

**Public Administration Reform and European Integration Processes:  
On the Same of Parallel Tracks?**

*Comparative Study of Serbia and Montenegro*

**(Abstract)**

Establishing strong links between public administration reform (PAR) and European integration (EI) process is of great importance if an aspiring EU member is to prepare its administration well for the challenges of EU membership. This thesis examines to which extent these two processes are connected in Serbia as well as in Montenegro. This question is of high importance in the two states, given the low domestic awareness of its importance and the ensuing lack of academic literature dealing with it. Hence, the analysis of this thesis project is based on significant use of primary sources and face-to-face interviews conducted by this author. These are triangulated with the existing reports on the Serbian and Montenegrin public administration systems as well as with secondary literature, mostly based on the cases of the CEECs and the previous enlargement. The entire analysis is conducted through the comparative method, focused on the Serbian and Montenegrin administrative systems.

The thesis proceeds through three main chapters, the first offering a theoretical framework within which the analysis is conducted, and the following two focused on the analysis itself. Accordingly, the second chapter examines to which extent the PAR strategies of Serbia and of Montenegro reflect some of the essential European administrative principles, as well as the institutional linkages they provide between the PAR and EI. Hence, that chapter deals with the reform design. The following chapter turns to the reality of reform. Accordingly, it reveals the real and potential linkages between the PAR and EI, by firstly examining such possibilities within the PAR bodies and subsequently within the EI sector. The same chapter also examines the prevailing administrative tradition and actors' perceptions, with the purpose of pointing to a potential further obstacle to the success of a holistic approach to the PAR, which would be based on the re-building of Serbia and Montenegro as future EU member states.

The analysis thus reveals that the design of the Serbian PAR is based on European administrative principles more than the Montenegrin one, while the possibilities for connecting the PAR and EI institutionally are rather limited in both strategic documents. The examination of the real functioning of the PAR and EI institutional systems demonstrates somewhat higher prospects for creating linkages between the management of the two processes in both republics. Nevertheless, the deficiencies within the administrative systems, coupled with the prevailing lack of awareness of the real implications that the PAR bears for the EI stemming from the legalist administrative tradition, prevent the utilisation of those potential linkages. Consequently, the conclusions of this thesis offer several recommendations for the future improvements in such links, both in the reform design and its implementation.