

Diplomarbeit

**Management reforms in international organizations**  
**A comparative analysis of influencing factors on**  
**organizational change of the European Commission**

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## Summary

This present comparative analysis addresses the question: which influencing factors affect the successful or failed implementation of administrative reforms in the European Commission? For this purpose, I conducted a historical comparison of the Commission's reform attempts between 1952 and 2004.

Facing a lack of theoretical understanding of managerial reforms at the international level, this study aims at contributing to uncover theoretical explanations of administrative reforms in international organizations which the European Commission is a case of. Thus, this study gives an overview of theoretical accounts representing possible paths for studying the research object. The reviewed theoretical background includes three threads of literature: managerial reform in international organizations, public sector reform and change management in the private sector.

Following an exploratory logic, a factorial scheme of 15 potential influencing factors is developed on the basis of these theoretical accounts. This analytical frame places interactions of key actors center stage and applies this approach to analyzing seven successful and three failed reform initiatives. Three out of the seven modernization initiatives have not been researched until this study. To answer the research question, the individual cases of modernization were compared and their success or failure was linked to influencing factors. Thereby, seven factors were identified as factors directly affecting the success or failure of formal implementation. Formulating theoretical assumptions on these 'success factors' of managerial reforms marks an important step toward theorizing managerial reforms in the European Commission and other international organizations.

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## List of Abbreviations

ABB	Activity Based Budgeting
ABM	Activity Based Management
AAR	Annual activity report
AMP	Annual management plan
CISC	Syndicat des Fonctionnaires Internationaux et Europeens
CISL	Fédération des Syndicats du Personnel des Organismes Européens
DG(s)	Directorate(s)-General
DG IX	Directorate-General of Personnel and Administration
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community (CECA, EGKS)
EEC	European Economic Community (CEE, EWG)
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community (CEEA, EAG)
EP	European Parliament
FFPE	Federation des fonctionnaire et personnel européens
SFIE	Syndicat des Fonctionnaires Internationaux et Européens
SGPOE	Syndicat Général du Personnel des Organismes Européens
SGPOI	Syndicat Général du Personnel des Organismes Internationaux
Staff Courier	= Courrier du Personnel = Personalkurier
NPM	New Public Management
UN	United Nations
VP	Vice-President

# 1 Introduction

“The European Commission is a remarkable testimony to organizational survival” (Cini 2000: 3). In the course of five decades this institution developed into one of the most influential organizations at the heart of the European institutions (Nugent 1997) and its administrative apparatus became by far the largest and most complex of any EU institution. As we read in the papers almost everyday, the management of private companies is crucial to their success or downfall. Likewise, the European Commission’s administrative management determines its functioning and organizational output. Therefore, my research interest is the administrative management and the related modernization efforts of the European Commission, from its formative years until 2004. I seek to explore crucial influencing factors on the successful implementation of reform initiatives.

The origins of the European Commission lie in the executive bodies of originally three separate European Communities. The first one was the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) founded in 1951 in the aftermath of the Second World War and based on the Treaty of Paris signed by six nation states. The first president of its High Authority, Jean Monnet, was one of the pioneers of the vision of a united Europe. On 25 March 1957 the Treaties of Rome, the founding text of what became the European Union, were signed. The European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) were founded, with their European Commissions as their executive organs. The EEC was chaired by President Hallstein and had the broadest range of tasks among the European Communities. Its mission was to pave the way for a customs union and a common European market in the future. The Euratom was limited to a European cooperation on nuclear energy. When in 1967 the Merger Treaty came into force, a single set of institutions of the European Communities was established; consequently the three executive bodies became one multi-purpose European Commission.

Starting five decades ago with the involvement of just six member states, now with the latest accession out of six accession waves in January 2007 the European Union has 27 member states<sup>1</sup>. The European Union has enormously grown in terms of size and responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> Be-

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1 Founding states: France, Germany, Italy, Belgium Luxembourg, the Netherlands;

Accessions: 1973: Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom; 1981: Greece; 1986: Spain, Portugal; (1990: Germany after reunification); 1995: Austria, Finland, Sweden; 2005: Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Malta, Cyprus; 2007: Bulgaria, Romania

2 Especially in the 1980s and 1990s the competencies and tasks of the Commission expanded remarkably. Based on the achievements of a common agricultural policy and a customs union reached in the late 1960s, the Regional, the Social and then the Structural Fund emerged. In the late 1980s the Regional Fund was brought together with the European Social Fund and part of the agricultural policy in order to operate as the EU structural Funds. The single market program and the Single Euro-

tween 1977 and 1997 the number of Commission staff grew by more than 100 per cent, with an increase of about 150 per cent in policy-making staff. The budget increased by more than 200 per cent in the same period of time. Looking at the expansion of tasks, this growth was important for coping with the new responsibilities<sup>3</sup>.

As the organization multiplied its size and tasks over the years, the administration grew accordingly. The administrative management of an organization is crucial for its ability to perform well and fulfill its function. From time to time the institution was criticized for its enormous bureaucratic apparatus, e.g. by member states demanding managerial reforms. In most cases, this criticism can be seen more as a means of national politicians to make their mark in national politics rather than demands for substantial reform. The peak was reached in 1999, when the College under president Jacques Santer had to resign due to allegations of mismanagement, fraud and nepotism (Stevens/Stevens 2006). The succeeding Commission's President Romano Prodi (1999-2004) was given the mandate to reform the organization's administration. Hence he assigned one of the vice presidents, Neil Kinnock, to be in charge of the long needed modernization effort. Within the first few months, Kinnock and his staff designed the most far-reaching reform program in the history of the Commission (European Commission 2000a, 2000b; Kassim 2004). Although three preceding modernization attempts have been recorded since the late 1970s<sup>4</sup>, there is a general agreement that this most recent administrative modernization<sup>5</sup> was the only successful attempt, in more than five decades of the European Commission's existence (Bauer 2006, 2007; Christiansen/Gray 2004; Cini 2004; Hine/McMahon 2006; Kassim 2004a, 2004b; Spence/Stevens 2006; Stevens/Stevens 2006). It is celebrated as a historic accomplishment, in contrast to a list of failed reforms (Kassim 2008), because comprehensive reform programs were launched and most measures are regarded as successfully implemented (Bauer 2006; European Commission 2003, 2004; Metcalfe 2004).

In the face of this apparently unremarkable reform record of the European Commission, it is astonishing, that merely the most recent modernization was successful (the so-called Kinnock reform). Thereby, the following questions come to mind: Why was the latest reform so much more successful than the rest? What is the difference between the latest successful reform and the preceding modernization attempts? Why did the prior ones apparently fail? Putting it dif-

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pean Act which revised the Treaties of Rome and the Treaty of Paris included new policy responsibilities. In 1993 the Maastricht Treaty created the European Union with its pillars home affairs, justice, and common foreign and security policy.

<sup>3</sup> cf. General report of the European Communities 1978; General report of the European Union 1998

<sup>4</sup> Academic accounts reviewing those four reform attempts: Bauer 2006, 2007; Kassim 2004a, 2004b; Spence/Stevens 2006; Stevens/Stevens 2006

<sup>5</sup> In this study I use the words administrative reform, managerial reform, administrative modernization, managerial modernization, reform, modernization and organizational, administrative change as synonyms.

ferently, the question is which influencing factors led to a positive and observable output of the reform process<sup>6</sup>?

Striving for a better understanding of this puzzle, I explore the following research question: which influencing factors affect the successful or failed formal implementation of managerial reforms? It is astonishing that this question has not been examined thoroughly in a systematic manner until today, except for Bauer (2007) whose work served as a starting point to my research (cf. section 3.1).

To address the research question, I will conduct a historic comparison of noteworthy reform attempts from its formative years until 2004 in order to put the study of administrative reforms within the European Commission in a context and to increase the analytical leverage.

The success or failure of reform initiatives is related to a variety of dimensions and potential causes that can be explored. I chose to apply an actor-centered perspective, concentrating on key actors involved in the reform attempts. I will examine their actions, interactions and constellations. Additionally, I will take the context of the reform process into account. The intention is to disentangle the processes leading to change by observing reform triggers, the interactions concerning the conceptualization of reform goals and the implementation of the management reform.

For accomplishing a theory-driven examination, I will develop a scheme of potentially influencing factors based on a broad theoretical background and deploy it in analyzing the cases of reform attempts. Then I will compare the particularities and common elements of the individual modernization efforts to one another. My aim is to discern the conditions and constellations of crucial factors affecting success or failure of modernization processes in the European Commission. The overall goal is to formulate theoretical assumptions and propositions for further inquiry, and thus to contribute to theorizing and eventually understanding observable administrative change in international organizations.

The information on modernization initiatives for the historical comparison of reform initiatives is based on internal and official documents of the European institutions researched at the historical archives of the European Commission, drawn from scholarly accounts and interviews

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<sup>6</sup> I examine the observable output of reform in terms of successful or failed formal implementation of set out reform initiatives. I do not regard the success of a reform in terms of improving the efficiency of the organization after implementation – what would be the outcome - but only in terms of formal implementation (cf. section 4.5.1).

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conducted in the course of the research program 'The European Commission 1958 – 1972. Memories of an institution', around the historian Professor Dumoulin<sup>7</sup>.

In the next sections I will proceed as follows:

In chapter 2 I will review the literature on the European Commission administration and point out research gaps that need to be addressed. In the following I will shed light on theoretical approaches that provide possible theoretical anchors for analyzing and theorizing managerial reforms in international bureaucracies. This chapter provides an overview of the literature to develop an analytical framework (chapter 3). Then, in chapter 4 I will lay out the development of my analytical framework and specify the research object. Furthermore I will go into detail on the selected methodology, the dependent and independent variables. Then, in chapter 5 I will present seven cases of reform initiatives in the European Commission since its founding years. In preparation for the intended comparative analysis, I will apply my previously developed analytical scheme to analyze the individual cases. Finally, I will conclude by comparing the observations made while scrutinizing the seven cases. The final chapter is dedicated to formulating assumptions on critical factors influencing successful reforms, further discussing benefit and limits of the resulting findings as well as implications for additional research (chapter 6).

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<sup>7</sup> 'The European Commission 1958 -1972. Memories of an institution' is an oral history programme on the history and memoirs of that institution. It was organised in the framework of the collective work 'The European Commission 1958 – 1972. History and Memoirs of an Institution' published by the European Commission (Secretary General) and was carried out by an international team of historians specialising in the study of the European integration process, under the direction of Professor Michel Dumoulin of the Catholic University of Leuven. It comprises 113 transcriptions of interviews collected from the 'actors', European high officials who carried out their functions at the Commission or in other Community institutions. The transcripts are available on the official website of the European University Institute.

## 2 Literature review

Academic accounts on the European Communities, its development and its institutions abound. The European Commission as the executive body of the European Union is probably its most researched institution (Bauer 2007; Cini 1996; Nugent 2001; Stevens/Stevens 2001; Spence/Edwards 2006). Scholars rooted in a broad variety of research fields and disciplines have covered different aspects.

The Commission's uniqueness is definitely one of the reasons for its attraction. Uniting a supranational and an intergovernmental component at once, the Commission "was born as a body that would perform both mundane administrative and overtly political tasks" (Peterson 1999:60). Nevertheless, the European Commission as an institution has suffered from severe academic neglect regarding its administration<sup>8</sup>. This lack of interest in the Commission's internal administrative management is not self-evident. The European Commission consists of political appointees and a supporting apparatus where administrative officials are responsible for managing and developing policies. Particularly the management of this latter part as well as the management of the institution as a whole is significant for the capability of the institution to fulfill its mission as the policy initiator and guardian of the treaties. Despite this general dearth of academic accounts in the 1970s, a small number of scholars examined its supranational administration (Coombes 1968, 1970; Michelmann 1978; Poulet/Deprez 1976; Scheuer/Weinstock 1977). In the 1980s and a large portion of the 1990s, however, the research interest in the European Commission was more focused on specific policy areas as well as the advancements in terms of the European integration, while neglecting the organization's internal, administrative life.

Although during that period the Commission's administration had lost much of its original attraction as research topic, this changed abruptly with the spectacular resignation of President Santer and his College in 1999. This incident revived the academic interest in the organization's administrative management and hence the issue of administrative reform.

In reviewing the literature on the European Commission's administration, I will give an overview of the literature before the resignation of the Commission in 1999, before turning to academic accounts published after this event. I will present the publications as two streams of literature because their focus of interest differs. The former concentrates on the evolving administration and its increasing bureaucratization. In this review section I will go back to the beginning of the formative years of the three originally separate executive bodies and the

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<sup>8</sup> Although a very small number of scholars has been interested in its supranational function in the past decade (Cini 1996, 2000; Nugent 2001; Edwards/Spence 2006).

merger uniting them to one unique Commission of the European Communities. The latter publications focus on the efforts of the European Commission to reform and modernize its administration. Finally, I will review the literature that emerged after the resignation.

## 2.1 Literature on the administrative development

Concerning the formative years of the European Communities, numerous academic accounts focus on the development of European integration and the institutions' role, but only few focus on the administration and the functioning of the organizations<sup>9</sup>. A valuable exception represents the edited volume of Heyen (1992) gathering numerous historical accounts on the administrative development of the ECSC as well as of the EEC<sup>10</sup>.

After the unification of the three executives into a single body based on the Merger Treaty, the interest in the increasing bureaucratization of this new administration increased significantly. As a pioneer in this field, Coombes (1970) reviews the development of the European civil service in 1968. His book on the politics and bureaucracy of the European Commission (Coombes 1970) was considered as the most comprehensive for a long time. Coombes takes a close look at the question, whether the European institutions are able to lead the integration process into an economic and political union between the member states. He describes the Commission's failure to fulfill its essentially political role. As the organization has become more preoccupied with mediation between the governments and as its administrative tasks have multiplied, its bureaucratic traits have become more pronounced. Thus, the author finds that a radical reform of the institutions leading to the emergence of an autonomous political leadership at the European level is needed.

Poulet and Deprez (1976) also treat the phenomenon of bureaucratization. They take a closer look at the characteristics, effectiveness and problems of the European Commission mainly after the merger. Similarly to Coombes, they also present the increase of the bureaucratization as the main problem to the effective functioning of the organization. However, their arguments differ. Coombes mostly holds institutional constraints responsible, whereas Poulet and

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<sup>9</sup> For details on the European executive bodies see the following accounts. High Authority: Collins 1975; Merry 1955; Mazey 1992; Roger 1992; Conrad 1992; Spierenburg/Poidvin 1994; EEC: Cassese/della Cananea 1992; Ritchie 1992; Hallstein 1963; Mikesell 1958; Camps 1958; Loch 1963; Euratom: Lapie 1960; Mayne 1963; Merger: Weil 1967

<sup>10</sup> Since there is scarce information covering in details the administration of the formative years before the Merger Treaty, this book is exceptional because apart from providing historical accounts of the administrative development it includes a testimony of Emile Noël, Secretary-General between 1958 and 1987, on the Monnet and Hallstein era.

Deprez<sup>11</sup> point additionally at problems concerning the personnel management. However, both approaches recognize a need for reform.

Michelmann (1978) examined the Commission's effectiveness in the early 1970s, after the merger and the accession of Denmark, Ireland and the UK. His study on the relationships between administrative performance and a set of organizational characteristics encompasses five Directorates-General (DGs). His work is particularly interesting because he had access to the documents of an internal working group in charge of the examination of the organizational functioning of the Commission in 1974. He gives a snapshot of the European administrative structure at that time and describes the organization's efforts to gain detailed information on its functioning and effectiveness in order to change the status quo.

Another interesting scholarly account on the administration of the European Commission in the early 1970s is the book of the German authors Scheuer and Weinstock (1977). They examine the administrative structure in detail and give specific recommendations based on this analysis, particularly concerning personnel questions. Furthermore, they describe the efforts of a joint group on personnel questions in the early 1970s, which were aimed at reforming the Commission's administration, and in particular the personnel management.

Summing it up, the literature on the early Commission's administration does not present any detailed information on internal reform efforts or activities of the European Commission. But the reviewed scholarly accounts imply indications of reform attempts, already since the formative years of this European institution.

## 2.2 Literature on the reform efforts

The 1980s and a huge part of the 1990s can be seen as lost decades for the research on the Commission's administration. Slowly there was a new trend of interest coming up towards the end of a decade long presidency of Jacques Delors<sup>12</sup> and with the new President Santer promising administrative reform (Cini 1996; Nugent 1997). This interest virtually exploded, when the Santer College (which propagated improvement of transparency and financial management) had to resign in March 1999 due to allegations of fraud, mismanagement and nepo-

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<sup>11</sup> In 1973 Deprez took part in drawing up the report on internal coordination as member of the external experts of A.U.R.A. of the University of Louvain (cf. section 5.2.3 on the reform initiative under President Ortoli).

<sup>12</sup> Since the range of tasks was continuously and largely extended, Metcalfe (1992) posed the question if the Commission was still able to manage Europe. This may be interpreted as reflecting a beginning, commonly felt insecurity (Metcalfe 1992).

tism<sup>13</sup> (MacMullen 1999). Succeeding the fallen Commission around Santer was the College under the presidency of Romano Prodi.

The newly awoken interest was not primarily focused on the supranational administration itself and its traits. Many scholars took the reform programs under scrutiny examining a variety of aspects like its origin, scope, timing, success, content or discourse. The majority of the scholarly accounts is mainly descriptive and gives a profound insight covering different aspects of the two latest reforms under Santer and Prodi (Bauer 2006, 2007, 2008; Cini 1996, 2000, 2004; Christiansen/Grey 2004; Cram 2001; Edwards/Spence 2006; Hine/McMahon 2006; Kassim 2004a, 2004b, 2008; Levy 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2006; Metcalfe 1999, 2000; Nugent 2001; Peterson 1999, 2004; Spence 2000; Spence/Stevens 2006; Stevens/Stevens 2001, 2006). Furthermore, authentic and informative contributions to the academic discussion on management reforms in the European Commission are provided by insiders (Bearfield 2004; Coull/Lewis 2003; Grey 2004; Kinnock 2002, 2004; Reichenbach 2001). Placing the Kinnock reform initiatives in a historical perspective, some academics identified and reviewed four modernization programs since the late 1970s (Bauer 2006, 2007; Stevens/Stevens 2006). Generally, scholars agree that the first modernization attempt was launched in 1978<sup>14</sup> (Bauer 2006, 2007; Kassim 2004a, 2004b; Spence/Stevens 2006; Stevens/Stevens 2006).

All these studies give a valuable descriptive overview on one or more reform attempts since 1977. Many articles treat the reform programs under Commissioner Kinnock<sup>15</sup> and President Santer<sup>16</sup>. But there are no accounts reviewing the European Commission's history closely with a focus on modernization initiatives before the late 1970s.

### 2.3. Research gaps to be addressed

Consequently, before conducting a historical comparison of the Commission's reform attempts since 1952, the first research gap I need to address is to review the administrative history of the European Commission and present noteworthy reform attempts in the first three decades of the institution's existence. Although the Commission has the reputation of being reluctant to change (Coull/Lewis 2003; Spence 2000; Stevens/Stevens 2006), the literature on the early

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<sup>13</sup> For a detailed review of the resignation of the Santer Commission see the following accounts: Peterson 1999; MacMullen 1999; Kassim 2004a, 2004b; Stevens 2000 and Stevens/Stevens 2006.

<sup>14</sup> In 1978, the College under Roy Jenkins requested the external review committee under the former ECSC official Dirk Spierenburg to draw up a report on the functioning of the European Commission.

<sup>15</sup> For a review of the Kinnock reform see: Bauer 2006, 2007; Christiansen/Grey 2004; Cini 2000; Hine/McMahon 2006; Levy 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2006; Metcalfe 2000; Peterson 2004; Spence/Stevens 2006; Stevens/Stevens 2006.

<sup>16</sup> For a review of the reform initiative under Jacques Santer see Bauer 2002, 2006, 2007; Cini 2000; Coull/Lewis 2003; Kassim 2004a 2004b; MacMullen 1999; Metcalfe 2000; Peterson 1999; Stevens/Stevens 2001, 2006.

institution's administrative history gives indications of substantive efforts aimed at improving the Commission's functioning and organizational effectiveness<sup>17</sup>. In order to identify managerial and administrative reform attempts undertaken since 1952, I traced back those indications. This resulted in detecting three further noteworthy modernization initiatives under President Hallstein, President Rey and President Ortoli.

The second research gap I address is to tackle the research question of crucial success factors of reform initiatives of the European Commission in a systematic historical comparison. The common assessment of the success of the four already identified Commission's managerial reforms is clearly negative. Most scholars consider only the most recent Kinnock reform as comprehensive and successful, while all three preceding reform efforts are seen as failures. For instance, Kassim (2004a, 2004b, 2008) describes the Kinnock reform as an historic accomplishment considering its context. The success of this most recent reform, at least in terms of formal implementation (European Commission 2003, 2005), came somewhat as a surprise. Levy (2003) tried to predict the output of the Kinnock reform and concluded that the modernization under Prodi was likely to fail (cf. section 3.1)

The explanation of managerial reforms in the European Commission has not yet been explored systematically; except for the article of Bauer (2007) whose work my research is based on. For identifying crucial influencing factors on the Commission's management reforms, he compares the modernization efforts since 1978 diachronically. For this purpose, he developed a tentative analytical framework for analyzing the four cases.

In the present comparative study I expand the historical comparison and take in all noteworthy reform initiatives from the formative years until 2004. Most scholarly accounts acknowledge that there have been numerous small and medium-sized, less conspicuous modernization initiatives in the past. As pointed out earlier, there is a general lack of information on past reform initiatives that are admittedly of little visible impact. Moreover, there is virtually no information on conditions facilitating or hampering organizational administrative change processes. This extended historical comparison allows, on the one hand to place the recent managerial reform into broader perspective and, on the other hand, it allows to exploit the variance that these additional cases provide, in order to analyze influencing factors and conditions favorable to or hindering administrative reform.

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<sup>17</sup> For indications on reports of the European Commission related to some kind of modernization attempt see Michelmann 1978; Poullett/Deprez 1976; Schön-Quinlivan 2007, Scheuer/Weinstock 1977.

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Therefore, I take on this first challenge to present these unexplored historical reform initiatives that have attracted little attention so far. I aim to analyze their potential to shed new light on conditions favoring or hindering managerial reforms in the European Commission. By studying managerial reform in a systematic and theory-driven historical comparison, I can put the successful Kinnock reform in a broader context and increase the analytical gain. This will provide insight into the constellation of influences and conditions affecting successful or failed reforms. Furthermore, it will enhance the understanding of how administrative reform initiatives emerge and are implemented at the international level.

The intended historical comparison of all detected management reforms of the European Commission can profit from the systematic and theory-driven approach, thus increasing the leverage and analytical gain of the comparative analysis. The goal is to contribute to advancing theorizing managerial reforms in international organizations. The second challenge I take on is to develop an analytical framework based on an interdisciplinary, broad theoretical background, illuminating the entire reform process from the inception of reform throughout its implementation. Comparing managerial reform initiatives of the European Commission diachronically promises to be fruitful, but it is important to do it systematically. This implies that appropriate, theoretical positions must be identified to conceptualize and eventually gaining a better understanding of administrative reform in the European Commission. For this purpose I will discuss theoretical accounts from different disciplines in the next chapter.

### 3 Theoretical background

So far, there is only scarce understanding of planned, administrative change in public organizations at the international level; even associated disciplines like international relations or organizational sociology do not provide comprehensive answers.

For addressing this gap, I investigate the case of the European Commission in an explorative manner based on an analytical framework. For developing this framework, I use theoretical approaches and findings which are not necessarily aimed at answering questions on administrative modernization in international bureaucracies but which can be applied as theoretical background to the cases investigated.

This lack of understanding is not only due to the lack of investigations<sup>18</sup> but also caused by the fact that only a few theoretical attempts have been made to link the existing findings to more general statements and theories on organizational change in international organizations (Knill/Bauer 2007:191). For developing a comprehensive analytical framework, one which can account for the entire reform process, I took on the challenge to combine external and internal approaches for explaining administrative change.

In this chapter I review thoroughly a wide variety of theoretical accounts for two different reasons. First, I want to point out possible theoretical threads to follow when addressing organizational administrative change in international organizations in general. As mentioned above, there are only a few studies which contribute to theory development analyzing reforms at the international level. Second, there are no comprehensive, straightforward models of explaining the entire reform process; neither of public sector reform<sup>19</sup> nor of managerial reform in international bureaucracies. Since I will regard the reform process from the triggering of reform, its conceptualization to its formal implementation, I will review different approaches on the three different phases of reform. I aim at sketching a far-reaching theoretical approach for analyzing administrative reform in international organizations.

In the first sections (sections 3.1-3), I will review different fields of research which identify potentially influencing factors of administrative reforms of the European Commission, to be put center stage in the later analysis. For this purpose, I examine empirical studies on management reform in international organizations. The case investigated here, the European Commission,

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<sup>18</sup> Although there is not an abundant amount of studies, the biggest part of the research on managerial reforms in international organizations is done on the European Commission. Many of the publications, especially the earlier ones, are naturally mostly descriptive since the research field is still in its infancy (Bauer 2002, 2006; Bearfield 2004; Cini 2004; Gram 2001; Christiansen/Grey 2004; Coull/Lewis 2003; Grey 2004; Hine/McMahon 2006; Hooghe 2002; Kassim 2004; Kinnock 2004; Ludlow 1991; Levy 2002, 2003a, 2003b; Metcalfe 2004; Spence 2000; Stevens 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Pollitt and Bouckaert's model is composed of descriptive categories can be seen as a good starting point for explaining the occurrence of reform.

can be seen as a case of international organizations. Therefore I will study the research findings on managerial change in international administrations first and scrutinize if they are valuable to the development of my analytical framework. Even if the results in this field have not yet been thoroughly tested but rather present empirical-based ideas, I will take them into account. Then, in the next two sections, I will turn to literature on public sector reform, as the European Commission is a public administration at the international level. Last but not least, the literature on organizational change in the private sector will be reviewed.

In the absence of an overall theory to provide a base for my investigations, the theoretical background encompasses three separate theoretical areas and reflects a multi-faceted spectrum of theoretical approaches. I will use only certain aspects of each theoretical approach for developing my analytical framework. The positive side effect is that I present a comprehensive overview on theoretical 'roads' to take for theorizing administrative reform in international organizations. After each review section, I will shortly mention the theoretical aspects that seem fruitful for my approach. In doing so, I will direct the attention to the essential information for this present study and will present a far-reaching theoretical background.

Based on the information of this preceding review section, I will develop a theoretical framework in the next chapter. I will identify candidate factors influencing reform processes of the European Commission and lay down possible values of the related factor dimensions. Accordingly I will assign indicators to the individual factors in order to develop a catalogue of questions for examining the cases systematically.

### **3.1 Management reforms in international organizations**

Exploring potential explanatory factors of successful or failed administrative reform initiatives of the European Commission is a case of exploring administrative reforms of international organizations. Although the Commission is often correctly regarded as a *sui generis* organization, it shares most of its characteristics with international organizations: the dependence on constituents regarding financial resources, not being entirely self-regulating and lacking a direct feedback mechanism to citizens of member states. In this case, these common characteristics outweigh the differences, which justifies transferring ideas from empirical research on management reform in international organizations.

Unfortunately, we have little theoretical understanding of managerial reforms and modernization processes deployed by international organizations (Bauer 2006, 2007; Geri 2001).

The empirical studies treating managerial reforms as dependent variable<sup>20</sup> can generally be divided into two main categories. The first ones emphasize external factors as triggers of administrative reforms or reasons for specific reform features (Geri 2001). The latter studies state that the main driving forces of reforms are internal factors, even though external ones may play a role as well (Bauer 2006; Baumann et al. 2007; Schön-Quinlivan 2008). Descriptive, empirical studies mainly on reform triggers and the occurrence of reform are available, although not abundantly. However, studies synthesizing the empirical findings systematically for explaining managerial reform of the European Commissions are still rare.

One of the first among the studies of management reforms in international organizations was Geri's (2001) work on the reforms of 6 sub-organizations of the United Nations. None of the investigated organizations was implementing a comprehensive set of new public management (NPM) measures when examined. Still, the specific scope and characteristics of reform in the individual organizations seem to show a pattern. Geri's results indicate that in order to realize a far-reaching structural change international organizations need external pressure. In most cases this pressure originates from financial dependencies and constituents. Hence, the origin of pressure seems to be mostly exerted by external stakeholders like constituents controlling financial resources, which can trigger far-reaching reform. The study describes potential external explanatory factors, while the other authors mostly point at internal explanatory factors.

Bauer (2006) goes beyond giving a detailed descriptive review of the Kinnock reform. A first try of theorizing reforms in international organizations is undertaken, accounting for their particularities and internal structure. The review of the most recent, administrative reform of the European Commission sheds light on three different relationships between structural as well as potential internal explanatory factors and the results of administrative reforms. The findings of this case study indicate that the external reform triggers may be important, while socio-economic factors like new management ideas do not seem to have a strong significant effect. However, both the relationship to the constituencies and strong leadership by internal reform promoters seem to have had an enormous impact on the Kinnock reform.

Picking up the connection proposed between the top management and the success of management reforms in international organizations, Baumann et al. (2007) concentrate exclusively on internal factors. The examination of 10 organizations indicates a positive correlation be-

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<sup>20</sup> Examining the administrative reforms as independent variable is still a blind spot in this research area due to the fact that it is still in an early stage of theory development. The work of Bauer (2008) and Ellinas/Suleiman (2008) can be seen as pioneering.

tween committed strong leadership and the intensity as well as success of administrative reform processes. As my special interest lies on factors influencing the success or failure of reform efforts, this work is particularly valuable.

Schön-Quinlivan (2008) also shows bureaucratic leadership as an important element for implementing processes in the European Commission during the Kinnock reform. In her comparative analysis of two separate Directorates-General she concludes, "supportive leadership is the key element which explains ownership of the reform by officials and therefore effective change" (Schön-Quinlivan 2008).

Knill and Bauer (2007) contribute to theorizing managerial reform in international bureaucracies by widening the perspective to external and internal explanatory factors and synthesizing existing empirical finding. They propose hypotheses based on the results of a number of case studies on management reforms of international organizations in the concluding chapter of their edited book. The hypotheses cover external and internal factors, the impact of crisis and the origin of reform. The authors formulate the following two assumptions that appear interesting to my investigations.

The speed and scope of management reforms in international organizations increase with the extent to which pre-existing concerns on performance gaps coincide with changes in the organization's constituency (Knill/Bauer 2007: 193). There have been, for instance, enlargements along the path of the Commission's organizational development, which lead to a change in the constituency. I will take them into account when regarding institutional changes as part of contextual aspects that may influence reform processes.

The second assumption that I find valuable for my examination regards the origin of the reform. The more management reforms of international organizations are dominated by administrative actors, the more one observes incremental changes in order to improve functional performance. By contrast, the more reforms are driven by political actors, the higher the probability of more fundamental reform attempts in order to increase an organization's external legitimacy (Knill/Bauer 2007: 197).

Levy's (2003) case study is an attempt to predict the likeliness of a successful implementation of the Kinnock reform. When his article was published, the Commission was more or less halfway through its reform program. For his analysis he developed a theoretical frame based on Pollitt and Bouckaert's (2000) politico-administrative regime type model as well as on Rainey's (1998) work. Rainey's work applied behavioral factors drawn from the change management models (Kotter 1995) to the public sector. The internal, behavioral triggers identified include a coherent vision, commitment, acceptance of the need for reform, opportunities for

participation and successful pilot projects. However, Levy does not find them to be clearly evident in the Kinnock reform when examining the case. The author concludes that this combination of the Commission's institutional disposition is unfavorable to radical, far-reaching change; also the alleged relative weakness of behavioral triggers made the reform unlikely to be successful. At the end of Romano Prodi's presidency, however, the administrative reform under the reform promoter Neil Kinnock is regarded as a successful modernization process (cf. Bauer 2006; Metcalfe 2004).

There are different possible reasons for his false prediction. The first may be that other influencing factors and factor constellations are more influential than the ones specified in the framework. Secondly, the observations related to the identified factors are not interpreted correctly or thirdly another alternative explanation was overlooked.

Even though, empirical case studies are available, the research on administrative reform in international organizations is still in its infant stages. The existing empirical-based ideas have to be synthesized and linked to theoretical approaches for explaining planned administrative change in international public organizations. This challenge of theorizing has to be taken on, even though there is still a long way to go. Since there is not a comprehensive approach yet which I can apply to the intended comparison of modernization initiatives of the European Commission, I will use the empirical-based ideas about the relevance of important actors which serve the development of my analytical framework well. But it is still indispensable to turn to other disciplines for identifying potential factors linked to the observable output of reform initiatives in terms of successful or failed formal implementation.

In regard to the relevance of the reviewed empirical studies for developing my analytical framework, I will investigate the influence of external stakeholders on the success or failure of managerial reform in the European Commission (cf. Geri 2001). Furthermore, I will take a close look at the relationship between external stakeholders and internal actors, as well as the interactions among them. In particular, I will focus on leadership as a potential explanatory factor of successful or failed reform processes in the European Commission (Bauer 2006; Baumann et al. 2007; Schön-Quilivan 2008). In line with Knill and Bauer's (2007) assumptions I will examine changes in the institutional framework and constituency in addition to the origin of reform initiative, as potential influencing factors on reform processes at the international level. Similar to Levy (2003), I will turn to other disciplines to draw on theoretical understanding, which may be applicable to the case of the European Commission. Apparently, his analytical frame was not adequately chosen and lacked explanatory power for understanding the reform under Prodi. Hence, in addition to the studies named above I will study closely the literature on

change in the public and the private sector in order to elaborate a scheme of potentially crucial influences on reform initiatives for my investigations.

## 3.2 Public Sector Reform Literature

Administrative change in bureaucracies can be regarded as public management policy change in governmental political systems. Apart from the discussion of New Public Management focusing mostly on ideological and rhetorical aspects<sup>21</sup>, there are two further streams of literature treating reforms of the public sector, which I will review in this section. The first regards scholarly accounts based on neo institutionalist<sup>22</sup> views from which I will merely review the comparative works of Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004). In the second part, I will review Barzelay and Gallego's work; it combines approaches from agenda research and policy dynamics (Barzelay/Gallego 2006; Baumgartner/Jones 2002; Kingdon 2003) to explain public management policy change.

The European Commission represents an international public administration; Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) describe the Commission as acting in a "quasi-federal treaty-framed environment" (Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004: 58). I take the reviewed literature on the public sector as a theoretical starting point. Although I will not draw on the first stream extensively, I want to give a short overview of the different approaches to explaining public sector reform, in addition to identifying valuable information for theorizing managerial reform in international organizations.

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<sup>21</sup> In the 1980s and 90s new public management was the prominent trend examining mostly ideological, doctrinal and rhetorical aspects of public management reform. A selection of research questions covered: What are the main features? What are the main ideas and theories behind these reforms? How do they appear in reform practice? Since I am not so much interested in the recommendations how bureaucracies need to be designed to be efficient but in potential explanatory factors and mechanisms for understanding reform processes in international bureaucracies better, I will not go into detail.

<sup>22</sup> For a review on new institutionalism: Hall/Taylor 1996 and Peters 2005

### 3.2.1. A historic institutionalist perspective

The new institutionalism, namely the historical, the rational choice institutionalism and the new institutionalism in organizational sociology (Hall/Taylor 1996), analyze the impact of institutions on social and political outcomes. They differ in how relations between institutions and behavior are conceptualized, and how they explain the processes of origin and change of institutions. I will confine myself to reviewing Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) as neo institutionalists in the public sector reform literature. The historical institutionalist perspective of their study<sup>23</sup> provides an insight whether structural opportunities for public management reforms are available. Their descriptive model, developed from a comparative analysis in twelve countries<sup>24</sup> and the European Commission as a special case, promotes a combination of external and structural factors determining the results of reforms (Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004: 25). The three sources of influence on the occurrence of reform and the design of reform goals are: socio-economic forces, characteristics of the political system, and so-called change events like scandals (Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004:33). For explaining specific patterns and trends, the authors introduce a fivefold classification scheme of politico-administrative regimes based on institutional factors. According to specific properties of a regime type it explains the influences on particularities and features of reforms including scope, time and timing. The European Commission's organization is "working within a quasi-federal treaty-framed environment" (Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004: 58). Due to these structural characteristics, it might be deduced that a far-reaching radical reform was not possible (Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004: 58).

Therefore, the most recent, big bang reform does not exactly fit with the predictions following the regime type approach. Pollitt and Bouckaert state that the Commission's "feasibility threshold over which management reforms must pass is particularly high" (Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004: 60). The modernization initiatives preceding the Kinnock reform support this conclusion; they were mid-ranged or small programs and resulted in incremental or no change.

Pollitt and Bouckaert focus mostly on structural and external factors as reform triggers and explanatory factors of reform trajectories; however, they neglect internal explanatory factors of change which are cited as essential in other empirical accounts on public management change and the European Commission (Bauer 2006, 2007; Rainey 1998). This may be the reason why

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<sup>23</sup> The authors state about their work that they "are probably closer to a mildly constructivist historical institutionalism than to either rational choice or the more strongly constructivist sociological institutionalism" (Pollitt/Bouckaert 2000: 23).

<sup>24</sup> The work of Pollitt and Bouckaert is well established and their comparison of numerous nation states for theorizing and understanding public sector reform is rather exceptional.

their fivefold scheme cannot predict the change observed recently; even though change events and other external pressures of socio-economic nature are taken into account.

As the authors, I will take a close look at change events and institutional aspects (like the role and relationship between relevant actors in the decision-making process) when examining the individual reform initiatives. There is no denying that socio-economic factors affect reforms; however, those socio-economic influences need an agency. Therefore by putting actions and interactions of key players center stage in my investigations, I will account for socio-economic factors indirectly.

### **3.2.2 Policy dynamics and Policy change**

The common core of policy agenda research is the focus placed on the dynamics of how new ideas and understandings of problems may or may not be accepted in the political system; individual approaches explain changes differing in scope and speed. The literature is concerned with forces reinforcing the status quo, resisting the emergence of new ideas, as well as those circumstances that allow occasional dramatic changes (Baumgartner/Green-Perdersen/Jones 2006: 960-1). Two of the most prominent models of agenda research are reviewed here, Kingdon (1984, 2003) and Baumgartner & Jones (1993, 2002). Their models are used by Barzelay and Gallego (2006) for developing a quite comprehensive approach for explaining public management policy change. As concerns the European Commission, the appearance of reform issues on its agenda followed by a conceptualization of reform can be viewed as a policy change. Kingdon's (2003) and Baumgartner and Jones' (2002) models provide general ideas of potential influences on policy change and their mechanisms. Barzelay and Gallego's work is an excellent example of bringing together institutional and process-related element with different approaches for explaining institutional and policy change. The 'processual' component focuses on interaction, while the 'institutional' component considers how interaction is influenced by a stable context.

#### **3.2.2.1 John Kingdon's model**

Kingdon's theoretical approach is based on the garbage can model of Cohen, March and Olsen (1972). It is geared at understanding agenda setting and is particularly useful for explaining politically visible changes. It stresses how the temporal configuration of different factors is crucial in producing policy change. In Kingdon's model three separate streams - problem recognition, the formation of policy proposals and politics - run through organized anarchies. These streams are coupled at critical junctures which produces the agenda change. The key to

understanding agenda and policy change is their coupling. Change is possible when the separate streams come together: a problem is recognized, a solution made available, the political climate is enabling a change and the constraints do not prohibit action (Kingdon 2003: 88). At this time, a window of opportunity opens and a policy entrepreneur takes the opportunity to push the attention to a particular problem, and to bring problems and solutions together. When advocating for the prominence of an idea, the policy entrepreneurs are willing to invest their resources time, energy and reputation in the hope of future return<sup>25</sup>. They attempt to soften up the key actor (potential veto players) and to get them used to new ideas as well as to build acceptance for their proposals.

An open window can affect the agenda and its order of priorities. Drawing attention to problems can follow various mechanisms. Apart from feedback on operating programs, there are so called focusing events. Those are linkages between highly newsworthy occurrences and the agenda-setting process (Barzeleay/Gallego 2006: 540). Yet, focusing events are not necessary for policy change to occur. The focusing events need to be present in the form of preexisting perceptions which they reinforce (Kingdon 2003: 98). The particularity of this concept is that it considers the causal relationship between context and situation.

For my attempt to develop a frame of potential factors affecting the reform in its different component processes, the concepts of focusing events, window of opportunities and policy entrepreneurs are interesting. It goes without saying that Kingdon's theoretical understanding of the agenda setting and policy processes in a federal government cannot be exactly transferred to policy change in the European Commission. But for the purpose of creating a scheme of potential influencing factors on administrative and managerial change of the European Commission, it serves well as a theoretical point of departure.

### 3.2.2.2 Baumgartner and Jones

Baumgartner and Jones' (1993, 2002) theoretical approach is geared at explaining policy dynamics and change. There are periods of stability and equilibrium, and periods of major disruptions and radical change<sup>26</sup>. The punctuated equilibrium model of policy change is based on the emergence and the recession of policy issues from the public agenda. Long periods of

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<sup>25</sup> Their incentives include: promotion of personal interests like protection of bureaucratic turf, promotion of their values or simply because they like the game.

<sup>26</sup> The mechanisms producing incremental and radical change are negative and positive feedback processes. Radical change and major disruptions are produced by positive feedback mechanisms (Baumgartner/Jones 2002). The negative feedback refers to the process, as political actors invest more political resources into the political conflict, they achieve a smaller marginal effect for their efforts. The politics of positive feedback follow a different logic from those of a negative. Political ideas become popular quickly and diffuse throughout large areas of the political system until they have replaced many old ones. This process is not incremental; rather changes come quickly and dramatically (Baumgartner/Jones 1993).

stability are created by stable policy systems, which have definable institutional structures responsible for policymaking and limit access to the policy process. The structural factors are institutional and cultural-ideational.

A change in these institutional structures, and the generation of new ideas are the two main reasons for instability and change. Points of stability are created and destroyed at critical junctures; the key to understanding this alteration between stability and change lies in the policy issue definition process. Issue definition is a purposive process that political leaders accomplish wanting to achieve something (Baumgartner/Jones 1993). As policy entrepreneurs introduce new ideas and succeed in convincing others of their opinion, they may achieve rapid success in altering public policy understanding; thus, agenda change is made possible.

For my analytical framework it is relevant that changing ideas and issue understandings as well as institutional aspects may affect agenda changes. Institutional changes may be recurring like the renewal of the College of a Commission or non-recurring events like an enlargement. Policy understanding may change over time due to contextual influences like the appearance of reform promoters, focusing events, or new ideational influences from accession countries.

### 3.2.2.3 Barzelay and Gallego's Institutional Processualism

Similar to new institutionalism, Barzelay and Gallego's (2006) institutional processualism seeks to attain a causal understanding of processes including organizational change. For understanding highly visible, low-visibility and ongoing change in institutional rules and organizational routines of government-wide practices, three theoretical approaches are brought together. The authors divide the phenomenon into component processes. Then they apply a fitting theoretical mechanism to each one in order to explain it, by deploying: Kingdon's (1984) model, theoretical propositions based on Baumgartner and Jones (1993) and the approach organizational learning developed by Levitt and March (1988).

The role of Kingdon's (1984) strongly processual and modestly institutional theory is to explain discrete policy choices and changes from one partial equilibrium situation to another. However, his model is not geared at explaining low-visibility changes. To compensate, structural changes leading to those low-visibility changes are considered as *explananda*. In line with Baumgartner and Jones' (1993) highly institutional model, the structural factors are organizational (structuring policy subsystems) and cultural-ideational (domain structure and issue image). Kingdon's theoretical analysis is then applied as mechanism explaining the change in these structures. Since analyzing ongoing change cannot be assessed well by applying Kingdon's theoretical approach, the highly process-related model of organizational learning developed by Levitt and March (1988) is deployed. It theorizes change in organizational routines as

follows. Prior to changes in organizational routines various kinds or ideational efforts are made. First of all information about routines and their operation is identified, then in a second step routines are coded as successful or not. Thirdly a view as to why such results were obtained is formulated. Subsequently practical inferences for adapting the target organization's routines are drawn. The research effort is an endogenous factor, which is triggered when aspirations are not matched outcomes. With its reference to organizational learning, institutional processualism also explains ongoing learning and adaptation of organizational routines (Barzelay/Gallego 2006: 541).

I will take this approach as a model for the development of my theoretical framework. As Barzelay and Gallego, I will examine the reform process split up in component processes and draw on appropriate theoretical accounts, in order to identify the potential influencing factors for each component process.

### **3.3 Change management**

The term change management stands for different kinds of strategies on how to manage and accompany radical change in private enterprises, so that staff identifies with it or at least accepts it. Change management is not about the design of what is desired compared to the status quo but aims at increasing the acceptance of change among members of organizations (Schridde 2005).

Although studies in this field do not directly apply to international public organizations or public administration, I see no objection to use its findings, especially when analyzing the implementation phase (phase 3) of the reform process of the Commission's modernization initiatives. Critics might state that one of the strongest objections to transfer theoretical findings is a major difference between the private organizations and the European Commission – namely, the strong dependence of the latter on its constituents. However, in my eyes this does not pose any problems when analyzing the implementation process because in this particular phase external stakeholders do not influence the happenings directly; their consent (formal or informal) is not needed to actualize internal organizational change. In the first and second phase of the reform process, however, they are directly involved.

For recognizing which potential factors affect successful or failed reform initiatives of the European Commission in the implementation process, it is important to understand the mechanisms potentially at work here. Since my investigations put interactions and actions of key

actors center stage, I will start off with painting a picture of reasons why people may resist to change and review strategies to overcome those on a micro-level. Then I will review and point out candidate influencing factors that I add to my factorial scheme.

Several reasons for resisting change are found in organizational literature on planned change (Duncan 1975: 438)<sup>27</sup>. Those reasons may be a lack of awareness of need for change or the envisaged change not being in line with existing norms and values of the organization's members. Furthermore, there are various reasons for resistance: existing habits, insecurity<sup>28</sup> and a lack of motivation<sup>29</sup>. The common recommendations to overcome resistance are: information, participation, the accompanying of staff throughout the change process, negotiations with possible losers as well as powerful, opposing groups, and manipulation (Kotter/Schlesinger/Sathe 1979).

For a better understanding of resistance<sup>30</sup> to change in an organization, the force field theory by Lewin (1947, 1963) is useful. According to Lewin, in every situation there are forces driving change and forces restraining change at work. If the amounts of both taken separately are equal, there is equilibrium, i.e. a status quo. If the restraining forces outweigh the driving ones, changes come about reluctantly or never. If the driving ones are dominant the organization is changing constantly. If the equilibrium (status quo) needs to be changed, the existing forces have to be modified. This can be achieved by strengthening the driving ones, reducing the restraining ones or by changing the direction of forces. That's when the knowledge on reasons for resistance and strategies to overcome those is essential. Lewin introduces three steps to successful transformation: unfreezing, moving and refreezing. The first step is to prepare the prospective change by creating awareness for the need for change, building acceptance and trust, reducing insecurity and changing the rules which hamper the reform process. Then the reorganization and introduction of the new status quo is implemented. The last step is to stabilize the new status quo in the long run.

Having this in mind, I turn to change management literature to identify concrete factors influencing the change process. It seems to be the only research field that provides a list of factors leading to success or failure of change.<sup>31</sup> Admittedly, the change management research is not

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<sup>27</sup> See also: Hellriegel/Slocum/Woodman 1986; Vahs 2003; Watson 1975;

<sup>28</sup> Insecurity in the form of fearing to be unable to fulfill new tasks and of ending up with a worse situation than the status quo (cf. Kotter/Schlesinger/Sathe 1979).

<sup>29</sup> The staff may lack motivation to change because that means breaking with routines; this leads to a bigger workload until the new challenges will become routines (cf. Kotter/Schlesinger/Sathe 1979).

<sup>30</sup> Also resistance which does not necessarily come from individuals.

<sup>31</sup> See also: Vahs 2003: pp 361; Kotter 1995: pp 59; Levy 2003: 554;

based on a comprehensive theory of organizational change, but it serves well as a source of information for identifying potential factors of influence on reform processes for this explorative study.

In 2001, the Change Management Institute Esslingen undertook an explorative analysis of preconditions to successful change by conducting a survey with more than 200 private companies and about 30 non-profits. A causal model of successful change was developed and confirmed by a quantitative analysis (Vahs 2003: 367). It states that 'training and participation' are positively correlated with 'measures of information and communication' which has a positive impact on the 'intrinsic and extrinsic motivation', just as a 'coherent vision and strong leadership' does. The level of motivation has a positive effect on successful change, whereas the 'presence of opposing groups' has a direct negative effect (Vahs 2003: 370-1). The conditions for successful organizational change should be present at the time of the reform or they should be created during the process of change (Vahs 2003: 369).

The behavioral triggers that I use in this research are: a coherent vision and clear objectives, commitment and support of the top leadership, awareness of need for reform by relevant actors involved, opportunities of participation by persons concerned and stakeholders, information and communication (Vahs 2003: 361-9). Those are all intended to 'soften up' the people concerned with the planned change: to reduce insecurity, build acceptance, prepare the conditions for change and thus minimize the resistance to change.

## 4 Analytical framework

### 4.1 Scheme of candidate influencing factors

After a review of the empirical studies and research on administrative reforms in international organizations, in the public and in the private sector, I will develop my analytical framework accordingly. In this section I will lay out the development of the factorial scheme. Then, I will go into detail on the object of research and the deployed methodology. After this, I will present specifics on the factors identified and their possible values in the form of the catalogue of questions that I will apply to the case analyses.

#### 4.1.1 Stakeholder perspective

My focus of interest is directed at the entire reform process under an actor-centered perspective, i.e. actions of key players and the interactions between actors. Thus, I put the process, the interaction between relevant actors center stage with a focus on behavioral triggers next to institutional and contextual components<sup>32</sup>. Under a stakeholder perspective, certain actors whose actions and interactions are of interest to the present study are identified as relevant to a reform process if their consent is formally or informally needed. The actors regarded as crucial to the organizational change processes in the European Commission are divided into internal and the external stakeholders. Since the European Commission is not an entirely self-regulating organization, some reform objectives require an official agreement by the EP and Council, according to the legislative decision-making rules. One can imagine that in these two scenarios different explanatory strategies and different key actors are relevant for a successful reform. When regarding a reform program on which the Commission can decide itself, the interactions of internal actors are more important for the phase of conception and implementation than the external ones. The stakeholders inside the European Commission can be separated in three groups: firstly the President, the College of Commissioners and the senior management as the organizational leadership; secondly the unions and staff representatives; and thirdly the staff working within the Commission. External actors include the constituents of the Commission, i.e. the European Parliament (EP) and member governments in the Council.

#### 4.1.2 Factorial scheme

Similarly to Barzelay and Gallego's approach I will examine the reform process split up in component processes and draw on appropriate theoretical accounts for each component. Addi-

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<sup>32</sup> Institutional components are aspects like the formal relationship between key actors and their formal and informal role in the decision making process. Contextual aspects may be changes in institutional structures, like changes in constituency.

tionally, I introduced a category on contextual factors, which may also affect the reform process but are not clearly related to one of the component processes. In contrast to Barzelay and Gallego, I do not confine my investigations to merely understanding the first phase of the process, the agenda-setting process. In this respect my approach is different. I want to paint a picture of the entire reform process from the triggering of reform (phase 1) to designing the reform concept (phase 2) and implementing the set out goals (phase 3). I will attempt to find an appropriate theoretical background for every individual process without losing sight of the entire reform process.

Since the impact of influencing factors may differ in those three phases of the reform process, dividing it up helps to disentangle which factors affect the process and its observable output. In addition, the individual reform attempts can be compared at different stages of the reform process separately. Investigating different phases and comparing them may show specific patterns, constellations of factors and conditions, which are not obvious when examining the entire reform processes at a time. Besides, different stakeholders are likely to have different impact on the single processes. The first and the second phases give opportunities for external actors to exert their influence. This is precisely the time when the formal or informal approval and acceptance of the European Council, the member states, the public opinion and the European Parliament play a significant role. In the third phase however, the internal actor's interactions are essential. When it comes to implementing the designated reform goals, the interactions with the organizations' members are more likely to be of importance.

On the one hand, my approach combines theoretical propositions from approaches covering internal or external explanatory factors and, on the other hand, approaches which cover a component process. Drawing on a variety of theoretical accounts is indispensable because no approach theorizes the entire process yet. For developing a framework in order to unpack the processes of reform initiatives I look at potentially influencing factors outside the organization and in particular the ones inside the European Commission. Internal factors can easily affect all three phases of the process, whereas the external ones are not very likely to influence the third phase directly. It is basically the period of implementation where no external stakeholder will have to give their formal or informal approval. Hence, the third phase can be theorized by drawing on information which does not take into account external actors explicitly. The reviewed public sector literature focuses on the occurrence or non-occurrence of reform and on the agenda setting process (phase 1 and 2); while the change management literature clearly focuses on the intra-organizational implementation process (phase 3). Only the literature on international organizations encompasses empirical studies on the triggering of the reform

processes as well as their conceptualization and implementation. In the following, I will present the factors identified, which are further sorted by the individual phases (see table 1 below).

The triggering of reform is obviously the first step towards its conceptualization and implementation. In the first phase, I examine in the triggering phase (phase 1) the origin of reform pressure and the occurrence of focusing events. According to the research by Geri (2001), Pollitt and Bouckart (2004) and Kingdon (2003), realizing managerial reform in international organizations is more likely under the influence of external pressure. At the same time, focusing events may open a window of opportunity for change.

In the second phase, the interactions for developing the reform concept and objectives are under scrutiny. In line with the assumptions of Knill and Bauer (2007) and Vahs (2003), I look closely at the applied action logic for conceptualizing reform and at the origin of reform initiation inside the European Commission. The pace and scope of reform processes are mostly descriptive categories, putting individual reform initiatives in perspective (for details see section 4.2).

For the implementation phase, i.e. the process of translating reform goals into reform measures and formal implementation, I drew primarily on Baumann et al. (2007) and the change management literature. Based on the study of Baumann et al. (2007), I focus on leadership as a potential explanatory factor of successful or failed reform processes. For additional success factors, I draw on findings of scholars studying the private sector.

The contextual elements that I consider in my comparative investigation can be traced back to ideas from change management (Vahs 2003) and Bauer (2006). Being aware of the reform need is an important success factor according to Vahs (2003). Similarly, the observations of Bauer (2006) point to the importance of the sincerity and time span of reform demand in the actualization of reform.

Table 1: Analytical scheme of potentially influencing factors

Phase	Factors	Possible Values		
Phase 1 Triggering	Origin of pressure	External		Internal
	Focusing event, Scandal	Yes		No
Phase 2 Conceptualizing	Reform initiator	Political		Administrative
	Conceptualization of reform goals	Inclusive, Participatory		Exclusive, Non-participatory
	Pace of change	Incremental		Radical
	Scope of reform	Narrow	Middle-ranged	Comprehensive
Phase 3 Implementing	Organizational leadership	Strong		Weak
	Position of reform leader	Strong		Weak
	Reform leader' s commitment	High		Low
	Management style	Inclusive, Participatory		Exclusive, Non-participatory
	Strategically changing rules	Yes		No
	Opponents to reform	Strong		Weak
Context	Awareness of need for re- form	High	Middle	Low
	Major institutional changes	Yes		No
	Time span of expressed reform demand	Long-term		Short-term

Source: own compilation

For the potential influencing factors and their possible values that I identified, I attempt to determine indicators and thresholds which can indicate the factor value. Due to the explorative nature of this study, it is difficult to do so *ex ante*. Nevertheless, I assign indicators to the individual factors and guidelines for categorizing the cases investigated to a number of factors. I lay down these specifications on individual factors and their possible values in a catalogue of questions (see annex). Serves its intended purpose, his specification is ensuring a systematic treatment of the observation and thus a systematic categorization of the cases so that a meaningful comparison can be undertaken. In consideration of the long period of investigation and the broad range of candidate influences, the questions posed in the analysis cannot be answered extensive for each case with equal depth. Yet the different sources of information (combining scholarly accounts, testimonies of officials and an intensive research of internal and officials documents) allow for a good review of the investigated reform initiatives in regard to the potential influencing factors. The collected information certainly serves the purpose to detect connections between influencing factors and the successful implementation of reform initiatives. Before I present the conceptualization I will apply to the case analysis, I will go into detail on the object of research.

## 4.2 Object of Research

When looking at management reforms of the European Commission, I refer to management reforms as planned actions which are aimed at organizational change in terms of altering the administration's functioning and procedures. Institutional changes that need to be laid down in treaties (like enlargements) and are not related to the organization's administration and management are not included in this examination.

The European Commission as a unique, supranational organization is not entirely self-regulating concerning its management. Pointing to this particularity is indispensable since it implies different decision-making rules depending on the discussed issue.

As regards its administrative management, the institution can decide autonomously on internal matters such as personnel management, financial management, working methods and procedures. Only a few management issues require the approval of its constituents. Financial issues as the budget, for instance, is decided by the Council and needs to be approved by the European Parliament (at least since the 1990s). Consequently, the financial resources spent on personnel and the respective allocation inside the Commission are fixed externally. Furthermore, major changes of the staff regulations require the approval of the Council and the European Parliament.<sup>33</sup> When analyzing and comparing the individual reform initiatives, I will take into account these differences.

### 4.2.1 Management reforms regarded as a process

In this study, management reforms are conceptualized as processes aiming to lead to organizational change. Each reform process is regarded as being made up of interactions that are structured by certain influencing factors and the context. For unpacking the reform process, the reform attempts are split up in three component phases and examined, focusing mainly on the interactions of external and internal key actors and the context. The three component processes are triggering reform, designing reform goals and formally implementing set out reform measures.

### 4.2.2 Scope and pace of reform processes

In this study, the European Commission's management reform attempts, which occurred throughout the organizations more 50 years of existence, will be observed. The scope of management reforms can differ significantly and may influence indirectly the result of reform

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<sup>33</sup> This is mostly due to the fact that after the Merger Treaty the European institutions decided on common staff regulations in 1968. Thereby, they do not apply to the Commission's staff alone but also the staff of the remaining European institutions.

initiatives. When comparing different administrative reforms over a long period of time one cannot expect their intensity to be the same. An approximation of a reform's intensity can be its scope and pace. The scope of reform is related to the number of issues addressed in a reform program (comprehensiveness vs. narrow). To account for this particular characteristic of the reform, I designed 3 categories of reform scopes: comprehensive, middle and small (cf. section 4.6.2). This distinction is helpful as the resistance a small reform encounters might be different from the one faced by a broader reform.

Apart from the scope in terms of the affected administrative areas, I distinguish the quality of change envisaged by a reform. For this I consider the intensity and nature of the planned change in form of incremental and small change opposed to big bang and radical change. The thresholds between these two categories cannot be defined clearly *a priori*. The former refers to mere adaptations and small improvements of the administration. When the organization changes profoundly, it is considered as radical change (cf. section 4.6.2).

## 4.3 Methodology

In this section, I will discuss the methodology applied in this within-case comparison, then I will then answer the question of what I take to mean a case in my investigations.

### 4.3.1 Within-case Comparison

To address the research question, which crucial factors influence the success or failure of formal implementation of reform processes in the European Commission, I conduct a case study of the European Commission following an explanatory logic. I decided in favor of a case study design because it allows for an in-depth analysis of the reform processes. This investigation aims at identifying crucial factors influencing the success or failure of management reforms in the European Commission. In consideration of the lack of theoretical knowledge on management reforms in international organizations, this field of research is in the phase of accumulating general knowledge and uncovering regularities. Thus I take an explorative approach to this examination, aiming to formulate hypotheses on crucial factors affecting the output of reform processes and to develop theoretical propositions for further inquiry.

For this purpose, the case study undertaken is a within-case comparison in form of a theory-driven, historical comparison of administrative reform initiatives. Thereby, I explore the various reform processes over the years as individual cases of the comparative analysis. The two major advantages of this approach are compelling. For one thing, the analytical gain increases im-

mensely when analyzing numerous cases instead of only one. For another, one can act on the assumption that the cases are generally comparable; even though, there are small constraints to full comparability, like the differing intensity of reform across the cases (cf. sections 4.2.2 and 4.6). I account for those in my analysis.

### 4.3.2 Unit of Analysis

When I refer to a case under investigation here, I do not refer to the European Commission but to an individual management reform attempt of its administrative history. My investigation covers the time period between 1952 and 2004, including the three separate executive bodies of the European communities<sup>34</sup> and then the merged single European Commission. All reform efforts that were made under a particular Commission's President, I subsume under one reform initiative. With every new President most members of the College are replaced (including their cabinets) and a new program of activities is introduced. At such a turning point, top priorities and directions of activities often change.<sup>35</sup> Thus, I suggest that the reform periods are linked to the present president and the Commissioner in charge. If reform activities related to a particular program are carried on under a sequential presidency this is not regarded as a new modernization attempt.

Except for one case, all reform initiatives occurred after the 1967 merger of the European executives into one single European Commission. The first case described took place during the formative years of the European Commission of the EEC, the forerunner of the unique Commission. Since the executive body of the EEC was used as the model of the merged body and the range of tasks was similar to the one of its successor, I do not see any reasons for excluding it from the comparison.

### 4.3.3 The method of structured focused comparison

Careful attention has to be paid to methodological principles in order to ensure the quality of the results. I apply the method of structured focused comparison, which is simple and straightforward. It is structured in terms of putting general questions reflecting the research objective center stage and applying those questions to the analysis of each case under study, thus, it guides and standardizes the collection of data. Following this procedure makes systematic comparison of the cases possible. The method is characterized as focused because it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases explored (George/Bennet 2005: 67). The focus of

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<sup>34</sup> High Authority of the ECSC, the European Commissions of the EEC and Euratom

<sup>35</sup> Although President Delors held office for ten years, I regard the reform efforts made over this time period as one reform initiative. This is due to the fact that the priorities of activities are closely linked to the president, his college and their mandate.

the present investigations is on reform processes under an actors-centered perspective (cf. section 4.1.1 on stakeholder perspective).

## 4.4 Data

The information in my historical, comparative analysis includes scholarly accounts<sup>36</sup>, newspaper articles<sup>37</sup>, internal and official documents of the European Commission and other European institutions, and interviews conducted for the research program “The European Commission 1958 – 1972, Memories of an institution” (cf. footnote 7). Transcripts of these interviews are publicly accessible via the website of the European University Institute<sup>38</sup>. The European Commission’s documents were accessed during a month-long research at the Archives of the European Commission<sup>39</sup> in Brussels and the European Documentation Centre in Munich.

These Commission documents encompass: General reports on the activities of the European Communities<sup>40</sup> and internal documents of the European Commission. The internal documents that I cited include reports on modernization, memos, speeches, intra-organizational letters, notes and the minutes of the weekly meetings of the College or other relevant working groups. Furthermore, I look at the regular intra-organizational publication for staff (Staff Courier) as well as publications of the unions. Thanks to the unflagging efforts of the European Commission’s archivist Mrs. Collonval<sup>41</sup>, I was able to consult documents on modernization attempts that had not been cataloged so far. Hence, I was able to collect information on reform efforts of the first three decades of the Commission’s existence. The official documents of the Council and the European Parliament encompass minutes of regular sessions, official statements and reports<sup>42</sup>. The internal documents of the European institutions cited in this study are available for consultation with the author.

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<sup>36</sup> These descriptive accounts are reviewed in the literature review and the historical background.

<sup>37</sup> The cited newspaper articles stem primarily from European Voice.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.iue.it/ECArchives/EN/OralHistory.shtml>

<sup>39</sup> The Commission’s internal documents and minutes of the weekly meetings of the College are accessible to the public at the Historical Archives if they are older than 30 years. Internal documents that are younger than 30 years can be requested via the European Commission for research purposes (<https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/fmb/formulaire.cfm?cl=de>).

<sup>40</sup> The General reports on the activities are published annually and are accessible to the public in European Documentation Centres and from 1996 on via the website of the European Commission (<http://europa.eu/bulletin/en/welcome.htm>).

<sup>41</sup> Special thanks also go to Professor Michelmann who helped me with the crucial information for finding internal documents on the modernization efforts in the 1970s.

<sup>42</sup> Similarly as in the European Commission, documents that are older than 30 years can be accessed in the Archives of the Council and the EP. Other documents via the following website: [http://europa.eu/documents/eu\\_council/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/documents/eu_council/index_en.htm)

## 4.5 Variables

### 4.5.1 The dependent variable

The dependant variable is the observable output of management reforms of the European Commission. I define two possible values: the successful formal implementation of set out reform goals and the failed formal implementation. To be precise, the success of a reform is not regarded in terms of improving the efficiency of the organization after implementation - what would be the outcome - but in terms of formal implementation.

### 4.5.1 The independent variable

Following an explorative logic the potential influencing factors (comprising the analytical scheme derived from a broad theoretical background) can be seen as potential independent variables (see list of potentially influencing factors in table 1).

## 4.6 Conceptualization

Inherent to explorative studies, it is impossible to operationalize the factors before hand - as it is done for testing theories. However, I put great emphasis on making the preparatory steps to this comparative analysis explicit. I describe the candidate factors in greatest possible detail, and I attempt to specify thresholds for distinguishing the observed values of particular factors. I developed a Catalogue of Questions (for details see in annex) that includes the specific questions asked when analyzing the cases, in order to ensure the systematic treatment of the observations. Even though, the present specification cannot lay down precise criteria and thresholds for every potential influencing factor, it serves the purpose of this explorative study well. In the following, I present an overview of descriptions of the 15 individual factors that I identified, sorted by component processes and context.

### 4.6.1 Phase 1: triggering of reform

Origin of pressure	<p><b>External</b> - pressure/demand for reform exerted by external stakeholders or the public. Can be detected in: mandate to modernize given by Council; public appeals to reform by constituents; external reports diagnosing managerial deficits; speeches of key actors; newspaper articles; etc.</p> <p><b>Internal</b> - demand for reform expressed by internal stakeholders or pressure originating from administrative difficulties e.g. resulting from enlargements. Can be detected in: statements of President, College or unions; internal documents on reform activities; institutional changes, etc.</p>
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Focusing event	Focusing events are viewed as events which result in a common public, negative perception regarding the organizational performance. <b>Yes:</b> focusing event occurred <b>No:</b> focusing event did not occur;
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#### 4.6.2 Phase 2: Conceptualizing reform

Reform initiator	<b>Administrative</b> – reform initiator is not a member of the College, he campaigns for reform and develops reform proposals. Can be detected in: memos, notes, letters and other internal documents on modernization aimed at winning support from the College and staff <b>Political</b> – reform initiator is a member of the College. Can be detected in: proposals introduced to the College; minutes of weekly meetings of College; internal documents aimed at winning support from colleagues and staff;
Designing the reform concept	<b>Inclusive, participatory</b> – involvement of stakeholders in conceptualization process of reform. Can be detected in: documents confirming opportunities of feedback; joint groups developing reform proposals; requests to providing opinions on reform proposals, etc.; <b>Exclusive, non-participatory</b> – involvement of stakeholders when conceptualizing reform is neglected.
Pace of change	<b>Incremental, small change</b> - adaptations and small improvements of the administrative procedures, working methods and structures. <b>Big bang, radical change</b> – drastic change and transformation of organizational structure, working methods and procedures.
Scope of reform	There are five core areas of administration: organizational structure, working methods, personnel, financial management and ethics. <b>Narrow:</b> one or two out of these five administrative areas addressed; <b>Middle ranged:</b> three or four administrative areas addressed; <b>Comprehensive:</b> all five areas in the reform blueprint addressed;

#### 4.6.3 Phase 3: Formal implementation

Organizational leadership	<b>Strong leadership</b> – coherent vision, clear reform objectives, demonstrating support, winning support, communicating reformative actions, campaigning for managerial reform, investing resources. Can be detected in: internal documents on modernization strategy and activities; speeches of reform leaders; minutes of the meetings of the College and relevant working groups; interactions and strategic actions aimed at communicating reform and winning support; publications in staff courier, etc.; <b>Weak leadership</b> - neglecting all these actions mentioned above.
Reform leader's position	<b>Strong</b> - having authority: President or Commissioner/VP supported by President. <b>Weak</b> - Director-General or Commissioner lacking support of President and College.
Reform leader's commitment	<b>Strong</b> - investing his resources, demonstrating repeatedly support and commitment to reform, incentives to push reform. Can be detected in: internal documents promoting reform; speeches and interactions with stakeholders encouraging to engage in reform; minutes of meetings of relevant working groups and College; strategic action for winning support; investing resources in pushing for modernization; incentives to push reform; etc.; <b>Weak</b> - hardly investing any resources, no incentives that might boost commitment, not demonstrating strong support.

Management style	<p><b>Inclusive, participatory</b> - involvement of stakeholders in the development of appropriate measures and in the implementation process. Can be detected in: internal documents on strategic action aiming at informing and involving staff; consulting statements regarding reform measures; joint development of appropriate measures; etc.;</p> <p><b>Exclusive, non-participatory</b> - no involvement and no opportunities for participation of stakeholders.</p>
Strategically changing rules	<p><b>Yes:</b> reform promoters changed the institutional rules strategically. <b>No:</b> no strategic change of institutional rules was undertaken.</p>
Opponents	<p><b>Strong</b> - collectively organized and powerful opposition. Can be detected in: public appeals; speeches; newspaper articles; contributions in staff courier; strikes; etc.;</p> <p><b>Weak</b> - individuals opposing reform. Can be detected in: internal documents including critical statements regarding reform proposals; minutes of College's meetings; etc.;</p>

#### 4.6.4 Context

Awareness of need for reform	<p>Awareness of a need for reform can be detected in: public appeals and speeches; newspaper articles; mandate to reform; documents diagnosing managerial deficits; minutes of meetings of the College, Council and EP etc.</p> <p><b>High</b> – all relevant stakeholders perceive the necessity to reform. <b>Middle</b> - important part of stakeholders aware of a need for reform. <b>Low</b> - few promoters are convinced of the necessity to reform.</p>
Major institutional changes	<p><b>Yes:</b> enlargement, change of constituency, merger, expansion of tasks; <b>No:</b> none of these changes occurred</p>
Time span of expressed demand for reform	<p><b>Long-term</b> - repeated affirmation of the demand for reform, of commitment to modernization, persistent campaigning for reform. Can be detected in: repeated appeals to modernize; strategic action aimed at campaigning reform; minutes of meetings of the College; campaigning for reform until implementation; interviews and articles in the staff courier;</p> <p><b>Short-term</b> - expressed reform interest and demand for reform fades away after a short period of time. Can be detected in: publicly withdrawing support of reform; no evidence of pushing reform or strategic actions for winning support; etc;</p>

#### 4.6.5 Observable output of managerial reform

Successful Implementation	<p><b>Yes</b> – reform concept translated into reform measures, the majority of these measures was formally implemented. Can be detected in: evaluation reports; internal document on adopted proposals and College's decisions; minutes of the weekly meetings of the College;</p> <p><b>No</b> - no translation of reform concept into reform measures, or only few of those measures were formally implemented. Can be detected in: internal documents on adopted proposals and College's decisions; minutes of the weekly meetings of the College; etc.;</p>
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## 5 European administration and reform initiatives

In this chapter, I will present the empirical analysis of the reform initiatives of the European Commission. In the first section, I will start with a descriptive overview of the administrative structures of the original three executive bodies of European Communities, in order to present background knowledge on the early European administration and its structures. For this purpose, I will introduce the High Authority and the European Commissions of the EEC and of the Euratom (sections 5.1.1-5.1.3). As the forerunner of the single European Commission, I will go more into detail on the Commission of the EEC than the Commission of the Euratom. Furthermore, the first reform initiative included in my comparative analysis took place in the Commission of the EEC. In the following section I will shortly describe the merger of the separate executive bodies and the resulting single European Commission.

After the given overview on the early European administration, the seven cases of reform initiatives of the European Commission will be presented in a chronological order (sections 5.2.1-5.2.7). When discussing individual reform attempts I will provide as much information as possible concerning the candidate factors. With the main focus on the stakeholders, their behavior and interactions, I will try to reconstruct the course of action of stakeholders as well as the underlying logic of action promoting or hindering reform initiatives. Although the focus is on key actors and their interactions, I will also outline the content of reform initiatives. The information on the specific reform content of individual reforms may reveal recurring reform issues or continuously intensifying modernization proposals. Yet, this is additional information on differences between individual initiatives - not the main focus. Following these reviews, I will compare the cases according to their observed values and point out the particularities, similarities and observed regularities. In the final section, I will lay out my conclusions drawn from these comparisons.

### 5.1 The origin of the European Commission

The European Coal and Steel Community was the beginning of the European cooperation after the Second World War; it joined the management of the strategic resources coal and steel as intended by the Schuman Declaration<sup>43</sup> on 9 May 1950. The goal of this plan, inspired by the

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<sup>43</sup> The French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman announced to the press on 9 May 1950 that he proposed to put the French and German joint production of coal and steel within the framework of a strong, supranational structure to be called the High Authority. This so called Schuman plan was mainly inspired by the Visionary Jean Monnet. The goal was to prevent a future re-militarisation of Germany and to decrease drastically the chances of a war between Germany and France since a tight cooperation embedded shared interests. Moreover, the members viewed it as an effective measure to avoid a steel surplus in Western Europe.

visionary Jean Monnet, was to facilitate economic growth and to ensure the Franco-German peace. The German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer welcomed the plan introduced by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman. This was the beginning of the often-cited cooperation between Germany and France, frequently characterized as the motor of European integration. In 1951 the six original members<sup>44</sup> signed the Treaty of Paris establishing a common free coal and steel market under the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

After the failed establishment of a European Defense Community, however, in 1957 the Treaties of Rome were signed establishing the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community. European integration advanced in the economic field and the field of atomic energy. The former had a particular emphasis on creating a common market. The latter aimed to develop nuclear energy and distribute it throughout the members of the Community. Each community consisted of an individual executive body: the Council representing the member states, the Common Assembly and the Court of Justice. The EEC and the Euratom inherited the ECSC institutions, the Common Assembly and the Court of Justice, whose authority was extended to the new Communities.

### 5.1.1 The High Authority of the ECSC

The High Authority of the ECSC was formed as a supranational body located in Luxembourg. What made it so different from other international organizations was the fact that its members agreed to be bound by the decisions reached within the decision-making process with the other ECSC institutions, without requiring any further processes such as national legislation (Stevens/Stevens 2001: 2). Jean Monnet, as one of the pioneers of the European Vision, was its first President<sup>45</sup>.

The administrative structure, the High Authority was to be independent of the national governments, with the nine members of the collegial body (including the President) taking decisions unanimously or by majority vote (cf. Mazey 1992: 33). The High Authority's President was charged with the administration of the services and ensuring the execution of the deliberation of the institution.

In the formative years of the Community, an administrative structure had to be designed to support the work of the members of the High Authority. The services were organized along horizontal, functional lines. Each member of the High Authority was charged with certain pol-

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<sup>44</sup> France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands

<sup>45</sup> The first president was Jean Monnet (1952-1955), followed by René Mayer (1955-58), Paul Finet (1958-59), Piero Malvesti (1959-63) and Dino Del Bo (1963-1967).

icy fields. The recruitment of officials was informal and based on short-term contracts. There were no standardized procedures yet, no standardized payment or officially set working hours (cf. Mazey 1992: 30).

Jean Monnet's influence was especially evident in the first few years (cf. Mazey 1992: 33). He was opposed to hierarchical structures. The relationship between the members of the High Authority and the administrative service can be described as quite informal<sup>46</sup>. Often senior officials were present in meetings, playing a consulting role in the decision-making process. This was in line with Monnet's preferred working method. He insisted on the coordinating function of the secretariat of the High Authority, seen as a source of information about all aspects of administrative activity.<sup>47</sup>

In January 1953 there were about 200 officials serving in the High Authority (Dickgans 1980: 79). Already in the first year, problems of administrative coordination and overlapping responsibilities arose and made a need for administrative improvements obvious<sup>48</sup>. The most evident incidents were when opposing or even contradicting propositions were submitted to the Commission by different services working on the same subject. Working Groups were formed, with three to four members of the High Authority, who supervised together the activities of divisions covering similar problems. The communication and coordination became part of the daily routine, thus maintaining the collegial nature of the decision-making process<sup>49</sup>. Jean Monnet was not particularly fond of managing the organization's administrative affairs, a part of his presidential mandate<sup>50</sup>, so he delegated it to Paul Finet.

After the presidency of Monnet, the administration had doubled in size: "Within a period of four years the administrative services of the High Authority were thus transformed from an informal grouping of sympathetic individuals into a professional bureaucracy which, in terms of structure and 'technocratic' character, resembled the French administration" (Mazey 1992: 43).

In 1959 the institution was facing about 50 departments, so a reorganization of the services was realized under the presidency of Paul Finet aiming at regrouping departments in order to

<sup>46</sup> Mr. Daniau on the Monnet's opinion on the High Authority's administration: "il ne faut pas se lancer dans une administration lourde, lente en recrutant beaucoup de monde" (Interview with Jean-François Deniau, 3 January 2004 : 54).

<sup>47</sup> 'Projet de Note du Président pour son successeur' J. Monnet, février 1955, CEAB 2/1991 : 7

<sup>48</sup> 'Note aux Directeurs des Divisions' G. Glisenti, Division des Problèmes du Travail, 17 juillet 1953, CEAB 2/1989: 11

<sup>49</sup> "Alles in werkgroepen. Ieder domein werd beheerd door een werkgroep van vier leden. Die nooit in het college een meerderheid hadden. Daar was dus niet zo'n lijn van een Commissaris, een directeur-generaal en daaronder de ambtenaren. In die werkgroepen kwamen de mensen samen" (Interview with E. Wellenstein, 17 December 2003: 7).

<sup>50</sup> According to Article 16 of the Treaty of the ECSC, "le Président de la Haute Autorité est chargé de l'administration des services et assure l'exécution des délibérations" (Conrad 1992: 60) that means that the President is charged with the administration of the supporting services and the execution of the High Authority's deliberations.

reduce the total number (Lapie 1960: 50). There were no additional significant efforts to modernize the organizational structure of the institution, apart from training to improve the language skills of the officials in order to overcome language barriers (Lapie 1960: 52). In 1967 when the High Authority merged with the Commission of the other European Communities, about 950 officials worked in the institution.

### 5.1.2 The European Commission of the EEC

The executive body of the ECSC was taken as a role model for the creation of the Commission of the EEC. The Commission had a wider variety of tasks than the High Authority. According to the Treaty of Rome it had three basic functions: firstly initiating the decision and law making process, secondly to act as the guardian of the Treaty and thirdly to implement the EEC's policies.

Although there are differences between the treaties of Rome and Paris, they all incorporated a similar institutional framework, emphasizing different aspects (Stevens/Stevens 2001:2). However, the supranationality that had been put center stage before was not mentioned as such in the Treaties of Rome due to political difficulties and worries of member states about losing sovereignty. Even though the supranational characteristic of the body was not spelled out in the treaties, the members of the Commission were "chosen for their general competence [...] who shall exercise their function in complete independence" (Treaty of Rome Art. 10§ 2). In other words, the nine Commissioners should be free of national influence and only act in the Community's interest.

The College of the Commission consisted of nine members, two of each from a big member state and one each of the Benelux states. A similar quota was applied when it came to the appointment of Directors-General, which was reserved to the College as a collegiate body. As in its role model, the College's decision-making was based on collegiality in order to ensure an equilibrium between the nations. Every commissioner was in charge of certain policy areas, the so-called Directorates-General (DGs) and the administrative units attached to it. To ensure the coherence of the Commission's work, three Commissioners formed a group responsible for certain policy fields. This working method had been established in the High Authority but the groups of the Commission have never had the same importance (Cassese/Della Cananea 1992). The workload on the commissioners and the variety of topics had increased immensely compared to the ECSC. The working groups were continued to exist merely formally except for domains where a close collaboration between commissioners was in their interests<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> Emile Noël describing the reality concerning the working groups of Commissioners: "Des collaboration de fait se sont établies dans certains domaines, en raison de l'intérêt soit fonctionnel soit politique que tel ou tel Commissaire avait pour le dossier."

President Hallstein ensured the coherence of the Commission by demanding from every member of the College to be present in the weekly meetings except for cases of *force majeure*. In this way the commissioners reported directly to the Commission as whole instead of running their proposal by the other colleagues of their working group. The collegiate responsibility of the Commission was primary, even if decisions could be taken by majority vote (Ritchie 1992; Noël 1992: 152).

From the beginning, the Commission developed a quite complex administrative structure. Being organized on a horizontal and vertical axis, administrative activities have to follow the principles of coordination and hierarchy at the same time, an important organizational service in terms on coordination and information on the administrative activities is the Secretary of the Commission. The Secretary of the Commission has an equal hierarchical status as the DGs, and has a counterpart in the French administration (*Secrétaire du gouvernement*) (Ritchie 1992: 101). The cabinets (copied from the French and Italian national administrations) assisted the Commission in its reflections and deliberations, being indispensable especially in terms of 'horizontal' coordination, collaboration and the preparation of the Commission's decisions (Berlin 1987: 45).

In contrast to the High Authority, the hierarchical element of the administration of the Commission played a more important role than in the organization of its model due to their difference in size, range of tasks and leadership. The German Walter Hallstein, President of the Commission, had a very different idea of the administration he wanted to build than Jean Monnet did. In Hallstein's eyes the new European administration was supposed to be a *grande administration* (Noël 1992: 150). He aimed at conceptualizing the best administration, better than any national administration<sup>52</sup>. Copying the *Auswärtige Amt* where he used to serve before, Hallstein implemented a clearly hierarchical structure according to German traditions (Noël 1992: 150). Every hierarchical level had a certain responsibility determining the order of reporting - affairs were mostly passed from the top to the bottom and reported from the bottom to the top. This administrative structure was also carried over to the single Commission after the Merger in 1967.

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Pour la négociation du Dillon Round, le chef de file était Jean Rey en tant que Commissaire aux relations extérieures, mais dès le début, Mansholt a été étroitement associé en raison de la dimension agricole ... de même que Marjolin pour des motifs politiques (sensibilité française sur ce dossier) et fonctionnels (son expérience antérieure de secrétaire général de l'OECE et sa connaissance des mécanismes de négociation multilatérale" (Noël 1992: 151).

<sup>52</sup> M. Deniau citing President Hallstein: "La force de la Commission sera qu'à tout moment, sur n'importe quel sujet, elle sera plus forte que n'importe laquelle des administrations nationales. Il faut qu'on soit prêt, que si un sujet vient, on puisse faire le meilleur papier, meilleur que la meilleure des administrations nationales" (Interview with Jean-François Deniau, 3 January 2004 : p.54).

Before the Budget committee started to work on the budget of 1959 (during the fall of 1958), the number of recruited officials was around 1000. This constant rush of appointments was supported and encouraged by Hallstein<sup>53</sup>. The member governments did not express any concerns about the recruitment in the formative phase, but merely cared about having their own candidates appointed. When the discussion on the budget began, the status quo of the administrative apparatus was taken as a *fait accompli* and starting point (Noël 1992: 153). The rapid recruitment and fast growth of the institution posed different kinds of problems. Therefore a Dutch consulting company was taken under contract in order to improve the organization's administrative management and structures (cf. section 5.2.1).

Although some of the administrative characteristics of the institution can be traced back to Hallstein's influence, many can be considered as a consequence of the organizational particularities and developments of the institution. A similar bureaucratization and shift from an informal working method to a more hierarchical order can be observed in the High Authority, even if not to such an extent.

### 5.1.3 The European Commission of the Euratom

The European Atomic Energy Community, founded the same day as the EEC, is characterized by similar institutional structures. The Euratom main objective was to develop nuclear energy and create an internal common market.

The Euratom and its Commission were the smallest of the Communities and designed slightly differently due to its very specific tasks. Clear difference is seen in its: particular advisory committee, the scientific and technical council and the budget for research or founding a common enterprise. Instead of nine, the Commission of the Euratom had five members including the first President<sup>54</sup> Louis Armand (1958-59). The organization's first *Statut* was adopted in 1961 based on the experience of the ECSC and was applied to all European institutions.

### 5.1.4 The Merger Treaty<sup>55</sup> and the single European Commission

Only a few years after the foundation of the EEC and Euratom, in 1965 the Merger Treaty was signed and entered into force in 1967. It established a single set of institutions by merging the judicial, legislative and administrative bodies of the three European communities. Before signing the Treaty, the presidents of the three institutions met on a regular basis to decide on im-

<sup>53</sup> M. Deniau citing President Hallstein: "Je vais faire du Frédéric II. À la longue, seuls gagnent les gros bataillons" (Interview with Jean-François Deniau, 3 January 2004: p. 54).

<sup>54</sup> The following presidents were Etienne Hirsch (1959-62) and Pierre Chatenet (1962-67).

<sup>55</sup> Officially it was called 'Treaty establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities' or 'Brussels Treaty' because it was signed in Brussels on 8 April 1965.

portant, preparatory measures. Apart from each organization trying to prepare itself for the merger of administration and personnel, an inter-institutional committee on the merger and rationalization was set up. Under the committee's supervision, every institution had to produce a list of their personnel and a clear description of every post. Recruitment was limited to a minimum and measures were taken to prepare for a smooth transformation (Weil 1967).

The merger of the three Executives (the largest had 3500 staff) into a single Executive of more than 8000 staff was a difficult operation, requiring a complete restructuring of the administrative apparatus. It took a year to set up the new administration; 250 officials from all categories were made redundant. Civil servants that had already reached a certain age could apply for early retirement. After the entry into force of the Merger Treaty, an internal working group on administrative problems worked on diagnosing problems and developing solutions. It was also responsible for the reallocation of 10 % of staff to different posts. Many problems were encountered when merging the three administrations because each institution had its own administrative practice (Noël 1992: 149).

The forerunner of the new single European Commission was the Commission of the EEC, thus the institutional structures stayed basically the same. However, one evident institutional difference between the two organizations was the number of Commissioners. The single executive body had 14 Commissioners for the first years. With the accessions (Denmark, Ireland, UK, Greece, Spain) the ideal number of College members was discussed. There were two preferred solutions, either 17<sup>56</sup> Commissioners (i.e. two Commissioners for the big countries and one each for every small state) or 12 Commissioners.

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<sup>56</sup> The recommendation of the Spierenburg report (published in 1979) was clearly in favor of 12 Commissioners (cf. section 5.2.4 on the reform initiative under President Jenkins).

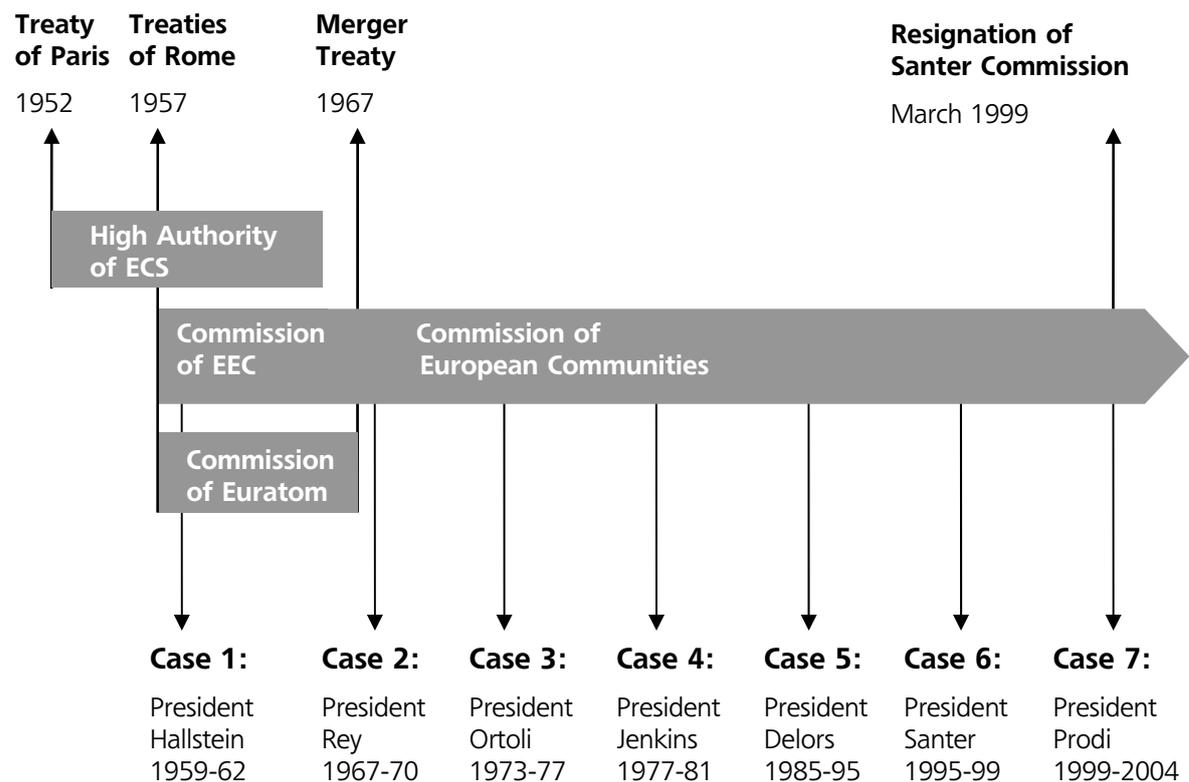
## 5.2 Reform initiatives of the European Commission

In the following section the seven identified reform initiatives (see graph below) of the European Commission are reviewed separately.

In every subsection, I will first present a table of the official Commission documents on administrative reform of the particular reform initiative under scrutiny, providing an overview of the administrative issues and at the same time informs about the scope of reform.

Then I will give a chronological overview of the reform efforts, followed by paragraphs where I focus on actions of external stakeholders as well as the behavior of internal key actors. Throughout the seven review sections, I will apply the catalogue of question (see annex) and will try to reveal key aspects of the potential influencing factors. In the final part of each review subsection, I will summarize the observed values of the investigated reform attempts in a table.

### Overview of studied reform initiatives of the European Commission



Source: own compilation

## 5.2.1 The reform initiative under President Hallstein of the EEC

Table 2: Documents on Modernization during the presidency of Hallstein

Documents on Modernization		Administrative issues treated				
President Hallstein 1958-67		Structures	Working Methods	Personnel	Finance	Ethics
1959	Bosboom en Hegener: 'Preliminary Report on the organisation and functioning of the European Commission'	●	●	●		
1959	Bosboom en Hegener: 'Report on the organisation and functioning'	●	●	●		
1961	'Report on the organisation of the services of the European Commission' (Ortoli Report)	●	●	●	●	

Source: own compilation

### a) Chronological overview of the reform initiative

Only one year after the European Commission of the EEC started to operate, the College decided in November 1958 to bring in external experts to draw up a report on the Commission's administrative organization<sup>57</sup>. President Hallstein, in charge of the institution's organization, initiated this proposal and was committed to improving the organizational structure. Unlike Jean Monnet, he decided to actively form the organizational structure instead of drawing the Commission's organizational design from practice (Noël 1992: 148). At the meeting of the Presidents of the four institutions<sup>58</sup> of the EEC in February 1959, it was agreed to contract the Dutch consultancy company Bosboom en Hegener, which started its work in April 1959<sup>59</sup>. Even though, this first reform attempt seems to come unusually early (just after the Commission's founding), the envisaged reform was due to the organization's fast development and the related administrative problems<sup>60</sup>. The institution's formative period was marked by enormous growth and thus drastic institutional challenges. Within the first year more than 1100 officials had been recruited and worked for the Commission<sup>61</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> cf. COM (58) PV 39, 2e partie IX

<sup>58</sup> The Presidents of the four institutions met from time to time to discuss different issues on an intra-organizational level.

<sup>59</sup> cf. COM(59) PV 15 § IV

<sup>60</sup> For instance, proposals that were laid before the College for adoption gave opposing recommendations due to lacking inter-service coordination and imprecisely specified responsibilities between Directorates-General (cf. Cassesse/della Cananea 1992; Noël 1992).

<sup>61</sup> cf. General Report of the European Economic Community 1959

Bosboom en Hegener, specialized in organizational design, submitted its first preliminary report on the organizational efficiency in May 1959<sup>62</sup>. This report examined all Directorates-General (DGs) focusing especially on the Directorate-General Personnel and Administration (DG IX<sup>63</sup>). The emphasis on DG IX as the center of the administration's management such as human resource and financial management<sup>64</sup> is self-evident; especially in consideration of the fact that except for the Secretariat-General and the legal service, all other DGs were purely concerned with policy fields. The first report suggested a far-reaching reorganization of DG IX (in terms of organizational structures and allocation of staff) to ensure its ability to provide the administrative services to the organization efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, a number of measures to improve the efficiency of working procedures were recommended.

The second report of Bosboom en Hegener was drawn up in cooperation with officials of the Directorate 'Organisation' and published in August 1959<sup>65</sup>. It gave recommendations on the organizational structure, working methods and personnel management. In regard to rationalization and the efficient exploitation of resources, a reporting system was proposed to serve as a basis for decision-making. Suggested improvements concerning the personnel management were confined to extensive training and standardized recruitment procedures.

Both reports led to few results. Minor changes, particularly the recommendations related to working procedures, were implemented<sup>66</sup> right away. In the beginning, several members of the College and senior management were opposed to most recommended changes for diverse reasons<sup>67</sup> (see paragraph c below). President Hallstein and his College reacted with the creation of a Committee of Rationalization in February 1960<sup>68</sup>. It was formed by the Directors-General Bobba, Verloren van Thernaat and chaired by Ortoli. This working group aimed at giving a follow up on the measures to be taken on the basis of both preceding reports by Bosboom en Hegener. The Committee's mandate was to formulate propositions regarding the rationalization of the Commission's services, known as the Ortoli report<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> 'Bericht über die Voruntersuchung nach der Zweckmäßigkeit der Organisation der Kommission der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft in Brüssel, Teil I: Generaldirektion IX', Bosboom en Hegener, May 1959, BAC 51/86 496

<sup>63</sup> Each DG was referred to by a number rather than a name until 2000. Then under President Prodi the numbers that used to designate Directorates-General (DGs) are replaced by titles summarizing their area of expertise in order to improve the transparency for citizens and external interacting with the European Commission.

<sup>64</sup> Only after the Merger Treaty a separate Directorate-General Budget was created.

<sup>65</sup> 'Ergebnis der Voruntersuchung über die Zweckmäßigkeit der Organisation der Kommission der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft in Brüssel, Teil II: Die allgemeine Organisation', Bosboom en Hegener, August 1959, BAC 51/86 497

<sup>66</sup> 'Confidential remarks to President Hallstein', Director-General van Karnebeek, November 1959, BAC 51/86 494;

<sup>67</sup> The officials opposing proposed suggestions were Mr Petrilli, the Commissioner of Social Affairs, similarly as the Directors-General Merpillat (Inner Affairs), von Goehler (Personnel), van Gronsveld (Budget) (cf. 'Bermerkungen von Herrn Petrilli' November 1959, BAC 51/86/494; 'Confidential remarks to President Hallstein', Director-General van Karnebeek, November 1959, BAC 51/86 494; 'Besprechung des Berichts der Firma Bosboom en Hegener über die Voruntersuchung nach der Zweckmäßigkeit der Organisation der EWG', 2 July 1959, BAC 51/86/ 494).

<sup>68</sup> cf. COM(60) PV spécial 9

<sup>69</sup> cf. 'Rapport sur l'organisation des services de la Commission', Ortoli, F.-X., May 1961, BAC 51/86 498

Published in May 1961, the report examined the organizational structure of the organization as a whole and the working methods of financial management and personnel management. The major structural problems that were diagnosed concerned: the need for a redistribution of responsibilities between DGs, the need to apply the logic of decentralization on the organizational and the need for a centralized power within each DG, thus ensuring coherence. The major management problems identified were: the rigid and inefficient personnel management, ineffective organizational planning and a generally rigid management system.

Regarding the personnel management, problems concerning the career development, allocation of responsibilities, intra-organization information and coordination as well as the training of staff were pointed out and the recommendation was to conduct more detailed studies on the basis of the existing reports. The Committee found that the rigid management system resulted in new recruitment for new tasks instead of reorganization and transfer of officials to posts of priority. In the light of a potential future merger between the three executive bodies, new recruitment had to be limited.<sup>70</sup> Moreover a better organizational planning was recommended as it could contribute to a more flexible organization. The precise recommendation was to create a better link between the domains 'Budget' and 'Financial control' and the unit 'Organisation' which ameliorates the organizational planning. This measure aimed at changing the approach from an administrative to a more functional one, regarding the financial and resource management. The other central recommendation was to create a central entity for internal critique, which would allow to keep track of necessary organizational adjustments, would strengthen the organizational flexibility and would play the role of whistle blower<sup>71</sup>. Overall, this reform initiative can be categorized as middle-ranged. Except for two central recommendations, the majority of recommendations aimed at small changes and improvements.

## **b) External stakeholders of the European Commission**

In 1959 during the discussions on the budget of 1960, the Commission's efforts on rationalization of its administration were debated. That's the time when the Council expressed that a thorough examination of possible rationalization of the executive – as the Commission itself already did - was encouraged and that the reports on the organizational structure are welcomed<sup>72</sup>. Before, the member states looked at the speedy recruitment procedure as necessary and did not protest much, being more concerned with the appointment of their candidates in strategically important positions (Noël 1992: 153). The Commission agreed to conduct a thor-

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<sup>70</sup> 'Remarques du Comité de Rationalisation concernant la fusion éventuelles des trois exécutifs', 20 Juillet 1960, BAC 51/86 498

<sup>71</sup> 'Briefing für President Hallstein über den Ortolí Bericht', Kabinett von Präsident Hallstein, 14 July 1961, BAC 144/92 644

<sup>72</sup> 'Brief von Herrn Zeilmaker an den Generaldirektor für Verwaltung van Karnebeek', Oktober 1959, BAC 51/86 494

ough examination of the rationalization of its administration, submitting it to the Council by March 1960<sup>73</sup>.

However, the Council's actively expressed reform demand did not last very long, not even a final report on the realized rationalization in the Commission was requested.

In a letter to the President of the Council<sup>74</sup>, President Hallstein presented the conclusions of Bosboom en Hegener that the Commission's overall degree of efficiency is high. He pointed out the Commission's and his personal commitment to modernization and rationalization, expressing the institution's motivation to design the most suitable organizational structure.

### c) Internal stakeholders of the European Commission

Although the Council's reform demand was only felt for a short period of time during this particular reform initiative, there was internal pressure to revitalize the organization due to its rapid growth, related administrative problems and the upcoming merger into one single institution. President Hallstein manifested repeatedly his strong interest in administrative reform and communicated the importance of renewing and optimizing the organizational structure. Although the thorough interest in reform of the Council faded away, President Hallstein pursued organizational renewal determinately. He, as an initiator of reform and a leader, demonstrated throughout the process his personal support and commitment to reform.

Right after the publication of the first report by Bosboom en Hegener, the externals' work was heavily criticized among senior management for different reasons. Firstly the Directors-General were irritated because they were not consulted or given the opportunity to participate and contribute to the reform proposals regarding their DGs. Secondly, they viewed this as obsolete in parts (as some recommendations referred to administrative problems that had already been discussed and acted upon<sup>75</sup>). Although minor changes of the existing working methods were realized<sup>76</sup> right away, individual Director-Generals and Commissioner Petrilli, the only strong opponent in College, were clearly opposed to the reform proposals<sup>77</sup>. Yet they did not organize their resistance and oppose collectively. In the course of the reform process they contributed to finding a compromise on reform measures.

For the second report, the external experts worked in cooperation with officials from DG IX, yet the skepticism toward the reform proposals prevailed. This becomes obvious when scrutinizing the statements of members of the top/senior management on the report, requested by

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<sup>73</sup> cf. Gesamtbericht der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft 1959

<sup>74</sup> 'Brief an den Herrn Präsidenten des Rates der EWG', March 1960, BAC 51/86 260

<sup>75</sup> 'Besprechung des Berichtes der Firma Bosboom en Hegener über die Voruntersuchung nach der Zweckmäßigkeit der Organisation der EWG', 2..Juli 1959, BAC 51/86 494

<sup>76</sup> 'Confidential remarks to President Hallstein', Director-General van Karnebeek, November 1959, BAC 51/86 494

<sup>77</sup> 'Besprechung des Berichtes der Firma Bosboom en Hegener über die Voruntersuchung nach der Zweckmäßigkeit der Organisation der EWG', 2 July 1959, BAC 51/86 494

President Hallstein<sup>78</sup>. Especially the central suggestion to introduce an extensive reporting system for improving organizational planning was viewed as over-exaggerated and not in line with actual practice<sup>79</sup>.

After the reluctant acceptance of the external recommendations, the reform promoters put emphasis on involving the relevant actors from senior and middle management. Therefore the Committee of Rationalization was created to draw up a follow up report on the recommendations of Bosboom en Hegener. While the working group prepared its conclusions, the potential merger of the three executives was already debated. Therefore the catchword of this period was *rationalization*. In the light of encountered administrative problems (particularly related to the coordination within the institution) and the inter-institutional discussion on rationalization, a growing awareness of the need for reform emerged within the Commission<sup>80</sup>.

After the publication of the Ortolì report, its reform recommendations on the 'heart' of the administrative management, the reorganization of DG Administration and Personnel, were discussed lengthily. The senior management affected by the change participated in this exchange of views. President Hallstein and Karl-Heinz Narjes, a cabinet member, moderated the discussion by soliciting input from the concerned actors on several occasions<sup>81</sup>. Then they developed a proposal (a compromise) to put before the College for adoption<sup>82</sup>. In the course of discussions on different hierarchical levels, Ortolì's rather radical proposals on financial management and creating an entity of internal criticism were rejected. The achieved compromise on modernization can be greatly attributed to President Hallstein's commitment and leadership. However, as the College of the Commission decided in July 1961, the majority of the suggested structural changes were implemented in principle following the Ortolì's recommendations<sup>83</sup>. Thus the reform initiative is regarded as successfully implemented

<sup>78</sup> 'Lettre aux MM. les Directeurs Généraux: consultation concernant le rapport de Bosboom en Hegener', President Hallstein, 14 Octobre 1959, BAC 51/86 494

<sup>79</sup> 'Bemerkungen von Herrn Petrilli', November 1959, BAC 51/86 494; 'Confidential remarks to President Hallstein', Director-General van Karnebeek, November 1959, BAC 51/86 494

<sup>80</sup> cf. 'Remarques du Comité de Rationalisation concernant la fusion éventuelles des trois exécutifs', 20 Juillet 1960, BAC 51/86 498; 'Brief an den Herrn Präsidenten des Rates der EWG', März 1960, BAC 51/86 260

<sup>81</sup> cf. 'Note pour M. le Professeur W. Hallstein', M. Verloren van Themaat, May 1961, BAC 51/86 495; 'Observations à la suite du Rapport sur l'organisation des services de la Commission', M. von Goeler, 5 Juin 1961, BAC 17/1988 265; 'Observation à la suite du rapport présenté par M. ORTOLI', M. Seelinger, Directeur Général des Relations Extérieures, Juin 1961, BAC 17/1988 265; 'Briefing pour M. le Président Hallstein sur le rapport ORTOLI', 13 Juin 1961, BAC 144/1992 644; 'Note pour M. von Göler: Directeur Général de l'Administration par interim: Réorganisation de la Direction C de la DG IX', M. Merpillat XX, 27 Juin 1961, BAC 51/86 497; 'An Herrn Generaldirektor für Verwaltung: Reorganisation auf Grund des Ortolì-Berichtes', Dr. Narjes, 22. Juni 1961, BAC 51/86/494;

<sup>82</sup> 'An Generaldirektion IX - Generaldirektor Smulders: Organisation der GD IX in Hinblick auf Vermerk vom 7. Juli 1961', Dr. Narjes, 13. Juli 1961, BAC 51/86 494;

<sup>83</sup> cf. COM (61) PV 155 § XIX

#### d) Summary of the observed values

Table 3: Overview of observations on reform initiative under Hallstein

Phase	Factors	Observed Values
Phase 1	Origin of pressure	Inside
	Focusing event, Scandal	No
Phase 2	Reform initiator	Political level: President Hallstein
	Conceptualization of reform	Inclusive, participatory
	Pace of change	Incremental
	Scope of reform	Middle-ranged
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Strong
	Position of reform leader	Strong: President
	Reform leader's commitment	High
	Management style	Inclusive, participatory
	Strategically changing rules	No
	Opponents to reform	Weak
Context	Awareness of need for reform	Middle
	Major institutional changes	Yes
	Time span of demand for reform	Long-term
Output	Successful Implementation	Yes

Source: own compilation

### 5.2.2 The reform initiative under President Rey

Table 4: Documents on Modernization during the presidency of Rey

Documents on Modernization		Administrative issues treated				
President Rey 1967-70		Structures	Working Methods	Personnel	Finance	Ethics
1970	'Report of the Round Table of Eight on the Personnel Problems and Organisation'	●	●	●	●	
1970	'Framework Program of the Round Table of Ten on Personnel Problems and Organisation'	●	●	●		

Source: own compilation

#### a) Chronological overview of the reform initiative

The first President after the merger of the three executives Jean Rey, who had been the Belgian Commissioner in the EEC Commission since 1958, was given a three-year term.

In consideration of the drastic institutional change – the emergence of the combined, merged Commission – it is not surprising that the pressure from administrative and staff related problems were rather high.

To enhance administrative reform<sup>84</sup>, the European Commission decided to create a Round Table on Personnel Problems in April 1969<sup>85</sup>. A joint working party was set up to undertake a detailed examination of the basic problems facing the institution's staff and find solutions. The joint working group was composed of eight members, four of them representatives of staff<sup>86</sup> and four representing the Commission<sup>87</sup>, and chaired by Commissioner Bodson (Commissioner for Traffic). The Round Table's mandate was not only to examine the personnel management and working conditions, but also to scrutinize the: organizational structure, the functioning and the working methods, and the financial management. The produced report did not propose an action plan for reforming the Commission. It examined the status quo of the European Commission in terms of efficiency and social organization. This inspection was conceptualized as a starting point for developing appropriate measures in a follow up report.

In addition to other grave managerial problems that partly had already been pointed out in the Ortolí and Bosboom en Hegener reports, the Round Table's report diagnosed a clear discontentment of staff. After a thorough discussion on its conclusions between the working group on administrative problems and representatives of the Round table<sup>88</sup>, the Commission adopted the report of the Round Table in April 1970<sup>89</sup> and published it in the Staff Courier<sup>90</sup> accessible to the entire personnel.

In response to the advisory and imprecise character of the report, the Commission decided to set up a follow up joint ten-member working party. The Round Table of Eight was enlarged by two members, representatives of the personnel, thus forming the Group of Ten. The mandate was to develop a Framework Program outlining actions for immediate implementation. The program provided guidelines covering: structural and operational problems, staff management policy, the working atmosphere and working methods. The financial management, however, was not addressed as in the report it was based on. Although the original Round Table's out-

<sup>84</sup> The following measures should not be mistaken for measures of the administrative reform under scrutiny.

Firstly, a working group on administrative problems took measures to harmonize three executives' administrations. The working group on administrative problems was installed as an inter-institutional committee before the actual merger. It was originally charged with supervising and facilitating the harmonization of the administrative, institutional and legal structures of the executives in preparation of the merger and accompanying the transition period (COM (69) PV 70; sec (69) 898; sec (69) 4435).

Secondly, Commissioner Levi-Sandri<sup>84</sup> initiated and conceptualized in cooperation with a working group on personnel training (that was founded 1968) special personnel training programs<sup>84</sup>. The aim was to integrate particularly the personnel who was deployed to different posts due to the merger.

<sup>85</sup> cf. COM (69) PV 76

<sup>86</sup> Mr. H. Feraton (SGPOE - Syndicat Général du Personnel des Organismes Européens), Mr. T. Holtz (FFPE - Fédération des fonctionnaires et personnel européens), H. Scheuer (SFIE - Syndicat des Fonctionnaires Internationaux et Européens), D. Sillettil (SGPOI - Syndicat Général du Personnel des Organismes Internationaux)

<sup>87</sup> Director-General for Administration Lambert, Director Janz, Director Mercereau, Director Schloesser

<sup>88</sup> cf. sec (70) 886; sec (70) 1138/2

<sup>89</sup> cf. COM (70) PV 119

<sup>90</sup> Staff Courier/Courrier du Personnel, nr. 111bis, 1<sup>ier</sup> mai 1970

line of modernization was broader than the Framework's recommendations, both documents aimed at a middle-ranged administrative reform and produced small-scaled changes and improvements of the status quo. Even though the Framework Program was more precise than the preceding report, it did not present specific actions and clear reform proposals.

The Commission adopted the Framework Program<sup>91</sup> on June 1970. At the Round Table's suggestion the College decided to have concretized proposals on personnel policy and on improving internal coordination<sup>92</sup>. Furthermore, it installed another joint group in order to standardize and work on the relationship between the Commission and the unions<sup>93</sup>. Although these two follow-up steps were organized, there were no immediate consequential measures taken to reform and modernize the Commission's administration. The reform drive and the reform demand from staff as well as the input expressed through their representation were not used for modernizing the institution (Scheuer/Weinstock 1977: 24).

The term of President Rey ended the same month when the Framework Program was published. It took several years for the Commission to seriously take follow-up measures on the Report of the Round Table and the Framework Program of the Group of Ten (under the presidency of Ortoli<sup>94</sup>). Although the European Commission announced the implementation of administrative reform, the majority of the College was not committed to reform; thus, it remained at the level of publishing reports without taking action (Scheuer/Weinstock 1977: 68, 73).

### **b) External stakeholders of the European Commission**

From outside, the European Commission did not feel any pressure to reform. Several members of the Council criticized the bureaucratic apparatus; but, this criticism was not openly expressed toward the Commission in an official form, nor was a concrete impulse given (Scheuer/Weinstock 1977: 24, 33). Similarly to the Council, the European Parliament was indifferent to the internal administrative management of the Commission (Scheuer/Weinstock 1977: 49).

### **c) Internal stakeholders of the European Commission**

<sup>91</sup> cf. Programme cadre du Groupe paritaire des Dix de la Table Ronde, Juin 1970, sec (70) 2240

<sup>92</sup> cf. COM (70) PV 127

<sup>93</sup> On 27 July 1971 the Commission responded to the wish expressed by the Group of Ten that negotiations between staff representatives and the Commission on methods of participation should begin immediately by instructing the Director General for Personnel and Administration to make appropriate contacts with the representatives of the trade unions and staff associations with a view to drawing up an agreement. After overcoming numerous difficulties an Agreement was reached in September 1974 (Accord du 20/09/1974 entre la Commission et les organisations syndicales et professionnelles).

<sup>94</sup> In the meantime, a diagnostic report on the internal coordination of the European Commission was published in November 1972 under President Malfatti. The so-called AURA report was drawn up by experts by the University of Leuven (cf. BAC 158/1990 19). However this presidency did not make any serious modernization efforts except for requesting the AURA report.

After the merger of the executives, the majority of the staff was personally and professionally affected by the institutional change. The most drastic consequences were that civil servants left the service (in most cases as being retired early) and staff had to move from Luxembourg to Brussels. But also within the Commission's services officials had to be redeployed and reallocated. The institution reduced its manpower and streamlined its organizational structures; therefore, it is not surprising that there was a general unease and even discontentment among staff<sup>95</sup>. The unions clearly expressed this discontentment and thus pressing issues were negotiated between them and Commissioner of Personnel Levi-Sandri<sup>96</sup>. The unions were particularly fighting to participate in shaping the outlines of future personnel policy, which was officially accredited by Commissioner Levi-Sandri<sup>97</sup> in 1968.

The College of the Commission initiated subsequently the Round Table conference on reforming its administrative management and included representatives of staff in conceptualizing it. Commissioner Bodson was assigned to preside over this joint working group.

By involving staff representatives in the process of conceptualizing administrative reform, the Commission deploys an apparent inclusive approach. Nevertheless, there were no follow up measures to be implemented and thus I cannot make any statements on the reform promoter's management style in the implementation phase.

The reform demand was evident among the unions and staff representations<sup>98</sup> but not so much among Commissioners. Although the Round Table conference had clearly stated the need for modernization, it was evidently not perceived strongly inside the College (Scheuer/Weinstock 1976: 24). Yet although the request for internal studies on administrative management was adopted, neither the top management pushed it collectively, nor did President Rey do so (as *primus inter pares*). President Rey as an initiator of reform did not demonstrate strong leadership and long-term political support to reform (Scheuer/Weinstock 1976: 24). Commissioner Bodson, assigned reform leader in the College, did not demonstrate a coherent plan and vision of administrative reform nor did he persistently campaign for their support (as seen in the minutes of the weekly meetings). Despite preparing administrative reform with the Round Table conference and the following framework, these propositions were not further developed and realized.

<sup>95</sup> 'Les fonctionnaires de la CEE sont mécontents', *La vie française*, 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 1967

<sup>96</sup> cf. 'Communiqué: Memorandum pour faire connaître sa position sur les critères à appliquer pour le réorganisation des services', SFIE, 6 octobre 1967, CEAB 2 2758; 'Information au Personnel', Comité Intersyndical SGPOE/SFIE, 29 mars 1968, CEAB 2 2759; 'Lettre à M. le Président Rey concernant les démissions des Comités du Personnel', Fédération des Syndicats du Personnel des Organismes Européens (CISL), 15 février 1968, CEAB 2 3549; 'Lettre à M. le Président Rey: Fusion et rationalisation des services de la Commission', Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail - CFDT (Paris), 22 février 1968, CEAB 2 2759

<sup>97</sup> cf. 'Informations Syndicales', Syndicat des Fonctionnaires Internationaux et Européens (CISC), octobre 1967, CEAB 2 2758; 'Note d'Information Urgente au Personnel', Comité Intersyndical SGPOE/SFIE, 1968, CEAB 2 2759;

<sup>98</sup> 'Etude du Groupe Syndicats Libres sur la suite à donner au Rapport des Huit (Table Ronde)—Projet', Syndicats Libres (SGPOI-CEE/SGPOI-CEE/SYLFPE), 2 avril 1970, BAC 164/1989 314

## d) Summary of observations

Table 5: Overview of observations on reform initiative under Rey

Phase	Factors	Observed Values
Phase 1	Origin of pressure	Inside
	Focusing event, Scandal	No
Phase 2	Reform initiator	Political level: President Rey, Commissioner Bodson
	Conceptualization of reform	Inclusive, participatory
	Pace of change	Incremental
	Scope of reform	Middle-ranged
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Weak
	Position of reform leader	Weak: Commissioner Bodson
	Reform leader's commitment	Low
	Management style	-
	Strategically changing rules	No
	Opponents to reform	-
Context	Awareness of need for reform	Low
	Major institutional changes	Yes
	Time span of demand for reform	Short-term
Output	Successful Implementation	No

Source: own compilation

### 5.2.3 The reform initiative under President Ortoli

Table 6: Documents on Modernization during the presidency of Ortoli

Documents on Modernization		Administrative issues treated				
President Ortoli 1973-77		Structures	Working Methods	Personnel	Finance	Ethics
1973	Personnel Politics: 'Propositions and Guidelines'			●		
1973	'Interim Report on Information, Documentation, Internal Coordination'		●			
1974	'Report on Information, Documentation and Internal Coordination' (Auckland)		●			
1974	'Report of the Screening group on Organisational Functioning'	●		●		

Source: own compilation

#### a) Chronological overview of the reform initiative

President Ortoli chaired the College of the European Commission for four years (1973-1977). More than a decade before being President, he was a Director-General of the Commission of the EEC and led the preparation of a report on organizational structure and functioning. With the beginning of this new presidency in 1973, three new member states joined the European Communities: Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. This first enlargement marked a great institutional change, with accompanying consequences for the Commission's administration. Civil servants from the accession countries had to be recruited and given posts in line with the proportional distribution of posts among member states<sup>99</sup>, requiring reorganizations of the DGs in order to integrate the new officials. Apart from that, two new official languages were introduced, establishing English as the third important language next to French and German. Furthermore it is undeniable that the new cultural influences (especially the ones related to the understanding and the perception of bureaucracy) aggravated the already existing difficulties in harmonizing the diversity of administrative cultures<sup>100</sup>. In consideration of these new problems, President Ortoli and his College highlighted three issues of administrative reform: personnel management, internal coordination and rationalization.

<sup>99</sup> The 'right to appropriate representation (geographical balance)' has been recognized since the formative years and is especially respected regarding new Member States. This normative rule on geographical balance can be found in the general terms of reference of the European Personnel Selection Office (cf. Stevens/Stevens 2006: 197).

<sup>100</sup> Already in the 1960s, the Bosboom en Hegener reports diagnosed the difficulties resulting from the diversity of cultural backgrounds of the officials.

Regarding the personnel management, the Commission's efforts were directed towards a new personnel policy, including multi-faceted personnel training<sup>101</sup> and the issue of reconciling the institution and staff unions<sup>102</sup>. Already during the first few months in the new term, the unions had voiced their criticism on the rigid management system regarding in particular the career development and the aspects hampering mobility of staff<sup>103</sup>. In response, President Ortolì convened a personnel assembly allowing the unions and staff representatives to pose ten pressing questions which he openly answered in April 1973<sup>104</sup>. The questions covered problems already identified by the Round Table in 1970<sup>105</sup>. Thereby the unions demonstrated their awareness of the need for reform and at the same time intensified the awareness of the top managerial level.

In reaction to this reform demand, the College of the Commission created a working group of personnel matters<sup>106</sup> composed of three Commissioners (Vice-Presidents Hillary and Heferkamp, and Commissioner Thomson) under the chair of Commissioner of Personnel Borschette. In cooperation with staff representatives and unions, guidelines on personnel policy including a work program on staff policy and administration<sup>107</sup> were developed, which the College adopted in July 1973. The content was mostly based on the recommendations of the Round Table conference. The work program was immediately published in the Staff Courier so that officials could give feedback on the suggested measures and contribute to their development<sup>108</sup>. The central themes of the new staff policy were staff training, mobility, career prospects, revisions of staff regulations<sup>109</sup> and changes in working methods. In the following months, appropriate measures and administrative decisions were specified in cooperation with the staff representatives and Directorates-General. The overall reform scope was middle-ranged, envisaged changes were adaptations and small-scaled improvements which were successively achieved by the end of Ortolì's term<sup>110</sup>. The intensified personnel training program was further developed over the years by a Directing Committee on personnel training beyond

<sup>101</sup> Newly introduced subjects of training included: IT, economics, accounting, management, statistics and specific training for passing from one category to another (cf. BAC 84/1986 699).

<sup>102</sup> The relationship between the Commission and the unions was institutionalized with the agreement that Commissioner Borschette and the unions signed in September 1974. This was certainly a big achievement of the Ortolì presidency.

<sup>103</sup> 'Communiqué: Favoriser la mobilité du personnel à l'occasion de la restructuration des services', Union syndicale service public européen (ISP/CISL), February 1973, BAC 17/1986 307

<sup>104</sup> cf. 'Assemblée générale avec M. le Président', 17 avril 1973, Courrier du Personnel Nr. 252 ; 'Note: Assemblée générale du personnel de la Commission', Comité de Liaison des Organisations syndicales et professionnelles, 4 avril 1973, BAC 17/1986 307

<sup>105</sup> cf. section 5.2.2 on the reform initiative under President Rey

<sup>106</sup> cf. COM (73) PV 260

<sup>107</sup> 'Programme de travail de la politique du personnel et organisation', 17 Juillet 1973, Courrier du Personnel Nr. 266bis

<sup>108</sup> cf. COM (73) PV 260; sec (73) 2600

<sup>109</sup> The revisions envisage regulating the right to strike and the related conditions for ensuring the institutions functioning. Furthermore the relationship and interaction between the institution and the unions as well as the right for training had to be included in the Staff Regulations (cf. General report on the activities of the European communities 1974, 1975, 1976).

<sup>110</sup> cf. 'Staff Policy - Memo from Mr. Borschette', 25 february 1974, sec (74) 670; 'Staff Policy - Memo from Mr. Borschette', 5 june 1974, sec (74) 2122; 'Memo for the Members of the Commission', President Ortolì, October 1976, BAC 84/1986 702

the presidency of Ortoli, since it was cemented by the revision of staff regulations, guaranteeing officials of the European institutions the right to training<sup>111</sup>.

Tackling the improvement of the Commission's internal coordination was already Ortoli's intention when he was Director-General in the 1960s. Being the Commission's President twenty years later, he requested of the Secretariat-General to prepare a report on the institution's internal coordination<sup>112</sup>. The interim report<sup>113</sup> took recommendations of proceeding reports into account that tackled the same problems: the Ortoli report of 1961, the reports of the Round Table of 1970 and the report of A.U.R.A. of 1972<sup>114</sup>. The central themes of this interim report prepared under the supervision of Deputy Secretary-General Audland, were: the planning of the Commission's activities, delegation of responsibility, the intra-service coordination as well as the handling and the dissemination of information and documents within the Commission. The latter issue was addressed by a three-year program of specific measures<sup>115</sup> introducing new information technologies and implementing a modern documentation system by 1976 (ECDOC)<sup>116</sup>. In 1974 the report on internal coordination<sup>117</sup> confirmed the successful implementation of the set out reform proposals enhancing the planning of activities, facilitating the delegation of power towards lower levels and improved working methods thus strengthening coordination within the institution.

Regarding the envisaged rationalization, efforts were made in screening and reorganizing the services, in the face of the enlarged European Communities. One of the impulses leading up to this screening exercise was that the staff unions addressed Commissioner Borschette directly after a few weeks in office. Their request was to put in place new procedures for staff mobility of officials in the course of the structural reorganization due to enlargement<sup>118</sup>. Thereupon, in October 1973 the College decided on creating a screening group charged with producing detailed descriptions of all posts (for the beginning only A grade) as a basis of a subsequent sta-

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<sup>111</sup> cf. Statute art. 24: specification of the right to training; 'Revision du Statut - Note à l'attention de M. Verploeg, Directeur d'action sociales, formation et information du personnel', Director Baxter, J.R., 11 april 1975, BAC 084/1986 700

<sup>112</sup> cf. COM (73) PV 252 2e partie § IV

<sup>113</sup> cf. COM (73) PV261 § IV; sec (73) 2616

<sup>114</sup> cf. footnote nr 100, section 5.2.2

<sup>115</sup> Based on a report by external experts on documentation systems of a Belgian Company (Van Dijk report 1970) and the so-called ECDOC report (1973), the documentation system ECDOC was implemented and the division 'Central Management Unit of ECDOC' was created in the Secretariat-General.

<sup>116</sup> In 1976, the documentation systems CELEX and ECDOC are combined to a system called CIRCE (Center d'information et de recherche documentaire des Communautés européennes). cf. Zehnter Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 1976

<sup>117</sup> Audland report: sec (74) 2710

<sup>118</sup> 'Communiqué: Favoriser la mobilité du personnel à l'occasion de la restructuration des services', Union syndicale service public européen (ISP/CISL), February 1973, BAC 17/1986 307 ;

tistical examination of the staff situation<sup>119</sup>. The screening group was composed of six officials of the Commission<sup>120</sup> and four external experts<sup>121</sup>, under the chair of Director of Personnel Baxter. The working group conducted a personnel survey and analyzed the workload and efficiency of individual DGs by applying statistical methods (Michelmann 1978: 5-9). In June 1974 the screening group submitted its results on organizational efficiency to the College<sup>122</sup>.

On the basis of this study, President Ortolí and Commissioner Borschette elaborated in cooperation with the Directorates-General appropriate measures for improving the organizational structure and the efficient use of personnel in each DG<sup>123</sup>, which were gradually implemented<sup>124</sup>. From this screening exercise concerning grade A emerged the creation of an organizational unit 'Inspection, Human resource and Evaluation'<sup>125</sup> in 1975. It was charged with the continuous inspection of the entire institution for facilitating consecutive adjustment. The future counterparts of this unit were the service 'Internal Affairs and Control' under the presidency of Delors; under reform leader Kinnock it was manifested as the 'Internal Audit' service (cf. section 5.2.7).

## b) External stakeholders of the European Commission

Neither the Council nor the European Parliament manifested a profound interest in the internal managerial administration of the European Commission in general. In the preparation and aftermath of the Tindemans report (1976), the focus of attention was more on the evolution of the political role of the European institutions than their internal organizational life. However, as changes in staff regulations require the approval of the constituents, they were involved in the decision-making of the revision of the remuneration of civil servants and the right to training for civil servants<sup>126</sup>.

<sup>119</sup> cf. COM (73) PV 270

<sup>120</sup> President: J.R. Baxter, Director of Personnel; Members: Mrs. M. Martínez, Mr. P. Bockstael, Mr. J. Buchet de Neuilly, Mr. R. De Smedt, Mr. P. Gibson and Mr. B. Petersen

<sup>121</sup> Mr. Deprez and Mr. Schiffer, Catholic University of Leuven; Mr. Drahi, University of Milano; Mr. Michelmann, University of Indiana;

<sup>122</sup> 'Rapport sur l'organisation et le fonctionnement des services de la Commission présenté par le Screening Group', 30 juin 1974, BAC 2504/1991 450

<sup>123</sup> According to the screening group's investigation, 49 post of the category A had to be transferred to different posts. When possible the College insisted on voluntary transfers, initiated by the officials concerned. Only one part of the civil servants is transferred to different DGs, the others join a task force within DG IX that deploys their members to posts of temporary priority. After initial protests of the union<sup>123</sup>, the so-called clearing group that was composed of civil servants of DG IX and staff representatives was created and assigned to organize and accompany the transfer (completed in 1975).

cf. 'Transfert de Postes: Screening', SFIE, FLASH spécial Nr 3, 7 mars 1975, BAC 43/1978 173 ; 'Lettre à Ambassadeur Borschette', Comité central du Personnel, 7 mars 1975, BAC 17/1986 309 ; 'Organisation des services de la Commission', Note Hebdomadaire Nr 6/75, 5 février 1975, BAC 43/1978 173 ;

<sup>124</sup> cf. COM (74) PV 304; COM (75) PV 327

<sup>125</sup> cf. Neunter Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit der Europäischen Gemeinschaft 1975

<sup>126</sup> cf. Zehnter Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit der Europäischen Gemeinschaft 1976

### c) Internal stakeholders of the European Commission

Shortly after the new Commission took office, the unions and staff representatives expressed their discontentment with the existing rigid personnel management. President Ortoli prioritized administrative reform not only in the face of enlargement, but also against the background of the managerial problems diagnosed by the Round Table conference. President Ortoli and Commissioner Borschette were the two reform promoters from the top managerial level. They initiated the new personnel politics of the European Commission and followed the development of the entire reform process. The involvement of three further Commissioners in the development of reform proposals for the personnel management (working group on personnel matters) clearly demonstrates the issue's high priority. President Ortoli, members of the top management, and staff representatives repeatedly expressed their interest in and commitment to reforming the Commission.

In the first few weeks of its term, the College reinforced the activities of the Staff Courier and the Informaphon<sup>127</sup>, an internal information service that allowed the personnel to receive intra-organizational news on a daily basis by telephone. Both means of information were frequently used to communicate reform proposals and to campaign for support of planned actions. For instance, reform promoters (President Ortoli, Commissioner Borschette and reform advocate Baxter) informed openly about reform projects, planned change, the objectives to be achieved and their progress<sup>128</sup>. This information strategy illustrates the strong, coherent organizational leadership of the time.

Furthermore, during the development of staff policy, training program as well as the measures on internal coordination and the structural reorganization, the reform promoters consulted and involved unions, the senior management and staff<sup>129</sup>.

The reform demand manifested by the unions was mostly based on the diagnosis of the failed administrative reform proposals of the Round Table conference. The Commission's reform initiative as response to the internal reform pressure also drew on the recommendations of the Round Table. In the face of the enlarged Commission and the problems identified by the Round Table conference, for internal key actors it was evident that organizational, structural and administrative changes were necessary. The modernization initiative hardly encountered opposition. There is no denying that modernization activities under President Ortoli were small-scaled and quite basic for any well-managed organization nowadays, as they tackled

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<sup>127</sup> cf. Siebter Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit der Gemeinschaften 1973

<sup>128</sup> cf. 'Message de M. Borschette', 9 février 1973, *Courrier du Personnel* Nr. 241bis; 'Possibilités du mutation de fonctionnaires', 16 juin 1973, *Courrier du Personnel* Nr. 261; 'Interview with Mr. Borschette', 29 march 1974, *Staff Courier* Nr. 315; 'Talking on Staff Policy - Article of Mr. Borschette', 5 September 1975, *Staff Courier* Nr. 360;

<sup>129</sup> 'Memo for the members of the Commission', President Ortoli, 12 July 1973, BAC 84/1986 702

rather basic management deficiencies. Even though the achieved reform was distinguished by adaptations and small improvements rather than radical change, the reform proposals were largely implemented in the framework of a reform initiative encompassing three important reform issues (middle-ranged initiative). They can be seen as follow-up measures to the recommendations of 1970.

#### d) Summary of observations

Table 7: Overview of observations on reform initiative under Ortolì

Phase	Factors	Observed Values
Phase 1	Origin of pressure	Inside
	Focusing event, Scandal	No
Phase 2	Reform initiator	Political level: President Ortolì, Commissioner Borschette
	Conceptualization of reform	Inclusive, participatory
	Pace of change	Incremental
	Scope of reform	Middle-ranged
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Strong
	Position of reform leader	Strong: President
	Reform leader's commitment	High
	Management style	Inclusive, participatory
	Strategically changing rules	No
	Opponents to reform	Weak
Context	Awareness of need for reform	Middle
	Major institutional changes	Yes
	Time span of demand for reform	Long-term
Output	Successful Implementation	Yes

Source: own compilation

### 5.2.4 The reform initiative under President Jenkins

Table 8: Documents on Modernization during the presidency of Jenkins

Documents on Modernization		Administrative issues treated				
President Jenkins 1977-81		Structures	Working Methods	Personnel	Finance	Ethics
1979	Spierenburg Report	●	●	●		
1980	'Report of the Three Wise Men'	●	●	●		
1980	'Report on the Implementation of the Spierenburg report' (Ortolì Report)		●	●		

Source: own compilation

### a) Chronological overview of the reform initiative

President Jenkins, a former British Labour politician, announced that one of his term's priorities was to improve the Commission's efficiency. Shortly after taking office, he requested an Independent Review Body (chaired by Dirk Spierenburg, a former member of the High Authority of the ECSC) to prepare a report on the internal workings of the European Commission. At the same time, the European Council requested another report on the European institutions for improving the mechanism and procedures of the Community's institutional system. The report of the 'Three Wise Men'<sup>130</sup> was drawn up to prepare the accession of Greece (1981) and then Spain and Portugal. It was published only a few months after the report of Spierenburg and his colleagues.

In September 1979 the so-named Spierenburg report was submitted to the Commission and it was immediately made public at the explicit request of President Jenkins<sup>131</sup>. Although reports on the administrative functioning and working had been drawn up before, this was the first one transmitted to the public. The Spierenburg report diagnosed "a certain lack of cohesion in the college of Commissioners, an imbalance between portfolios, insufficient coordination among senior officials, a misdistribution of staff between departments, and shortcomings in the career structure of the civil service of the Commission" (Spierenburg 1979: 4). The report recommended a long list of necessary measures; among which one prominent suggestion was to reduce the number of Commissioners, particularly in the face of the upcoming accessions. The report made it unmistakably clear that the number of Commissioner should be limited to one per member state; while the weighting relative to the size of the member states should be restricted to the European Parliament and the Council. Moreover the report proposed: to restructure the portfolios in order to make them more equal, to regroup the Directorates-General adjusting them to the related portfolios, and to reduce the overall number of units. In addition, the experts insisted on a strengthening of the presidency of the Commission (regarding the coordination of the Commission's activities) and on introducing measures to improve transparency (regarding staff mobility and promotion)<sup>132</sup>. The proposals did not call directly for any changes to the Treaties; however the Commission itself could not implement some of the reform proposals by itself, meaning that on some points there would have to be agreements between the Governments. The suggestions of the Spierenburg Report received strong endorsement from the report of the 'Three Wise Men', which gave almost identical recommendations concerning the Commission.

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<sup>130</sup> The group of experts was composed of Robert Marjolin as chairman, Barend Biesheuvel, the former Prime Minister of Netherlands and Edmund Dell, President of British Board of Trade.

<sup>131</sup> 'Editorial of Emanuele Gazzo on the Spierenburg report', 4 October 1979, Agence Europe Nr. 2761

<sup>132</sup> For details see: Stevens/Stevens 2006

The Commission's response was to set up a new committee, this time composed of internal experts chaired by Commissioner Ortoli. The intention was to have the list of recommendations reviewed and consider their implementation. The so-named Ortoli report also gave detailed recommendations on staff management and general administrative management questions, in line with the Spierenburg proposals (Ortoli 1980: 7). The reports outline a middle-ranged reform program proposing partly radical changes. Their prescriptions encountered opposition from different directions. The larger member states were determined to keep their privilege of having two Commissioners. Various Commissioners were opposed to having rearranged the portfolios and strengthening the position of the President within the College. Besides President Jenkins did not favour 'equalizing' the portfolios because he was not equally fond of all of his Commissioners. Last but not least, the senior management did not like the idea of a rationalization and re-grouping of the Directorates-General and services. Various reform proposals were quite radical, even though no changes were proposed that required a revision of Staff Regulations. In the face of such a wide-ranging opposition, it is not surprising that except for decreasing the number of units, the reform proposals largely remained unimplemented (Nugent 2001: 39).

### **b) Constituents of the European Commission**

"This is the first time that a report on the functioning of the Commission and its services has been made public, and this comes just at the moment when the elected Parliament is meeting. Therefore...go ahead, children! " (Gazzo1979: 1), commented Paul Delouvrier<sup>133</sup> on the publication of the Spierenburg report. "That means: the future of the reform proposals lies largely in the hands of public opinion and of European political forces" (Gazzo 1979a: 1). But the recommendations made by the reports of Spierenburg, Ortoli and the Three Wise Men fell on deaf ears. Apart from a minor decrease in the number of administrative units, the European Council and staff representatives resisted modernization pressures (Ellinas/Suleiman 2007: 3). Although there was an external reform pressure, it was fairly low. Neither the Council nor the European Parliament showed substantive interest in the administrative reforms of the European Commission. Additionally member governments were vehemently opposed to reducing the number of Commissioners (Nugent 2001: 39).

### **c) Inside the European Commission**

Before Jenkins took office, he jumped to the Commission's defence when the British Press bashed its bureaucratic administration<sup>134</sup>. Picking up on this imprecise external reform pres-

<sup>133</sup> He was a former member of working group elaborating the Treaties of Rome.

<sup>134</sup> 'Jenkins jumps to Commission's defence', 25 November 1976, Staff Courier Nr. 376

sure<sup>135</sup>, President Jenkins turned it into an internally motivated modernization effort. As *primus inter pares*, Jenkins initiated the commission of the external Spierenburg report and arranged for it to be made public. "The political significance of this gesture seems obvious [...]. This document contains proposals which the Commission as it stands cannot realise (e.g. reducing the number of Commissioners) but the fact of making them public is in itself significant" (Gazzo 1979a: 1). It appears that this exercise was partly undertaken to sharpen Jenkins' presidential profile. When designing the administrative reform, external experts proposed the main recommendations and the follow up report was prepared by only a small group of officials; there was no extensive consultation of internal stakeholders. That appears to be one of the reasons why among internal stakeholders (such as members of the College and senior management) the overall sentiment towards the reform proposals was ambivalent. Although there was no organized opposition, the overall suspicion and negative attitude towards this outside intervention was evident. In combination with the Constituents' reaction to the reform proposal, ranging from reluctant interest to open resistance, the opponents can be considered as strong. Jenkins' discontentment with the proposed reform model probably stopped him from actively advancing the reform. Without the President's political backing the reform virtually lost the indispensable organizational leadership (Bauer 2007: 56).

#### d) Summary of observations

**Table 9: Overview of observations on reform initiative under Jenkins**

Phase	Factors	Observed Values
Phase 1	Origin of pressure	Inside
	Focusing event, Scandal	No
Phase 2	Reform initiator	Political level: President Jenkins
	Conceptualization of reform	Exclusive, non-participatory
	Pace of change	Radical
	Scope of reform	Middle-ranged
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Weak
	Position of reform leader	Strong: President
	Reform leader's commitment	Low
	Management style	Exclusive, non-participatory
	Strategically changing rules	No
	Opponents to reform	Strong
Context	Awareness of need for reform	Low
	Major institutional changes	No
	Time span of exerted reform demand	Short-term
Output	Successful Implementation	No

Source: own compilation

<sup>135</sup> This reform pressures was manifested in criticism from member governments and national politicians, particularly from the UK and the report of the Three Wise Men requested by the Council.

## 5.2.5 The reform initiative under President Delors

Table 10: Documents on Modernization during the presidency of Delors

Documents on Modernization		Administrative issues treated				
President Delors 1985-95		Structures	Working Methods	Personnel	Finance	Ethics
1986	Policy on Modernisation Politics		●	●		
1987	'Programme for creating awareness of Management Questions Seminars for Personnel'		●			
1989	Set of Management Measures: Management, Mobilisation- and Information Programme		●	●		
1991	Guidelines and Program on Personnel training			●		
1994	'Report on the efficiency of the institution and its administration'		●	●		

Source: own compilation

### a) Chronological overview of the reform initiative

Jacques Delors, described as “the most successful Commission leader in the history of the Community” (Ross 1994: 14), presided over three Colleges of the European Commission, covering a decade. His major achievements were the Single European Act, common foreign and security policy and the European monetary union. When Delors left office, the European Commission had expanded its responsibilities and tasks to a remarkable extent. During his presidency the Commission’s and the member states’ priorities were clearly focused on: deepening policy, revising the treaties, handling the northern and southern enlargements, and conquering further common grounds in terms of European integration.

Although re-launching European integration was a top priority, the issue of internal reform and managerial modernization was not completely absent during this period. Since President Delors was not keen on prioritizing it himself, administrative modernization was initiated rather inconspicuously at the administrative level. Henning Christophersen, Commissioner and Vice-presidents, was responsible for budget, financial control, and personnel and administration (1985-89). He took charge of the modernization of the Commission’s bureaucracy in cooperation with his Director General Richard Hay (1986-91). They pushed improvements in different administrative areas producing incremental change (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 457). In 1986, the European Commission decided on a Modernization policy that included an action plan high-

lighting five reform issues: management techniques, staff policy, resource management, working procedures and informatics<sup>136</sup>.

Regarding the introduction of new management techniques, a three-year modernization program was realized. The aim was to create a climate favoring active participation of all individuals engaged in improving management methods (Hay 1989: 42). Increasing awareness of the managerial deficits and acceptance of reform was particularly important. In the Commission's administrative culture, managerial tasks are regarded as mundane and a distraction from the institution's real work; on the other hand, producing and launching policy initiatives is viewed as bringing success and acknowledgement (Hooghe 2002; Stevens/Stevens 2001).

In consideration of this fact, Hay and Christophersen put emphasis on a participatory strategy for managerial modernization on all hierarchical levels of the bureaucratic apparatus, with the aim to create ownership and to minimize resistance. For this purpose the Directors-General were included throughout the entire modernization process, from developing a future strategy for improving the managerial capabilities of the organization and making people aware of management questions to assessing the results achieved (Hay 1989: 42-4). In addition, Hay took different actions to familiarize the organization's members with new ideas and to build acceptance for the entire modernization program, including new management techniques. In cooperation with external experts of the Dutch company 'Time Management International', management seminars for staff of all grades and a personnel survey on the contentment of staff were realized<sup>137</sup>. Moreover, the staff courier was extensively used as a means of informing staff on modernization projects, to reduce insecurity and skepticism, and to campaign for acceptance and commitment<sup>138</sup>.

For improving staff management, the Commission conducted a personnel survey on staff contentment<sup>139</sup> and decided on a set of measures: for clarifying tasks; for expanding the responsibilities of DGs concerning the management and quality of staff; for standardizing and speeding up recruitment procedures; as well as for enforcing personnel training and career development. An Inspectorate General was created to act as an in-house consultancy on personnel

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<sup>136</sup> cf. Zwanzigster Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 1986: 42; Bulletin of the EC, Programme of activities, Supplement 1/1986

<sup>137</sup> 'Modernisation: entretien avec Richard Hay', Décembre 1987, *Courrier du Personnel* Nr. 491

<sup>138</sup> cf. *Staff Courier/Courrier du Personnel* 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c

<sup>139</sup> The personnel survey revealed that the staff was content with their salaries, secured employment and autonomy but certain aspects of the functioning needed improvement (cf. XXII. Gesamtbericht über die Tätigkeit der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 1988: 42).

issues (Kassim 2004b: 26). Also, as based on the modernization policy, the Commission devoted a considerably increasing amount of time and money to staff training<sup>140</sup>.

Furthermore, a new resource management instrument was introduced to enable the Commission to find staff and other resources from within its organization to meet changing needs. The main mechanism was a five-year rolling program for the use of staff resource. Moreover, the decentralization of responsibility and delegation did not only play an important role in staff and resource management but also in simplifying working procedures and introducing IT solutions. Individual DGs took more responsibilities for their activities, especially concerning procedures in the areas of financial delegation. The IT program introduced new technology<sup>141</sup> to each DG, allowing it to review its administrative structures and to simplify its work procedures (Hay 1989: 44-46).

Towards the end of Delors's last term, the DG Personnel asked Director Petit-Laurent (career development) to draw up a report on the state of administration<sup>142</sup>. Even though Petit-Laurent found that the problems identified in the Spierenburg report were not *satisfactorily* solved, the reform measures still touched its core aspects. Hay's reform initiative tackled in particular problems related to the personnel management (e.g. the imbalance of workload, staff mobility, career development and recruitment). Apart from that, Hay designed various modernization measures following the recommended principle of decentralization. Further recommendations by Spierenburg, like rearranging the Commissioners' portfolios and changing the total number of Commissioners, could not be addressed by the Commission by itself; they require a treaty revision, and therefore the involvement of member governments.

There is no denying that the modernization measures are fairly simple measures addressing basic, pressing administrative problems. With hindsight the reform achievements are definitely respectable for an initiative emerging from the administrative level. Although the modernization policy was not linked to a broad and comprehensive reform program, the intended modernization was realized.

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<sup>140</sup> In 1990 a 'New Training Policy' set out some specific targets. Every official should have an average of six months continuous training per period of ten years or 5% of working time (cf. Zito 1992: 75-87).

<sup>141</sup> All technical equipment was made compatible and linked to the Commission network ready to intercommunicate, and an electronic mail system was developed of the years.

<sup>142</sup> cf. COM (94) PV 1205 § VIII; 'Réflexion sur l'efficacité de l'institution et de son administration', Petit-Laurent, P., novembre 1994

In 1995 Petit-Laurent submitted a second report to the College proposing improvements and suggesting that the outgoing Delors Commission was still reluctant to believe that there was anything fundamentally amiss (cf. Stevens 2001: 186; Stevens/Stevens 2006: 459).

Against the background of an enlarged European Union and an enormous expansion of tasks, the frustration over Delors' exclusive priority setting on policy and the resulting management neglect grew inside the European Commission toward the end of his last term. The budget Commissioner Schmidhuber, a German conservative, drew attention to management deficiencies in the area of financial management. In the 'Schmidhuber memorandum' he summarized his experiences and his conclusions about existing deficits and how to improve the management of the Community finances as a sort of political testament to his successor. This text was finally tabled at the very last meeting of the Delors Commission, early January 1995, and accepted by the college against the will and vote of Jacques Delors himself (Laffan 1997: 181). The main points of criticism of the memorandum were that the Commission departments paid far too little attention to the organization and methods of financial management compared to the contents of policies. According to the memorandum, the individual Commission services were also too dependent on the DG for executing financial control (Bauer 2007: 58).

#### **b) External stakeholders of the European Commission**

With the Spierenburg report and the Report of the Three Wise men, the need to reform the Commission's administration was made public. Despite the knowledge of the managerial deficits, neither the Council nor the European Commission demanded a managerial reform in the Commission. While prioritizing European integration, the representatives of member governments gave no priority to matters of the Commission's internal administration; there were no national political points to be made with this issue. There was apparently no awareness of the urgent need to modernize the institution's management.

#### **c) Internal stakeholders of the European Commission**

The priority of the Delors Commission was policy advancement; it certainly was not the administrative modernization of the European Commission. In the light of the accessions of Portugal and Spain (1983) and the exceptional expansion of tasks, an administrative reform was needed. Yet, the modernization initiatives were dependent on the leadership of Commissioner Christophersen and Director-General Hay, who mostly promoted the small-scaled reform (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 458). Although their hierarchical position was rather weak, as they lacked strong support by the President and the College, both reform promoters were committed to modernization. They took on the challenge of modernizing the Commission's management and achieved the implementation of a narrow reform, realizing adaptations and small changes. In line with the overall unfavorable situation for reform at the political level, there was a certain level of resistance against the modernization in the bureaucratic apparatus because "[...] officials in the Commission were suspicious of the Nordic approach to management

[...]” (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 458) and because the reform was in opposition to the existing administrative culture. To compensate, Hay followed a strategy of information and participation to soften resistance and to build awareness as well as acceptance. While realizing this narrow scoped change, they encountered only weak open resistance. Both reform leaders, Hay in particular, were strongly committed to fighting managerial deficiencies in the European Commission. When they stepped down from their position being in charge of personnel and administration, the driving forces for reform in terms of their strong leadership also left with them.

#### d) Summary of observations

Table 11: Overview of observations on reform initiative under Delors

Phase	Factors	Observed Values
Phase 1	Origin of pressure	Inside
	Focusing event, Scandal	No
Phase 2	Reform initiator	Political level: Director-General Hay, Commissioner Christophersen
	Conceptualization of reform	Inclusive, participatory
	Pace of change	Incremental
	Scope of reform	Narrow
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Strong
	Position of reform leader	Weak: General-Director, Commissioner
	Reform leader's commitment	High
	Management style	Inclusive, participatory
	Strategically changing rules	No
	Opponents to reform	Weak
Context	Awareness of need for reform	Middle
	Major institutional changes	Yes
	Time span of exerted demand for reform	Long-term
Output	Successful Implementation	Yes

Source: own compilation

## 5.2.6 The reform initiative under President Santer

Table 12: Documents on Modernization during the presidency of Santer

Documents on Modernization		Administrative issues treated				
President Santer 1995-99		Structures	Working Methods	Personnel	Finance	Ethics
1995	'Sound Efficient Management' (SEM 2000)		●		●	
1997	'Modernisation of Administration and Personnel Policy' (MAP)			●		
1997	'Designing the Commission of Tomorrow' (Decode)		●	●	●	
1998	Caston Report: Internal document of DG IX on personnel policy			●		
1998	Williamson Report: Reflection Group on Personnel Policy			●		
1999	First Report of the Committee of Independent Experts (CIE)		●	●	●	●

Source: own compilation

### a) Chronological overview of the reform initiative

President Santer and his Commissioners took office in February 1995. With the heritage of the Schmidhuber memorandum and the conclusions by senior official Petit-Laurent on the administration of the Delors-era, the new Commission made administrative reform a central priority. Santer's intention was to distinguish himself from the successful Delors-era in terms of policy production. Thus, he announced in January 1995 the Commission's new slogan "less action but better action"<sup>143</sup>. Erkki Liikanen, Commissioner of Personnel and Administration, launched a series of initiatives for increasing the financial awareness and decentralizing responsibly for budgets and personnel, in the framework of the program 'Tomorrow's Commission'. The first reform initiative, called 'Sound Efficient Management Programme' (SEM 2000), was developed in cooperation with the Commissioner of Budget Antia Gradin. SEM was launched in 1994 and directed at financial management. The second initiative was called Modernization of Administration and Personnel Policy (MAP 2000) and sought to decentralize as well as simplify procedures for managing staff (Stevens/Stevens 2001: 187-192). Thirdly, to address the severe problem of allocating manpower according to the greatest needs and organizational priorities, yet another screening exercise was carried out between 1997 and May 1999. The ongoing modernization activities of SEM and MAP were linked to the screening exercise and subsumed in the program 'Designing the Commission of Tomorrow' (DECODE) (Bauer 2007: 59). The

<sup>143</sup> Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, Speech to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 17 January 1995

intention was to publish the results by April 1998 and to use them as a basis for further reformative actions.

During 1997 however, the staff and the unions “were becoming increasingly suspicious of a reform programme that was not well understood outside the small circle charged with developing it within the Personnel and Administration DG” (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 460). The members of this group were discussing public management ideas for some years already and “assumed a far higher familiarity with, and acceptance of, these ideas within the Commission than was actually the case” (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 460).

Additionally, two central reasons may explain the strong aversion to managerial reform and resistance among staff and unions. The first was the administrative culture within the Commission, which puts policy production and European integration center stage and views managerial tasks as nonessential and negligible (cf. section 5.2.4). The second was the union’s fear of losing power and influence, due to Liikanen’s central reform principle - decentralization. Since the unions were traditionally better connected to the top of the Commission’s organization, they saw the risk of being bypassed and losing importance with decentralized responsibility and delegated power towards the lower hierarchical levels (Bauer 2007: 59).

In April 1998 an internal issues paper of DG XI leaked. This Caston report made the case for radical changes in Staff Regulations concerning such sensitive issues as career development and personnel management. That’s when the unions called for a strike. The inevitable consequence of the mis-communication and apparent secrecy was a well-attended strike at the end of the month (Coull/Lewis 2003: 2). The strike found wide support from staff, also including senior management who partly participated in this so-called day of action. This demonstrates a rather low awareness of the urgent need for reform among staff, as was later identified by the CIE. Reacting to the pressure, the College distanced itself from the Caston report and installed a joint group under the presidency of former Secretary-General David Williamson; it strived to reconcile the opposing groups and extensively consulted staff and staff unions. The working group preparing the Williamson report<sup>144</sup> had to be given time to come to its conclusions; thus, the reform program was in effect stopped in its tracks (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 461).

The next crisis was already arising in form of a conflict between the European Parliament and the Commission on the discharge of the 1996 budget. An internal auditor in the Commission’s financial control department, Paul van Buitenen, transmitted information to members of the

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<sup>144</sup> The Williamson report was published in November 1998. It did not rule out the possibility that the Staff Regulations could be revised. The majority of suggestions, however, concentrated on reform measures that could be realized without amending Staff Regulations and thus without having to consult the Commission’s constituents (‘Williamson Report: Reflection Group on Personnel Policy’, November 1998).

EP in an act of 'whistle-blowing'<sup>145</sup>. After a failed censure vote, the European Parliament demanded a report of a Committee of Independent Experts (CIE)<sup>146</sup> who examined whether the Commission as a body or individual Commissioners could be held responsible for mismanagement, fraud and nepotism (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 461-2). Two CIE reports were published. The first focused on the role and responsibility of Commissioners themselves stating "It is becoming difficult to find anyone who has even the slightest sense of responsibility"<sup>147</sup>. After this report, the Commission as a whole resigned on March 1999, before having to face another vote of censure<sup>148</sup> (MacMullen 1999). In the second report published in September 1999, the CIE had examined the Commission's practices over a longer period and made ninety recommendations<sup>149</sup> on a financial management reform and staff policy reform. These are ideas picked up by the subsequent Commission's in their overhauling reform attempt (Kassim 2004b :33).

### **b) External stakeholders of the European Commission**

The European Parliament exerted pressure on the Commission to examine its internal management and practices. This pressure originated in the EP's unease about financial management within the Commission. This was openly expressed when the EP refused to discharge the budget 1996, subsequently manifested in a censure vote also based on the information of 'whistle-blower' Buitenen. The clear request to install a Committee of Independent Experts only emerged with the events which directly led to the resignation of the College under President Santer (Kassim 2004b: 29). After this incident, the Council as a body and the individual member governments exerted reform pressure on the European Commission. This pressure weighed heavily on the subsequently elected President Prodi and his College.

### **c) Internal stakeholders of the European Commission**

The external pressure for examining and revising the Commission's administration came after Santer had announced his plan for the modernization of the institution. President Santer seriously approached administrative reform as top priority, especially compared to the two preceding Presidents (Peterson 1999, Metcalfe 2000). Speaking before the European Parliament, he highlighted that the public confidence in the European institutions had to be re-gained and

<sup>145</sup> For details see: Stevens/Stevens 2006: 461-2

<sup>146</sup> The EP threatened with an immediate vote of censure which was prevented when the Commission accepted a examination by an External Review Body (MacMullen 1999).

<sup>147</sup> Committee of Independent Experts' First report 1999, § 9.4.25 cited in Stevens/Stevens 2006:42

<sup>148</sup> For a detailed review of the resignation of the Santer Commission see Peterson 1999; MacMullen 1999; Kassim 2004a, 2004b; Stevens 2000 and Stevens/Stevens 2006.

<sup>149</sup> These recommendations are partly based on recommendations of previous reports on administrative reform, like the Spierenburg report and the Schmidhuber memorandum.

that the Commission was to become a modern and efficient institution, one able to live up to the citizen's expectations of sound management of European integration (Santer 1998). Yet, he backed away from his political responsibility as a reform leader of a far-reaching managerial reform and failed to demonstrate his political support and commitment when conflict arose from the leaking of the Caston report (Bauer 2001).

Furthermore, scholars criticize the reform measures under President Santer as poorly managed in two different ways (Cini 2000; Kassim 2004b). Firstly, the reform promoters Santer and Liikanen failed to win support from the College and senior management (Cini 2000: 22). Secondly, unions and staff were not adequately informed of the reform projects and the purpose of the proposed changes. Therefore the atmosphere of "secrecy surrounding the reform enabled the staff unions to exploit anxiety among Commission Personnel" (Kassim 2004 b: 36). This failure of poor management and poor leadership can be attributed both to Santer's lack of credibility as change initiator and to the rather elitist way in which he and Liikaanen oversaw the reform process (Cini 2000: 22). Apart from that, the reform initiatives are criticized for a lack of overall strategy, coherence and proper co-ordination or sufficient forethought (Kassim 2004b: 36), which was further "exacerbated by a lack of clear leadership from the top" (Stevens/Stevens 2001: 194).

Even though the reform program was stopped in its tracks, some achievements were made. The evaluation report on SEM 2000 published in 1999<sup>150</sup> confirms that most measures regarding financial matters were realized, even though the College's term ended abruptly. However the majority of the intended reform activities could not be implemented.

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<sup>150</sup> 'Evaluation of the implementation of SEM 2000', July 1999; S181/ 121807

## d) Summary of observations

Table 13: Overview of observations on reform initiative under Santer

Phase	Factors	Observed Values
Phase 1	Origin of pressure	Inside
	Focusing event, Scandal	No
Phase 2	Reform initiator	Political level: President Santer
	Conceptualization of reform	Exclusive, non-participatory
	Pace of change	Radical
	Scope of reform	Middle-ranged
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Weak
	Position of reform leader	Strong: President
	Reform leader's commitment	Low
	Management style	Exclusive, non-participatory
	Strategically changing rules	No
	Opponents to reform	Strong
Context	Awareness of need for reform	Low
	Major institutional changes	No
	Time span of demand for reform	Short-term
Output	Successful Implementation	No

Source: own compilation

## 5.2.7 The reform initiative under President Prodi

Table 14: Documents on Modernization during the presidency of Prodi

Documents on Modernization		Administrative issues treated				
President Prodi 1999-2004		Structures	Working Methods	Personnel	Finance	Ethics
1999	Second report of the CIE: Reform of the European Commission	●	●	●	●	●
2000	White Paper: 'Reforming The European Commission'	●	●	●	●	●
2003	'Progress Review of Reform'	●	●	●	●	●
2004	'Completing the Reform Mandate'		●	●		

Source: own compilation

### a) Chronological overview of the reform initiative

After the dramatic resignation of the Santer Commission, President Prodi and his College were provisionally announced in July 1999. Demonstrating his commitment to reform, Prodi designated Neil Kinnock, one of the few 'survivors' of the previous Commission, as Vice-president and Commissioner for Administrative Reform. Assigning administrative modernization as the only responsibility to a Vice-president was exceptional and put the reform promoter definitely

in a powerful position. This clearly shows what was at stake - the credibility of European Commission as institution capable of managing the European Union<sup>151</sup>. This was especially important in the face of the upcoming accession of 10 new member states on 1 May 2004. This drastic institutional expansion, in combination with the shock of the College's stepping down amid accusations of mismanagement<sup>152</sup>, led to an awareness of reform need among internal and external stakeholders.

Within the first few months Kinnock and his team<sup>153</sup> prepared a White Paper on the future administrative reform. They made use of internal experience and expertise gathered in the earlier reform attempts and incorporated ideas that had featured in earlier reform initiatives. For instance, before adopting the White Paper the College decided to consult staff intensively on the proposed reform project, to build consensus and to avoid the flaw of the previous reform (Bearfield 2004: 20). Besides, the reform blueprint drew heavily on the results of the DECODE screening exercise and recommendations made in the CIE reports and the Williamson report (Levy 2003: 557). Kinnock's reform blueprint proposed a far-reaching program of change, overhauling the personnel, financial and planning system<sup>154</sup>, and also emphasizing an administrative culture based on service<sup>155</sup>. The modernization program was intended in principle and in practice to bring the Commission in line with modern management practices (Kinnock 2004: 9). The White Paper set out 98 modernization actions, including radical amendments of the Financial and Staff Regulations. This is particularly astonishing as the reform attempt under President Santer was put to a halt by staff resistance. The situation of growing opposition of unions and staff escalated due to the leaked Caston report, which also proposed revisions to the Staff Regulations. However, the so-named Kinnock reform did achieve amending of the Financial Regulation<sup>156</sup> and of the Staff Regulations<sup>157</sup>. To realize these revisions the European Parliament and Council have to be officially involved in the decision-making process<sup>158</sup>, but also the unions and staff (who managed to resist effectively the last reform attempt) obviously have to be involved. Therefore the so-named Ersbøll<sup>159</sup> group was installed to discuss staff policy measures with unions and staff representatives. Regarding the Staff Regulations, the Commission introduced a new system of staff appraisal and a more linear career system

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<sup>151</sup> cf. Kassim 2008

<sup>152</sup> After thorough inspection of the allegations, it was revealed that only the accusations against Commissioner Edit Cresson were justified (cf. Bauer 2006: 6).

<sup>153</sup> The Task Force for Administrative Reform under the chair of Vice-president Kinnock was composed of officials of different DGs.

<sup>154</sup> For details see also: Christiansen/Grey 2004; Grey 2004

<sup>155</sup> For details see also: Cini 2004; Hine/McMahon 2006

<sup>156</sup> The new Financial Regulation (Reg. 1605/2002) was adopted in July 2002 and came into force in January 2003.

<sup>157</sup> The new Staff Regulation (Reg. 723/2004) was adopted in March 2004 and came into force on 1 May 2004.

<sup>158</sup> As it is a legislative act that can be only amended by consulting the EP and the proposals have to be approved by the Council (see also section 5.1.4 on Staff and Financial Regulations).

<sup>159</sup> Niels Ersbøll, former Secretary General of the Council Secretariat, was chairman.

(Commission 2000: 26-7) as results of negotiations within the Ersbøl group. The four-category personnel structure was replaced with two categories, as similarly proposed in the Caston report. Moreover the staff appraisal was modernized by introducing an appraisal system (Career Development Review) linked to promotion and career management (Kassim 2008: 19).

Regarding the financial management reform, the Santer Commission already had made respectable progress. Combining Santer's achievements with the specific proposals of the second CIE report, Kinnock realized quickly the new Financial Regulation<sup>160</sup> (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 466). In order to strengthen financial control and to delegate responsibility to individual Commissioners, the Commission created a central Internal Audit service<sup>161</sup>. Furthermore, it established internal control mechanisms within each DG and ensured external control by the Court of Auditors (Grey 2004: 56). Apart from that, the Commission introduced a new requirement for every DG to publish an annual management plan (AMP), laying down the planned activities including corresponding expenditures, and an annual activity report (AAR) as a progress report. Both aim at reinforcing the direct accountability of the Directors-Generals for expenditure authorized by them and for their service's contribution to the Commission's achievements according to the strategic objectives (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 467).

This new exercise is instrumental to solving the central problem of matching tasks and resources effectively. In response, the Commission introduced a new management approach, the Activity Based Budgeting and Management (ABB and ABM). The aim is to translate politically set priorities in strategic organizational objectives and future achievements. Thereby the Commission agrees on an Annual Policy Strategy defining activities of priorities and thus enabling resources to be assigned accordingly. On the next level, the planned activities are broken down into activities on DG-level. Consequently fine-grained adjustments can be arranged within each DG. Additionally, the AARs of each DG helps to control the spent resources as well as to keep track of the number of strategic objectives that were achieved during a certain period of time (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 465; Bauer 2006: 9).

The above-mentioned changes represent only a portion of the implemented modernization measures. The interim Progress report of 2003<sup>162</sup> confirms that more than 90 of the 98 set out

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<sup>160</sup> Brian Grey, a senior official of the European Commission, states that "Introducing new accounting procedures throughout the Commission in such a short space of time would not have been possible if the financial culture had not already been successfully changed, and ingrained in all services" (Grey 2004: 59).

<sup>161</sup> The Internal Audit service was installed in September 2000 (cf. General report on the Activities of the European Union 2000).

<sup>162</sup> cf. COM (2003) 40;

For a detailed review on the milestones of implementation see Kassim 2004; Stevens/Stevens 2006.

reform activities were formally implemented; while the remaining measures were planned to be implemented<sup>163</sup> by 2005<sup>164</sup>.

### **b) External stakeholders of the European Commission**

Evidently, "the crisis of March 1999 compelled the European Council to address the questions raised by the EP and the CIE about the Commission's management" (Kassim 2008: 26). At the European Council of 1999 in Berlin, the Commission was urged to improve its organizational management, particularly the financial management, in respect of the principles of integrity and efficiency<sup>165</sup>. Yet no precise reform measures were imposed on the European Commission. Each of the constituents had its own interests in reform. In amending the Staff Regulations and Financial Regulation the constituents were actively involved in the decision-making process. That was the moment when the different priorities became obvious. The European Council took the opportunity of having the authority to approve the Commission's proposal on revising the Staff Regulations to press the issue of reducing staff related expenditures<sup>166</sup>. The European Parliament, which is only consulted when amending Staff Regulations, pushed for exceptions concerning recruitment and promotion of its own officials. The EP also pressed for expanding of its formal decision-making powers, thus aiming to move from consultative into a co-decision role. Despite the interest in these issues, the constituents did not focus their attentions on reform details. However, the external political pressure was clearly present; the success of the Prodi Commission was going to be measured by the success of the Commission's management reform (Bauer 2007: 62).

### **c) Internal stakeholders of the European Commission**

In the light of the externally given mandate, Prodi immediately demonstrated his will to realize a comprehensive reform. In July 1999, he declared before the European Parliament that he intended to "transform the Commission into a world-class administration that leads by example" (European Voice, 2 December 1999). Against the background of the external reform pressure by constituents and the internal one in the face of the next accession wave, Kinnock seized the opportunity to propose radical reform measures and to overhaul existing administrative systems and procedures. Having learnt a good lesson from the failure of the reform efforts under President Santer, Kinnock used a well-elaborated information and communica-

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<sup>163</sup> cf. COM (2004) 93

<sup>164</sup> The Commission's Progress report of 2005 confirms that implementation of the remaining recommendations (COM (2005) 24).

<sup>165</sup> cf. Bulletin of the European Union 1999, 3: I 39

<sup>166</sup> "In the event, the major line of conflict in the Council was whether and how to save costs by making the 'overpaid' Commission staff contribute to the consolidation of future civil service pension expenses" (Bauer 2007: 63).

tion strategy<sup>167</sup>. The reform promoters “focused attention from day one on the absolute necessity to place effective communication within the Commission at the heart of the change process” (Bearfield 2004: 13). The staff, although aware of the necessity to modernize the Commission, did not greet the reform with cheers since they expected an impact on careers and financial benefits. Therefore the Commission had to make a persuasive case for change and involve staff<sup>168</sup> in its conception as well as implementation, in order to ensure their active participation and acceptance (Bearfield 2004: 14). In order to promote awareness, understanding and building commitment throughout the entire reform process, the Commission communicated purposefully its objectives clearly and included staff on the administrative as well as political level (Bearfield 2004: 16-9).

Vice-President Kinnock, the Commissioner in charge of designing the management reform and managing the reform process, had a particular strategy for committing the College to administrative reform. It is not only essential to find support among the senior management, middle management and staff but also among the Commissioners. That is why Kinnock put a value on involving - formally or informally - the members of the Commission in the modernization process. For instance, on the level of cabinets working groups were set up to ensure the flow of information on reform issues. More importantly, Kinnock paid attention to introduce all reform measures to the College and to have his colleagues formally vote on it. As soon as the collegial body adopted reform measures, it was almost impossible for individual Commissioners to oppose them later in the reform process. This strategic behavior was especially useful when conflicts arose between the reform promoters and the interests of a Commissioner’s DG<sup>169</sup> (Bauer 2007: 63-4).

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<sup>167</sup> In the White Paper of March 2000 the communication strategy including an action plan was presented. The so-called ‘Communicating change, Changing the way we communicate’ strategy was developed in cooperation with external experts aimed to support the management of the change process. The central message is that “The Commission will continue to ensure full communication with and involvement of staff and provide for effective means of feedback and input” (White Paper 2000, Chapter IV). Furthermore, the “communication strategy is a supplement to, and not a replacement for, the normal consultations with staff representatives” (White Paper 2000, Chapter IV).

<sup>168</sup> President Prodi and Vice-president Kinnock addressed staff individually in an email encouraging them to engage the reform. Furthermore, Vice-president Kinnock informed staff directly by email on reform issues and was open to feedback from individuals via different channels. He held Q & A sessions with the staff of the entire Commission. Moreover the intranet (Europaplus) presented up-to-date information on reform issues and progress reports as well as a black board for posting feedback. The formal opinion of each DG was consulted as well as the views of individuals. Several surveys of staff attitude to reform were conducted for being adequately reactive to the needs on information or other needs of staff (Kassim 2004: 31; Kinnock 2004; Bearfield 2004; Stevens/Stevens 2006). This is not an exhaustive list of taken measures but it gives a good picture on the emphasis put on communicating to and consulting staff to build trust and commitment.

<sup>169</sup> An official stated in an interview conducted by Bauer in 2005, that Kinnock’s “decisive tactical innovation on the ‘home front’ with his fellow commissioners was to channel all proposals formally through the college. Without this formal approval of the various reform initiatives by the college, the solidarity of the other commissioners in times of conflict would have almost certainly been much lower. And there have been difficult times, where the mood in the college was very bad” (Bauer 2007: 64).

Another impressive strategic move was the way Kinnock handled the precarious situation of opposing unions. To put it simple, the Vice-president attacked on two fronts. On the one hand, he insisted on communicating with the staff directly instead of using the staff representatives as mediators, and on the other hand, he altered the institutional rules concerning the participation of the unions and their available resources.

Regarding the direct communication with staff, "this left the unions much less room to exploit the climate of uncertainty and suspicion which had undermined reform in the past. Given the support of the leadership and the high profile of reform, the sheer pace and openness of these procedures enabled Kinnock to re-establish the control of the agenda which the Commission had lost to the union in 1998" (Stevens/Stevens 2006: 473).

For strategically changing rules of the game<sup>170</sup>, the first tactical move was to cut back on their resources allocation, e.g. decreasing the number of civil servants being excused from normal service and working on behalf of the unions. The second was to alter the rules of representation within the intra-organizational body of staff representation, i.e. reducing the number of staff representatives on committees. These changes resulted in a reformation of unions into moderate, large ones and small, radical ones. The latter type of unions lost influence in the process. Hence the moderate ones were the main negotiating partners on reform issues<sup>171</sup>. This new context allowed the unions to secure relevant concessions and, at the same time, forced them to endorse the general set of reform initiatives and the corresponding measures<sup>172</sup>. Evidently, Kinnock and his team succeeded in diminishing or even overcoming resistance by unions. They managed to weaken the union's strong influence on staff by communicating with staff directly and they succeeded in appeasing the newly formed moderate majority of unions by negotiating a compromise on critical issues. The end result was negligible resistance by the staff against the proposed radical reform measures (Bauer 2007: 64-6).

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<sup>170</sup> For a detailed review on the Commission's unions and Kinnock's handling the situation with the unions, see Bauer 2006, 2007; Kassim 2004; Spence/Stevens 2006; Stevens/Stevens 2006.

<sup>171</sup> After calling for a strike in spring 2000 which did not find strong support with staff, the moderate unions decided to strive for constructive negotiations instead of hostile confrontation.

<sup>172</sup> In particular Director-General Reichenbach, next to Kinnock as strong reform promoter, was extensively involved in the meetings with unions negotiating the compromise on reforming the Staff Regulations (cf. Bauer 2006: 17-8).

## d) Summary of observations

Table 15: Overview of observations on reform initiative under Prodi

Phase	Factors	Observed Values
Phase 1	Origin of pressure	Inside
	Focusing event, Scandal	No
Phase 2	Reform initiator	Political level: President Prodi, Vice-President Kinnock
	Conceptualization of reform	Inclusive, participatory
	Pace of change	Radical
	Scope of reform	Comprehensive
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Strong
	Position of reform leader	Strong: Vice-President supported by President
	Reform leader's commitment	High
	Management style	Inclusive, participatory
	Strategically changing rules	Yes
	Opponents to reform	Weak
Context	Awareness of need for reform	High
	Major institutional changes	Yes
	Time span of demand for reform	Long-term
Output	Successful Implementation	Yes

Source: own compilation

## **5.3 Comparing the reform initiatives**

In this section I will present the overall comparison of the seven investigated cases regarding the assessment of the potential influencing factors (see table 16 below). The examined cases are grouped in successfully and unsuccessfully implemented reform initiatives. My intention is to link my observations to the observable output, thereby identifying regularities and learning about important success factors.

I will start by presenting the common particularities of the successful cases, before turning to the unsuccessful cases. I will point out the eye-catching differences between successful and unsuccessful reform initiatives. The subsequent part will cover the observations on the remaining factors that do not lead to a straightforward conclusion. Despite this fact they are worth discussing. Some of them point to interesting linkages between influencing factors and reform initiatives; even though, they do not show a clear connection to their success or failure.

### **5.3.1 Comparison of the seven investigated cases**

Following the comparative design of the present study I will categorize the examined cases based on my analytical scheme and will compare the individual cases as presented in table 16. In the next paragraphs, I will gradually depict the conducted comparison and present the findings that emerge. Four out of the seven scrutinized cases of reform initiatives can be regarded as successful and the remaining three as failed. Applying a comparative perspective, the observed similarities and differences between the cases allow provide insight in the particular constellations of factors, which affect the observable output of reform projects.

Table 16: Comparison of observed values of seven investigated cases

			Hallstein Case 1	Ortoli Case 3	Delors Case 5	Prodi Case 7	Rey Case 2	Jenkins Case 4	Santer Case 6
Phase	Factors	Possible Values	Successful reform initiatives				Unsuccessful reform initiatives		
Phase 1	Origin of Pressure	External				●			
		Internal	●	●	●		●	●	●
	Focusing Event, Scandal	Yes				●			
		No	●	●	●		●	●	●
Phase 2	Reform initiator	Political	●	●		●	●	●	●
		Administrative			●				
	Designing reform goals	Participatory	●	●	●	●	●		
		Non-participatory						●	●
	Pace of Change	Incremental	●	●	●		●		
		Radical				●		●	●
	Scope of reform	Narrow			●				
		Middle-ranged	●	●			●	●	●
Comprehensive					●				
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Strong	●	●	●	●			
		Weak					●	●	●
	Position of reform leader	Strong	●	●		●		●	●
		Weak			●		●		
	Reform leader's commitment	High	●	●	●	●			
		Low					●	●	●
	Management style	Participatory	●	●	●	●	-		
		Non-participatory					-	●	●
	Strategically changing rules	Yes				●			
		No	●	●	●		●	●	●
Opponents to reform	Strong					-	●	●	
	Weak	●	●	●	●	-			
Context	Awareness of need for reform	High				●			
		Middle	●	●	●				
		Low					●	●	●
	Institutional changes	Yes	●	●	●	●	●		
		No						●	●
	Time span of demand for reform	Long-term	●	●	●	●			
Short-term						●	●	●	

Source: own compilation

### 5.3.2 Successful reform initiatives

When comparing the cases which succeeded in formally implementing the majority of the set out reform proposals, it stands out that all four cases show the same observed values on seven factors out of fifteen potential factors. The remaining eight factors which do not show a clear pattern will be discussed later (see section 5.3.4). Taking a closer look at the table summarizing the factors which display identical observed values (see table 17 below), it is eye-catching that the majority of these seven factors structure the implementation process (phase 3), while none of them are associated with the triggering phase (phase 1).

**Table 17: Observed regularities of successful reform initiatives**

Phase	Factors	Observed values
Phase 2	Designing reform concept	Inclusive, participatory
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Strong
	Reform leader's commitment	High
	Management style	Inclusive, participatory
	Opponents to reform	Weak
Context	Awareness of need for reform	High/Middle
	Time span of demand for reform	Long-term

Source: own compilation

Regarding the designing of the reform concept in the conceptualization phase (phase 2) and the applied management style in the implementation phase (phase 3), it is striking that the same behavioral approach to organizational reform is predominant. In both component processes of successful reforms, the change promoters applied a logic of action coined by the involvement of crucial stakeholders. This is not surprising, especially when considering the literature on change management (Kotter 1995, 1997; Vahs 2003) and on management reforms in international organizations (Levy 2003) (see sections 3.1, 3.3). In this regard, particularly Vice-President Kinnock's course of action stands out. He pursued a well-elaborated information and communication strategy as well as a clever participation strategy to keep the College involved throughout the entire process. Although the other three successful administrative reforms were of a smaller scope and the achieved modernizations less impressive, their reform promoters<sup>173</sup> paid attention to develop and realize modernization along the same lines of staff involvement and regular communication on reform issues.

<sup>173</sup> President Hallstein's efforts were clearly focused on including senior management and staff in developing adequate reform measures based on the presented modernization proposals. Their realization was rather swift.

Director-General Hay under President Delors and the reform leaders President Ortoli and his Commission Borschette introduced the modernization measures similarly. Hay (1989) outlined the intentions of his course of action in an issue of the periodical of the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. When compared to Kinnock, the magni-

Furthermore, in all four successful cases the factors 'reform leader's commitment' and 'organizational leadership' (phase 3) were observed in terms of communicating clear objectives, displaying a coherent reform vision as well as demonstrating strong support and serious commitment to reform. These observations are not astonishing, as various authors have already presented similar indications of the positive influence of strong, coherent leadership and personal commitment to the success of the modernization initiatives<sup>174</sup>. President Hallstein, for instance, displayed his deep commitment to organizational renewal to the Council<sup>175</sup> verbally and he also showed determination to modernizing actions within the Commission. Hallstein and his reform promoters persistently discussed and negotiated on modernization measures with the internal stakeholders until a compromise was reached. Turning to the management reform under President Prodi, it is eye-catching that the modernization was virtually personified by Vice-president Kinnock. As a reform leader, he and his team developed tactics for steering and leading the change process, e.g. strategic actions for overcoming resistance and communicating the reform concept to all internal and external stakeholders extensively and repeatedly. Other reform promoters, President Ortoli and Director-General Hay (under the presidency of Delors), were equally committed and managed to lead the organizational modernization coherently (see sections 5.2.3, 5.2.5).

Every alteration of the status quo provokes actors to oppose change. In the investigated cases of successfully implemented organizational change, the opponents can be described as rather weak<sup>176</sup>. Although all successful reforms show the identical observed value, the circumstances and handling of opponents differed.

In the case of reform under the Presidents Hallstein, Ortoli and Delors, the opponents rejected specific proposals and suggestions but did not resist change in an organized, collective and uncompromising manner. Since the reform leaders integrated the relevant stakeholders in the conceptualization of measures and their implementation, potential opponents could contribute to designing the reform objective and thus could accept the planned modernization more easily. Particularly interesting is the Kinnock reform. It encountered strong opposition particularly among unions and staff representatives in the beginning; especially as they had succeeded in stopping successfully the previous reform. In the course of the Kinnock's reform process how-

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tude of his strategic course of action was much smaller but appropriate to the impact of the measures and the envisaged change.

<sup>174</sup> These findings underpin the findings of Baumann et al. (2007) and Schön-Quinlivan (2008) in international organizations, and confirm the results from the literature of change management (Vahs 2003).

<sup>175</sup> „Brief an den Herrn Präsidenten des Rates der EWG“ March 1960, BAC 51/86 260

<sup>176</sup> These observations are in line with the empirical study of the Institute of Change Management (Vahs 2003) on managing change in the private sector. It states that the existence of opponents to change have a negative influence on its successful implementation.

ever, the reform promoters succeeded in weakening their position by strategically changing the institutional rules which regulated their available resources and participation in committees.

The 'awareness of an existing reform need' (context) can be observed in successful cases, but the stakeholders' levels of awareness varies. In my reading the same holds for the causes of perceiving the need for reform; the causes vary. The relevant actors of the first three reform initiatives reveal a medium level of awareness; while I detected in the reform process under President Prodi a high level of awareness of the reform pressure.

During the presidencies of Hallstein and Ortolí as well as during the Delors-era, primarily internal stakeholders took notice of the necessity for administrative reform.

In the former two cases, the perception of the need for reform mostly emerged from internal administrative difficulties aggravated by institutional changes. In response, reports diagnosing the administrative management and proposing reform measures were prepared. The situation of the Hay reform under Delors was rather different; there the reform leaders deliberately created and increased the awareness of the need for reform. The change promoters established the preconditions so that officials were enabled to detect management deficits themselves (cf. section 5.2.5). Yet, a different situation regarding the awareness of the need for reform was evident in the Kinnock reform. A focusing event, namely the first ever resignation of an entire College, drew attention to the necessity of modernization in a very dramatic way. Basically all external and internal stakeholders could not deny the urgent need for reform. Apart from this catalytic event, the existence of an 'accumulation effect', i.e. the various reform attempts, probably increased over time the perceived need to modernize, is very likely. Even if the circumstances and happenings vary across the cases, they all result in a medium or high level of awareness of reform need.

In all successful cases the time span, during which the reform promoters and stakeholders demonstrated their strong reform interest, covered the entire reform process. Even though the way, the circumstances and the intensity of the reform leaders affirmations to modernize varied over these four cases, the overall result was similar in respect to the presence of a continuous and noticeable demand for reform

### **5.3.3 Unsuccessful reform initiatives**

Across the unsuccessful reform initiatives, six influencing factors presented in table 18 below and the following paragraphs show identical observed values. Even more interesting is the fact that those factors overlap with the influencing factors which display regularities among the

successful cases. The two groups of cases display the complementary observed values on exactly these six factors, strongly indicating that they are six important influencing factors on successful or failed implementation. The seventh factor 'designing the reform concept' showed identical results across the successful cases. Across the unsuccessful cases, the observed values related to this factor are identical in two out of three cases. None of these presented factors are relevant to the triggering phase. This implies that factors structuring the triggering phase (phase 1) do not have a direct influence on the success or failure of reform.

**Table 18: Observed regularities of unsuccessful reform initiatives**

Phase	Factors	Observed values
Phase 2	Designing reform concept	Exclusive, non-participatory
Phase 3	Organizational leadership	Weak
	Reform leader's commitment	Low
	Management style	Exclusive, non-participatory
	Opponents to reform	Strong
Context	Awareness of need for reform	Low
	Time span of demand for reform	Short-term

Source: own compilation

Weak organizational leadership and low personal commitment of reform leaders characterize the examined reform programs that were not successfully implemented. Neither President Rey nor President Jenkins nor President Santer determinedly led the reform process they initiated to successful implementation. The former two reform initiators basically just stopped pushing modernization at a certain point, backing away from the reform proposals and thereby their responsibility as reform promoter and leader. President Santer and his College even withdrew their political support to reform formally by disowning the Caston report, in light of the open conflict with staff and unions.

The deployed management style of the reform leaders and promoters is certainly interrelated with organizational leadership and commitment. The common particularity between the unsuccessful modernization programs for the factor 'management style' is the rather exclusive and non-participatory management approach. I only refer to the reform attempts under President Santer and President Jenkins, as the reform efforts during the presidency of Jean Rey did not even reach the implementation phase. President Jenkins' externally prepared reform proposals were followed by a report written by a small group of high civil servants, without consultation of relevant stakeholders. The external recommendations together with the rather

exclusive, small circle of experts entrusted to propose appropriate reform measures did not contribute to increasing support for modernization among Commission's officials. In contrast, under President Santer, a 'home-grown' reform initiative emerged, drawing on the internal expertise of Commission's officials. However, the reform promoters around Santer and Commissioner Liikanen failed on several fronts: to communicate the proposed actions, to campaign for modernization and to involve the unions and staff. On the contrary, the officials outside the circle of reform promoters perceived the reform efforts as a secretive mission and thus grew increasingly suspicious to managerial reform. Evidently, these actions contributed to the occurrence of the strike in April 1998, which stopped the suggested administrative reform.

Both unsuccessful cases that actually reached the implementation phase encountered strong resistance. During Jenkins' and Santer's presidency<sup>177</sup>, the opponents can be considered as strong, particularly the unions. The collective, organized resistance that peaked in the mentioned strike under Santer was an extraordinary example of strong opponents aiming at hampering administrative reform. These observations are certainly not astonishing, particularly in light of the change management literature. As presented in the previously reviewed study on private enterprises (Vahs 2003: see section 3.3), the presence of opponents to change reduces the chances of realizing organizational change successfully.

The relevant actors of the unsuccessful reform initiatives had a rather low level of awareness regarding the need for reform. However, they were not completely unaware of reform need, since a number of reports diagnosed the administrative deficiencies and proposed different measures for improvement. Additionally, an accumulation effect respective the perception of the reform need cannot be excluded, however, the overall level of awareness can be described as low in these unsuccessful reform attempts can. Merely a small group of internal stakeholders (e.g. unions) or certain individuals appeared to be actually aware of the need to prioritize modernization.

In unsuccessful reform initiatives, the time frame covering the expressed reform pressure or substantive interest in reform by important stakeholders or change promoters is quite small compared to successful cases. President Jenkins, for instance, who had requested a report on the Commission's administration by external experts around Spierenburg and a follow up report based on internal expertise, only demonstrated his interest in organizational change in the beginning of his term. After the publication of the second report, he and his College stopped pursuing reform issues so that no modernizing actions followed. The interest in reform was

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<sup>177</sup> Regarding this factor, I cannot present any information on the reform attempt under President Rey; the reform initiative was virtually put to a halt with the end of Jean Rey's term.

not credibly demonstrated over a longer period of time, ideally from its initiation until its implementation. This was similarly the cases in the administrative reforms under Presidents Rey and Santer, who stopped expressing their profound reform interest at some point during the modernization process (see sections 5.2.2, 5.2.6).

The only factor that displayed an obvious regularity across the successful reform programs, yet did not show a 100 percent complementary pattern across the unsuccessful cases, is the factor 'designing the reform concept'. The 'outlier' is the case of President Ray, where the staff unions (as strong stakeholders) and senior officials were involved in the Round Table conference, collaborating on a first outline of administrative reform. Therefore, the way of conceptualizing the reform can be described as participatory and inclusive, while the remaining unsuccessful reform attempts under Santer and Jenkins clearly lacked a participatory and inclusive approach. In spite of this 'outlier', there are observations in six other cases indicating this factor as relevant for the implementation of reform. Thus, I assume that the factor 'designing reform concept' is a relevant influencing factor for the success or failure of reform initiatives.

### **5.3.4 Examined factors without straightforward pattern**

In this section, I will go into detail on the eight remaining factors that have mixed results on the potential influencing factors and do not send any clear messages concerning the successful or failed implementation of reform initiatives. Some of them do not show regularities or particularities providing indications for influencing the reform process. Others however, point in a different direction, unmasking potential linkages between investigated factors and the observable output of reform in terms of particular reform features (origin of pressure, focusing events, reform initiator, scope). Especially, the potential factors identified in the triggering phase do not show clear results concerning the success or failure of administrative reforms.

**Table 19: Factors with mixed results concerning the success of failure**

Phase	Factors
Phase 1	Origin of reform pressure
	Focusing events
Phase 2	Reform initiator
	Pace of change
	Scope of reform
Phase 3	Position of reform leader
	Strategically changing rules
Context	Major institutional changes

Source: own compilation

Regarding phase 1, the 'origin of pressure' and 'focusing events' are conceptualized as structuring factors of the reform process; they do not have clear-cut influence on the reform's success or failure.

Although the literature on management reforms in international organizations provides indications on the relationship between an externally originated pressure and the success of realizing comprehensive reforms<sup>178</sup>, my comparative analysis cannot uncover any compelling evidence in this regard. There was only one case of a comprehensive<sup>179</sup> reform examined (Kinnock reform) and it was successful. However, other cases were also successfully implemented under internal reform pressure; admittedly, in these cases the scope of reform was smaller. Yet, based on this one clue I do not want to jump to conclusions on the origin of pressure contributing to the success of particular reform initiatives. I rather assume it having a direct impact on the scope of reform attempts. Similar is the case for statements on focusing events influencing successful implementation of administrative reforms (cf. section 5.3.5 below).

The second phase (conceptualization) includes the factors on the organizational level of the reform initiator, the pace and scope of reform. A frequent question is what leads to successful organizational change an incremental or a radical reform processes. Considering the mixed results on the factor 'pace of change' across the investigated sample, my comparative analysis does not show any direct link between the pace of change and its chances for success. The pace of reform does not appear to have a relevant influence on successful implementation, instead serving as a helpful descriptive category for a comparative analysis. The situation is

<sup>178</sup> Geri (2001) claims that far-reaching reform in international organization can only be realized under pressure by the organization's constituents. When looking at the potential influence of external pressure on the scope of a reform concept without considering its success or failure, my observations allow for a new reading (cf. section 5.3.5).

<sup>179</sup> Note that the definition of what is considered as comprehensive scope in a reform certainly varies.

similar for the reform initiator's organizational level and the scope of reform. These factors do not appear to have a straightforward connection to the success or failure of managerial reforms in the European Commission. They also seem to serve as descriptive categories capturing differences between individual initiatives.

The third phase (implementation) encompasses the strategic change in the institutional rules and the position of the reform leader. The latter can be seen as a similar descriptive category as the ones of phase 2, helping to make differences between cases of comparative analysis explicit. Regarding the former, again the case of Kinnock's reform is the exception in showing a tactical manipulation of the Commission's internal rules. The strategic change of institutional rules is a well-established strategy for creating a winning coalition and overcoming resistance. It is more likely that it is needed in far-reaching, overhauling change processes than in incremental change processes. Kinnock showed such a strategic behavior *par excellence* when skillfully manipulating the rules on staff representation and thus weakening the threatening position of unions. This factor might be influencing successful implementation of comprehensive reform initiatives; however, in light of the scarce availability of information on this matter, it requires further inquiry.

When paying attention to the occurrence of major institutional changes throughout the administrative history, the expected connection is that important changes in the organization's institutional or mission related framework coincide with periods of administrative modernization. Even though there is a noticeable tendency in that direction, I suggest viewing its occurrence or non-occurrence rather as an indication for internal reform pressure and a circumstance increasing the awareness of the need for reform. For instance, the reform initiative under Rey that was launched right after the merger failed, although the Commission was facing administrative difficulties due to this major institutional change. Yet, the first enlargement of the European Communities surely raised the perception that with the integration and new influences of British, Irish and Danish civil servants a structural reorganization and overall modernization would be necessary.

All those factors do not seem to have a direct influence on the successful or failed formal implementation of reform initiatives. I suggest, however, to shift the attention away from assessing the observable output of reforms purely in terms of its formal implementation and to focus on the observable specifics of reform processes. This paints a different picture of influences on reform.

### 5.3.5 Shifting the attention from implementation to the scope

Regarding the scope of the observed reform initiatives under scrutiny, they differ substantially. To name the two most extreme cases, the Kinnock reform was a broad-gauged, big bang reform while Hay's modernization under President Delors had a narrow scope. These fundamental differences may be related to the observed values on the remaining factors (origin of pressure, reform initiator, focusing event).

First of all, in the examined sample, reform initiatives that occurred under an internal reform pressure had a narrow or middle-ranged scope; while the only comprehensive, radical reform program was exposed to external pressure (as the pattern shows in the table 20 below). The only comprehensive one that I observed was indeed successful, but among the middle-ranged some succeeded others failed in being formally implemented. Therefore, my observations do not indicate that the internal pressure has an impact on the success or failure of reform and they do not bear a clear message on the influence of external pressure on the success of reforms. However, looking at the varying scope of reform initiatives under internal and external pressure, it reveals regularities, as mentioned above. Thus, I rather assume that the origin of pressure has an impact on the scope of reform more than it has a direct influence on the success or failure of formal implementation.

Additionally, the occurrence of the 'focusing event' may contribute to the comprehensive scope of managerial reform under President Prodi. However, the Kinnock reform was the sole comprehensive initiative and it was the only time when the commission was exposed to the consequences of a dramatic scandal and serious external reform pressure. This suggests that these particular circumstances propelled an unusually broad scope and rapid paced in a 'big bang' reform concept. This leaves a rather weak but plausible assumption that focusing events influence positively the conceptualization of comprehensive reform programs. However, one must consider that an 'accumulation effect' concerning the pace of reform cannot be excluded.

Regarding the role of the reform initiator in managerial modernization (phase 3), his hierarchical level obviously goes hand in hand with his position as reform leader in terms of authority and competencies. The following observations do not come as a surprise especially as they are inline with the assumptions made by Knill and Bauer (2007) on the connection between the reform initiator and the scope of reform.

When grouping the investigated cases by their scope of reform instead by their successful im-

plementation, one finds that the only reform initiative that encompasses merely two administrative areas (narrow scope) was determinately pushed on the administrative level by Director-General Hay (under President Delors). Whereas, the only comprehensive reform program and the other middle-ranged ones were clearly initiated on the political level by the President of the College. This indicates strongly that modernization programs initiated on the administrative level are more likely to be incremental and small-scaled than broad-gauged and big bang projects.

**Table 20: Influencing factors focusing on the scope of reform**

Phase	Factors	Possible Values	Hallstein Case 1	Ortoli Case 3	Santer Case 6	Jenkins Case 4	Rey Case 2	Prodi Case 7	Delors Case 5
Phase 1	Origin of Pressure	External						●	
		Internal	●	●	●	●	●		●
	Focusing Event, Scandal	Yes						●	
		No	●	●	●	●	●		●
Phase 2	Reform initiator	Political	●	●	●	●	●	●	
		Administrative							●
	Scope of reform	Narrow							●
		Middle-ranged	●	●	●	●	●		
		Comprehensive						●	
	Pace of Change	Incremental	●	●		●			●
Radical				●		●	●		

Source: own compilation

Putting the observations on the factors which structure the triggering and the conceptualization phase of the reform process together, I assume that the origin of pressure and focusing events (phase 1) and the organizational level of the reform initiator (phase 2) have a direct influence on the scope of reform. Regarding the pace of reform, the mixed results do not allow any clear statements neither on the success of administrative reform nor on the scope of reform. However, there is a trend that reform proposal become more radical and more comprehensive over time (only the Hay reform is an exception in this upward trend). This observation suggests that an 'accumulation effect' affecting the pace of change can be observed.

## 6 Conclusions and Outlook

In this section I will draw conclusions based on the findings of the historic comparison. First of all, I will elaborate on my conclusions regarding the research question: which crucial factors influence the successful or failed implementation of reform initiatives? Then, I will shortly summarize observations on the role of different stakeholders in the reform process. In the final section I will discuss potential points of departure for further research.

### 6.1 Answering the research question

In answering the research question I selected fifteen potential influencing factors on successful or failed administrative reforms in the European Commission. After conducting my comparative analysis, I can identify seven of factors that point in a clear direction regarding the potential for success or failure of the formal implementation of administrative modernizations in the European Commission. As the comparison in the previous section showed, these seven factors displayed basically identical values within the group of successfully implemented reforms and within the group of unsuccessfully implemented ones, showing a complementary pattern. This fact is a very strong indication that those seven factors affect the success or failure of implementing the European Commission's reform initiatives.

#### 6.1.1 Crucial influencing factors

**Table 21: Factors influencing success or failure**

Phase	Factors
Phase 2	Designing the reform concept
Phase 3	Organizational leadership
	Reform leader's commitment
	Management style
	Opponents to reform
Context	Awareness of need for reform
	Time span of demand for reform

Source: own compilation

First of all, none of the factors related to the triggering of reform (phase 1) displays unmistakably a direct influence on successful or failed managerial reforms in the European Commission. These factors rather seem to have an impact on the scope of reform (see section 5.3.5).

The first influencing factor which affects the implementation of administrative reform 'designing reform concept' is associated with the second phase of the reform process. Designing the reform concept in a participatory and inclusive manner by involving relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process enhanced the successful formal implementation of reform. Whereas, missing the opportunity to include stakeholders in the conceptualization process hampered a successful realization of reform initiatives in the selected cases.

Four out of the seven factors are essential to the formal implementation of Commission's reforms structure in the third phase of the reform process. This leads to the assumption that the implementation phase is the most important part of successfully implementing reform initiatives. The four factors structuring this component process are: the 'reform leader's commitment' to reform, the 'organizational leadership', the 'management style' and the 'presence of opponents' to reform.

A high level of commitment to reform of the reform leader as well as strong organizational leadership (in terms of having a coherent vision, communicating clear objectives, demonstrating support to and campaigning for reform) contribute to successfully implementing administrative reform. Reform leaders who are merely half-heartedly committed to modernization and whose organizational leadership can be described as weak are not likely to succeed in formally implementing administrative modernization.

Also important for the successful implementation of the Commission's modernizations appear clearly to be the reform leaders' and reform promoters' behavior when realizing set out reform goals. A deployed management style that is characterized by involving key actors in the process, contributes to formally implementing modernization measures. Whereas, excluding stakeholders from contributing to and participating in the implementation process hampers the success of the formal implementation, similarly as in the conceptualization process (phase 2).

It is clear that strong opponents to reform hamper its successful implementation, while it is not very likely that weak opponents are in a position to seriously hinder or even stop a reform process.

Last but not least, the indications point to two crucial factors structuring the context of the investigated reform process; these are the time span of an expressed substantive reform demand and the level of awareness of the need for reform.

For a successful implementation, a long-term time span during which organizational authority or constituents exert a credible interest in reform is crucial. In situations of a rather shortly demonstrated substantive reform interest by authorities, this particular circumstance hinders successfully implementing modernization.

Concerning the awareness of a need for reform, my findings strongly indicate that a high<sup>180</sup> level of awareness enhances successful formal implementation of reform initiatives.

When regarding these seven 'success factors', it is striking that all seven can be subject to manipulation. That means that generally reform leaders and promoters can exploit this knowledge to influence the success of formally implementing managerial reform. The awareness of a modernization need is the only factor which might be intensified only to a certain extent due to behavioral triggers. For instance, the reform leaders may change the perception of the importance of modernization by campaigning for managerial reform and informing about promising future results of reform. The others, however, can be purposefully influenced in order to create conditions favorable to modernization.

In essence, strongly committed reform leaders following and communicating a coherent vision with clear objectives characterize successful managerial reform initiatives in the European Commission. Moreover, involving the internal and external stakeholders in crucial situations of the reform process secures support and ownership. This support, either in terms of political support by the top management and constituents or in terms of acceptance from staff, needs to be kept up throughout the change process. The perception of all involved actors that reform is necessary or unavoidable increases their willingness to support and engage in reform.

### **6.1.2 Added value of this research**

Regarding the stakeholder perspective applied to this study, comparing the external and internal stakeholders and their positions throughout the reform processes reveals clear indications of their influence on reform initiatives.

The Commission's constituents do not have such a strong influence on the modernization of the institution as expected from national experience. Their influence is mostly limited to the first and second phase of the reform process, while the internal stakeholders dominate the third phase, which appears to be the crucial for the formal implementation of administrative reform. In a nutshell, the external stakeholders' influence is rather indirect. However, the con-

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<sup>180</sup> Since the perception of what a high or low level is may vary, I specified three categories in section 4.6 for distinguishing different levels of awareness. According to my findings the categories high and middle as I specified them can be regarded as levels of awareness enhancing the successful formal implementation of reform.

stituents' influence can still exert an external pressure on the institution, particularly considering the limited self-regulatory character of the European Commission and its financial dependency on member states. Their demand for reform appears to be more global than proposing precise reform features. The two groups of internal stakeholders, basically the College and the staff, have a very strong and a more direct influence on the reform agenda and how modernization is realized. This stakeholder approach shows to be fruitful for studying administrative reforms in the European Commission, as it captures a key trait of the institution as an international organization, its dependence on external stakeholders and their interplay with internal stakeholders. Hence, this approach appears to be promising for studying managerial reforms in international organizations.

The division of the reform process in component processes in order to disentangle the individual factors' influences on administrative reform was certainly fruitful to my investigation. In particular, it demonstrated clearly that mainly the third phase and specific contextual factors are crucial to the formal implementation process. Furthermore, it generated a more differentiated picture of the stakeholders' influence on the success or failure of managerial reform. Last but not least, comparing component processes of individual initiatives allowed me to disentangle the individual factors and to draw a comparison between component processes (even in cases when the reform did not reach a phase of the reform process e.g. the implementation phase).

The present historical comparison of the managerial reforms in the European Commission includes three modernization attempts that have been hardly noticed in academic accounts so far. There was a general lack of information on these early reform initiatives in the European Commission. Even though they are admittedly of little visibility, they provide substantive additional information for studying the Commission's administrative reforms. I researched these almost 'omitted' reform attempts thoroughly, in order to provide descriptive accounts of these early reform attempts. This new information contributes to further research on managerial reforms in European Commission and in international organizations in general. Moreover, the inclusion of this additional information in the historical comparison increased the analytical gain of the comparison and improved the quality of the resulting findings.

Based on my findings, I formulated assumptions on seven 'success factors' of administrative reforms in the European Commission (see table 21, section 6.1). Answering my research question, these seven factors have a direct influence on the observable output of reform processes

in terms of formal implementation. These findings are an important step toward understanding managerial reforms in the European Commission.

In addition, my observations reveal indications that three other factors are also linked to the observable output of managerial reform, in terms of the scope of reform (see section 5.3.5). To be precise, the factors related to the origin of pressure and the occurrence of focusing events (phase 1) and the factor 'reform initiator' (phase 2) appear to influence the scope of reform directly. These three factors apparently affect the scope of reform structure in the early reform process, while factors structuring the later reform process influence the success of its implementation. Although these results go beyond the originally posed research question, they enhance the value of this study reforms because on these results one can embark for theorizing managerial modernization in international organizations.

## 6.2 Outlook

The presented findings have to be seen as propositions contributing to a larger and more comprehensive effort to theorize administrative reforms in international organizations. My comparative analysis was conceptualized to serve as a starting point for systematically researching theoretical explanations about organizational, managerial change at the international level. There are many paths that one might take for further inquiry.

Apart from doing the obvious, reviewing my analytical framework, its factors, values and indicators as well as its theoretical background and improving it, the 'success factors' that I identified, their constellations and the weight of individual influence deserve further attention and research. Using the 'success factors' as a starting point, the next step could be to explore their particularities, their constellations, and necessary/sufficient conditions regarding the successful formal implementation of managerial reform.

The propositions of my case study of the European Commission are a preparatory step for researching managerial reforms in international organizations. The next move is to compare administrative reforms in various international organizations and thus study if my identified factors are appropriate for explaining success or failure of their reform initiatives. This would mark an important step towards theorizing administrative reform in the international sphere. In addition, studying managerial reforms in international organizations may also reflect back on explaining public sector reform.

Finally, I turn to a rather ambitious, mental exercise proposing an *ad hoc* conceptualization of a broader analytical frame, applicable to future research. This new analytical framework shall serve the purpose of gaining an understanding of how the essential influencing factors affect the individual component processes and how those might be connected.

For developing this framework, I suggest to take another look at the model of Barzelay and Gallego (2006), which I used as a basis of my analytical framework. It answers the question of how specific reform features come about and how reform processes are influenced. Their approach deploys to each component process a fitting theoretical mechanism. After reviewing my analytical scheme and some of my findings as a reminder, I will use it as a theoretical point of departure for the development of the analytical framework for further research.

In the first phase of the reform process, the factors 'origin of pressure' and 'focusing events' appear to affect the scope of reform. In the second phase, one factor ('reform initiator') seems to influence the scope of reform while the other factor ('designing the reform concept') apparently affects the formal implementation of reform. The four factors of the third phase influencing the reform process are all 'success factors'. These observations suggest that the factors influencing the early reform process affect the reform characteristic 'scope' and the factors influencing the later reform process seem to affect the 'success' or 'failure' of implementing reform.

In the light of these observations, I divide the new scheme for explaining administrative reform in merely two component processes, the triggering of reform and the realizing of reform. The former encompasses the factors 'origin of pressure', 'focusing events' and 'organizational level of reform initiator'; the latter encompasses the factors 'designing the reform concept' and all four 'success factors' of the implementation phase of my analytical scheme ('leadership', 'commitment', 'management style', 'opponents').

Having the reviewed theoretical background in mind for identifying appropriate theoretical mechanisms for each of the two component processes, Kingdon's model (2003) may be an inspiration for the first component process: The external demand for reform, possibly created or increased by a focusing event, opens a window of opportunity. The reform initiator can be seen as a policy entrepreneur waiting for the right moment and taking the chance to introduce his comprehensive propositions. In case of internal reform pressure, the reform initiator takes the problem pressure as an opportunity to 'politicize' his proposals. Not every internal reform pressure is perceived strongly enough to push the reform issue on the agenda. The reform pressure and the nature of reform initiator's propositions influence the characteristic of reform.

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Regarding the second component process, the following suggestions appear plausible: Reform leaders who succeed in providing a coherent, clear vision of modernization and its benefits are likely to win the stakeholders' trust and support. Similarly, when integrating the key actors in the conceptualization of measures and their implementation, potential opponents can contribute to design the reform objective and e.g. compensations for potential losers be incorporated. In so doing, the acceptance and ownership related to the planned modernization can be increased. Yet, these are mere suggestions. The change management literature reviewed in chapter 3 does not propose clearly how the identified 'success factors' affect the implementation of change. Appropriate mechanism for the second component process may be found in organizational sociology and psychology.

In the light of the very scarce theoretical understanding of administrative reform in international organizations, this certainly demonstrated my previously developed analytical framework is a fruitful, theoretical point of departure for further research.

## List of relevant professionals

Baxter, J.R.	The British official was Director of Personnel of the Commission under the presidency of Ortoli (1973-77).
Bobba, Franco	The Italian Bobba was General-Director of Economic and financial affairs in the Commission of the EEC.
Bodson, Victor	Bodson, a Luxembourg politician, was Commissioner for Traffic (1967-70) under President Rey.
Borschette, Albert.	Borschette was Commissioner of Personnel under the presidency of Ortoli (1973-77).
Christophersen, Henning	The Danish Commissioner and Vice-presidents, was responsible for budget, financial control, and personnel and administration (1985-89).
Delouvrier, Paul	Delouvrier was a former member of working group elaborating the Treaties of Rome.
Delors, Jacques	Delors, a French socialist, served as Economics, Finance and Budget Minister (1981–1984) under the French President Mitterrand. Between 1985 and 1995 he was President of the European Commission. He is regarded as one of the most successful in advancing the European integration.
Deniau, Jean-François	The French politician was Commissioner for Foreign Trade under President Rey (1967-70) in the following three years he is Commissioner in charge of enlargement.
Ersbøll, Niels	Ersbøll, former Secretary General of the Council Secretariat, was chairman of the Ersboll working group on staff policy measures (1999-2004).
Finet, Paul	Finet was the Belgium Member of the High Authority (1952-1965), during that time he was the High Authority's President between 1958 and 59.
Gazzo, Emanuele	First director and chief editor of the publication 'Agence Europe' founded in 1953.
Hallstein, Walter	Walter Hallstein presided over the Commission of the EEC for two terms as the institution's only President (1957-67). He ended his European career in 1967 when the so-called Merger Treaty merged the three executive bodies of the European Communities into one single European Commission.
Hay, Richard	The British Richard Hay was Director General for Personnel under President Delors (1986-91).
Jenkins, Roy	Jenkins, a former British Labour politician; became the first British President of the Commission (1977-81).
Kinnock, Neil	Kinnock was member of the British Labor Party since the 1970s. Under President Santer he was Transport Commissioner. After the Santer College's resignation, Kinnock became Vice-president of the European Commission under President Prodi and the frontman of the European Commission's reform.
Levi-Sandri, Lionello	Levi-Sandri, member of the Italian Socialist party, was Commissioner for the Social Affairs of the EEC between 1960 and 1967. He continued as a member of the Rey Commission responsible for Personnel from 1967 to 1970.
Liikanen, Erkki	The Finish Political Scientist was member of the Commission responsible for Personnel and Administration between 1995 and 1999. In 1999 he became Commissioner for Enterprises under President Prodi.
Malfatti, France	Malfatti replaced Jean Rey as President of the European Commission in 1970. He showed little contrition about walking away from the Commission after 15 months to contest a domestic Italian election.
Michelmann, Hans	Michelmann was a consultant in organizational questions of the European Commission in the 1970s. In 1978 he published his dissertation on 'Organisational effectiveness in a multinational bureaucracy'. Today he is Professor of Political Studies University of Saskatchewan.

Monnet, Jean	Monnet was the actual author of the Schuman-Plan published in 1950. Before Monnet became President of the High Authority in 1952, he was Head of the French General Planning Commission.
Narjes, Karl-Heinz	Narjes was cabinet member of President Hallstein between 1960 and 1967. During the Delors-era he became Vice-president responsible for Industry, IT and Research.
Noel, Emile	Since the 1950s Noel is a high, French civil servant responsible for European questions. Between 1952 and 1967 he was Secretary-General (Secrétaire executive) of the High Authority of the ECSC, subsequently he became Secretary-General of the single Commission (1967-87).
Ortoli, Francois-Xavier	Francois-Xavier Ortoli was in his mid-thirties when he was the chef of Commissioner Lemaigen's cabinet before he became Director-General. In his fifties he became President of the single European Commission (1973-77) and then in 1980 he was charged with the follow-up report on the famous Spierenburg report on organizational efficiency of the European Commission.
Petit-Laurent, Philippe	The French Director of career development Petit-Laurent was to draw up a report on the state of administration (1990s).
Petrilli, Guiseppe	Petrilli was the first Italian European Commissioner of the EEC with responsibility for the Social Affairs portfolio (1957-60).
Prodi, Romano	Prodi was Italian Prime Minister between 1996 and 1998. In September 1999 he was elected President of the European Commission (1999-2004) succeeding President Santer who had resigned.
Reichenbach, Horst	The German Director-General Reichenbach, next to Kinnock a strong reform promoter, under President Prodi.
Rey, Jean	Rey, Belgian Liberal politician, became the first President of the single Commission of the European Communities (1967-70).
Santer, Jacques	Jacques Santer, member of the Christian Social People's Party, was Prime Minister of Luxembourg between 1984 and 1995. In 1995 he became President of the European Commission, but his entire College resigned in March 1999 due to allegations of fraud and mismanagement.
Scheuer, Hans	President of the 'Syndicat des Fonctionnaires Internationaux et Européens' between 1969 and 1974. In 1977 he published a book on the administrative structures of the European Commission in cooperation with Weinstock.
Schmidhuber, Peter	Schmidhuber, a German conservative, was Commissioner for Economic affairs, Budget and Employment (1989-95). In 1995 Schmidhuber became a member of the Court of Directors of the German national bank.
Spierenburg, Dirk	Dirk Spierenburg, a former member of the High Authority of the ECSC, and Ambassador of the Netherlands chaired the Committee drawing up the Spierenburg report on the administration of the European Commission in 1979.
van Karnebeek, F.	Director-General in the European Commission of the EEC under President Hallstein (1957-65).
van Themaat, Verloren	The Dutch lawyer was Director-General of Competition in the Commission of the EEC between 1957 and 1967.
Weinstock, Ulrich	Weinstock was member of the cabinet of President Hallstein between 1965 and 1969. From 1973 on he was Director-General in the Secretariat-General of the European Council.
Wellenstein, Edmund	From 1960 on Wallenstein is high official of the Secretary-General of the High Authority of the ECSC. Then he was Director-General of Internal Market in the single Commission between 1967 and 1973.
Williamson, David	Williamson was Deputy Director-General for Agriculture in the Commission (1977-83) and Secretary-General of the European Commission between 1987 and 1997.
Zeilmaker, M.	Zeilmaker was Head of Unit 'Organisation' (DG IX) under President Hallstein (1957-67).

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## Annex

### Catalogue of Questions

#### Phase 1: Triggering the reform

Where does the *reform pressure originate*?

Do external stakeholders as the constituents, the EP or the Council, exert it?

Do internal stakeholders demanding modernization exert it?

Whether the origin of pressure is external or internal, is decided by scrutinizing public statements, official documents and speeches given by key actors. The external pressure can be expressed in the form of an external mandate or an official, substantial appeal to modernize. For example, internal reform demand can be expressed by setting reform on the College's decision agenda or by unions expressing their discontentment and pushing for modernization. Also, internal pressure can arise from major institutional changes like a recent or upcoming enlargement. Therefore I point out important institutional changes as a contextual element.

Was there a *focusing event*, such as a scandal, a crisis or another catalytic event?

In this investigation, focusing events are viewed as events that result in a widely public, negative perception regarding organizational performance.

#### Phase 2: Designing the reform program

On which institutional, hierarchical level was the reform attempt initiated? Was the *reform initiator* positioned on the political or administrative level?

Was it on the political level, i.e. by the President of the Commission?

Was it initiated on the administrative level, i.e. the senior management of the administrative apparatus?

According to the decision-making rules of the European Commission, one of the Commissioners presents the proposals in front of the College. Therefore usually senior officials do not formally introduce major reform proposals to the College; rather the members responsible for the particular case present it to the Commission. Nevertheless, proactive suggestions on reformative actions can emerge from the administrative level. In my investigation I will distinguish the reform initiatives proposed directly by the President or a member of the College and reform attempts particularly pushed on the administrative level, by studying internal Commission documents and scholarly accounts.

How were the *conceptualization of reform goals* and the reform initiative realized?

The designing of reform objectives and reform initiatives can follow different action logics. Were the decisions on modernization matters reached by involving key actors? Were relevant actors consulted? Were they given the opportunity to contribute and participate? Were essential decisions taken in a rather exclusive, non-participatory and top-down manner?

Concerning the different features of the reform there are two factors potentially accounting for salient differences in the reform concept of the cases under scrutiny.

The first one is the *pace of change* that may differ between the investigated cases.

Is an incremental change envisaged, producing small improvements and adaptations of the status quo? Is the reform a big bang reform aiming at radical, overhauling change?

I consider the pace of the planned change, contrasting incremental and small change with big bang and radical change. The thresholds between these two categories cannot be defined clearly *a priori*. The former refers to mere adaptations and small improvements of the administration. When the organization changes profoundly, it is considered radical change. (see also chapter 4.6 conceptualization)

The second is the *scope of reform*; which can vary from a small-scaled reform to a far-reaching reform program. I designed three categories for describing the differences in the range of addressed reform issues within one reform initiative. There are five areas of administration which I view as core areas: organizational structure, working methods, personnel, financial management and ethics.

If a reform initiative addresses only one of them, I define the scope of reform as narrow.

If a reform initiative addresses two or three, I refer to it as a middle-ranged reform.

If a reform initiative addresses four or five administrative areas, I consider it as a comprehensive reform initiative.

### **Phase 3: Translating reform goals into measures**

As regards the *organizational leadership*, the questions are concerned with the behavior and attitude of the reform leader and his reform concept.

Is the reform initiative based on a coherent vision and clear objectives? Does the reform leader communicate those clearly? Does the reform promoter demonstrate his strong support to reform openly? Does the reform promoter campaign for modernization? Do the reform advocates try to convince stakeholders of advantages and promising results of this proposed mod-

ernization? Does the reform promoter inform the people concerned with the change of the necessary actions for modernization?

I regard organizational leadership as strong when the reform leader can communicate a coherent vision and clear reform objectives. Additionally the reform promoter has to demonstrate his strong support openly as well as campaign for modernization. Otherwise, I view the organizational leadership as weak.

The *reform leaders* can be distinguished regarding their hierarchical position, i.e. their authority, and their personal commitment to reform.

Is the reform leader in a strong position? As strong position I regard having a powerful position in the hierarchical structure of the European Commission, including resources in terms of time, staff and financial means in order to engage fully in reform and modernization.

Is the reform leader in a weak hierarchical position? That means that his position does not provide the reform advocate with the authority to find an attentive ear throughout the institution and among the constituents. Furthermore restricted access to resources does not allow for substantial investment in reform. As the College of the Commission is a collegial body, the President (*as primus inter pares*) does have a stronger position than others, including the Vice-presidents. The latter ones are in a powerful position only if they have the support of the President and the majority of their colleagues.

*Is the reform leader committed?*

Does the reform advocate invest resources in winning supporters for modernization? Does the reform leader have clear incentives to push reform? If the answers to the previous questions are yes; then, the commitment is high.

Is the reform seen as a way to sharpen one's political profile or to brush over criticism? Is the reform leader half-heartedly or even only formally engaging in reform? Then the reform leader's commitment to modernization is low.

The *management style* of the reform process is observed closely in the present analysis.

Similarly to the different approaches when conceptualizing the reform initiative, the behavior of reform promoters can follow a participatory or a non-participatory action logic.

Are key stakeholders and people concerned with the change well informed? Is there a way for the staff to give feedback on reform issues, their implementation process and its progress? Is the reform received as a "home grown", a reform accounting for intra-organizational expertise of all levels? Is it a top-down approach for modernizing?

Was a *strategic change of the decision-making rules* part of the reform process?

Were decision-making rules strategically manipulated in order to create a winning coalition?

Were there any opponents to reform, e.g. publicly demonstrated opposition?

Were there *opponents to reform*?

I distinguish between strong and weak opponents to reform. Every change process encounters some kind of resistance. I refer to strong opponents when a large group of relevant actors actively opposes modernization in an organized and collective manner. Simple lack of support I do not view as resistance. In case of weak opponents, individuals oppose change but do not group up and do not form opposing movements.

Did opponents organize far-reaching resistance to reform? Did individuals oppose to modernization?

### **Contextual elements as potential influencing factors**

Can an *awareness of the need for reform* be detected?

The level of the awareness of a need for modernization can differ immensely; therefore I distinguish three levels: high, middle and low.

A high level of awareness means that all relevant stakeholders, i.e. internal and external stakeholders, perceive the necessity to reform the administrative management.

A low level of awareness dominates the context of reform when only few reform promoters are profoundly convinced of the necessity to reform. The majority of stakeholders does not regard managerial reform as a priority or use it as a means to smooth over criticism and sharpen the personal profile.

The category in the middle describes the situation when an important part of the stakeholders recognizes the need of reform. That means that the internal or the external stakeholders feel the importance to modernize the institution.

Do the external constituents notice a need for reform? Do the internal stakeholders, i.e. the top management, the staff representations and the general staff, feel a need to modernize and reform the organization? Do stakeholders profoundly perceive a need to modernize? Is management reform used as a prestigious issue to sharpen one's profile or smooth over criticism? Did previous reform attempts occur? Were previous deficits of the administrative management systematically diagnosed? Do stakeholders express their demands for reform?

Have there been any *major institutional changes* that may lead to a need or facilitate reform? Was there a large expansion of tasks? Did the constituency change? Was there an accession

and thus new officials of different member states have to be integrated? Is there a planned enlargement in the near future?

How long did the *expressed reform demand or reform pressure* last?

When regarding the external or internal reform pressure, the time span of the expressed reform demand can vary greatly. Therefore, I aim to distinguish between long-term and short-term reform demand. The reform demand can be expressed in form of exerted pressure or a substantial interest by stakeholders. Both are regarded as equivalent forms of expression. The cases are merely grouped concerning the period of time the reform demand was kept up. Long-term pressure is characterized by a repeatedly demonstrated substantial reform interest or demand and by investing resources, e.g. time and money, in pushing reform. Short-term pressure on the other hand may be mere criticism without substance, e.g. using the European administration as a scapegoat by national politicians in the member states.

### **Observable output of reform**

Were the set out reform objectives and agreed reform proposals formally implemented?

(see section 4.6)