

## **Overview of Administrative Reform and Implementation in Italy: Organization, Personnel, Procedures and Delivery of Public Services**

by Franco Bassanini

(published in *International Journal of Public Administration*, Volume 23 Issue 2 & 3 2000, pp. 229-252 )

In the early nineties Italy as well as many industrialized countries embarked on wide governmental reform. Their reasons were similar. The need to cut the budget deficit was an imperative<sup>1</sup>. All countries needed also to restore citizens' trust in the institutions and in government in particular. The burden of taxation and the quality of public services were unaligned or at least were perceived to be so. Reform in each country had its own features according to the characteristics of its institutional system and to the departure conditions.

In Italy, more than in other countries, administrative reform goes together with constitutional reform. Institutional innovations are necessary to ensure stability, legitimization and decisional power of Government institutions. Beside, the need to modernize the public administration is perhaps more pressing than elsewhere. The macrostructure of government needs reforming while its strategic mission has to be reviewed. The whole administrative culture must change. Rules and procedures need to be simplified. The bureaucratic burdens on individuals and businesses have to be reduced. The public administration need focusing on results and not on processes.

Therefore additional innovations are needed to create a more decentralized government, an administration no longer ham-strung by red-tape, more open to the market and to civil society. A government that does less but does it better while fostering opportunities rather than producing goods and services directly. A government that favors businesses rather than imposing unnecessary constraints. A government that sets modern rules for the market rather than protecting public and private monopolies.

Since the year 1990 important innovations have been adopted in Italy. Laws 142 of 1990 and 81 of 1993 introducing the direct election of mayors and presidents of the provinces brought stability, legitimization and a modern set-up to local government. Law 241 of 1990 was enacted to bring greater transparency and accountability to administrative procedure and to streamline processes. With Decree 29 of 1993 the reform of the status of civil servants began, the concept of the separation of policy-making and administration was established and the premises for introducing private

---