public administration in CEE and therefore brings about the change at the domestic level, a few other activities must be presented though in more detailed manner. These three examples reflect some of the core functions of the organization: training, advocacy/consulting and facilitating teaching/education in public administration.

3.9.1 How to be a better policy advisor?

How to be a better policy advisor? is a regional project implemented by NISPAcee supported by Regional Support Centre of UNDP in Slovakia under general programme *Building Policy Advisory Capacities in ECIS.* NISPAcee as a regional pioneer in developing professional networks and organization that ensures the continuity of public administration reform efforts has started to implement this project within the region. The

importance of this activity lies in emphasis on unlocking one of the key resources of expertise which is highly qualified academic community and other external advisors by helping this community to assist and influence governments more effectively. There is a growing need for more local-specific advice which can not be received by foreign consultants who were of great importance at the beginning of transition process. Even though there is a large number of professionals active in the filed of public administration, due to education and training systems in the CEES, they posses relatively little practical skills required to successfully provide policy advice. That is why the main purpose of this project is to create a tool to develop advisory skills and capacity for young academics who have the knowledge to base to provide relevant advice to government, but lack the skills to formulate this advice in a way that makes it usable for decisions-makers.

Two publications were prepared by a group of experts under auspicious of UNDP. *How to be a better policy advisor? and How to be a better policy advisor? Manual for Trainers* are instrumental for implementation of this project (both published in English and Russian, also on CDs). These manuals provide an excellent basis not only for this training but also for academia and other training institutions in the region to start developing their own courses and integrate them into their curricula.

The project was implemented between 2001 and 2005, however due to high level of interests is being resumed. First phase of the project (2001-2003) brought together almost 100 participants. At first, a pool of trainers from the CEES was trained. That comprised two trainings (basic and advanced one) in English hold in Slovakia. Consequently, 5 other trainings were organized, however already in the filed (e.g. in Kazakhstan or Romania). Those activities had around 100 beneficiaries spread out in the region and carefully selected for this project.
First phase was assessed as a great innovation and success and therefore carried on. The second phase of the project (2003-2004) was conducted with support of MATRA, a financial instrument of Dutch government. Once again a pool of trainers took part in the activity, however the focus of a training was narrowed-down to the issue of institution building for the EU membership, since that was the most relevant topic right before the Enlargement of 2004. This part of the programme resulted in publishing of an addition to the manual titled *Reference Guide for Horizontal Integration* based on experience derived from a training of over 30 persons. In 2005 trainings were moved to the Caucasus region addressing specific and urgent needs of this area. Around 50 people benefited from three consecutive trainings. Simultaneously (2005-2006), NISPAcee responding to the needs of other members started to implement the project in the West Balkans with support of the Slovak Aid Bratislava-Belgrade Fund. Prospectus young professionals from this sub-region tool part in the trainings, both for trainers and beneficiaries. Respectively, the following activities in this area were run by Serbian trainers, however with supervision of the NISPAcee experts. This resulted in a number of successful training in which took part 30 people and next 35 plan to participate. Addressing specific needs of this region, both manuals were translated onto Serbian language. For the next period 2006-2007, partner institutions of NISPAcee are organizing training session throughout the region. So far around 50 persons benefited from those activities and additionally manuals were translated into Uzbek and Estonian.

As yet, thanks to implementation of *How to be a better policy advisor?* project resulted in approximately 300 trained advisors. Taking into account a number and size of countries in the CEE region, it seems that a lot more must be done to raise the capacity of young professionals to deliver high quality advices to authorities at all level of governance. Nevertheless, with relatively modest financial resources, this project is a successful resulting in building long-term advisory capacity that may well have impact on decision-making process in relevant countries, but also when it comes to teaching curricula where need for more skills and practice-oriented approach has been recognized (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.9.2 Regional School of Public Administration

Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is the latest significant initiative in which NISPAcee plays an important role, which was presented to the public during the 14[th] Annual Conference in Ljubljana, in May 2006. ReSPA is primarily the initiative of the European Commission, in particular DG Enlargement. However, other important stakeholders have been invited to co-operate in development and implementation of this project incl. NISPAcee and OECD/SIGMA as well as representatives of governments of the West Balkan region. Composition of a group enhancing this project reveals complexity of this initiative as well as its importance for broadly understood development.

At the consultative conference that took place in Brussels in May 2006, the representatives of the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro along with the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) acting on behalf of Kosovo pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, as well as the European Union represented by the European Commission signed the protocol on establishment of the Regional School of Public Administration. Recalling the importance for the Stabilization and Association Process of strengthening regional co-operation and administrative capacity, as pointed out in the *Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans* (European Commission 2003) endorsed by the governments of the region and the Council of Ministers of the European Union in June 2003, this initiative in principle is focused on creation of a regional mechanism fostering training and education for public administration.

The needs of administrative systems in those countries have been finally recognized and channelled into a comprehensive project, however still in making. There is no doubt, that ReSPA is a political project initiated and financed, at least at the beginning, by the European Commission. In Ljubljana, representatives of the EC, OECD and NISPAcee presented objectives and planned activities of ReSPA to other interested parties. It also aimed in explaining proposed methods of organization and to exchange ideas and best practices and receive feedback from parties involved present at this conference.

Project was divided into three phases. At the very moment ReSPA initiative is in the first phase of existence what includes preparations for first activities still supported by the EC. Prior to this stage, phase zero was of a crucial importance, not only for the project itself

but primarily NISPAcee which was invited as an advisor. At first the EC contracted a feasibility study prepared by on of private agencies in Brussels. As a result the Commission decided to continue the project, but firstly inviting other actors and what is very important making use out of already existing arrangements and experience in the region. Finally it was proposed that beneficiaries of this project would not only be schools and institutes of public administration or governmental studies, but also civil servants and political representatives, since ReSPA as it was already mentioned has also a strong political dimension. The EC itself is not a part of a legal agreement, but just has a role of initiator and facilitator of this initiative. ReSPA so far will not have a legal personality, due to the fact that it is believed that gradual development of this institution will show what direction should be followed. Nevertheless, ReSPA will have a form of a network institution of in-service training rather than an institution focusing only on higher education or professionalisation in teaching. It has been clearly stated, that ReSPA is not a competitor of NISPAcee, but a kind of its regional more focused extension, however supported differently. Therefore, the role of NISPAcee in this initiative is crucial due to the fact that it is perceived as a carrier of regional experience and expertise and best available platform for joint co-operation. In addition to this, ReSPA will benefit not only from expertise of NISPAcee, but also its capacities e.g. related to providing translations into regional languages.

Parties involved in the project agreed upon major objectives of the cooperation which are as follows:

- improving regional cooperation in the field of public administration,
- strengthening administrative capacity as required by the European integration process,
- developing human resources in line with the principles of the European Administrative Space.

ReSPA as network is obliged to maintain contacts among their institutions responsible for public administration training and education, facilitating the sharing of information and experiences through activities such as:

- stimulating cooperation between public administration institutions from the region and similar institutions in the European Union, as well as participation in international networks,

- holding seminars and summer/winter schools for public administration professionals, as well as an annual conference for public administration training and education institutions,

- acting as a catalyst for trans-national communities of practice, through the implementation of training by mobility schemes allowing public servants to gain experience of different contexts,

- sharing information resources through the publication of a newsletter, the creation of a joint electronic library, and the issuing of other specialised publications such as training materials.

Those activities undertaken by ReSPA and supported in terms of finances and capacities by the EC, OECD and NISPA should aim at direct improvements in the training and education for their public administration crucial for modernization processes and preparation for a status of the EU candidate countries. As agreed they should be related to:

- development of methodological guidelines based on good practice for training and education programs, and encouraging innovation by reviewing existing ones,

- strengthening the research base of training and education for public administration through joint study groups for comparative research on topics of immediate interest,

- advising on the strengthening of the institutional framework for the management of quality training and education for public administration, including under the auspices of the network,

- improving the availability and quality of training and education by delivering, in cooperation with national institutions, high quality programmes on issues relevant to the European integration process.

The Steering Committee of ReSPA is responsible for governing functions. Each of the governments which signed the initial protocol is represented by its representative in the Steering Committee. To fulfil its mission ReSPA is supposed to seek support from the European Community through technical assistance, including the funding, in particular on the basis of the CARDS and IPA programmes, for an initial two-year period of its activities and of a Secretariat assisting the Steering Committee in its responsibilities. Additionally, according to the agreement, ReSPA coordinates and pursues maximum synergy with other organisations sharing similar objectives, whether financed predominantly by the European Community (e.g. the SIGMA programme) or through other sources (e.g. the NISPAcee). As mentioned before ReSPA in near future will organize first activities with support of other parties. Nonetheless, within two years all the stakeholders will evaluate project and decide upon further institutionalisation of their co-operation (European Commission, 2003; NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

3.9.3 Evaluation and accreditation of PA programmes in CEE

Finally, NISPAcee is not only involved in training, advocacy/consulting, but also facilitating teaching/education in public administration in the CEE region. Through certain activities e.g. forums of heads of schools and institutes of public administration, it brings together specialists and practitioners in education and training to reflect and exchange ideas and experiences in educational practice. In principle, those activities lead to strengthening human and institutional capacities to improve public sector performance through raising excellence in teaching. It is widely recognized that pubic administration education and training is a vital precondition to effective governance. In response to regional context of the CEE where is a great need to improve the quality of education in training, NISPAcee with a support of

UNDESA/DPADM, IASIA and EAPAA continuous to undertake vital initiatives in that field. As yet, it has been proved that thanks to NISPAcee meetings heads of the schools and institutes of public administration strengthen their co-operation and in turn quality of services regarding organization of MPA programmes in the light of international co-operation, implementation of Bologna Declaration and organization of joint diplomas.

NISPAcee is also a platform for regional workshops of the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation based in the Netherlands focused on evaluation and accreditation of PA programmes around Europe. Since the late 1990s, NISPAcee in co-operation with other partners publish evaluation studies on public administration programmes and level of their Europeanization in 14 countries of the region. That has already resulted in continuous assessment and improvements efforts in regard to ability to satisfy stated or implied standards of teaching quality in public administration followed by a formal decision of recognition of diplomas at the supranational level. A number of institutional members of NISPAcee have applied to EAPAA in order to receive accreditation confirmation. As yet, evaluation procedures are being conducted, however decisions are expected shortly e.g. concerning MPA programmes at Ljubljana University or Białystok School of Public Administration. Those efforts of individual schools or institute are of particular importance aiming in the quality improvement and assurance of academic level programmes in public administration. NISPAcee plans to encourage larger number of its members to join the EAPAA, however it is difficult due to shortages in terms of financial resources and human capacities. In addition, NISPAcee co-operates in this regard with national networks of public administration education e.g. Polish Association for Public Administration Education. Nevertheless, facilitating teaching/education in public administration remains one of the core activities of NISPAcee with a high potential to increase the positive outcomes in that field (EAPAA, 2006; NISPAceeInt, 2006; NISPAceeWeb, 2006; NISPAceeInterviews, 2006).

3.10 Conclusions

The main aim of this chapter was to present Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe as a vibrant and dynamic organization operating in specific regional context of CEE. Information presented was gathered through application of various techniques of inquiry including text analysis, as well as interviews and participation, since not all the information regarding activities of this organization are being published and therefore are not easily accessible. Besides presenting various activities that aim in fulfilling the main objectives of the organization (networking, facilitating training and education, fostering research, developing consultancy and supporting advocacy), this chapter also tried to picture formal structures, interests involved and capabilities of NISPAcee. Information provided in this chapter serves as an exit point for examination of hypothesis of this study through analysis which will be conducted in the following part of this report.

4 Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented detailed information concerning the organisation under investigation in a broad socio-political context of transitional Central and Eastern Europe. This part of the report on he other hand aims in discussing findings presented in the third chapter together with other data gathered through observation, desk research and interviews conducted for the purpose of this study. In the framework of domestic change as a response to adaptational pressures, the following analysis tries to examine in a comprehensive manner the compliance of NISPAcee with a model of the change agent in terms of public administration and governance issues and examine professionalisation endeavours as crucial dimension of its activity.

4.2 Central and Eastern Europe and logic of domestic change

Early experiences of transition agenda have been accumulated by both practitioners and academic. Both groups emphasize centrality of institutions in helping to formulate and implement public administration and governance reforms and their importance is growing over time. Those institutional actors are both of administrative and non-governmental origin contributing either to professionalisation of public administration or preparation of reform or advancement packages.

In most of the CEE countries after almost fifteen years of transition processes, the changes are significant in the structures and nature of the state, market economy and society. Indisputably, they have received substantial attention and resources however they are still far from complete and not without serious possibilities of reversal due to political instability in at least some of the countries in the region and beyond. Reorientation of many of the policies emanating from public institutions on the front lines of economic reforms has been accompanied and accelerated to a large extent by evolving political and societal transformation. Success of economic transition (in most of the cases) has not reflected reforms of the core governmental apparatus, namely public administration and design of governance structures. The later ones have been much slower to materialize, however various stakeholders incl. international organizations and societal actors have proceeded haltingly to support various programmes to strengthen administrative capacity in public sectors of the CEES. The hesitation has sources in among others urgency of economic reforms and societal attitudes towards the state as such, nevertheless the process of professionalisation and capacity development within public administration allowed eight countries of the region to join the European Union (besides fulfilling other criteria). All process related to transformation increasingly become characterized as incremental and accumulative change rather then a sort of revolutionary change. Policy formulation rests largely with government that is perceived as a critical actor sustaining reform developments and initiates them. However other institutional actors while resetting structure of governance gain more and more influence promoting need for change into modern, efficient and ethical public administration. Complexity of transformation process alongside with adaptational pressures makes domestic change even more challenging but undoubtedly unprecedented.

The preceding chapters sought to bring into sharper focus what for much of democratization and Europeanization processes has been a blurred picture of the administrative and governance changes at the domestic levels of the CEES. A definitive view on this experience is surely beyond of the scope of this report; however a lot of effort has been made to focus on one case study to examine role and impact of a non-governmental organization on domestic change regarding administrative and governance issues. Though even a tentative understanding of the current context of reform endeavours, especially after the 2004 Enlargement, can only strengthen the analytical basis about the direction and prospects for further reforms and professionalisation within public sector. Diversity in a past of transition processes and administrative and political structures and economic circumstances within the region influences responses and limitations of planned or introduced advancements. With due recognition of the unique features of research organization, the discussion that follows tries to place activities of NISPAcee into a conceptual framework drawing at the same time some more general conclusions and recommendations that can be applied to a daily functioning of this organization.

Complex changes in Central and Eastern Europe involve various factors in bringing about the change, such as those related to the institutional and political environment for reforms and professionalisation within a public service, as well as external variables stemming from international actors advocating certain modes of governance and administration or conditionality of various donor assistance and the sway held by foreign administrative models. The political factor of administrative change in the CEE is generally under-analyzed in this research. However, political issues have had decisive impact on the paste and form of reform processes.

Democratization and Europeanization stirred hopes that profound changes would follow in all social domains including politics, economy, bureaucracy and society as such. In many ways including the EU Enlargement, those expectations have been at least partially realized in the political and economic realms. In other important respects, the transition in a broader sense has been less spontaneous and less penetrating, however significant. In particular when it comes to public administration and governance issues, many patterns of *ancient regime* remain unchanged preventing immense change. Nevertheless, gradual change supported by both external and internal professionalisation endeavours can be observed leading to effective functioning of capable and efficient public sector as well as the opening up of the channels of public administration as a discipline and profession. The overall success and greater level of domestic change well depends on various issues however it seems to be reasonable to mention at least ability and raising capacity of bureaucracies themselves in managing effectively tasks of the governments and reform agendas. One can also see increasingly important role of other actors such as international or domestic organizations advocating certain trends in this regard or providing expertise, trainings and other form of activities stimulating professionalisation in this domain. More optimistically, growing diversity within the region and various funding opportunities seem to accelerate the pace of change in public administration in those countries. Moreover, there are reasons to presume that professionalisation and administrative capacity building focused on horizontal approach will speed up further in response to both domestic

and external pressures and incentives. The governments of the CEES and other active stakeholders in the filed are becoming more sophisticated consumers of internationally offered or supplied options, creating a demand for more customized and better targeted support and more advanced professionalisation instruments. These factors are likely to play an increasingly important role for other countries in the CEE as they get closer to various forms of partnership with the EU. In this context, indeed role of particular governments from the region as well as other organization such as NISPAcee is even more vital. Thus, transfer of ideas and experiences from earlier stages of transition and responses to adaptation pressures may be well adapted and introduced in other state systems accelerating the change. This study addresses the development of the general administrative capacity in Central and Eastern Europe countries. Such capacity is vital for their proper functioning as members of the EU and at the other international and internal arenas.

4.3 Adaptational pressures and dimensions of change

As argued already domestic change derives from adaptational pressure and (necessary condition) is supported by mediating actors that allow, prohibit or accelerate change (sufficient condition). The CEES have been undergoing fundamental change of governance and administration domains among others affecting the very foundations of their political, economic and social life. Domestic change result from adaptational pressures described for the purpose of this research as democratization (see 2.5) and Europeanization (see 2.6). Although both the extent of modernisation processes as well as involvement of mediating factors differ considerably among the CEES, it is no doubt possible to detect a number of shared characteristics which suggest a common pattern of change. In particular, the role of professionalisation activities provided by international organisations i.e. NISPAcee and institutional infrastructure they constitute (see 2.8 & 5.5).

It is worth repeating that the task of modernising the institutional arrangements of state and public administration or the public sector at large goes much beyond subjecting it to basic legal norms of conduct, thus the experience of this region is specific and complex. One is well advised, therefore, to recall that the dynamics of institutional transformation are intimately linked to changes in the political, legal, social and economic environments (in other terms at the levels of politics, policy and polity) in which public institutions operate and whose material and immaterial inputs crucially depend.

Figure 4.1 (see below) presents general requirements developed over the 1990s for the membership in the EU. Even though they seem to be not sharp enough and not applicable for all the countries of the region (since not all of them aspire or will become the members), they reveals conditions vital for functioning of a modern state. These requirements elaborate on democratization and Europeanization adaptational pressures. It is also to be added that the increasing importance attached to meeting these criteria (especially horizontal administrative capacity and democratic state structures) can be seen both as a expression of general scepticism about the quality of the administrative systems of the CEES (high adaptational pressures), and as a illustration of the even higher threshold that has been set for the new and prospective members.

Figure 4.1 The EU Membership Criteria

The *Copenhagen Criteria*:

1. The stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, protection of minorities,

2. A functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces in the single market of the Union,

3. The ability to assume the rights and obligations arising from Community law,

4. Adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union,

5. The capacity of the EU to absorb new members without losing the momentum of European integration.

Later European Councils set additional criteria, thus

The *Madrid Criterion*:

6. The acceding countries have to strengthen their administrative capacity.

The *Feira Criterion*:

7. The effective incorporation and enforcement of the EC law shall determine the negotiation speed.

Source: (Goldschmidt, *et. al.* 2005, p. 16).

General administrative capacity criteria were developed quite late in the process of defining and operationalising the EU membership criteria. Administrative capacity, especially horizontal, were defined no sooner than in 1995-1999, whereas conditions in terms of democracy or the Single Market were relatively clear cut at the time. That is why various actors in the mid-1990s did not take into account these specific requirements, but they followed the general trend of modernisation and transformation, partially supported by various international and supranational organisations. That changed around 2000 and with current Enlargement seems to even more important (Bulgaria, Romania and the West Balkans) since the administrative and governance gap is even bigger than it was with the 2004 Enlargement. In conclusion, the adaptational pressures between the transition and the EU Enlargement have been high, what resulted in a necessary condition for domestic change in the region. Nevertheless, there was a problem with defining administrative capacity requirements (guidelines) for the EU membership, underestimation of importance of horizontal approach for building such a capacity and finally insufficient as often argued mechanisms and instruments that aimed in preparing the CEES for the membership (e.g. PHARE) due to complexity of problems and legacy of these countries. The misfit inducing the need for domestic change can be traced at three vital levels: policy, politics and polity/institutions (NISPAceeInterviews 2006; Börzel 2000; Verheijn 2000; SIGMA 1998a).

4.3.1 Policy misfit

71

Pressures of Europeanization and democratization on domestic change in the region are no longer controversial. Surely both of them have differential impact on changes in terms of public administration and governance, however they are crucial for functioning of the state and society therefore highly anticipated by various actors. Firstly, the low compatibility between national and supranational level in terms of policies has been for a long time indisputable, especially with regard to administrative capacities and professional state institutions (see also 2.7.1).

Policy misfit in the context of CEE reflects essentially compliance problems with generally accepted 1) standards, 2) instruments, 3) problem-solving approaches, 3) policy narratives and discourses in terms of policy process. European policies for instance may well challenge national policy goals (especially in transitional context), regulatory standards, the instruments or techniques used to achieve policy goals. At the same time policy misfit exerted adaptational pressure on underlying institution and domestic arrangement (e.g. patterns of interest intermediation) that were lacking professional capacities to operate in that context. That eventually leads to substantial policy fabric of the both member states and candidate countries.

4.3.2 Political misfit

Obviously, different policy-making processes (i.e. democratic, at various levels of governance, etc.) have consequences for domestic process of 1) interest formation, 2) interest aggregation, 3) interests representation and 4) public discourse. This domain however is not yet well research, especially when it comes to administrative reforms or more broadly modernisation since direct political influence of the EU is limited (no direct competences in this regard). On the other hand there are several sources of indirect influence of the EU membership on member and prospectus state administrations, especially in the domains of policy and polity.

4.3.3 Institutional misfit

Finally, misfit can be easily recognized at the level of institutions/polity (see 2.4). Most of the research on the impact of adaptational pressures concentrates on the change of institutional arrangements, both formal and informal, and the role of various actors involved in this process. Institutional (polity) misfit challenges domestic rules and procedures together with collective understanding and values attached to them (democratic state, market economy, civil service). This domain is crucial for this research since it relates to vital element of state and societal arrangements such as 1) political institutions, 2) intergovernmental relations, 3) judicial structures, 4) public administration, 5) state traditions, 6) economic institutions, 7) state-society relations (i.e. role and positions of NGOs) and 8) collective identities and values. Institutional misfit in the times of complex transitional changes is also indisputable, thus resulting from Europeanization and democratization adaptational pressures. Tackling these problems is a long term and incremental task. The state of affairs in the member states of the EU shows that domestic change in this regard has been profound, however in many respects experience and modernization

endeavours must be still institutionalised and correctly executed (NISPAceeInt 2006, NISPAceeInterviews 2006; Cremona 2003; Bulmer & Lequesne 2005).

Policy, politics and polity misfits resulting for Europeanization and democratization pressures are necessary conditions for domestic change. Whether misfits produce substantial effects at the domestic level highly depends of various factors facilitating adaptation and serve as catalysts for domestic change. That is in the core interest of this case study, since as assumed NISPAcee plays such a role when it comes to public administration and governance issues, especially my exerting its functions in professionalisation of teaching, research and education in these fields. Theoretical framework of domestic change (Börzel 2005; Börzel & Risse 2000, 2003) argues that only if and when these intervening factors are present can we expect a transformation of policies, politics or polities at the domestic level. The questions remain to what extend given organisation complies with the model of a change agent, how much and in what domain (policies, politics, polity) brings about the change and if, what instruments are used in order to achieve these goals?

4.4 Facilitating actor as a sufficient condition for domestic change

Emerging European system of governance as well as consolidation of democratic state structures in the CEES have implications on domestic change concerning adaptation of processes, policies, institutions, norms and other rules (Olsen 1996). According to sociological institutionalism actors are driven by collectively accepted behaviours and norms in a given socio-political context. This approach perceives Europeanization and democratization as the emergence of new rules, institutional arrangements and mechanisms to which states under influence of those processes adopt them to their internal structures.

Agency-based version of sociological institutionalism suggests that there are differences in the degree to which domestic norms and institutions change in response to international institutional arrangements and promoted by them ideas or required conditions. This approach concentrates though on socialization process as a potential explanation for domestic change (e.g. professionalisation in a filed of public administration). Through internalization and incorporation of new norms or collectively acceptable modes of functioning, states cumulate capacity to become members of certain communities or be perceived as states in good standing. However, not only misfit between those levels but also mediating factors is necessary to make it happen.

Surely formative context of CEE involves many actors that can be perceived as change agents (at different levels, resources and power), however in regard to professionalisation in public administration and governance, NISPAcee seems to play crucial however limited in certain extent role. This organisation in contradiction to international or supranational actors as OECD or the EU has emerged form the efforts of individual people (i.e. Alena Brunovska) and governments (e.g. Austrian) with a extremely modest goals and focus at first, however constantly evolving towards respectable and influential international body. At the beginning adaptational pressures related to Europeanization had limited

impact on functioning of the organisation, thus a quick enlargement was at the time a non-issue. However over a course of a decade of existence, NISPAcee proved that it has played a significant role when it comes to professionalisation of public administration influencing domestic change within the region of Central and Easter Europe. It has engaged process of social learning (e.g. professionalisation) and therefore has persuaded them to change (gradually and still in making) their interests and identities. Before the final assessment of the nature of this organisation and its impact in certain domains it reasonable to analyze the function and activities that it has been performing at the levels policies, politics and polities. Data collected during the interviews and other forms of inquiry (partially presented in Chapter 3) allows us to assess the contribution of NISPAcee in this regard.

4.4.1 Policy

The case study presented in the third chapter as well as the analysis of the mission of NISPAcee leads to the conclusion that the organisation has no direct mandate or capacity to participate in policy-making cycles in the CEES both in terms of horizontal and sectoral approach to public administration and state apparatus. Even though development of standards and instruments of this process are crucial for successful functioning state influencing institutional change, this domain is still highly nationalised, so that direct impact of external/internal actors is relatively limited. However, the high policy misfit especially in the light of the EU Enlargement and enforcement of *acquis communautaire* resulted in increased attention how to develop the expertise and skills of civil servants and politicians so that policy-process and attached to it mechanisms and values would be efficient and satisfy the needs of societies in the CEES. This problem has been targeted with powerful means such as PHARE Programme, commercial consulting services or conditional support of WB or other financial institutions.

On the other hand, NISPAcee through its activities has a very indirect impact on policy formation and therefore highly difficult to assess. A great advantage of this organisation is a localized focus and experience creating the climate for acceptance of new ideas and change and moreover social infrastructure thanks to interactive search for knowledge and accumulating expertise, criticism and good practices supported by various incentives and facilitated by institutional arrangements of NISPAcee and member organisations. That generates a further demand for improvements among both practitioners and researchers through professional activities contributing to development of certain skills required in policy-making process and its assessment.

It can be well proved by the example of *How to be a better policy advisor?* programme implemented by NISPAcee supported by Regional Support Centre of UNDP in Slovakia under general programme *Building Policy Advisory Capacities*. NISPAcee as a regional pioneer in developing professional networks and organization that ensures the continuity of public administration reform efforts has started to implement this project within the geographical region of its focus. The importance of this activity lies in emphasis on unlocking one of the key resources of expertise which is highly qualified academic community and other external advisors by helping this community to assist and influence governments more effectively. That is why the main purpose of this project is to create a tool to develop advisory skills and capacity for

young academics who have the knowledge to provide relevant advice to government, but lack the skills to formulate this advice in a way that makes it usable for decisions-makers (see 3.9.1). NISPAcee contribution in this regard is extremely important in terms of promoting indigenous capacity to think about modernisation and professionalisation. It also plays a crucial role in dissemination of ideas and enforcement of those, but obviously not directly and its non-political, non-threatening features favour its impact.

Moreover, NISPAcee influences indirectly policy-process concerned with civil service through *Civil Service Forums* (see 3.8.6). This creates a room for discussion and co-operation to be operational between educational institutions, civil servants and politicians. NISPAcee intends to continue in organising similar meetings, seminars or workshops that would provide a platform for governments, civil servants and educational and training institutions to meet and establish closure co-operation and co-ordination of programmes. Bringing together senior officials and researchers together have advantage of spreading knowledge and good practices that may impact on decision-making process in represented countries.

Finally, NISPAcee has an indirect impact on policy process through its member institutions, e.g. think-thanks or research institutes that are contracted to provide consultancy for the authorities at various levels of governance. Additionally, some of the individual members are engaged in various bodies providing advice to governments or individual institutions based partially on accumulated experience of the organisation concerned with administrative reforms (e.g. Martin Potucek advised the Czech government, Laszlo Vass – Hungarian and Barbara Kudrycka is the Member of European Parliament; NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

4.4.2 Politics

It seems that one of the greatest advantages of this organisation is non-ideological, non-political and non-orthodox profile. That distinguishes NISPAcee from donor organisations and international bodies that in majority of cases take certain political stand. Therefore, this organisation has managed to create its internal quality of political neutrality that helps in bringing various (often conflicted) parties together and discuss the vital issues for modernisation and professionalisation of public administration. Thanks to this non-threatening quality, the NISPAcee has created its high-profile brand name in the region and beyond (e.g. regional expert and partner of UNDESA/UNPAN) of being a profound contributor among others to the body of knowledge and the research in public administration.

Description of core activities and structure of NISPAcee leads to the conclusion that there is no direct link between the organisation and political bargaining of the CEES. On the other hand though, the organisation has been generously supported by a number of governments i.e. Austrian or French, however without taking risk of attaining a certain political course. Political backing seems to be relatively important for establishing and functioning of the organisation, but at the same time there is no direct involvement of NISPAcee in political scene since the membership and functional focus is surely different.

However, in a broader sense, NISPAcee through performing its basic functions such as supporting advocacy or fostering research contributes to formation of certain interests related to public administration and functioning of state and democratic system. Through publishing activities, public relations and its most important event – annual conference, usually backed by media, NISPAcee exists in a public discourse taking a sharp position reflecting its ideas and common values related to Europeanization and democratization (see 2.5 & 2.6 and 3.7 & 3.8).

The latest development that in the belief of the author may well eventually lead to a gradual change of attitude of NISPAcee with regards to political dimension of domestic change is participation in the new project establishing Regional School of Public Administration analyzed in details in the section 3.9.2. This initiative of the EC and other actors besides focusing on creating an institutional arrangement fostering training and education for public administration in the Western Balkans has a clear political dimension. Underlying ideology is related to modernization of state arrangements in this region according to agreed standards with a respect to European values. NISPAcee in this initiative plays a role of a carrier of regional experience and expertise in the filed giving this to this project its brand name. Nevertheless, this project is in the early stage of implementation, so that it is so far impossible to discuss and assess the impact of this activity in terms of bridging the political misfit.

4.4.3 Polity

Portfolio of NISPAcee and its target groups seem to concentrate its activities in the domain of polity. Institutional misfit in the CEES has been assessed in the early years of transition as a profound that is why various types of actors have concentrated their efforts and resources onto restructuring the basis of the state, bureaucracy and society, also in the filed of public administration, both as a profession and a field of study. Misfit resulting from Europeanization and democratization depending on the country differs, however still exists, even in the countries that joined the EU in 2004. That results from a vital but complex problems facing what relevant for this study public administration and public sector in a broad sense as well as governance issues.

A growing portfolio of activities as well as expanding geographical focus (partially caused by the search for financial resources) of NISPAcee constitutes an added value to other endeavours in this filed. It is not only l*earning by doing,* but after a decade of functioning and accumulating the knowledge and experience - *learning from experience.* This refers not only to the help and assistance provided by the EC and other organizations, but also commercial advisors. Especially after the Enlargement and heading towards the East, another trend can be observed that derives from but also to the possibility of utilising the experiences and transferring good practices to other countries – from policy transfer to policy learning. International focus of NISPAcee activities has demonstrated its value as significantly flexible approach creating a room for discussion about common problems and possible solutions and fostering professionalisation in teaching, research and education of public administration. The sift towards the East (the Caucasus) and South (the West Balkans) also reveals that horizontal

approach to reforming public administration and state structure through transmission of certain standards and instruments is to a greater extent acknowledge both internally and externally as it was ever before.

NISPAcee expanding its initially modest portfolio continues to conduct its core activities and develop new ones which are directed to meet shared needs of its members (see for details 3.8). Those activities are continuously funded by various organizations. Specific regional context causes the need for seeking of support externally (see also 3.5). Through its basic activities, NISPAcee fulfils its functions of a so-called *clearing-house* that allows thanks to a variety of target groups and undertaken efforts a discussion of challenges and instruments of professionalisation of public administration in the region. Accumulation of experience and growing quality of expertise open up new channels of functioning as well as allow constructive criticism and screening of available at hand models of co-operation and training that are suitable for a certain target group, member institution or a state. Shared experience of modernisation and gaining knowledge about the domestic change in transitional context with a respect of common values and mechanisms of democratic and efficient state have given to NISPAcee a label of reliable and important partner and contributor to overall gains in professionalisation in the region. That could be proved not only by growing number of high quality comparative and international publications (see 3.8.3), increasing number of members and budget (see 3.5 & 3.6), but also by engagement of NISPAcee to more and more advanced projects such as already mentioned ReSPA (see 3.9.2) or focused on building advisory capacities successful project like *How to be a better policy advisor?* (see 3.9.3). Evaluation of at least some of the projects or core activities in terms of goal attainment or efficiency a number of targeted people/institutions is indisputable positive. However on the other hand, it is hardly possible to assess an overall impact of NISPAcee activities in the filed of public administration and governance. Direct impact is limited to beneficiaries of various activities and members, both individuals and institutions (from growing expertise to facilitation of receiving MPA accreditations); however indirect impact on overall gains in professionalisation can be only anticipated.

4.5 NISPAcee and its perception

Both in qualitative and quantitative terms, NISPAcee seems to be a growing and flexible structure originating from a modest effort of a few persons committed to principles of professional public administration and well-functioning democratic state. AS stated in the mission statement, the organisation concentrates in professionalisation in teaching, research and education of public administration in the CEE region. However it is easily recognised that the scope of functioning has grown enormously over the past decade. Undertaken activities restricted by the organisational capacity and relatively modest financial resources in the opinion of external actors and its own members have immensely changed the way of thinking about public administration and governance in the CEES. On the other hand, formative context and accumulated experience helped the other organisations such as OECD or the EU to redefine frameworks of reference and standards on which basis administrative or state systems are being assessed.

NISPAcee in relation to other similar entities of this kind like NASPAA has lead to transformation of intellectual community in the region as well as other actors interested and involved in domestic change in CEE. Achievements of this organisation even with a lack or limited resources are remarkable in terms of number of run projects and beneficiaries of various activities. Budget-wise, the search for available resources keeps the organisation not only active, but especially after the 2004 Enlargement – resources driven, since the focus of donors and other funding instruments is heading further towards the East. Flexible governance structure of NISPAcee combined with no strict goals that need to be achieved is more capable to adjust to a fast-changing formative context of CEE and new functions ahead. This spontaneous and self-governing arrangement comprising diverse members in a way perform relatively basic functions of improving quality of teaching, research and education in public administration. However, it also helps researchers and practitioners to be more skilful and able and therefore in turn affect (postponed impact) overall gains in professionalisation and modernization processes resulting from high adaptational pressures of Europeanization and democratization across the region (NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

4.6 Outcome of domestic change

Taking into account the function and relative impact of NISPAcee on domestic change in the CEE region assessed at the three dimensions of policies, politics and polity it seems that professionalisation as suggested in the research hypothesis is a vital in exercising impact upon domestic change and therefore playing a role of mediating factor.

Due to complexity and dynamism of a formative context (many actors, various national traditions and institutional arrangements channelling the change) it is very likely that overall degree of domestic change even in terms of institutional transformation in a long term perspective will be of moderate paste. In this context, through socialization and social learning, NISPAcee as a mediating factor helps in accommodating domestic change in terms of public administration and governance. It means that direct impact is limited and postponed; however eventually through professionalisation will lead to gradual change not only of institutional arrangements but also attached to them values and understandings (see also 2.7.3).

Additionally, it can be argued that the role of mediating actors as well as other organisations has had significant impact on an evolving administrative culture by transmitting ethos, frames of reference, and knowledge. Thus, the nature and quality of the public service heavily depends upon the nature and quality of the system of education, training and research. As the means of professionalisation they have to respond to the demands of public administration while shaping the nature of governance and administration systems as the response to adaptational pressures. In addition, the creation of new Public Administration programs in Central and Eastern Europe (accreditation endeavours) as well as functioning of facilitating actors could give the discipline and profession a further impetus to develop its own identity and approach. These developments have created a momentum for the design of academic programs of a European character, which could eventually lead to the promotion of a specific strand of public administration teaching and research, based on European realities, and thus contributing to the

development of a common European Administrative Space (see below & section 5.6).

Long political evolution has led to some consensus in establishing principles for public administration shared by the EU member states with different legal traditions and different systems of governance (after 1999 and SIGMA Report). The main principles of the European Administrative Space common to the EU Member States are discussed as follows: reliability and predictability, openness and transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness (SIGMA 1998, pp.8-14). The EAS concerns basic institutional arrangements, processes, common administrative standards, civil service values and administrative culture. In addition, the extent to which the above-mentioned principles are present in the regulatory arrangements for public administration, and are respected and enforced in practical life, gives an idea about the capabilities of the new member states to implement and enforce the *acquis communautaire* in a reliable way. Hence, the EAS, albeit a metaphor, signifies a convergence and states the basic values of public administration as a practice and a profession in Europe.

In relation to the CEE countries, an inventory undertaken in cooperation with the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (Verheijen & Nemec 2000) indicates that since 1989 the development of Public Administration programs, research and training has stimulated a gradual reaction to the importance of the European and comparative dimension. The recognition of adequate administrative capacities as an important requirement for EU membership (adaptational pressure) is likely to have been an important rationale for the continuing development of the European emphases in the Public Administration programs and research in CEE. However, this evidence remains in contrast to the developments in the Public Administration curricula of the 'old' member states, particularly of the Southern Europe, where the increasing influence of the European decisions is not adequately reflected in teaching and training (Toonen & Verheijen 1999; Verheijen & Connaughton 2003). Consequently, it remains to be seen whether European integration is a potential unifying measure also in the discipline and profession of public administration.

It is possible to draw a direct link between the practice of public administration and the study of Public Administration by arguing that the type of Public Administration education, training and research strongly correlates with the way public administration is practiced in the field (Hajnal 2003, p. 253). Therefore existence and development of facilitating actors including NISPAcee is crucial, however their direct impact may be limited.

4.7 Conclusions

Adaptational pressures in the CEE region and domestic change have resulted among other issues in a need to change the way of thinking about the state, public administration and training for the public service. The task of training and in general professionalisation of public sector is a complex and problematic issue that must accompany significant efforts in of state modernization and reorganization of public administration. However, professionalisation seems to be crucial and should be at the top of the agendas. Adaptational pressures of democratization and Europeanization that result in change at domestic

level require highly professional staff at all levels of governance as well as well-trained advisors and capable researchers. Generally speaking, during the building of new democracies in the region, the role of education and training in public policy and public administration has not been taken as a valuable tool for facilitating successful reforms. Only very recently, it applies especially to the new members of the EU, has adequate attention been given to the professionalisation in that area provided both by public and private institutions emphasizing growing institutional and international environment.

In this given challenging reality, it is especially important that one thinks systematically about such matters and does it with a broad frame of reference. Besides numerous training and educational programmes launched in the 1990s often supported by international organisations, other institutional actors such as NISPAcee seem to play extremely important role providing more flexible and innovative professionalisation activities as a new and creative way to fast-changing institutional and political environment. Responding to the needs of particular states in the region and at the same time taking into account basic guidelines set for modern and efficient public administrations (see Appendix 9 - SIGMA baselines), NISPAcee gradually tailored its agenda to three general categories of skills upon which education and training programs in public administration and public policy as well as other training activities ought to focus their attention in order to operate effectively in a dynamic context of Europe and beyond. Various activities provided by NISPAcee and more generally skills or capabilities promoted in the region are related to basic technical, more advanced managerial and finally leadership skills that represent implicit continuum of capabilities which are required for effective functioning of state and bureaucracy.

Analysis of training and education activities and documents of NISPAcee as well as conducted interviews gives an overview of skills (technical, managerial and leadership) that are promoted directly or indirectly leading in a long term to professionalisation of both discipline and practice of public administration and therefore institutional change (see 4.8.4).

Experience of early stage of democratization and Europeanization processes (including successes and failures of managerialism) resulted in a conviction that the CEES should not draw lessons directly from the Western states or accept models promoted by international/supranational organisation. On the contrary, the CEES must localize various solutions how to organize and run the state in a good manner. In this regard, NISPAcee has played and still plays a crucial role of a platform of exchange and discussion of ideas suitable for governments in making. Researchers in the field of governmental reform and to smaller extend external advisors to the governments in the region agreed that specific status of those countries require new way of thinking about domestic change in terms of governance and public administration.

4.7.1 Institutionalisation

In the belief of the author, institutionalism as the conceptual framework for this case study has helped in investigating the role, functioning and indirectly impact of the change agent in a set of theoretical ideas, hypotheses concerning the relations between institutional characteristics and political agency, performance and change. Institutionalism emphasizes the endogenous nature and social construction of institutions. Institutions are not simply equilibrium contracts among self-seeking, calculating individual actors or arenas for contending social forces. They are collections of structures, rules and standard operating procedures that have a partly autonomous role in social life.

Institutionalism comes in many flavours, but they are all perspectives for researching, understanding and improving political and social systems. They supplement and compete with two other broad interpretations of politics. The first alternative is a *rational actor* perspective which sees political life as organized by exchange among calculating, self-interested actors. The second alternative is a *cultural community* perspective which sees political life as organized by shared values and worldviews in a community of common culture, experience and vision (e.g. NISPAcee and its members). The three perspectives – institutional, rational actors and cultural community – are not exclusive. Most governance and public administration systems can be interpreted as functioning through a mix of organizing principles.

Within an institutional perspective, a core assumption is that institutions create elements of order and predictability, especially important in the time of dynamic change such as transition or the EU Enlargement. They fashion, enable and constrain political actors as they act within logic of appropriate action. Institutions are carriers of identities and roles and they are markers of a polity character, history (also with the Communist legacy) and visions. They provide bonds that tie citizens and other actors together in spite of the many things that divide them. They also impact institutional change, and create elements of *historical inefficiency* (March & Olsen 2006).

In modern society the polity is a configuration of many formally organized institutions that define the context within which politics and governance take place. In this context institutions are not static and institutionalization is not an inevitable process, nor is it unidirectional, monotonic or irreversible (Weaver & Rockman 1993). In general, however, because institutions are defended by insiders and validated by outsiders, and because their histories are encoded into rules and routines, their internal structures and rules cannot be changed arbitrarily (March & Olsen 1989; Offe 2001). The changes that occur are more likely to reflect local adaptation to local experience and thus be relatively myopic and meandering, rather than optimizing.

It is commonplace to observe that the causal relation between institutional arrangements and substantive policy is complex. Usually, causal chains are indirect, long and contingent (Weaver and Rockman 1993), so that political institutions can be expected to constrain and enable outcomes without being be the immediate and direct cause of public policy. The same arrangement can have quite different consequences under different conditions. The disentanglement of institutional effects is particularly difficult in multi-level and multi-centred institutional settings, characterized by interactions

among multiple autonomous processes such as appearing simultaneously Europeanization and democratization (Orren & Skowronek 2004; March & Olsen 1989, 2005, 2006).

The dynamics of institutional change include elements of design, competitive selection, and the accidents of external shocks (Goodin 1996, pp. 24-25). Rules, routines, norms, and identities are both instruments of stability and arenas of change. Change is a constant feature of institutions and existing arrangements impact how institutions emerge and how they are reproduced and changed. Institutional arrangements can prescribe and proscribe, speed up and delay change. Key to understand the dynamics of change is a clarification of the role of institutions and organisations within standard processes of change. Most contemporary theories assume (but also this case shows) that the mix of rules, routines, norms, and identities that describe institutions change over time in response to historical experience (March & Olsen 1998, 2006; Olsen 2001).

4.7.2 NISPAcee as a change agent

Overview of NISPAcee activities and analysis of its qualities in the light of Europeanization and democratization lead to a conclusion that this organisation plays a role of a facilitating actor. Through mobilization of resources (i.e. knowledge) and support at the domestic level, it reveals characteristics of two types of change agents that are not mutually exclusive:

1. *Epistemic community* that can be characterized as a network of actors that provide with scientific knowledge and experience about casual relationship and therefore legitimate new norms that might be implemented causing domestic change at various levels of governance. Epistemic community is influential in inducing change especially when there is a consensus on what values and instruments promote and when efforts made are highly institutionalized (see also Figure 2.2 & 5.2).

2. *Advocacy issue network* that is characterized by rather shared values and beliefs than consensual knowledge. Those networks refer to collectively shared norms or ideas underlying principles of e.g. democratic state or effective public sector and try to persuade other actors to reconsider their goals and reconstruct their attitudes or identities (e.g. through professionalisation endeavours). Persuasion and advocacy embedded in clearly defined activities not only lead to social learning but in turn may well influence policy making or institutional transformation.

NISPAcee not only can be described as a change agent, but thanks to its activities it sets up a crucial professional institutional infrastructure that comprises:

1. *Accoutrements of professional life and activity* for the articulation and dissemination of professional ideology, mission, values and behaviours, symbols and ethics,
2. *Communication networks* – sharing of common professional expertise and experience through journals, websites, research reports, bulletins,

3. *Professional knowledge generation and development* – institutions that provide basic paradigms through both applied and theoretical research and thereby increasing the intellectual capital in the filed through publications, trainings and consulting activities,
4. *Benchmarking and professional performance evaluation* – opportunity for competition and recognition, accreditation, peer review, transregional sharing of good practices and standards for better performance and development.
5. *Entry level and life-professional education and training* – formal and distance programmes at universities and institutes and less formalised various training activities and publishing training manuals and materials,
6. *Professional integrity and identity enhancement* - annual conferences, working groups, awards, publications, joint activities.

NISPAcee also delivers valuable contribution to at least three dimensions of the professionalisation:

1. Into the processes of changing existing professional values and ideology, knowledge and culture,
2. Into the processes of integrational transfer of professional culture and values,
3. Into the processes of accumulation of professional experience, enrichment and innovation of professional knowledge and improvement of standards of conduct.

Professionalisation provokes reflection and leads to changes of attitudes, skills development and reshape of overall frames of mind and activities and in turn to domestic change. The advancements of communication and shared goals (e.g. the EU membership) create absolutely new reality tremendous opportunities for transnational exchanges of information and experience. These possibilities to share and promote common needs, interests and values can stimulate collective professionalisation through development of new cultural and learning frameworks. The transitional situation of the CEES offers a unique opportunity for deliberate intervention into the processes of formation and development of professions and their institutional infrastructure in a research and practice of public administration.

4.7.3 Internal qualities of NISPAcee

NISPAcee reveals not only some of the characteristics of the change agent, but also constitutes by itself a complex organisational environment. Machado and Burns (1998) conceptualise such an entity as consisting of heterogeneous modes of organizing referring to inter-institutional setting (member institution on NISPAcee) and complex activity focus (expanding geographical and activity scope). As presented in a case study and partly in analysis (see Chapters 3 & 4), NISPAcee succeeded to create distinct from other organisations principles, constitutive rules and cognitive frame of reality, but also social position, mechanisms of functioning, integrating and conflict resolution.

An organizing mode and its institutional formation are specialized, designed for certain purposes, part of an organizational division of

labour or function. This is not only a question of effectiveness and increasing impact, but it is also a question of legitimacy. Thus, the democratic mode is considered right and proper when it comes to selection of political leaders, law-making, and policy-formation, that is, matters that should be based on the 'will of the people'. An administrative system, on the other hand, should assure the effective implementation of policies, programmes, and rules. In many modern social organizations, several modes are combined in order to deal effectively with diverse problems including demands for legitimacy. Thus, the modern state provides services, regulates, collects taxes, and makes laws and policies; different organizing modes are utilized – and are expected to be utilized - in organizing and performing such a variety of activities. The same can be said about a modern university or a hospital complex or an organisation as NISPAcee or similar active in the field.

Actors involved in any given organizing mode within a complex social organization typically try to maintain the integrity, the defining characteristics of their own institutionalized organizing mode. At the same time, some work to resolve or minimize incompatibilities, incoherence, tensions and conflicts at the interfaces with other organizing modes. In a certain sense, differentiating and oppositional processes are combined – or closely associated with - harmonizing, integrating processes in any complex organization. In this case that derives also from a widespread geographical focus and different needs of certain member institutions. Even though the researched organisation is not research from a network perspective, it has managed to some extend to work out more flexible manner of operating by adapting rules, negotiating new rules and reaching agreements and accommodations at the various points of interaction. Certainly, NISPAcee is also capable to encompass a great diversity of functions and actors proving its flexibility only constrained by its budget and mandate.

4.7.4 Professionalisation as a response to complexity of public reforms

Adaptational pressures in the CEE region result in dramatic growth of complexity of public problems. Effective functioning in this complex environment increasingly requires a new set of technical competencies which must be developed simultaneously with the more traditional ones. Newly emerging shape of modernizing public sector puts a great emphasis, alongside budgeting or policy analysis, on customer service, entrepreneurialism or privatization. Enhancement in these areas must be combined with:

1. development of collaborative capacities within and outside government,
2. understanding of international/supranational organizations and their values (e.g. institutional arrangements, processes and values of European Administrative Space),
3. substantive raise in policy expertise (especially important for the CEES),
4. performance measurement and contract management skills,
5. program/project development and implementation,
6. oral and written presentation skills in foreign languages (exposure to international environment, accountability),

7. knowledge of information technology and e-governance.

Alongside technical skills crucial for successful operation within public sector, advocacy of certain managerial standards seems to be vital. Public managers operating in complex institutional settings combined with a need to overtake more responsibilities (cut-backs), need to enhance their skills focused on i.e. management of institutional and personal relationships. NISPAcee itself and training systems at universities and within government structures have significantly contributed to enhancement in the managerial skills of public administrators, however there is still a need to initiate or intensified efforts focused on:

1. understanding of individual and organizational psychology,
2. ability to facilitate effective staff personal and professional development,
3. capacity to build and sustain multi-ethnic/cultural environment,
4. ability to negotiate with external actors,
5. enhance information processing and analytical capabilities.

Increasing demands for more technical and managerial skills in public administration must be combined with more creative and effective leadership. Leaders of public organizations at all levels of governance need to develop their abilities to enunciate an engaging and compelling vision for he future of the organisation. New and more effective approaches should aim in helping administrators to cope more effectively with their leadership responsibilities. The situation could be enhanced through emphasis on:

1. ability to adopt rapidly to change and complexity,
2. ethical awareness and commitment,
3. entrepreneurialism and risk-taking ability,
4. strategic planning capability,
5. democratization process.

New circumstances require the development of new or redefinition of existing skills. Capacity to response to the adaptational pressures and accommodate the change is vital for the CEES but certainly challenging. This in turn reflects an increasing need for training and professionalisation in public administration. In response to changing environment, specifics of particular systems and baseline criteria of administration (academic) programmes and training activities should reflect the new demands facing public sector at the very moment. NISPAcee advocates importance of building administrative capacities through training and education in described above areas. Additionally, analysis of its activities proves that organizational portfolio has accommodated new needs and developments. In truth, that process is a continuing one and undoubtedly NISPAcee within available resources has been serving as a facilitating actor of domestic change in this regard (Rosenbaum & Gajdosova 2003; NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006).

5 Conclusions

Having presented the case study followed by the analysis conducted in a theoretical and conceptual frame developed and presented in the opening chapter, this part of the report aims in presenting final conclusions deriving from this enquiry besides findings presented in the previous parts. Fifth chapter consists of the final assessment of the research hypothesis as well as sub-questions on which basis NISPAcee has been researched; and also evaluation if the aims of the research have been achieved. At the top of that this chapter gives some insight into the European Administrative Space and some findings related to research in public administration. Finally, this chapter is followed by the recommendations (see Chapter 6) that derives from this study and can be utilized by the researched organisation.

5.1 Adaptational pressures and institutional response

Adaptational pressures in Central and Eastern Europe (democratization and Europeanization) result in domestic change i.e. regarding public administration and governance. Consolidation of social, governance and political spaces were facilitated and conditioned by existing, abandoned or newly establish institutions. Thus, transformation of public administration and governance arrangement belongs to complex and long term processes and moreover depends very much on the peculiarities of existing structures. This study instead of extensive comments on causes and outcomes shows that it is highly important to evaluate how those changes can be explained and by what means can be achieved. Sociological accounts of institutional change give in this concept at least partial explanation, where social (political, economical) interactions among various actors lead to institution building and then those actors are induced to behave in a way that results in further institutional change. Intuitions make governance possible and more efficient, nevertheless it must be taken into account that complex social organisations especially in a highly dynamic context, consist of various forms of organising and influence. That results in emphasized feedback loops connecting actors to take an action or organize endeavours generating synergy effects. Those loops are perceived as generic mechanism of innovation and institutionalisation. The study of NISPAcee stresses the demands arising from society undergoing profound systemic changes and the way institutions (also societal actors) respond to them. This case also shows that institutional actors have a supply side as well as an independent impact. Moreover, case of NISPAcee shows endogenous dimension of institutionalisation process in which actors engage institutional (capacity) building, through i.e. resetting existing ones, clarifying vague ones and exploiting institutional voids. Concluding, it has been shown that institutions and organisations are vital part of modernization processes and domestic change in terms of public administration and governance in the CEE region, confirming therefore two of the sub-hypothesis of this inquiry (see 1.3.2 §1, 2). As mentioned before, not only institutional arrangements and adaptational pressures generate the need for change, but also mediating factors are necessary to make it happen. The following two sections draw conclusions upon these issues (Knill 2001; Shapiro 2001; Stone Sweet *et al.* 2001; March & Olsen 1989).

5.2 NISPAcee as a change agent

Following two sections (5.2 & 5.3) draw conclusions on the main research question (see 1.3.1 & 1.3.2 §3) and finally give a firm answer that derives from the analysis of the findings. *This case study on the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public administration in Central and Eastern Europe has attempted to evaluate to what extend this organisation complies with a model of a change agent in a broad theoretical framework of domestic change as a response to adaptational pressures in an institutionally dynamic context of the CEE region between the transition and the EU Enlargement.* Indirectly, this research also examines to some extend the impact of the organisation and a crucial goal of its activities – professionalisation in public administration.

The professionalisation in teaching, research and practice of public administration and governance serve as a generator and primarily guardian of values. In the transitional context, where the shift of value system appears as one of the dominant dimensions in changes resulting from adaptational pressures such as democratization and Europeanization, the further development of processes of professionalisation will facilitate and even drive changes of system of system. The professionalisation in the context of this research seems to be an important trust building institution crucial in the context of the Central and Easter Europe.

Functioning of a change agent, in this context NISPAcee, secures and transfers particular features of a new system of governance and public administration. Innovative capacity of a change agent is set upon the network of individuals and member organisations which creates and serves as an infrastructure for articulating, channelling, directing and supporting flows of knowledge, expertise and reflection. It is only possible when certain group of people – fellow members of a professional community (both practitioners and researcher) are able and willing to perform this activity. This allows professionals to reflect and benchmark current developments, design and try to implement necessary changes, and restructure professional dimension of public domain. This case showed that consistent development of NISPAcee has resulted in full-scale mastering and performance of crucial meta-reflective functions for the professionalisation of systems of governance and public administration in post-Communist Europe.

Holistic approach of the facilitating actor to professional performance allows the organisation through various initiatives and functions enhancing certain skills and patterns of behaviour, redesigning principles of professional activities, supporting or provoking changes of basic values and core knowledge. Moreover, all of these reflective functions enhance accumulation of professional knowledge and culture and reproduction of professional activities. In this context, NISPAcee generates and accumulates a complex method of knowing, testing and verifying basic ontological assumption of profession, ideas and knowledge adjusting them to a certain local context. That proves one more time that domestic change in the area of governance and public administration through various professionalisation endeavours cannot take place without building and strengthening of an integrated professional infrastructure. Prohibition, acceleration or induction of domestic change occurs in poly-processes of reflection communication and learning. Change agents as NISPAcee provide:

1. formal and informal matrices for developing knowledge, attitudes, values and effective techniques for practice,
2. new frames of thinking, reflecting and experiencing,
3. roles as an authority, facilitator and arbitrator of knowledge of change (Rusaw 1995, p. 219).

Clearly, one of the core reasons for institutional chaos and partial failures in institution building in CEES is the absence of well-establish professions and widespread mechanisms fostering professionalisation and accumulation of experience and culture of democratic state and public administration. The process of professionalisation in the transitional countries and New Members of the EU must be considered in a complex and multi-institutional context. Therefore, it seems that change agents like NISPAcee play crucial innovative role in a model of domestic change (NISPAceeInterviews 2006; Börzel 2005).

5.3 Bringing about the change and generating public goods

Europeanization and democratization result in a misfit at the levels of policies, politics and polity. That constitutes necessary condition for domestic change. The second condition is that various factors respond to the adaptational pressures prohibiting, accelerating or inducing the domestic change. Analysis of NISPAcee leads to a conclusion, that this organisation surely can be perceived as a mediating factor. However its direct impact is mainly restricted to a domain of polity in which socialization and collective learning processes (professionalisation endeavours in teaching, research and education of public administration) resulting in norm internalization and the development of new frames of reference. These processes are complex and long-term in delivering visible outcomes; therefore direct impact of the organisation is postponed, but noticeable in qualitative terms (see 2.7.3 & 4.7.2).

The research organisation what has been analyzed partially in Chapters 3 and in Chapter 4, through its multiple activities, functions and differential impact mobilize resources and generate resources in order to contribute to production of a public good, which in this case is professional and reliable public administration that reveals characteristics set i.e. by the SIGMA/OECD or the EU (see Appendix 9). Collective action of the individual and institutional members of NISPAcee thanks to relatively limited size of the organisation and various incentives that are provided leads eventually to achievement of certain goals agreed by its members (professionalisation of public administration as a profession and the filed of study). That well contributes to acceleration of domestic change in terms of professional public administration and governance structures that are perceived as public goods that would not be achieved without functioning and impact of this organisation. NISPAcee although is growing can be perceived as a relatively small group (organisation) that could act more decisively and use their resources more effectively than larger groups (e.g. the EU) According to Olson, when a group or organization has a lot of members, individual members might feel as though their participation will not affect the group, and will still expect to reap the benefits, whether or not they make a contribution. However, in the context of dynamic changes in the CEE region members of the NISPAcee having various incentives (i.e. professional, economical) act voluntary and commit themselves in

order to maximize their contribution to the activities of the organisation, what in turn affects the contribution to generating the public good. That leads to a conclusion that the role of the change agent (broker) in delivering public goods in this case is particularly relevant (see 1.3.2 §6). That is caused by government/market failure and specific context of Central and Eastern Europe (Olsen 1965; NISPAceeInterviews 2006).

As argued in analytical part (see 4.7.2), NISPAcee reveals characteristics of a change agent as an epistemic community and advocacy issue network (see 2.7.2). Accumulation and sharing of knowledge and expertise is an important dimension of power and diffusion of new ideas and information can lead to new patterns of behaviour and proves to be an important determinant of domestic change, at least in terms of professionalisation in public administration crucial for effective functioning of the modern state and society. An epistemic community is a network of professionals (in this case practitioners and researchers) with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain. That affirms the research hypothesis in a way that NISPAcee through its activities comply with a model of a mediating factor. However as already mentioned the impact of the organisation is inevitably difficult to assess and differential due to dynamics of modernization process and domestic change in a formative context of Central and Eastern Europe (see 1.3.2 §4).

Concluding, on the basis of presented information as well as analysis conducted in Chapter 4 it is possible to answer the main research hypothesis (see 1.3.1). *Taking into account all the limitation of this investigation, the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe can be perceived as a mediating factor, therefore it complies with a model of change agent in the context of domestic change in terms of public administration professionalisation in the CEE region between transition and the EU Enlargement. Evaluation of gathered data confirms to certain extend the research hypothesis set for this inquiry.*

Nevertheless, the final conclusion still gives a room for a final conclusions related to a vital dimension of activities of NISPAcee – professionalisation perceived as a vital link between domestic change, mediating factors and adaptational pressures; generating a social infrastructure and finally way of thinking about administrative convergence – European Administrative Space.

5.4 Influencing domestic change: professionalisation

As the research proves, NISPAcee is a witness, but also an intermediary of change within the region when it comes to domestic change in terms of public administration and governance issues. As mentioned before, professionalisation seems to be the only powerful link between strong adaptational pressures inducing domestic change in the context of functioning of change agents (see sub-hypothesis 1.3.2 §5). Acceleration of domestic change takes place in a complex setting of fast changing public policy environment, the state and democracy in flux, expanding web of mutual dependencies and more demanding citizens. Taking into account experience of Central and Eastern Europe alongside with assessing the functioning of NISPAcee, improvement of governance,

modernization and professionalisation in public domain are in any case institutionally difficult and long term.

In a given context of transition and the EU Enlargement, demands of public administration including training and professionalisation are related to at least a few vital issues such as:

1. efficiency and cost effectiveness,
2. responsiveness to citizens,
3. growing importance of policy analysis and advisory functions,
4. facing up to technological complexity,
5. handling international interchange,
6. relating to media.

Moreover, each one can be viewed from the viewpoint of managerial competences, political/administrative relationship, accountability and e-governance. Surely, it is a challenge for all professionalisation attempts and therefore need to be carefully considered. It may well result in a demand for development of new capacities of training and more generally professionalisation:

1. education in policy analysis,
2. environmental understanding (context),
3. empathy (at home and abroad),
4. evaluation and learning.

Though, the question remains how quickly can those capacities can be developed, used and or become politically acceptable in still highly dynamic and diverse context of CEES. And the other open question is how to develop a capacity to sustain modernisation in public administration in a long term perspective.

The analysis of gathered data resulted in number of conclusions concerning a soft underpinning of professionalism:

1. importance of prevailing environment – political and economic relations,
2. social attitudes - demand for change vs. traditional passivity,
3. socialization initiative: political training, independent prizes, peer review and exchanges, involvement of change agents,
4. importance of accreditation and development within higher education/training system,
5. forcing pressures or incentives.

All in all, the professionalisation of the extremely complex sphere of public administration and governance is far from complete. There is underdeveloped infrastructure for knowledge-building, research and consulting activities, training and dissemination of knowledge. However, mobilizing support is vital to create favourable conditions for professionalisation and further modernisation in the CEES. Inter-professional participation of agents as NISPAcee that localize support for change is inevitably important and is expected to grow (NISPAceeInterviews 2006; Verheijn 2001).

5.5 Mediating actors as infrastructure

In the context of institutionalisation and domestic change, this case study has proved that the ability of an organisation to act as a change agent and social actor depends very much on its internal qualities. This paragraph provides the final conclusions to the research sub-questions focused on qualities of the organisation and its impact; and also creation of social infrastructure (see 1.3.2 §4, 7)

Functioning of a particular organisation in a given domain contributes to creating the infrastructure prohibiting, accelerating or preventing domestic change, in this particular case through professionalisation. In essence, a number of internal qualities can be distinguished that affect setting up institutional infrastructure for mediating actors:

1. *Conception* – this quality allows collecting reliable findings about the parameters of the organisation, examining and producing ideas of is function and possible dimension of activities. Moreover, its role is to provide a forum for confrontation of ideas and opinions, to develop concepts for solving problems and ensure the flexible response to suddenly emerging issues.

2. *Coordination* – its purpose is to communicate various parties with each other and coordinate meeting the goals inline with certain conception of function to strengthen the importance of organisation and expand its facilitating impact on domestic change. Additionally, it allows identifying of common interest and values and mobilizing interested parties in their defence and advocacy resulting in direct or indirect impact upon professionalisation or reforming of certain institutional arrangements.

3. *Facilitation* – it purpose is to support networking and encourage cooperation among various actors (e.g. international/supranational organisations, NGOs and researchers) sharing the same views and values and working together to achieve certain goals. Apart from that, its role is to establish favourable environment of cooperation in which domestic change is likely to happen (incl. communication and professionalisation).

4. *Advocacy* – through its advocacy capacities, the organisation provide lobbying and advocacy services (in this case indirect and limited, though possible) in the form of monitoring, research, facilitating communication, delivering knowledge through professional trainings, developing educational curricula, providing advisory function (direct and indirect).

5. *Evaluation* – allows functioning of accreditation bodies (e.g. EAPPA), localizing and evaluating of common standards (e.g. European Administrative Space) and finally fostering research both of assessment nature as well as those related to methodology of evaluation and audition studies.

6. *Information* – this quality is related to gathering and dissemination of knowledge, also for research purpose (in this case it complies with a model of interactive search for knowledge). It also offers opportunity to communicate interested parties (e.g. database of experts and member organisations),

providing room for building common interests and trust having great effect on the strength of a change agent. At the top of that, it also aims in cooperation of various actors in order to publish reliable studies concern with a domain of the interests (e.g. high quality publications and training instruments of NISPAcee).

7. *Public Relations* – it bounds to everyday activities of the organisation in order to bring various parties other to work more effectively for a common purpose (e.g. practitioners and researchers). The core activities primarily aim in cooperation with member institutions (and other organisations), advocating and advertising certain standards of training and research, lobbying for its own interests (e.g. business meeting with the EU officials), mediating feedback from various activities within the organisation and to external actors.

8. *Self-regulation* – this quality allows focusing the activities of the organisation on producing, disseminating and checking the adherence to desired norms and behaviours. The organisation creates the room for discussing ethical problems and possible solutions. It also formulates ethical code of conduct for its members and also at more general level and disseminates the awareness of shred values and vision (epistemic community). That enforces common understanding and affects behaviour of individuals and entire organisation strengthening the legitimate position in terms of functioning as a change agent (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeInterviews 2006; Verheijn 2001; Flick & Butora 2003).

5.6 The way foreword: Towards European Administrative Space?

The quality of public administration, its reliability and reform are at the front line of the democratization and Europeanization processes on which the CEES are embarked. The issue of public administration and governance is central to European project, which is first and foremost an institutional structure in a broad sense. Nevertheless, traditionally the EU has given modest attention and priority to administrative issues. States are free to set up their own administration as they please, but it must operate in such a way as to ensure that Community tasks are effectively and properly fulfilled to achieve policy outcomes which are set by the EU. On this basis the Union is entitled to demand that current and future MS have a reliable system of governance set upon formal and informal standards. Especially endeavours during the 2004 Enlargement proved that changing the public administration and governance system in order to create convergence in line with certain standard and values implies intervention in large-scale, complex and dynamic institutions with pre-existing identities, structures and resources. Still, the EU has not developed an explicit and coherent administrative policy, however what may be called *European Administrative Space* is slowly taking shape (see Appendix 9 & 10).

In the time scope of this research, Central and Eastern European countries have been involved in a fundamental shifts consisting of three parts (as response to adaptation pressures): 1) introducing democracy and democratic state institutions, 2) shifting to market economy, 3) moving towards integration with the EU. Each of these changes carries

significant implications for public administration and governance arrangements. The issue of administration in the context of Europeanization is usually expressed in terms of compliance and enforcement capacities of *acquis communautaire.* However, the EAS is more than this; it is about how the administrative systems work i.e. reliability, efficiency, transparency and ability to change. In this context as already discussed professionalisation efforts undertaken by mediating actors like NISPAcee are therefore crucial to induce change at the domestic level. Obviously, that must be facilitated by political will and efforts, external support (e.g. PHARE Programme), but also it can only by designed in details and carried out with full knowledge and understanding of the local circumstances. Even though NISPAcee does not have a direct impact upon decision-making process, though its presence and activities indirectly it enhances professionalisation in public domain. That in turn affects enormously implementation and development concerning key common features of public administration systems in the EU (see Appendix 9 & 10). It is to be added that some of the objectives have not necessarily been uniformly achieved in countries which are already the EU Members. On the other hand, European-level developments have not dictated convergence on a single form of administration. They rather reveal national characteristics at the same time respecting common values and standards of functioning of a public sector and the state.

However, with respect to the Central and Eastern Europe as well as future Member States, convergence on the EAS model has been highly dependant on several factors. High adaptational pressures (democratization and Europeanization) resulted into convergence through attractiveness (learning and voluntary imitation of a superior model) as well as imposition (convergence based on the use of authority and power) that can be characterized by asymmetry and conditionality. The general tendency though is to describe administrative change as a question of attractiveness and professionalisation. The role of the EU and other bodies is to provide guidance and support. Nevertheless, governments and other actors such as change agents are crucial in the whole process. So far, the New Members have met the baseline criteria of administration and governance requirements; however changes at the domestic level as well as knowledge and experience must be now institutionalised. It is argued that as yet the convergence has materialised only to a limited degree. It is so due to the fact that there are no shared concepts and indicators of administrative convergence and dynamics of change as well as local context highly influence this process. However, so far achievements within the EU make possible to cooperate internationally as well as implement policies developed at the supranational level. It seems though that the concept of the EAS creates more general questions concerning a need for further convergence, the role of professional bodies in this process (both governmental and non-governmental), required conditions and infrastructure and horizontal approach to domestic change. That leads to conclusion that especially in the context of the CEES, the EAS denotes rather the way of thinking about the convergence than suggests single *modus operandi* applicable regardless national or local context (see reserach sub-question 1.3.2 §8; Olsen 2002; Hesse 1998; Pereto 2005).

5.7 Assessing domestic change: research in PA

This qualitative case study has employed various enquiry methods in a broad conceptual framework in order to examine the main research hypothesis of to what extend NISPAcee complies with a model of a change agent in a given context of modernization in Central and Eastern Europe. The reason for using qualitative research of this kind is to employ the richness of interviews and observational data in reaching the understanding of the process of how organization and its activities affect domestic change. Chosen approach seems to be an alternative to impact evaluation which key features could be described as summative and quantitative. Alongside ordinary purpose of a research in the filed of public administration, this investigation also aimed in providing utilization focus outcomes. Examination of development of organizational structures and undertaken activities in a broad theoretical context provides governing bodies of particular institutions and their members with better means for improving functional and managerial capacities, learning from past experience, better planning and allocating resources and finally improving their external relations and public image (see Chapter 6).

Institutional approach applied for this study alongside with Europeanization/democratization analytical framework constitutes generally speaking a consistent research frame. However, the enquiry methods and conceptual frame have their significant limitations.

Firstly, qualitative studies are less valid, reliable and credible than extensive formal surveys and therefore findings relate to specific region and usually are difficult to generalize. Secondly, some of the methods used were time-consuming (e.g. interviews) and therefore less efficient. Additionally, it is quite difficult to generalize from the conclusions from case study, thus it seems that there is very little or no similar organisations of this kind in the region and beyond that operate in such a specific and complex setting. And finally, it is a weakness of political sciences vis-à-vis organizational studies, when a theory, as it is in this case, is developed on macro-level of analysis and extremely difficult to apply to micro-level studies. Nevertheless, the final report from this study delivered some observations and conclusions examining the research theory and provided recommendations that might be easily utilized by the research organization.

On the other hand, there is a more general concern with methods that can be successfully applied in research in international public management and/or public administration, especially when it comes to examination of institutions or organisations in a highly dynamic and complex socio-political setting. In the author's belief, the combination of methods and concepts used for this investigation turned to be rather comprehensive and appropriate. However, there is an urgent need to develop new techniques and instruments to conduct both qualitative and quantitative (ideally both) types of research in order to provide consistent, reliable and applicable results.

Finally, the research in the field of public administration and public management should be developed not only in the state run universities and research institutions but also in nongovernmental establishments of higher education, private research institutions and by, much more active then now, scientific associations. The necessary development and modernization of education and research in this field cannot be effective without significant reinforcement of a horizontal networking

and more effective collaboration, at the national level, of all public sector institutions, foundations, associations and non governmental educational and training institutions involved or concerned by the modernization and democratization of public administration system. Presently, this networking and collaboration is much more developed on international then national level. This top-down approach is very useful but can have only limited effects. Promotion of horizontal networking and bottom-up collective initiatives of its members could become a new NISPAcee approach which could contribute to more effective collaboration of public and non-governmental institutions in public administration reform and modernization process.

Last but not least, on the basis of the whole research process as well as provided information and generated conclusions, this research report seems to fulfil both practical and academic aims set for this investigation (see 1.3.3). Most importantly, conducted research provides academically reliable findings and practical recommendations generated on the basis of qualitative and quantitative data throughout the past months. Obviously with some limitations, this case study has tested applicability of a broad conceptual/theoretical framework to micro-level academic enquiry in order to examine dimensions of domestic change in regards to public administration professionalisation; and assessed and proved necessity of functioning of mediating actors in regard to contribution to delivery of public goods. Additionally, the research provides an extensive overview of NISPAcee activities and it role in modernization of public domains in the CEE region. Hopefully, this investigation prepares a ground for a more extensive and long term research on this organisation in order to draw more general conclusions related to the role and impact of non-governmental actors on domestic change in the formative context.

5.8 Final conclusion

This very final section aims in providing more explicit and systematic conclusions in regard to sub-questions and on that basis to the main research problem of this investigation. This paragraph takes into account preliminary and final conclusions included in Chapter 4 & 5 of this report relating directly to the subject of this research as well as remaining at more generic level.

In order to evaluate the main research hypothesis: *To what extend (if at all) the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe complies with a model of a change agent in a broad framework of domestic change between transition and the EU Enlargement?* this study has dealt with a set of more detailed research questions:

1. Are the institutions vital part of the context of domestic change in terms of public administration and governance in the CEE region?

Indeed, consolidation of social, governance and political spaces between transition and the EU Enlargement were facilitated and conditioned by existing, abandoned or newly establish institutions. Thus, transformation of public administration and governance arrangement belongs to complex and long term processes and moreover depends very much on the peculiarities of existing structures. Intuitions make governance possible and more efficient, nevertheless it must be taken

into account that complex social organisations especially in a highly dynamic context, consist of various forms of organising and influence in a state of flux. That results in emphasized feedback loops connecting actors to take an action or organize endeavours generating synergy effects. Those loops are perceived as generic mechanism of innovation and institutionalisation. The study of NISPAcee stresses the demands arising from society undergoing profound systemic changes and the way institutions (also societal actors) respond to them. This case also shows that institutional actors have a supply side as well as an independent impact. Moreover, case of NISPAcee shows endogenous dimension of institutionalisation process in which actors engage institutional (capacity) building, through i.e. resetting existing ones, clarifying vague ones and exploiting institutional voids. Concluding, it has been shown that institutions and organisations are vital part of modernization processes and domestic change in terms of public administration and governance in the CEE region.

2. What are the necessary and sufficient conditions inducing domestic change?

Two conditions must me satisfy in order to expect domestic changes in respond to complex processes of Europeanization and democratization. The frame used for this research has been expanded and also encompasses democratization process as source of adaptational pressure and therefore domestic change. Firstly, there must be some degree of misfit between processes, institutions or practices between domestic level and those already in place at supranational level of governance. This misfit results in adaptational pressure which is perceived as a necessary but not sufficient condition for expecting domestic change (governance structures and society in flux after the collapse of the Communist block). The second condition is that facilitating factors of institutional or individual nature respond to the adaptational pressures, thus inducing the change at the domestic level (e.g. NISPAcee). This paper has argued that functioning of a change agent/norm entrepreneur influences the degree to which such misfit results in the internalization of new norms or mechanisms. This approach suggests that those two processes eventually lead to domestic change through collective learning process and socialization affecting development and internalization of new identities.

3. Does NISPAcee comply with the model of a change agent in a conceptual framework of domestic change?

Overview of NISPAcee activities and analysis of its qualities in the light of Europeanization and democratization lead to a conclusion that this organisation plays a role of a facilitating actor. Through mobilization of resources (i.e. knowledge) and support at the domestic level, it reveals characteristics of two types of change agents: epistemic community and advocacy issue network especially in a domain of professionalisation.

Professionalisation provokes reflection and leads to changes of attitudes, skills development and reshape of overall frames of mind and activities and in turn to domestic change. The advancements of communication and shared goals (e.g. the EU membership) create absolutely new reality tremendous opportunities for transnational exchanges of information and experience. These possibilities to share

and promote common needs, interests and values can stimulate collective professionalisation through development of new cultural and learning frameworks. The transitional situation of the CEES offers a unique opportunity for deliberate intervention into the processes of formation and development of professions and their institutional infrastructure in a research and practice of public administration

4. Is professionalisation the only researchable link between adaptational pressures, functioning mediating factors and domestic change?

As the research proves, NISPAcee is a witness, but also an intermediary of change within the region when it comes to domestic change in terms of public administration and governance issues. As mentioned before, professionalisation seems to be the only powerful link between strong adaptational pressures inducing domestic change in the context of functioning of change agent(s). Professionalisation of complex domain of public administration and governance is far from complete. There is underdeveloped infrastructure for knowledge-building, research and consulting activities, training and dissemination of knowledge. However, mobilizing support is vital to create favourable conditions for professionalisation and further modernisation in the CEES. Inter-professional participation of agents as NISPAcee that localize support for change is inevitably important and is expected to grow.

5. What is the role of a change agent in delivering pubic good in a formative context?

Collective action of the individual and institutional members of NISPAcee thanks to relatively limited size of the organisation and various incentives that are provided leads eventually to achievement of certain goals agreed by its members (professionalisation of public administration as a profession and the filed of study). That well contributes to acceleration of domestic change in terms of professional public administration and governance structures that are perceived as public goods that would not be achieved without functioning and impact of this organisation. NISPAcee although is growing can be perceived as a relatively small group (organisation) that could act more decisively and use their resources more effectively than larger groups of this kind. In the context of dynamic changes in the CEE region members of the NISPAcee having various incentives (i.e. professional, economical) act voluntary and commit themselves in order to maximize their contribution to the activities of the organisation, what in turn affects the contribution to generation of the public good.

6. What is the role of non-profit sector in terms of domestic change and what sort of social infrastructure is therefore provided?

In the context of institutionalisation and domestic change, this case study has proved that the ability of an organisation to act as a change agent and social actor depends very much on its internal qualities. Functioning of a particular organisation in a given domain contributes to creating the infrastructure prohibiting, accelerating or preventing domestic change, in this particular case through professionalisation. In essence, a number of internal qualities can be distinguished that affect setting up institutional infrastructure at the levels of: conception,

coordination, facilitation, advocacy, evaluation, information, public relations and self-regulation.

7. Does domestic change in the CEES contribute to the overall convergence towards the European Administrative Space? The way foreword or a myth?

Central and Eastern European countries have been involved in a fundamental shifts consisting of three parts: 1) introducing democracy and democratic state institutions, 2) shifting to market economy, 3) moving towards integration with the EU. Each of these changes carries significant implications for public administration and governance arrangements. The issue of administration in the context of Europeanization is usually expressed in terms of compliance and enforcement capacities of *acquis communautaire.* However, the EAS is more than this – it is about how the administrative systems work and what sort values or frames of reference it provides. Even though NISPAcee does not have a direct impact upon decision-making process, though its presence and activities indirectly enhances professionalisation in public domains of the CEES and beyond. That in turn affects enormously implementation and development concerning key common features of public administration systems in the EU for the future MS. It is to be added that some of the objectives of the EAS have not necessarily been uniformly achieved in countries which are already the EU Members. On the other hand, European-level developments have not dictated convergence on a single form of administration. They rather reveal national characteristics at the same time respecting common values and standards of functioning of a public sector and the state.

8. What can be recommended to NISPAcee in terms of a) structure, b) management and c) portfolio d) professionalisation in order to cope with challenges in the CEE region after the EU Enlargement and in turn increase impact of the organisation on domestic change?

Over a decade of democratization and the EU Enlargement of 2004 create new challenges for functioning of governments and third sector organizations. That provides a valuable opportunity to discuss new priorities and improve both management and capacities of NISPAcee for further sustainable development of the organisation and strengthening its impact on professionalisation of public administration in the CEES. On the basis of conducted interviews and analysis of other data a number of recommendations has been proposed in regard to structure, management, portfolio and professionalisation endeavours. Details are provided in Chapter 6.

All in all, this case study on the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public administration in Central and Eastern Europe has attempted to evaluate to what extend this organisation complies with a model of a change agent in a broad theoretical framework of domestic change as a response to adaptational pressures in an institutionally dynamic context of the CEE region between the transition and the EU Enlargement. Indirectly, this research also examines to some extend the impact of the organisation and a crucial goal of its activities – professionalisation in public administration.

NISPAcee reveals characteristics of a change agent as an epistemic community and advocacy issue network. Accumulation and sharing of

knowledge and expertise is an important dimension of power and diffusion of new ideas and information can lead to new patterns of behaviour and proves to be an important determinant of domestic change, at least in terms of professionalisation in public administration crucial for effective functioning of the modern state and society. That affirms the research hypothesis in a way that NISPAcee through its activities complies with a model of a mediating factor. However, as already mentioned the impact of the organisation is inevitably difficult to assess and differential due to dynamics of modernization process and domestic change in a formative context of Central and Eastern Europe and differs at the level of politics, polity and policies.

6 Recommendations

Researches conducted in public administration besides contribution to the body of knowledge have also utilization focus. That is why, on the basis of gathered information and analysis of data, a number of recommendations can be proposed which in the opinion of the author may well improve functioning of NISPAcee and in turn result in more comprehensive and significant efforts towards professionalisation in public administration in the region. This section fulfils one of the most important practical goals of this research and gives answers to one of the sub-hypothesis (see 1.3.2 §9), namely what can be recommended to organisation to increase effectiveness of the organisation and in turn maximize its impact on professionalisation of public administration in the CEE region.

Over a decade of democratization and the EU Enlargement of 2004 create new challenges for functioning of governments and third sector organizations. That provides a valuable opportunity to discuss new priorities and improve both management and capacities of NISPAcee for further sustainable development of the organisation. Proposed recommendations due to their focus may be divided into four categories: structures, management, portfolio and additionally professionalisation.

6.1 Structures

- NISPAcee is facing a at the moment growing diversity of its membership. It therefore has to anticipate the articulation of 'sub-groups' within the association. This will require reviewing the membership-fee policy, rationalizing the publication policy and eventually improving flexibility of other policies.
- Growing diversity of the members in terms of capacities and nationality should result in some improvements regarding representation in governing bodies of the organization.
- From the same reasons, it might be useable to either increase number of employees at the secretariat or establish contact points in geographically distant areas (e.g. Central Asia) in order to improve communication and effectiveness in the filed.

6.2 Management

- NISPAcee should continue to build its sustainability, mainly by searching for new partners and funding opportunities which could substitute its traditional supporters in the future. In this respect, NISPAcee will have to seek for funding opportunities within available EU instruments.
- In that regard, NISPAcee should review its public image and undertake some initiatives aiming in increasing public awareness of its role, importance and functions. That may well require further advancements of the website and engaging more media publicity for its activities.
- Due to the growing costs of participation (e.g. travel expenses) in various activities (e.g. annual conference) organized by NISPAcee, the Steering Committee should review its fees regulations. That may result in a higher number of participants attending and benefiting from these activities.
- Due to the growing geographical scope of the organization, NISPAcee should strengthen communication among the members of the

network assuring that all of them despite a distance receive information and are able to respond in appropriate time and at low cost. That could be improved by introducing new online features of the website.

6.3 Portfolio

- NISPAcee shares a belief in values represented by a broadly understood European Administrative Space project and therefore should have an open attitude towards further joint co-operation and project-oriented collaboration with other international and regional like-minded organizations such as EPAN, EAPAA or OECD/SIGMA.

- Emphasizing importance of excellence in teaching in training in public administration and related issues, NISPAcee should evaluate its so far achievements in that regard and consider taking initiatives aiming in encouragement of its institutional members to introduce accreditation procedures of their curricula.

- It is observable that NISPAcee is becoming more academic oriented, however in principle it should bridge practitioners and academia. Therefore, the network should utilize its capacities and create maximum synergy of its bridging functions. The Figure 6.1 presents desirable change in membership focus and type of planned activities:

Figure 6.1 Strategic direction of NISPAcee
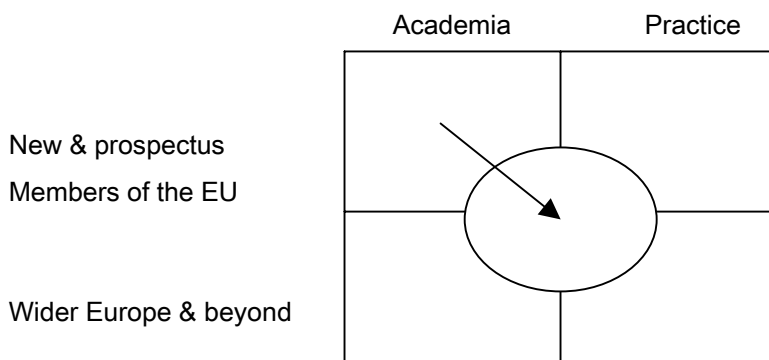
Source: Personal elaboration (2006).

- NISPAcee should keep its unique advantage which is a great diversity of its activities. For a more stable future operation, it should a survey of the involvement of its members, their needs and demands. New activities should reflect a need of attracting more practitioners in the filed.
- Almost a half of the members represent non-member states of the EU. That is why a new geographical focus of activities should certainly concern the Western Balkan, the Caucasus and Central Asia. At the same time, it should not loose the interest of the core CEE members. In order to transfer the transition experiences from the CEE countries towards the East, it may be rational to establish a special working group on this issue

assisting those members in expressing their special needs and interests.

6.4 Professionalisation

- NISPAcee yet further should focus on providing a comprehensive conception of profession and process of professionalisation of systems of public administration and governance in the post-Enlargement Europe,
- Interconnected web of experts and member institutions supporting professional development and professionalism,
- Maps and structured and applicable vision of institutional infrastructure of professional system of governance and bureaucracy,
- Mechanisms of formation and development of professional activities and institutions concerned with governance and public administration,
- Enhanced instruments and opportunities for international collaboration for the professionalisation of systems of public administration and governance in the CEES and beyond.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Study trips - list of institutions

No.	Institution	Location	Date	Type of research
1.	Erasmus University	Rotterdam, NL	September 2005 – June 2006	Research content-related consultations, library desk research, taught modules;
2.	Jagiellonian University	Krakow, PL	December 2005	Library desk research;
3.	International Institute of Administrative Sciences IISA	Brussels, BE	March 2006	Library desk research;
4.	Catholic University Leuven	Leuven, BE	March 2006	Library desk research, research content-related consultation;
5.	Leiden University	Leiden, NL	March 2006	Research content-related consultation;
6.	Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe NISPAcee	Ljubljana, SI	May 2006	Participation in the annual conference, interviews, research content-related consultation;

Source: Personal elaboration (2006).

Appendix 2 Research content-related consultations

No.	Name	Institution	Date	Form of consultation
1.	Dr. Frans van Nispen	Erasmus University Rotterdam	Ongoing during research period	Meetings & e-mail
2.	Prof. Christopher Pollitt	Erasmus University Rotterdam	March 2006	Meeting
3.	Prof. Geert Bouckaert	Catholic University Leuven	February & March 2006	E-mail
4.	Prof. Marleen Brans	Catholic University Leuven	March 2006	E-mail
5.	Dr. Trui Steen	Leiden University/Catholic University Leuven	March 2006	Meeting
6.	Prof. Theo Toonen	Leiden University	March 2006	Meeting
7.	Prof. Tanja A. Börzel	Free University of Berlin	April 2006	E-mail

Source: Personal elaboration (2006).

Appendix 3 List of interviewees

No.	Name	Institution	Academic Title/Position	Place of interview	Time
1.	Mr. Michael Brintnall	American Political Science Association (APSA), Washington D.C., United States	Ph.D.; Executive Director	Ljubljana, SI	~26 min.
2.	Mr. Guy B. Peters	Dept. of Political Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, United States	Professor; Associated Dean	Ljubljana, SI	~24 min.
3.	Mr. Allan Rosenbaum	School of Policy & Management, Florida International University, United States	Professor	Ljubljana, SI	~39 min.
4.	Mr. Nicolas Dubois	SIGMA/OECD, Paris, France	Principal Administrator	Ljubljana, SI	~46 min.
5.	Mr. Derry Ormond	Not applicable; Former Director of GOV/PUMA at OECD	Independent Advisor in Governance	Ljubljana, SI	~27 min.
6.	Mr. Louis Hersom	DG Enlargement, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium	Principal Administrator	Ljubljana, SI	~42 min.
7.	Mr. Jide M. Balogun	UNDSEA/DPADM, United Nations, New York, United States	Professor, Senior Advisor	Ljubljana, SI	~27 min.
8.	Ms. Bernadette Connaughon	Dept. of Government & Society, University of Limerick, Ireland	Junior Lecturer in Public Administration	Ljubljana, SI	~21 min.
9.	Ms. Tiina Randma-Liiv	Dept. of Public Administration, Tartu University, Estonia (Recipient of 2006 Alena Brunovska Award for Teaching Excellence in Public Administration)	Professor	Ljubljana, SI	~31 min.
10.	Mr. Juraj Nemec	Faculty of Economics,	Professor;	Ljubljana, SI	~31 min.

		University of Matej Bel, Banska Bystrica, Slovak Rep.	Former Member of NISPAcee Steering Committee		
11.	Mr. Wolfgang Drechsler	Inst. of Humanities & Social Sciences, Tallinn Technical University, Estonia (Recipient of 2002 Alena Brunovska Award for Teaching Excellence in Public Administration)	Professor; Member of NISPAcee Steering Committee	Ljubljana, SI	~54 min.
12.	Mr. Laszlo Vass	Faculty of Social Sciences, Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration, Budapest, Hungary	Professor; President of NISPAcee 2004-2006	Ljubljana, SI	~1hr 5 min.
13.	Mr. Jan Pastwa	Civil Service Office, Warsaw, Poland	Head of Polish Civil Service Office	Ljubljana, SI	~33 min.
14.	Ms. Ludmila Gajdosova	Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe	Executive Director	Ljubljana, SI	~43 min.
15.	Mr. David Coombes	Governance Research Centre, University of Bristol, United Kingdom	Professor	Ljubljana, SI	~40 min.
16.	Ms. Katarina Staronova	Institute of Public Policy, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia	Researcher	e-mail	Not applicable
17.	Ms. Barbara Kudrycka	School of Public Administration, Bialystok, Poland	Professor; Member of NISPAcee Steering Committee	e-mail	Not applicable

Source: Personal elaboration (2006).

Appendix 4 Questionnaire 1 – Research content-related consultations (provisional meeting agenda)

Please note that following meeting agenda is provisional and is meant to be a meeting framework rather than a strict guide.

1. Theoretical frame of reference and analytical approach of the research project: your impressions, remarks and comments.

2. Towards a European Administrative Space?

- Normative program/goal to be achieved?
- Accomplished fact (even partially)?
- Hypothesis?

Key words: convergence, divergence, persistence, mechanisms, degree of convergence, reasons and conditionality of convergence.

3. Domestic factors shaping response to the EU policy demands (administrative style and structure) specific for the CEE countries.

4. Managerial reforms presuppose some minimal administrative infrastructure, but what is the minimal package in administrative reform, especially with regard to CEE countries?

5. The type of reform process in CEE countries showed resemblance to a process of public administration development rather than public administration reform in the sense of re-organization. In this respect, reform of policy process is of particular importance – involvement and impact of external actors/non-governmental bodies into policy-making.

6. The problem of policy design in the CEE region: the role of external actors in policy-making process.

7. Methodology. How to analyze organizational (NGO) strategy in the field of public management? How to measure direct impact of the organisation on people/members of the network and indirect impact on public management reforms?

8. NISPAcee and its equivalents in Western Europe. Who are the most important stakeholders – external and internal? How the governance structure of the network is set up? What are the main failures and successes of this organization? Can you think of any improvements that could be made to improve its impact over the pa systems in the region? Can you draw any kind of comparison between two networks operating in the East and West?

Appendix 5 Questionnaire 2 – Interview agenda – The NISPAcee Annual Conference – Ljubljana, 11-13 May 2006

Answer sheet submitted by Katarina Staronova, Institute of Public Policy, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia.

Please note that following meeting agenda is provisional and is meant to be an interview framework rather than a strict guide.

1. What are the roots of NISPAcee? What organizations/individuals were involved in setting up the network?

NISPAcee was set up by the board of the Academia Istropolitana (a newly established independent University for the Central and Eastern European region that originally was supposed to host also Central European University, however, which due to the political climate was set up in Budapest and even Academia Istropolitana suffered and had to be reestablished in 1997 as Academia Istropolitana NOVA), particularly by late Ms. Brunovska. Without her vision, will and strong determination to have a network of schools in public administration in CEE countries (which were newly established as under communism social sciences were not a subject taught and civil service was not seen as a professional career but a political tool). Other important personalities are now represented in the board, such as Mr. Potucek, Ms. Kudlovska, etc.

2. Has the main goals of NISPAcee changed over time (between the transition and the Enlargement)?

Its mission is the same: excellence in teaching of public administration, however the focus has shifted more from the Central Europe (which has accessed the EU) to the East, such as the Balkan or Central Asia.

3. How the organizational structure has evolved over past 10 years?

No. The secretariat is about the same size, also the board. It is linked with the amount of finances available for the organization. Thus, although the number of tasks and activities could grow the finances did not (quite contrary) and the organizational structure is pretty much the same.

4. In the past 10 years, NISPAcee operated in a highly dynamic context of 1) transition, 2) Europeanization (T. A. Boerzel), 3) the EU Membership and 4) European Administrative Space facilitating the shifts at the levels of 1) polity, 2) politics and 3) policies in the relevant states.
What are at the moment the main challenges ahead of the organization (managerial, financial, etc.)?

I perceive the situation as an outsider (although I work with NISPAcee for approximately 5 years, it is still on a contract basis in the working groups rather than as an insider). Thus, I perceive the biggest challenge for NISPAcee to act as a bridge between European well established organizations (such EPAN) with CEE countries, those accessed and not yet accessed and those without a vision of being part of EU

network (e.g. Central Asia). NISPAcee thus can become an organization that works across borders and new walls… Financially, this will be a difficult task because its headquarters (and secretariat) is anchored in Slovakia, a country which can be perceived in various ways.

5. What are in your opinion the most profound achievements of the network so far?

The activities of the organization focus on raising the quality of research and teaching in public administration in CEE. As said before, there is no tradition in social sciences and thus the quality has been very low. Thanks to the possibilities of publishing and presenting research papers on a scientific forum (maybe not that rigid as in western EU but raising in its quality from year to year) under the scrutiny of BOTH western and eastern researchers enabled many scholars to understand and improve their skills (which they would not have the opportunity elsewhere). The same counts for summer school and trainings that target increase of quality.

6. Do you think that NISPAcee, through its activities comply with an interactive model of search and utilization of public administration knowledge and its development of Carol H. Weiss?

[*Public Administration* 39(5):426-431 (1979) – in the model, those engaged in policy development seek information and insights from various sources; policy process is not linear (from research to decision) but more heterogeneous; research is a part of a complicated process that also encompasses use of experience, pressure, judgment and political insight]

Absolutely, it is also the style of its biggest event, annual conference, which is not solely scholarly but invites practitioners, researchers, academia, analysts, students in short any professions or would be professions dealing with public administration from very broad perspective (central government, local level of government, non-governmental organizations, international organizations such as OECD, UNDP, the EC, etc.). One might criticize that this type of forum is not targeted enough and too broad but it is exactly the mixture of all professions that facilitates learning and spread of information in all directions. This is particularly true in CEE context (or transitional context) where it is difficult to measure the depth and scope of knowledge and where reforms are brought about by many various actors.

7. Can you say that NISPAcee alongside its mission written down in the bylaw the organization aimed, perhaps unintentionally, to set up a kind of minimum package necessary to facilitate further transition and get administrations ready for the EU Enlargement?
(The core of the NISPAcee activities is to promote the development of public administration disciplines and training programs in post-Communist countries. This shall promote both human capacity building and institutional development in public administration through mutual learning and bring about considerable synergetic effects to all member institutions.).

At the time when the organization was set up nobody even thought of the EU enlargement (it was time when EU was enlarged by countries such as Austria) and thus the mission clearly focused on niche felt by their

116

founders - lack of educational opportunities and knowledge in the discipline of public administration. In the course of the time when enlargement became an issue, public administration capacity became a criterion for EU entry readiness and thus NISPAcee in a way did assist in the facilitation of the knowledge. However, it has to be stressed that academia in CEE countries used to (and still has) only a little influence and therefore, I doubt that these activities did have any effect on public administration capacity within the existing civil service. Other projects of EU that specifically targeted these issues had much a bigger budget, technical assistance and possibilities (political pressure) to influence behavior and values of civil servants.

8. NISPAcee reveals characteristics of P.A. Haas's *epistemic community* [*Introduction: Epistemic Community and International Policy Coordination.* In *International Organization,* Vol. 46(1), 1992] or *change agent* in a broader T.A. Boerzel's perspective throughout its organizational structure and activities.
Does NISPAcee have a distinct from the WB or the OECD model/line in promoting public administration development (e.g. like PUMA/GOV – in the past NPM, now *Modernizing Government Agenda*)?

NISPAcee has only a very limited budget and activities and thus if one takes into consideration the number of persons affected, its scope of influence is limited. WB or OECD has a political tool (credit, political pressure, budget, technical expertise, etc.) which provides these organizations which incomparable influence. If an average civil servant is asked about these organizations, I doubt he or she would be aware of NISPAcee, as NISPAcee is targeting academia and not civil servants per se. Thus, I would definitely not call NISPAcee a change agent. The same counts for its activities, although activities of the organization are extremely important in knowledge dissemination and opportunities, these are mostly for a different target group and also the format is not user friendly to practitioners. The publications and seminars by WB, OECD (SIGMA) or the EU have a civil servant as a primary object of its endeavors.

9. Impact of international NGOs on the management/ administrative reforms vary over time and country due to various circumstances such as political or legal system.
What are the most favourable conditions for such an organization to maximize its impact on administrative change?

There has to be a positive political climate which supports networking and information dissemination among various actors, even if initialized by an NGO and not government. If the government feels that it is the task of the government and not an NGO, the impact can be only limited, if possible at all. Also, the technical expertise from NGOs has to be perceived as knowledgeable and credible without having "interests" in the reforms claimed. Thus, credibility in a certain field of knowledge and perceived neutrality is important. Networking capabilities which enables the NGO immediately bring about experts in a specific field or experience from various regions is also of benefit.

10. How to measure impact and effectiveness of an organization like NISPAcee, having in mind its network structure meaning i.e. that it has a direct impact on the nodes (members both individuals and

institutions), but indirect on administrative reforms in particular countries?
(More generally: How to measure performance of the organization - in particular examine the relationship between interorganizational network structures, activities and measures of effectiveness).

Impact is always difficult to measure and maybe one way is to look at member individuals and institutions and their influence in reforms and try to determine whether this was possible thanks to NISPA or not.

11. How could you describe influence of external change agents/facilitators such as NISPAcee in transition (modernization) of the CEE states (coercive? voluntary? forceful?). Can you compare dynamics of the organization to the other entities you know in the region or worldwide?

Again I do not see NISPAcee as a direct change agent but more as a facilitator for ideas exchange that secondarily might have influenced some reforms. But as the main target actors were academia which in CEE is weak actors in civil service reform. Public administration and policy making as a subject of debate is a too abstract concept for reform, it is much easier to introduce reforms through concrete subject topic, such as education, drugs, criminal procedure, etc. NISPAcee is a strong change agent in education and academia by enabling individuals and institutions to benchmark their performance against others and develop their research and presenting skills. If looking at civil service, Open Society Institute with its national foundations is a much strong change agent due to a number of factors (1. number of employees dedicated to its mission, working directly on reform issues with civil servants; 2. much bigger budget; 3. much bigger expertise in various fields…).

12. How to relate activities of an organization like NISPAcee to operations of other stakeholders such as the OECD or the EU?

I do not think this is comparable. NISPAcee can be compared to EPAN or IASIA (if) but not OECD or the EU. It does not have a permanent staff (only administrative secretariat) capable of providing expertise; it does not have credibility or political pressure. NISPAcee solely serves as a forum for people to meet and discuss issues.

13. If applicable, how to strengthen links among medium-size organizations such as IASIA/IIAS and NISPAcee or other stakeholders in order to improve impact on development within public sectors in the CEE states?

Joint projects with shared responsibility and shared target groups. That is the only way so that both organizations learn from each other through joint activities as well as joint target groups.

14. NISPAcee has a network-like organizational structure build upon nodes spread among the CEE states. Is that network-formula the best possible arrangement to execute the mission of the organization?

There exist various styles of work. One possibility is to act as a forum, which NISPAcee has chosen and does very well. Other possibility is to act as a research institute itself and act as a 'center of excellence' and set certain standards and target by own example. Another

possibility is to become one of the institutions and lead the network…
Thus, there are number of ways, each having advantages and disadvantages and it depends on the finances, leadership, culture, context, etc. on which way to choose.

15. The European Administrative Space (after P. Olsen: EAS denotes that public administrations operate on the basis of common European principles, rules & regulations uniformly enforced in the relevant territory) suggests way of thinking about administrative convergence within the EU and Europe.
Too what extend can you agree with the statement: Since the EU has no explicit or coherent administrative policy (besides Copenhagen Criteria for CEE the candidates & application of *acquis communaitaire*), the presence and activities undertaken by NISPAcee in the region can be perceived as facilitation and therefore necessary in order to meet common administrative standards (interplay between convergence mode in CEEs – attractiveness and imposition through asymmetry and conditionality).

Once again, I would like to stress that NISPAcee facilitates research and education in public administration and does not target civil service and public administration systems per se. Therefore, if NISPAcee activities facilitate convergence then it is more in the area of ethics and standards as promoted by the research than by targeted activities. At the same time, the research currently conducted and published by young emerging scholars in CEE countries (the most profound impact of NISPAcee) promote different ways of transition and public administration arrangements than those blindly transferred from western Europe so far (e.g. research on NPM methods and their impact in CEE region, etc.). Thus, the activities of NISPAcee can both facilitate convergence and divergence at the same time. And that is the best result, as the mission of NISPAcee targets improvement of public administration research and training, rather than public administration per se.

Appendix 6 The 14th NISPAcee Annual Conference – Overview

1. Conference title
The 14th NISPAcee Annual Conference: "Public Administration and Public Policy in Emerging Europe & Eurasia: For Professionalism, Impartiality and Transparency"

2. Conference details
May 11 - 13, 2006, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Grand Union Hotel
270 participants from 41 states

3. Organizer
The Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee)
Hanulova 5/B, P.O.Box 163, 840-02 Bratislava 42, The Slovak Republic
http://www.nispa.sk/_portal/homepage.php

4. About the conference
The NISPAcee Conference provides a forum to encourage the exchange of information and developments in the theory and practice of public administration and public policy. The Conference addresses experts, scholars and practitioners who work in the field of public administration in Central and Eastern Europe.
Conference will be structured into opening and closing plenary sessions, general session, working sessions on the main conference theme, specialized panels and forums and meetings of NISPAcee Working Groups running in parallel. Papers have been invited for the General Session, the Main Conference Theme or on the themes of the Working Groups announced for the conference.

5. Main theme of the conference

Countries of Central, Eastern Europe and Central Asia are facing new challenges in their administrative development. While they are still designing their own institutional systems based on their own historical development and culture, they also can learn from each other's experiences. New EU member countries are adapting to the new environment within the EU. After the legal harmonization with the EU law, these countries are looking for not only more efficient and economic public administration but also for the stabile professionalism and transparent functioning in the policy process. The accession countries are struggling with the tasks of administrative and legal capacity building, and they may utilize the rich experiences the new member states gained during their learning period. Those countries just going through the latest democratic renewal need support in strengthening the democratization and professionalisation of their system of governance. Civil servants in the NISPAcee countries are frequently facing a growing degree of politicization in the public service. This unwanted tendency may result in very counterproductive outcomes in the operation of the public administration and the policy-making, like the deficits in the professionalism and the decaying impartiality. The new trends, the media coverage of the politics and the governance have also threats in the real transparency of the policy process.

Appendix 7 Governance of NISPAcee

GOVERNANCE OF THE NISPAcee			
1.PRESENT AND FORMER PRESIDENTS			
NAME	**INSTITUTION**	**COUNTRY**	**DURATION**
Ms. Mzia Mikeladze	Georgian Institute of Public Administration	Georgia	2006-
Mr. Laszlo Vass	Corvinus University of Budapest	Hungary	2004-2006
Ms. Barbara Kudrycka	Białystok School of Public Administartion	Poland	2002-2004
Mr. Martin Potucek	Charles University	Czech Republic	2000-2002
Mr. Laszlo Varadi	Corvinus University of Budapest	Hungary	1997-2000
Ms. Alena Brunovska (✝)	Academia Istropolitana Nova	Slovak Republic	1994-1997
2. PRESENT STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS			
Mr. Laszlo Vass	Corvinus University of Budapest	Hungary	2001-
Ms. Barbara Kudrycka	Bialystok School of Public Administartion	Poland	2000-
Mr. Sergey Pushkarev	Ural State University	Russia	2003-
Mr. Wolfgang Drechsler	University of Tartu	Estonia	2004-
Ms. Stanka Setnikar-Cankar	University of Ljubljana	Slovenia	2004-
3. FORMER STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS			
Mr. Juraj Nemec	Matej Bel University	Slovak Republic	1998-2004
Ms. Mzia Mikeladze	Georgian Institute of Public Administration	Georgia	2001-2004
Mr. Martin Potucek	Charles University	Czech Republic	1997-2001
Mr. Laszlo Varadi	Corvinus University of Budapest	Hungary	1995-2001
Mr. Todor Tanev	Sofia University	Bulgaria	1998-2001
Ms. Tiina Randma-Liiv	University of Tartu	Estonia	1997-2000
Ms. Krystyna Plaza	Lodz School of Public Administration	Poland	1995-1998
Mr. Mirko Vintar	University of Ljubljana	Slovenia	1994-1998
Mr. Bohdan Krawchenko	Ukrainian Academy of Public Administration	Ukraine	1994-1997
4. FORMER STEERING COMMITTEE ADVISORS			
Ms. Anita Weiss-Gaenger	Austrian Federal Academy of Public Administration	Austria	1994-2000

Mr. Jak Jabes	SIGMA/OECD	France	1994-2000
5. MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT			
NAME	**INSTITUTION**	**LOCATION**	**FUNCTION**
Ms. Ludmila Gadosova	NISPAcee	Slovak Republic	Executive Director
Ms. Viera Vallnerova	NISPAcee	Slovak Republic	Project Manager
Ms. Elena Zakova	NISPAcee	Slovak Republic	Project Manager
Mr. Juraj Sklenar	NISPAcee	Slovak Republic	Information & PR Manager
Mr. Jan Andruch	NISPAcee	Slovak Republic	IT Consultant & Webmaster

Source: Personal elaboration (2006) & NISPAceeWEB (2006).

Appendix 8 Annual Conferences 1993–2006

1. The 1st Meeting of Representatives of Regional Institutes and Schools of Public Administration, Vienna, Austria, January 1993

2. The 2nd Meeting of Representatives of Regional Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Easter Europe, Bratislava, Slovakia, January 1994 (establishment of NISPAcee)

3. The 3rd Annual Conference *Public Administration in Transition,* Bled, Slovenia, March 1995

4. The 4th Annual Conference *Developing Organizations and Changing Attitudes: Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe* Tirana, Albania, March 1996

5. The 5th Annual Conference *Professionalisation of Public Servants in Central and Eastern Europe,* Tallinn, Estonia, April 1997

6. The 6th Annual Conference *Public Administration and Social Policies in Central and Eastern Europe,* Prague, the Czech Republic, March 1998

7. The 7th Annual Conference *Improving Relations between the Administration and the Public,* Sofia, Bulgaria, March 1999

8. The 8th Annual Conference *Ten Years of Transition: Prospects and Challenges of the Future for Public Administration,* Budapest, Hungary, April 2000

9. The 9th Annual Conference *Government, Market and the Civil Sector: the Search for a Productive Partnership,* Riga, Latvia, May 2001

10. The 10th Annual Conference *Delivering Public Services in Central and Eastern Europe,* Krakow, Poland, April 2002

11. The 11th Annual Conference *Enhancing the Capacities to Govern: Challenges Facing the CEE Countries,* Bucharest, Romania, April 2003

12. The 12th Annual Conference *Central and Eastern European Countries inside and outside the European Union: Avoiding a New Divide,* Vilnius, Lithuania, May 2004

13. The 13th Annual Conference *Democratic Governance for the 21st Century: Challenges and Responses in CEE Countries,* Moscow, Russia, May 2005

14. The 14th Annual Conference *Public Administration and Public Policy in Emerging Europe & Eurasia: for Professionalism, Impartiality and Transparency,* Ljubljana, Slovenia, May 2006

15. The 15th Annual Conference *Leadership and Management in the Public Sector: Values, Standards and Competencies in Central and Eastern Europe*, Kiev, Ukraine, May 2007

Source: Personal elaboration on (NISPAceeInt 2006; NISPAceeWeb 2006).

Appendix 9 Baseline issues for horizontal administrative capacity assessment

Assessment element	Baseline issues
Policy-Making and Co-ordination	Coherence of the policy-making framework Inter-ministerial consultation mechanisms Agenda Planning Dispute resolution mechanisms Central co-ordination capacity General strategic capacity Co-ordination of EU affairs Involvement of the Council of Ministers in budget decisions Impact assessment
Civil Service	Legal status of civil servants Legality, responsibility and accountability of public servants Impartiality and integrity of public servants Efficiency in management of public servants and in control of staffing Professionalism and stability of public servants Development of civil service capacities in the area of European Integration
Public Expenditure Management Systems	Inclusion of sound budgeting principles in the Constitution, Organic Budget Law and/or related laws Balance between executive and legislative power Exact definition of the scope of the State Budget and efficient arrangements for transfers to extra-budgetary funds Medium term expenditure framework A logical, sequential and transparent Budget process, set out in clearly defined rules Effective arrangements for the Budget management of Public Investments Effective monitoring mechanisms for budget implementation Common classification for accounting and reporting, compatible with concepts related to the disbursement of EU funds Capacities for upgrading the Public Expenditure Management system
Public Procurement	Inclusion of a defined set of principles in public procurement legislation Clear legal basis and adequate capacities for the central procurement organisation Effective mechanisms of procurement implementation and training Presence of control and complaints review procedures Capacity for upgrading the Public Procurement system
Internal Financial Control	A coherent and comprehensive statutory base defining the systems, principles and functioning of financial control Presence of management control systems and procedures Presence of a functionally independent internal audit/inspectorate mechanism Presence of systems to prevent and take actions against irregularities and to enable recovery of damages Capacity to upgrade financial control systems
External Audit	Statutory authority for the SAI to audit all public and statutory funds and resources, including EU funds Meeting requirements set out in INTOSAI auditing standards Necessary operational and functional independence Reporting: regularity, fairness, timeliness, proper counterpart in the parliament Awareness of EU accession process requirements Capacity to upgrade quality of external audit

Source:(Verheijn 2000).

Appendix 10 European Administrative Space: characteristics

SIGMA "EUROPEAN ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE"

Reliability and predictability refer to the concept of legal certainty or juridical security meant to eliminate arbitrariness in the conduct of public affairs. PA has to act according to the rule of law and administrative decisions have to be impartial and general, guided by no other consideration than law (non-discrimination principle). PA is subordinated to a hierarchy of legal rules enforced by independent courts and binding regulatory decisions of government. Public authorities can only decide on matters for which they are legally authorized (legal competence). Nevertheless, a certain degree of discretion is left to the decision-maker, as law cannot foresee details for every case that the representative of an administrative authority might be confronted with. When making use of this discretion, public authorities are guided by principles elaborated by courts (these are still open to interpretation in practice) such as "to act in good faith, pursue the public interest in a reasonable way, to follow fair procedures, to uphold the requirement of equal treatment and to respect the notion of proportionality." (SIGMA 1999a: 10).

Proportionality means that administrative action should be proportional to the end pursued by law, avoiding abuse of administrative powers. Procedural fairness requires correct and impartial application of the law, and attention to social values (e.g. respect of the individual and protection of personal dignity). The latter is to be ensured by acquainting an applicant with the facts leading to a certain decision and granting the opportunity to state his/her interests in an adequate procedure.

Timeliness of administrative actions – expressed in binding limits for decision taking – is a further procedural element strengthening the principles of reliability and predictability.

Openness and transparency ensure that PA is open to outside inspection and assessment. Anyone affected by an administrative action/decision should know its underlying reasons. Only exceptional matters (such as protection of national security or personal data) should be kept secret or confidential. Procedural applications of the principles are, for instance, subscription of administrative actions by the competent authority, access to public registers, identification of agents of authority (decision making officials) to the public, disclosure of civil servants' earnings from private activities. Another feature of this principle is the procedural requirement of a statement of reasons for administrative actions/decisions. Public authorities have to provide reasons (facts and evidence, legal justification) for their decisions, thus enabling anyone interested to prepare an appeal against the decision.

Accountability is often used with reference to both responsibility and answerability. The principle of accountability as defined by SIGMA implies

that *"any administrative body should be answerable for its actions to other administrative, legislative or juridical authorities"* (SIGMA 1999a: 12) and that no authority should be exempt from inspection or review by the respective institutions. These institutions can be courts, superior administrative bodies, Ombudsman, audit boards or parliamentary committees. Accountability is assured through a complex array of formal procedures. Examples are the obligation to report to superior authorities or parliamentary committees or the accountability to audit boards

Efficiency is about maintaining an appropriate ratio between resources and results (input/output). Effectiveness looks at the performance of PA in achieving goals and acts up to the responsibilities set by law and government (outcomes). A conflict might arise between the rule of law principle and the requirement for due procedures on one hand and the micro-economic efficiency requirement on the other. The extensive use of formal procedures may be cost-intensive and slow down administrative performance. A possible solution, according to SIGMA, is contracting-out of activities to the private sector and leaving the responsibility to act according to the laws on public procurement and control the contract for PA.

Source: (Goldschmidt, *et. al.* 2005, p.23)