



# Interministerial Coordination Report

GO Expertise, GO Gatekeeping, Line Ministries, Cabinet Committees,  
Ministerial Bureaucracy, Informal Coordination

Sustainable Governance  
Indicators 2016

Indicator

## GO Expertise

Question

Does the government office / prime minister's office (GO / PMO) have the expertise to evaluate ministerial draft bills substantively?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = The GO / PMO has comprehensive sectoral policy expertise and provides regular, independent evaluations of draft bills for the cabinet / prime minister. These assessments are guided exclusively by the government's strategic and budgetary priorities.
- 8-6 = The GO / PMO has sectoral policy expertise and evaluates important draft bills.
- 5-3 = The GO / PMO can rely on some sectoral policy expertise, but does not evaluate draft bills.
- 2-1 = The GO / PMO does not have any sectoral policy expertise. Its role is limited to collecting, registering and circulating documents submitted for cabinet meetings.

### United States

Score 10

The closest comparison to a government office or prime minister's office in the U.S. system is the White House staff, along with other units of the Executive Office of the President (e.g., the Council of Economic Advisers, the Office of Management and Budget, and the National Security Council). Because of the separation of powers, Congress or particular congressional committees sometimes compete with the president to shape policymaking in executive agencies. In response to these challenges, presidents have gradually built up a large executive-office establishment designed to help assert presidential control over the departments and agencies, and to enable the independence of presidential policy decisions. The total professional staff in the presidential bureaucracy vastly exceeds that of a parliamentary system's GO or PMO, with roughly 2,500 professionals and a budget of \$300 million to \$400 million.

Indeed, White House may not allow the departments and agencies to play a major substantive role in drafting bills. In recent presidencies, it has increasingly dominated executive-branch policymaking. President Obama has gone even further than previous presidents, appointing a number of high-level presidential advisors, or so-called czars, to oversee executive-branch policymaking in specific areas.

## Australia

- Score 9 The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet is responsible for policy coordination, and as such evaluates and provides advice on all major line ministry proposals. The department has significant resources, and has authority to draw from, and consult with, appropriate sources across the whole of the government system.

## Canada

- Score 9 Draft bills are vetted primarily by the Privy Council Office and to a lesser extent by Finance Canada and the Treasury Board. These central agencies are prestigious places to work, and indeed, central-agency experience is highly valued (some even say a prerequisite) for advancement to senior levels within the federal public service. Consequently, central-agency staff members are generally highly skilled and possess the comprehensive sectoral-policy expertise needed for the regular and independent evaluation of draft bills based on the government's strategic and budgetary priorities.

## Chile

- Score 9 The president's advisory ministry (Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia, Segpres) and the Government or Cabinet Office (Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno, or Segegob) have at their disposal the necessary instruments and capacities to monitor and evaluate the policy content of line-ministry proposals. Nevertheless, channels of evaluation and advice are not fully institutionalized, and may change with a new head of state.

## Finland

- Score 9 As a ministry in itself, the Prime Minister's Office has the capacity to evaluate proposed policy. The primary function of the Prime Minister's Office is to support the duties of the prime minister, who directs the work of government and coordinates the preparation and consideration of government business. The Prime Minister's Office monitors the implementation of the government program and coordinates Finland's EU policy. In addition, the Prime Minister's Office is tasked with coordinating communications between the government and various ministries, planning future-oriented social policies, and promoting cooperation between the government and the various branches of public administration. The Prime Minister's Office has four departments: European Union Affairs, Government Administration, Government Ownership Steering, and Government Communications. Additionally, it has three units: the Government Session Unit, the Government Policy Analysis Unit

and the Government External Economic Relations Unit. The Prime Minister's Office has a secretary of state, a permanent undersecretary of state and some 550 employees arranged within several task-specific departments. In addition, the steering of the Team Finland network takes place within the Prime Minister's Office. Team Finland is a network tasked with promoting international trade and relations, improving the efficiency of business cooperation abroad, and increasing the ease with which Finnish customers can access international business services.

Citation:

<http://vnk.fi/en/frontpage>

<http://team.finland.fi/en/frontpage>

## Poland

Score 9 The Tusk government strengthened the policy expertise of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister which has not been changed by Ewa Kopacz. The Chancellery's Council of Ministers Committee Department monitors the government's legislative work and issues opinions on documents to be submitted to the Council of Ministers.

## United Kingdom

Score 9 The primary coordinating role is undertaken by the Cabinet Office, which has expertise in all areas of government. According to its website, the Cabinet Office has over 2,000 staff, is responsible for the National Security Council and is central to "making government work better." The Cabinet Office's Economic and Domestic Secretariat is responsible for coordinating policy advice to the prime minister and the cabinet. The head of the Economic and Domestic Secretariat is also responsible for the Implementation Unit and the operation of the Implementation Task Forces, which oversee the implementation of government policies, and coordinates between ministers and public officials. Implementation Unit staff are policy experts from the civil service with good ministerial networks and excellent substantive expertise. It is common for civil servants working in the Cabinet Office to have worked in other government departments. The role of the Treasury in putting pressure on departmental spending also contributes to inter-ministerial coordination.

## Latvia

Score 8 The formation of the PKC, which reports directly to the prime minister, has ensured a mechanism enabling input from the government office on the substance of policy proposals from line ministries. The PKC evaluates all proposals to be addressed by the cabinet on a weekly basis, focusing on three issues: cross-sectoral impact, adherence to the government declaration and compatibility with long-term strategy documents (such as the National Development Plan and Latvia 2030).

While expectations of the PKC are high, its ability to deliver on these expectations is limited. For example, the PKC's ability to deliver high quality cross-sectoral analysis has been undermined by staffing capacity constraints. Furthermore, the PKC has no financial capacity to engage short-term or ad hoc consultants on specific substantive issues.

Citation:

1. National Development Plan 2020, Available at (in Latvian): <http://www.nap.lv/>, Last assessed: 21.05.2013

2. Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, Available at: [http://www.latvija2030.lv/upload/latvija2030\\_en.pdf](http://www.latvija2030.lv/upload/latvija2030_en.pdf), Last assessed: 21.05.2013

## Mexico

Score 8

The presidential office offers positions of high prestige in Mexico. It is involved with the legislative process to a decisive degree. Due to the absence of a high-level career civil service, both the cabinet and the presidential office are staffed with presidential appointments. The independence of figures within the executive is thus questionable since everyone of influence in the presidential office is a political appointee. It is relevant to note that the majority of legislative proposals introduced by the executive failed in post-1997 Mexico; however, this has shown a distinct turnaround in the last two years, with proposals succeeding at what might be comparatively viewed as a radical level. Political roadblocks rather than any lack of policy expertise were responsible for the earlier problems.

## New Zealand

Score 8

The policy-advisory group in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) currently consists of 14 staff members covering a broad spectrum of policy expertise. They are in constant contact with the prime minister and provide advice on all cabinet and cabinet committee papers. They also engage in coordinating interministerial cooperation. The policy-advisory group provides direct support to the prime minister on specifically commissioned initiatives, such as the prime minister's "Tackling Methamphetamine" Action Plan. In 2015, a Legislation Design and Advisory Committee (LDAC) was established with the aim of improving the quality and effectiveness of legislation. The LDAC advises departments regarding the design and content of bills while still in the development stage.

Citation:

Annual Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2014 (Wellington: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2014).

Policy Advisory Group: <http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/pag> (accessed October 24, 2015).

Legislation Design and Advisory Committee: <http://www.ldac.org.nz/> (accessed 30 November, 2015).

## Norway

- Score 8** The Office of the Prime Minister has a small to medium-sized staff of 30 to 50 people, about 10 of which are political advisers, with the rest being professional bureaucrats. The office is not tasked with evaluating policy proposals in detail, but rather works to coordinate activities, ensure that government policies are roughly aligned, and monitor whether policy planning is adequate and is following prescribed procedures. The office has sufficient expertise and capacity for these purposes, and is considered to be an elite department with very highly skilled employees. The new government installed a Europe Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with the mandate to increase coordination in handling issues affecting both domestic and European affairs. Additionally, a junior minister was appointed to coordinate issues related to domestic security.

## South Korea

- Score 8** South Korea's presidential system has a dual executive structure, with the president serving both as head of state and head of government. The prime minister is clearly subordinate to the president and is not accountable to parliament. The presidential office, known as the Blue House, has the power and expertise to evaluate draft bills. As the real center of power in the South Korean government, the Blue House has divisions corresponding with the various line-ministry responsibilities. The role of the president's office has become even stronger under President Park, with power becoming still more centralized. The Blue House is supported in its oversight role by the Prime Minister's Office and its Government Performance Evaluation Committee as well as by public institutions, such as the Korea Institute of Public Administration. President Park Geun-hye has established two vice prime ministers, one for the economy and one for society, education and culture, with the aim of promoting interministerial coordination.

Citation:

Government Performance Evaluation Committee, <http://www.psec.go.kr>

The Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), <http://www.kipa.re.kr>

## Spain

- Score 8** Spain's Government Office (Ministry of the Presidency, Ministerio de la Presidencia) and Prime Minister's Office (PMO) (both the Private Office and the Economic Office) are tasked with evaluating line-ministry proposals from the political and technical points of view. From a functional and even physical point of view, these bodies are nearly one, and form the very powerful political core of the executive (often called the Moncloa, after the name of the main palace hosting the

prime minister on the outskirts of Madrid). In general, these different units have ample staff with specific policy expertise, whose task is to substantively assess draft bills and other important sectoral initiatives to ensure they are compatible with the government's strategic and budgetary priorities.

The internal structures of the prime minister's Private Office and Economic Office vaguely reflect the various ministerial portfolios, although without achieving a comprehensive policy expertise that enables perfect oversight throughout the executive. Moreover, evaluations made by the advisers working there are not truly independent, since most staffers are insiders bureaucratically connected to their ministries of origin. For its part, the Government Office, which is also responsible for organizing the Council of Ministers' cycle of sessions, and whose head is the powerful deputy prime minister, has no sectoral-policy expertise, but also evaluates the substantive content of draft bills to some extent.

Nevertheless, despite the extensive constitutional and political strength of the Spanish premiership, these units enjoy only limited administrative resources. Their relatively small size is perhaps explained by the hierarchical, single-party nature of the Spanish government, in which it is not particularly necessary to monitor sectoral ministers from the center. To be sure, the transition toward a multi-party system entailing coalition or minority executives, which can be taken for granted for 2016, will require that this pattern of organization and functioning be revisited.

## Sweden

### Score 8

Interministerial coordination has been a significant problem in the Swedish system of government for a long time but has now been addressed in a comprehensive strategy. Over the past couple of years, a major program ("RK Styr") was implemented in order to strengthen the coordination between departments. This goal was believed to be a necessary step to increase the capability of the GO to steer the agencies more effectively.

In formal and legal terms, the government and its departments act as a collectivity. All decisions in government are made collectively and there is no individual ministerial accountability. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) plays a significant role in the coordination process. This is also the case for the Department of Finance. Furthermore, when the incumbent government is a coalition government, as has been the case since 2006, policies must be coordinated not just among the relevant departments but also among the governing parties.

The practice of governing and coordination is much more complex. Each department has a fair amount of autonomy in their respective sector. Coordination among departments takes places at different organizational levels depending on whether the issue is a technical and administrative issue, or whether it is a more political matter.

With the latter, political actors make the final decisions. When bills involving more than one department are drafted, coordination is achieved through meetings where drafts of the bill are discussed. There are instances where drafts have gone through a very large number of revisions as part of the coordination process. In pro-growth policies in the mid-2000s, for instance, the bill that eventually was submitted to the Riksdag was the 56th version of the bill.

The lack of coordination has to some extent been resolved by increasing the centralization within the Government Office. The Ministry of Finance has become a “primus inter pares” among the departments; a pattern that emerged in the wake of the financial crises in the early 1990s but that has remained ever since.

The PMO rarely coordinates policy content, which generally takes place during the process of deliberation or drafting of bills.

Citation:

Dahlström, C., B. G. Peters and J. Pierre (eds) (2011), *Steerings from the Center* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

Jacobsson, B., J. Pierre and G. Sundström (2015), *Governing the Embedded State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Niemann, C. (2013), *Villkorat förtroende. Normer och rollförväntningar i relationen mellan politiker och tjänstemän i Regeringskansliet* (Stockholm: Department of Political Science, University of Stockholm).

Pierre, J. and G. Sundström (eds) (2009), *Den nya samhällsstyrningen* (Malmö: Liber).

Premfors, R. and G. Sundström (2007), *Regeringskansliet* (Malmö: Liber).

## Belgium

Score 7

The Prime Minister’s Office contains a “strategic cell” that helps the prime minister evaluate and steer policy across all levels. Typically, this oversight function is shared with deputy prime ministers (one per coalition party, apart from the prime minister’s party) in a regular “core” meeting. Each of the advisors and experts in the cell specializes in one field. They assess only the most important issues, as the relatively small size of the team limits its ability to deal with all issues at hand. The fact that governments are always coalitions (comprised of at least four parties) also gives a central role to party advisors of the corresponding minister in the process of lawmaking.

## Denmark

Score 7

The Danish Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) is relatively small. The current number of staff is 74, spread between three groups (i.e., academics, technical and administrative staff), the academic group being the largest.

The office is divided into two groups, one dealing with foreign policy and the second with domestic political and economic issues. There is also a law division and an

administrative division. The High Commissioner for the Faroe Islands and the High Commissioner for Greenland also fall under the PMO. The prime minister has the following portfolio tasks: the North Atlantic area (e.g., Greenland and the Faroe Islands), the press, constitutional law and relations with the Royal Family.

Given its small size, the PMO does not have the capacity to evaluate the details of all laws. But some officials are seconded from important line ministries to give the PMO a certain capacity. This capacity has been strengthened since the 1990s.

There is a strong tradition of so-called minister rule (*ministerstyre*). A minister is in charge of a certain area, but the cabinet is a collective unit and is supposed to have only one policy focus, for which the prime minister has the overall responsibility. Coordination takes place through special committees. Most important is the coordination committee which meets weekly. Other committees are the committee on economic affairs, the security committee and the appointment committee. There is also a tradition of two-day government seminars once or twice per year where important government issues are discussed.

Citation:

Website of the Prime Minister's Office: [http://stm.dk/\\_a\\_2747.html](http://stm.dk/_a_2747.html) (Accessed 8 October 2015).

Jørgen Grønnegård Christensen et al., *Politik og forvaltning*, 2011.

## France

Score 7

There are three main loci of policy evaluation once a policy proposal has been forwarded to the prime minister. The first is the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the second is the President's Office, and the third, in cases of legislation or regulation, the Council of State. This hierarchical organization gives the prime minister the option of modifying ministers' draft bills. In important cases, this steering function is located in the President's Office. Both the president and the prime minister appoint advisors from all ministries as policy advisors in a given sector. All ministerial domains are covered. Several hundred people are involved in government steering, checking, controlling and advising functions.

However, considering these various checks a method of evaluation is probably overstated. The PMO mainly coordinates and arbitrates between ministries, takes into consideration opinions and criticisms from involved interests and from the majority coalition, and balances political benefits and risks. The President's Office does more or less the same in coordination with the PMO. More than offering a thorough policy evaluation, these two institutions serve as a place where the ultimate arbitrations between bureaucrats, party activists and vested interests are made. The power of the last word belongs to the President's Office, and this informal hierarchy gives considerable influence to the president's cabinet, and in practice, to the person in charge of a given policy area. The Council of State is supposed to offer legal

advice only. However, the Council takes advantage of this mandatory consultation step to trim a proposed bill or decree, pointing out weaknesses or contradictions. This advice, however, goes much beyond legal issues, yet the government has a choice between accepting the council's advice or dropping the questioned elements of policy, given international, European or constitutional requirements. The policy road, under these circumstances, might be narrow. It has to be noted that none of these "evaluations" are made public. Some of their content, however, do become known as many involved parties have a vested interest in leaking information in order to mobilize groups and lobbies in support of or against the envisaged policy.

The Hollande presidency (since May 2012), especially in its first two years, has been marked by a striking lack of political and administrative coordination. Multiple contradictions and tensions appeared over policy choices and issues. Divergences and fights between ministers reflected tensions within the left coalition and within the Socialist Party itself. A major battle was fought when the minister of the economy himself expressed disagreement with the government's economic policy. In August 2014, the new prime minister, Manuel Valls, had to step in and request that dissenting ministers resign. Since then, the situation has normalized. The Macron law (2015) illustrates the extent to which the process is now supervised by the prime minister and the president.

## Hungary

### Score 7

The Orbán governments have steadily expanded both the competencies and the resources of the *Miniszterelnökség*, or Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Under the third Orbán government, the number of state secretaries and undersecretaries in the PMO has been further expanded, and now stands at about 30. Altogether, 624 persons are employed in the PMO. In line with developments in other ministries, the expertise and professionalism of the PMO has declined since the 2014 elections. Three research institutes with about one hundred employees have supported the PMO: Veritas Institute (an institute of contemporary history), the Institute for Linguistic Strategy (sets language guidelines for the state and private Fidesz media) and Institute for National Strategy (deals with Hungarians in neighboring countries).

## Ireland

### Score 7

The influence and effectiveness of the Irish prime minister's office (Department of the Taoiseach) is limited by a dearth of analytical skills. The department is focused on strategic policy issues and the delivery of the Programme for Government.

An expert group on strengthening civil-service accountability and performance reported to government in May 2014. Among the numerous recommendations it made, it proposed the establishment of an accountability board for the civil service,

chaired by the Taoiseach but including external members. This board would be tasked with reviewing and constructively challenging the performance of senior management as well as monitoring progress on the delivery of agreed-upon priorities. It also recommended that the Irish Civil Service be given an appointed head. The government rejected the proposal for a head of civil service, but an accountability board with independent members was established in May 2015.

Citation:

The report of the Independent Panel on Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance is available here:

<http://www.per.gov.ie/civil-service-accountability-consultation-process/>

## Japan

### Score 7

Under the central-government reform implemented by the Koizumi government in 2001, the role of lead institutions was considerably strengthened, particularly through a beefing-up of the Kantei, which assists the prime minister, and through the introduction of cabinet-related councils, including the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy. Later LDP- and DPJ-led governments have struggled with calibrating the relationship between central authority, the ministries and their bureaucracies, and the coalition parties (which follow their own political logics).

The Kantei has grown to more than 800 employees with expertise in all major policy fields. These employees are usually temporarily seconded by their ministries. While these staffers possess considerable expertise in their respective fields, it is doubtful whether they can function in an unbiased manner on issues where the institutional interests of their home organizations are concerned. Moreover, the system lacks adequate infrastructure for broader coordination (including public relations or contemporary methods of policy evaluation). In 2015, additional measures were put in place aimed at focusing and coordinating the workloads of the Kantei and Cabinet Office.

It is frequently said in Japan that the Kantei's clout is determined largely by its head, the chief cabinet secretary, who at the time of writing was Yoshihide Suga. This figure's main duties include holding two daily press conferences and coordinating policy. The position has a special annual fund of JPY 1.4 billion (about €10.6 million in October 2015) at its disposal, with no need to disclose expenditure details.

Citation:

Izuru Makihara, The Role of the Kantei in Making Policy, nippon.com, 27.06.2013, <http://www.nippon.com/en/features/c00408/>

Kensuke Takayasu, The Pressures of Change: The Office of Prime Minister in the United Kingdom and Japan, nippon.com, 22.05.2014, <http://www.nippon.com/en/features/c00410/>

Reiji Yoshida, Chief Cabinet secretary is much more than top government spokesman, The Japan Times, 18 May 2015, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/05/18/reference/chief-cabinet-secretary-much-top-government-spokesman/>

## Lithuania

### Score 7

Under Prime Minister Kubilius, the Government Office was reorganized into a Prime Minister's Office, and given the task of assisting in the formulation and execution of government policies. This reform increased the capacities of the core government to assess the policy content of draft government decisions, at the expense of its capacity to review their legal quality. However, this latter function was moved to the Ministry of Justice. Shortly after taking power, the Butkevičius government reversed this organizational reform, reorganizing the Prime Minister's Office once again into a Government Office.

The recent development of evidence-based decision-making instruments such as a monitoring information system, a budget-program assessment system and an impact-assessment system has increased the capacity of the core government to monitor and evaluate draft government decisions based on the government's political agenda. However, the degree of effectiveness has varied by instrument, as well as with the relevance and quality of the empirical evidence available for decision-making. Assessing the coordination of regulatory policy in Lithuania, the OECD recently recommended establishing an integrated strategic plan for better regulation, a high-level coordination body, and a better-regulation unit within the central government.

#### Citation:

OECD, Regulatory Policy in Lithuania: Focusing on the Delivery Side, OECD Reviews of Regulatory Reform, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2015 [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/regulatory-policy-in-lithuania\\_9789264239340-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/regulatory-policy-in-lithuania_9789264239340-en).

## Germany

### Score 6

The Federal Chancellery is organized into six directorates, with various numbers of subgroups that are again subdivided to better mirror the line ministries (Spiegelreferate). With respect to European politics and international tasks, the Chancellery seems to coordinate with partners and to function quite effectively. However, national policies are mainly worked out by the individual ministries in accordance with previously struck political compromises. In general, the Chancellery does not autonomously evaluate important draft bills or assess them according to strategic and to budgetary government guidelines. In addition, it appears that its capacities are generally lower than those of the line ministries.

During the recent refugee crisis, the Federal Chancellery gained some ad hoc competences to manage, coordinate and evaluate the related policies of line ministries. However, in all other policy areas the powers of the Chancellery remain limited.

## Greece

### Score 6

The center of government has traditionally struggled to coordinate and evaluate government legislation. Few prime ministers have had effective staffing to help perform such functions. As with previous governments (including the New Democracy-PASOK coalition government which ended in 2014), under the Syriza-ANEL coalition government (since January 2015) draft legislation has rarely been subjected to substantive review and evaluation. In fact, ministers have often been able to insert last-minute amendments to legislation and thereby foster clientelism.

The two relevant offices at the center of government – the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG), which is a separate unit supervised by the prime minister and tasked more narrowly with preparing cabinet meetings and reviewing draft bills, have lacked the staff and resources to act as efficient coordinators and evaluators. The PMO staff has often assigned non-governmental tasks. The GSG has normally played a limited role in coordination and evaluation, largely failing to do so effectively. It has not, for example, kept or circulated minutes of relevant cabinet meetings.

Bailout conditionality has compelled the government to pay closer attention to such matters. In 2013 and 2014, PM Samaras (New Democracy) and Deputy Prime Minister Evangelos Venizelos cooperated closely with the latter ensuring that ministers complied with the government’s decisions. In 2015, PM Tsipras only monitored his ministers to an extent as he was intensely preoccupied with negotiations with Greece’s creditors which led to the third bailout package of July 2015.

## Iceland

### Score 6

The Prime Minister’s Office has the fewest staff members of any of the country’s ministries and a limited capacity for independently assessing draft bills. The previous government (Sigurðardóttir cabinet) merged a number of ministries together, reducing the total number of ministries from 12 to eight. A primary justification was that some ministries lacked broad-based expertise and the merger would make this expertise more widely accessible, which has in some cases been achieved. The current government (Gunnlaugsson cabinet) partially reversed this reform in 2013 by appointing separate ministers to head the Ministry of Welfare’s subdivisions of Social Affairs and Housing, and Health Affairs. Furthermore, a separate Minister of Environment and Resources was appointed at the end of 2014. These changes have increased the number of ministers from eight to 10.

## Italy

### Score 6

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as a rule evaluates all draft bills before they are submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. This scrutiny however mainly deals with legal aspects (which now increasingly concern compatibility with European laws) as the PMO itself does not have the systematic sectoral expertise that would allow it to conduct a detailed policy scrutiny. This means that intervention by the PMO is more reactive than proactive. The office gets more deeply involved in issues when problems emerge during the policymaking process. Important draft bills are in general scrutinized by the office with regard to the effects a bill may have on the cohesion of the majority coalition. A detailed scrutiny of the financial implications of each bill is conducted by the Treasury, which has a kind of preventive veto power. Prime Minister Renzi's dominant role in the current government means that both he and his personal political staff have significant influence in steering the cabinet on legislation. However, the PMO's small staff size prevents it from controlling all the technical aspects of legislation. As a result, corrections to legislative proposals are often necessary to secure parliamentary approval.

## Luxembourg

### Score 6

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) employs around 40 civil servants, primarily trained in law, economics and political sciences. The PMO does not have sufficient resources to assess all the activities of government ministries. Due to the limited capacities of all ministries including the PMO, there is no specific capacity and no special committee designated to manage interministerial coordination. After the inauguration of the new government in December 2013, interministerial coordination presented some difficulties.

Senior civil servants in the ministries prepare a "pré-conseil" or pre-briefing for the weekly meeting of ministers (conseil de gouvernement). All draft bills have to be adopted at both stages before being introduced to parliament, and all draft bills are revised within these two interministerial meetings. The Inspectorate General of Finance (Inspection générale des finances, IGF) evaluates draft bills and participates in numerous committees.

Citation:

<http://www.igf.etat.lu/>

OECD (2013), OECD Journal on Budgeting, 2012/Supplement 1, Paris

[http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/governance/oecd-journal-on-budgeting-volume-2012-supplement-1\\_budget-v12-sup1-en#page1](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/governance/oecd-journal-on-budgeting-volume-2012-supplement-1_budget-v12-sup1-en#page1)

<http://www.gouvernement.lu/1719191/conseil-gouv>

<http://www.mss.public.lu/acteurs/igss/index.html>

<http://www.gouvernement.lu/1719075/gouvernement>

## Netherlands

### Score 6

The Dutch prime minister is formally in charge of coordinating government policy as a whole, and has a concomitant range of competencies which include deciding on the composition of the Council of Ministers' agenda and formulating its conclusions and decisions; chairing Council of Ministers meetings, committees (onderraad) and (in most cases) ministerial committees; adjudicating interministerial conflicts; serving as the primary press spokesperson and first speaker in the States General; and speaking in international fora and arenas (e.g., European Union and the United Nations) on behalf of the Council of Ministers and the Dutch government as a whole.

The prime minister's own Ministry of General Affairs office has some 14 advising councilors (raadadviseurs, with junior assistants) at its disposal. The advising councilors are top-level civil servants, not political appointees. In addition, the prime minister has a special relationship with the Scientific Council of Government Policy. Sometimes, deputy directors of the planning agencies play the role of secretaries for interdepartmental "front gates." To conclude, the Prime Minister's Office and the prime minister himself have a very limited capacity to evaluate the policy content of line ministry proposals unless they openly clash with the government platform (regeerakkoord).

#### Citation:

<http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/bewindspersonen/jan-peter-balkenende/taken>

[http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/selectielijsten/BSD\\_Coordinatie\\_algemeen\\_regeringsbeleid\\_stcrnt\\_2009\\_63.pdf](http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/selectielijsten/BSD_Coordinatie_algemeen_regeringsbeleid_stcrnt_2009_63.pdf)

#### Additional reference:

R.B. Andeweg and G.A. Irwin (2014), *Governance and politics of the Netherlands*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

## Portugal

### Score 6

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has limited policy expertise. While it is able to assess bills, it lacks in-depth policy assessment capabilities within most policy areas. With the bailout terms and the achievement of budgetary targets taking a paramount role in the 2011 – 2014 period, a situation that continued through November 2015, the assessment of policy has largely centered on budgetary implications, notably in terms of reducing costs and/or increasing revenue. To this end, the Ministry of Finance plays a central role in the assessment of policy proposals alongside the PMO.

## Romania

**Score 6** The prime minister evaluates important draft bills. The Chancellery of the Prime Minister (of which the prime minister is the head) is one of the bodies responsible for the evaluation of national programs, and consists of about 15 state counselors with varying degrees and depths of expertise. However, no unit is responsible for policy evaluation and, as a result, ministry proposals are not always assessed properly in terms of their content.

Citation:

CURLEY, H (2006) Assessment of the Evaluation Culture in Romania. [Online] Available from: [http://discutii.mfinante.ro/static/10/Mfp/evaluare/Assessment\\_Romanian\\_Eval\\_CultureEN.pdf](http://discutii.mfinante.ro/static/10/Mfp/evaluare/Assessment_Romanian_Eval_CultureEN.pdf). [Accessed 05/11/15].

MATEI, L (2009) Romanian Public Management Reform: Theoretical and Empirical Studies. Vol 1. Bucharest: Editura Economică.

## Austria

**Score 5** Two aspects of Austria's governance system limit the efficiency of interministerial coordination. First, members of the cabinet ("Ministerrat," which is officially translated as the Council of Ministers but is essentially a cabinet) all enjoy the same legal status. The federal chancellor, who chairs the cabinet, is only first among equals. He or she has no formal authority over the other members of the council. Secondly, with the exception of the years between 1966 and 1983, Austria has been governed by coalitions since 1945. This further reduces the authority of the head of government, as another member of the government – typically the vice-chancellor, is head of another part in the coalition. The result is a significant fragmentation of strategic capacities. Responsibility within the government is distributed among highly autonomous ministers and among political parties linked by a coalition agreement but nevertheless competing for votes.

The Federal Chancellery does have a department called the Legal and Constitutional Service (Verfassungsdienst), which is responsible for checking the constitutionality of policy proposals coming from the various ministries. Another instrument of oversight is the evaluation of policy effects (Wirkungsorientierte Folgenabschätzung, WFA) that as of 2013 must be integrated into every policy proposal. Under this policy, every draft law has to include an evaluation of its effects in financial, social and other terms, thus enabling other members of government to evaluate its consequences. The cabinet is de facto a collective leadership, complicated by the conflicting interests of coalition partners.

The 2013 elections and the resulting coalition government, which consists of the same two parties, have not led to any significant changes regarding interministerial coordination.

## Czech Republic

- Score 5 The Office of the Government is relatively small and has little sectoral policy expertise. It prepares cabinet meetings, but lacks the capacity to evaluate draft bills.

## Estonia

- Score 5 GO capacities were substantially weakened in 1992 in the process of governmental reform. Currently, the GO and prime minister's support structures primarily serve to provide consulting services, monitor governmental processes and provide technical (judicial) expertise. There is no capacity to perform substantial evaluation of line-ministry proposals. As a result, as an OECD governance report (2011) pointed out, policymaking lacks coherence and interministerial cooperation is not strong. In December 2014, an updated action plan for the implementation of OECD recommendations was adopted. One of the objectives of the action plan was to strengthen the GO's capacity to address long-term and cross-cutting issues.

## Israel

- Score 5 The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) relies on sectoral policy expertise. In recent years, it adopted a principle that it should hold a staff of independent and professional analysts; this led to the establishment of the National Security Council and the Economics Committee, which directly advise the PMO. The 2012 Kochik Committee viewed these as positive but insufficient steps and advised strengthening the PMOs consulting mechanism.

Citation:

Arian, Asher, "Politics In Israel: The Second Republic", 2nd Edition 2005 (Hebrew).

Arlozerov, Merav, "To be a minister in the government? I wouldn't touch that job with a stick, the Treasury castrates them all", theMarker, 1.8.2012:

<http://www.themarker.com/career/civil-service/1.1790839> (Hebrew).

"The committee to investigate the Prime Minister's headquarter", Official report April 2012, (Hebrew).

## Malta

- Score 5 Government ministries in Malta enjoy almost complete autonomy, with limitations only in the form of budgetary constraints imposed by the Ministry of Finance and cabinet approval. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) relies largely on the attorney general's office to evaluate draft bills, while consulting specialists on non-legal issues.

In March 2013 the government appointed a minister, as part of the PMO, to oversee the implementation of the government's manifesto. Furthermore, the PMO has demonstrated a greater ability to respond to policy implementation failures more recently. However, cases involving the Lands Department indicate that more needs to be done.

Citation:

Sansone, K Justice to be transferred to OPM - Labor MP is Commissioner Against Bureaucracy Times of Malta 18/06/13

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20151029/local/over-32m-in-government-consultancies-in-one-year.590017>

## Slovakia

Score 5

Slovakia has a strong tradition of departmentalism and collegial cabinets. The Government Office focuses on the legal and technical coherence of draft bills, but lacks the capacity and sectoral expertise to evaluate their policy content.

Citation:

Blondel, Jean, Ferdinand Müller-Rommel, Darina Malová et al., 2007: *Governing New Democracies*. Basingstoke/London: Palgrave.

## Switzerland

Score 5

The Swiss political system does not have a prime minister or a prime minister's office. The government is a collegial body. However, there are several instruments of interministerial coordination and various mechanisms by which ministries' draft bills are evaluated. Departments engage in a formal process of consultation when drafting proposals, the Department of Justice provides legal evaluations of draft bills, and the Federal Chancellery and Federal Council provide political coordination.

## Turkey

Score 5

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has established a General Directorate of Laws and Decrees and General Directorate of Legislation Development and Publication to scrutinize bylaws prepared by ministries and public agencies, examining their congruity with the existing body of draft bills, decrees, statutes, regulations and Council of Minister resolutions. The directorates also review laws, general legal principles, development plans and programs, and the government's program. These units are the primary government-office entities charged with drafting and coordinating new regulations. However, not all draft bills are the product of expert advice. Recently, the number of adjustments to draft bills made during the

parliamentary-approval process indicated that standards were upheld only partially.

The PMO has a total of 2,243 employees, a quarter of whom are experts or advisors, or able to provide similar services. A Sectoral Monitoring and Assessment Unit was established to provide advice to the PMO in 2011. As of May 2015, about 266 career employees from various public institutions were assigned to this unit. Critics argue that these senior civil servants lack sufficient resources, as well as incentives for effective action. It is also alleged to be a “detention camp” for bureaucrats supposedly close to the illegal Gülenist “parallel state” structure.

Citation:

TC Başbakanlık 2014 Yılı Faaliyet Raporu, [http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/docs/KurumsalHaberler/2014-yili-basbakanlik-faaliyet-raporu\\_150302134448.pdf](http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/docs/KurumsalHaberler/2014-yili-basbakanlik-faaliyet-raporu_150302134448.pdf) (accessed 27 October 2015)

Cinnah'taki toplama kampı, Taraf daily newspaper, 25 September 2015, <http://www.taraf.com.tr/cinnahtaki-toplama-kampi/> (accessed 27 October 2015)

Kamuda Paralel tasfiyesi, Akşam daily newspaper, 12 September 2015, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/ekonomi/kamuda-paralel-tasfiyesi/haber-442223> (accessed 27 October 2015)

## Bulgaria

Score 4

The official government office in Bulgaria, the Council of Ministers' administration, plays a mainly administrative role. It prepares cabinet meetings but lacks the capacity for in-depth evaluation of the policy content of line-ministry proposals. Specialized directorates within the Council of Ministers' administration do review submissions from the line ministries, but deal less with substance than with ensuring that submissions are presented in the appropriate format. The prime minister's own political-cabinet staff is relatively small and has little expertise to evaluate the policy content of line-ministry proposals.

## Slovenia

Score 4

Slovenia has a strong tradition of departmentalism and collegial cabinets. The Government Office focuses on the legal and technical coherence of draft bills, but lacks the capacity and sectoral expertise to evaluate their policy content, especially since the recruitment of expert staff is limited and often subject to political pressures. Prime Minister Cerar has done little to change this situation.

## Croatia

Score 3

In Croatia, the Prime Minister's Office lacked until 2014 a central policy unit able to evaluate and coordinate the activities of the line ministries. At the beginning of 2014, a unit for public policy coordination and support to the prime minister was established in the Prime Minister Office. The unit has jurisdiction for coordination

and monitoring public policies performed by line ministries. However, the capacity of the staff to provide reliable applied policy analysis is limited.

Citation:

Z. Petak (2015) Evidence-Based Policy Making and the Implementation of Regulatory Impact Assessment in Croatia. *Management and Business Administration: Central Europe*, Vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 147-162.

## Cyprus

### Score 2

Under Cyprus' presidential system, draft bills are prepared by the responsible line ministry and sent to the secretariat of the Council of Ministers for inclusion on meetings' agenda. Advice, limited to the constitutionality of the draft, is usually provided by the Attorney General's Office. The secretariat of the Council of Ministers is expected to check proposals for consistency with previous decisions and existing laws.

There is no GO in the sense of a body with sufficient sectoral expertise or capacities to evaluate draft laws related to fiscal and strategic planning.

Indicator

## GO Gatekeeping

Question

Can the government office / prime minister's office return items envisaged for the cabinet meeting on the basis of policy considerations?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = The GO/PMO can return all/most items on policy grounds.
- 8-6 = The GO/PMO can return some items on policy grounds.
- 5-3 = The GO/PMO can return items on technical, formal grounds only.
- 2-1 = The GO/PMO has no authority to return items.

### Australia

Score 10

All major policy proposals must pass through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. In its role of coordinating government policy and ensuring a consistent and coherent legislative program, the department has the capacity to return any item that conflicts with the government's overall policy agenda. However, such an occasion rarely arises, since the department is involved at an early stage in assisting with the drafting of any significant policy initiatives, so it does not reach an advanced stage without department approval.

### Chile

Score 10

The Government or Cabinet Office (Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno, or Segegob) has the ability to return items. The president can overrule the advisory ministry if he or she holds a strong particular interest in a special item. But in the day-to-day course of operations, this rarely happens. Under the previous government, however, some proposals were blocked directly by then-President Sebastián Piñera.

### France

Score 10

The Prime Minister's Office has strong powers vis-à-vis line ministers. Since the beginning of the Fifth Republic, the authority of the prime minister has been indisputable. The only exceptions to this iron rule derive from the presence of heavyweights in the cabinet, or when a minister has privileged access to the President (for instance, Jack Lang, the minister of culture during Mitterrand's

presidency). President Hollande's reluctance to impose a strong line weakened the prime minister vis-à-vis the ministers during the term of the first prime minister, Jean-Marc Ayrault. His successor, Prime Minister Manuel Valls has imposed a return to strict discipline and forced dissenting ministers to resign. This turmoil has shown that beyond the formal rules, it is political leadership that enables the full application of the prime minister's powers.

## Hungary

Score 10

The dominance of the Prime Minister's Office over line ministries started already before Orbán regained power, but has further increased since. Under the Orbán governments, all important personal, political and policy decisions have been made by the prime minister and the small groups of his confidants. Until autumn 2015, this included first of all the two young ministers, Minister of the PMO János Lázár and Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó. With his appointment as head of the personal political cabinet of Orbán, Antal Rogán will control all government activities on behalf of the prime minister and will report to him daily. Rogán is a close ally of Árpád Habony, the closest adviser to Orbán, who has no official position and no public presence and is therefore not interviewed, made subject to oversight, or investigated. There are concerns that GO gatekeeping allows the leading right-wing elite to act without consideration for the administration more generally.

## Iceland

Score 10

The Prime Minister's Office has no formal authority. Formally issues can only be approved in cabinet if a unanimous decision is reached by ministers. In practice, however, prime ministers can return items to cabinet despite this authority not being explicitly granted by law.

## United States

Score 10

The comparable issue for the U.S. system concerns the ability of White House staff to control the presentation of issues, proposals, policy papers and decision memoranda to the White House or cabinet-based presidential-advisory committees. In fact, the president and his or her staff assign the responsibility for coordinating decision processes on major issues, and may choose to emphasize White House or cabinet responsibility in varying degrees as he or she organizes the White House and establishes advisory arrangements. In recent presidencies, a strong and consistent trend has favored White House control. In the Obama administration, for example, the White House controls policy management and thus the presentation of decision materials almost completely, with cabinet officials in subordinate roles.

## Canada

- Score 9** In general, Canada's government office, the PCO, can both legally and de facto return items to initiating departments on the basis of policy considerations. Indeed, this happens frequently. On the other hand, as one deputy minister in Ottawa once observed, "He who writes the first draft, controls policy." To be sure, central agencies have significant influence within the machinery of government in Ottawa. However, there is ongoing dialogue between central-agency staff and line-department officials. Things tend to be sorted out before items are "returned" to line departments. Moreover, unless draft legislation has a financial resources component to it, neither Finance nor Treasury Board officials are likely to take a strong interest.

## Denmark

- Score 9** The prime minister has the discretionary power to take the actions deemed necessary. The tradition of "minister rule" (ministerstyre) implies that this possibility is rarely exercised. Moreover, the fact that most governments have been minority governments implies that consensus and negotiation is involved.

Citation:

Jørgen Grønnegård Christensen, Peter Munk Christiansen and Marius Ibsen, *Politik og forvaltning*, 3rd ed., 2011.

## Ireland

- Score 9** The Department of the Taoiseach reviews draft memoranda designated for discussion by the cabinet. Its views are taken into account when these memoranda are revised. The Taoiseach's office exercises tight control over the government agenda; as does the Department of Finance.

## Italy

- Score 9** In Renzi's cabinet, the position of the prime minister vis à vis the other ministers is particularly strong. This has in part to do with the strong leadership style pursued by Renzi, who is also the unchallenged leader of the heavily reformed Democratic Party, but is also a result of the limited impact waged by other coalition parties. As a result, the Prime Minister's Office has played a particularly strong gatekeeping role throughout the period under review. This is particularly evident in policy matters given top priority by the government.

## Malta

- Score 9 Malta's system of government is based on the Westminster system, and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) can return most items on policy grounds. In practice, policies are adopted or rejected following cabinet discussions. Although the PMO has not established procedures for sectoral policy overviews, it now employs a number of offices to achieve this, including the Policy Efficiency Unit and Internal Audit Offices. Much also depends on the powers of persuasion of the prime minister among his cabinet colleagues. The cabinet has a great deal of leverage, and its members are the most likely to object to policy or a draft bill.

## Mexico

- Score 9 The role of the presidential office is significant in Mexico. Because Mexico does not have a prime minister, there has been no real counterweight to the power of the presidency within the executive branch of government. Much of the power thus comes from the presidential office. Whatever the legal situation might be, it makes no sense to press ahead with items to be discussed in cabinet if the presidential office opposes them. Good relations between the presidential office and an individual member of cabinet matter more to the cabinet secretary than to the presidential office.

## New Zealand

- Score 9 The key policy adviser in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) plays an influential role in policy processes and regularly intervenes to "pull" cabinet papers that are deemed to be inadequate in some way.

Citation:  
Confidential information by a policy adviser in the DPMC.

## Norway

- Score 9 The Office of the Prime Minister plays an important role in coordinating government policy and ensuring a consistent and coherent legislative program, especially in situations when line ministries are in disagreement. It is able to and often does return materials to departments for further elaboration, and frequently works directly with departments on draft proposals. Both the gatekeeping and general policy-oversight functions are shared with the ministries of Finance and Justice.

## South Korea

- Score 9 There is extensive coordination between ministries, the prime minister's office and the Blue House in the course of planning cabinet meetings. The president presides over regular cabinet meetings and can legally and de facto return any items envisaged for meetings as she wishes. In practice this competence is limited only by the expertise of the Blue House and the relatively small size of the Blue House bureaucracy. Thus, the de facto ability to return issues depends on their political importance to the president.

## Spain

- Score 9 Materials earmarked for cabinet meetings (usually draft bills or appointments of top officials) are not frequently returned, but the Government Office (Ministerio de la Presidencia, GO) can do so, citing either formal or substantive considerations. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) does not have the official mandate to return items on policy grounds but, given its political weight within the core executive, does so nonetheless. The head of the GO (who is also the deputy prime minister) has since 2011 been Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, a state attorney and powerful member of the Popular Party (Partido Popular, PP) who can reject initiatives either in her political or legal position as chair of the committee that prepares Council of Ministers meetings (the Comisión General de Subsecretarios y Secretarios de Estado). The powerful directors of the prime minister's Private Office, Jorge Moragas, and the prime minister's Economic Office, Álvaro Nadal, can de facto return items but only by taking advantage of their proximity to the prime minister. This is typically done through informal instructions to the sectoral department responsible for the item. Nonetheless, the prime minister's Economic Office has also been, since 2012, officially responsible for coordinating economic matters. It does so through a specialized ministerial committee on economic affairs. This constellation grants the Economic Office some legal capacity to accept or return on economic policy or budgetary grounds items that have been submitted by a ministry. The Ministry of Finance and Public Administration also participates in this gatekeeping function, but only on budgetary and organizational grounds.

A legal reform of the new general administrative procedure passed in October 2015 introduced the so-called Annual Normative Plan, along with the idea of "better regulation" as a guiding principle for Spanish lawmaking. This will probably reinforce the GO's role as a central gatekeeper able to monitor whether sectoral ministries sending legal proposals to the cabinet meeting have respected formal and policy considerations, and that new proposals are compatible with previous plans.

Citation:

Ley 39/2015, del Procedimiento Administrativo Común de las Administraciones Públicas  
[www.boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2015-10565](http://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2015-10565)

## Sweden

### Score 9

The GO or PMO always have the final say on policy decisions and can return items on grounds or technical grounds. The only exception to this rule is when there is minority government and the parliamentary majority makes a decision which is in conflict with the government's proposal.

However, given the distinct top-down nature of the work in the GO, items rarely proceed very far without an approving not from upstairs, so it is not very common that policy items are returned in the final stage of the decision-making process. When this happens, it is usually because the timing of a given proposal is not politically advantageous or it is unclear how the policy will be funded. It can also be the case that the European Union adopts a policy that render a domestic policy moot. A final observation is that for the current government, which is a coalition government, policy-progress must be coordinated not just among departments, but also among the governing partners.

Citation:

Premfors, R. and G. Sundström (2007), *Regeringskansliet* (Malmö: Liber).

## Turkey

### Score 9

According to Article 112 of the constitution, the prime minister, as chairman of the Council of Ministers, is tasked with ensuring cooperation among ministers and with supervising the implementation of government general policy. The members of the Council of Ministers are jointly responsible for the implementation of policy. Each minister is responsible to the prime minister and is responsible for the conduct of affairs under his or her jurisdiction and the acts and activities of his or her subordinates. The prime minister ensures that the ministers exercise their functions in accordance with the constitution and the law, and can take corrective measures. Article 109 of the constitution, which gives the prime minister the power to appoint ministers, also makes his or her oversight power over ministerial proposals clear. However, ministries have been able to exercise greater influence during periods of coalition government. To prevent this, a special coordinating body composed of ministers from coalition parties sets the agenda for cabinet meetings.

An example of the exceptional power of the Prime Minister's Office in terms of policymaking is the fact that all public institutions, entities and corporations in which more than 50% of assets are publicly held – excluding municipalities and special provincial administrations – must get permission from this office before selling, renting, transferring, allocating or bartering any real-estate holdings (Circular 2012/15).

The hidden (discretionary) budget is allocated through the approval of the prime minister and the minister of finance. This was increased to €429 million in the January – October 2015 period. Expenditures through the president’s discretionary budget, which was created after the 2014 presidential elections, totaled €89.6 million during the first nine months of 2015. These expenditures are not audited.

Citation:

Circular, 2012/15, 16 Haziran 2012, [http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskil\\_er/2012/06/20120616-6.htm](http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskil_er/2012/06/20120616-6.htm) (accessed 27 October 2015)

Cumhurbaşkanlığı'na örtülü ödenek yetmedi, bütçe 546 milyona çıktı, T24, 16 September 2015, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/cumhurbaskanligina-ortulu-odenek-yetmedi-butce-546-milyona-cikti,309811> (accessed 27 October 2015)

Nereye harcadığı gizli tutulan örtülü ödenekten ilk 9 ayda başbakanlık 1 milyar 780 milyon, Cumhurbaşkanlığı ise 278 milyon lira harcadı, Kazete, 18.10.2015, [http://kazete.com.tr/haber/ortulu-odenek-harcamasinda-basbakanlik-costu\\_42312](http://kazete.com.tr/haber/ortulu-odenek-harcamasinda-basbakanlik-costu_42312) (accessed 27 October 2015)

## United Kingdom

Score 9

The new Conservative government faces fewer difficulties than its predecessor, because there is no longer a need to coordinate between two different political parties. During the coalition government, 2010 to 2015, a complex mechanism had to be set up to ensure bipartisan approval and consistency with the coalition agreement. Since the return of a majoritarian government in May 2015, the situation has returned to the pre-2010 status quo. The Cabinet Secretariat, the most important political unit within the Cabinet Office, sets the agenda for cabinet meetings and prepares a forward program, which is agreed by the prime minister. The Cabinet Secretariat may contact ministerial offices to request that a minister makes a presentation, presents a paper or raises an issue orally. The prime minister is thus in a very strong position.

Citation:

Constitution Unit 2011: Inside Story: How Coalition Government Works (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/research/coalition-government/interim-report.pdf>). Royal Holloway Group 2012: A partnership of unequals: Positional power in the coalition government, in: *British Politics* 7 (4), 418-442.

## Luxembourg

Score 8

The long period of leadership of former Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker (in office 1995 – 2013) gave him the authority to reject policy proposals or inspire new policy projects. The prime minister is in general able to withdraw a project or a draft bill without formal procedures. However, he or she acts as first among equals (*primus inter pares*), and therefore should be reluctant to interfere particularly in dossiers handled by ministries held by the government coalition partner. Consultative bodies, interministerial meetings and the Inspection General of Finance (*Inspection générale des finances*, IGF), which is affiliated with the budget ministry, function as arbiters in policymaking.

Citation:

<http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/a/archives/2009/0173/a173.pdf#page=2>

[http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/textescoordonnes/compilation/code\\_administratif/VOL\\_1/GOUVERNEMENT.pdf](http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/textescoordonnes/compilation/code_administratif/VOL_1/GOUVERNEMENT.pdf)

## Poland

Score 8

The prime minister and his/her Chancellery plays a strong gatekeeping role. The prime minister is formally allowed to return items on policy grounds, and has also enjoyed a strong informal authority. All draft bills are reviewed by the Chancellery's Council of Ministers Committee Department before their presentation in the Council of Ministers.

## Portugal

Score 8

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is able to return proposed legislation on the basis of policy considerations. However, due to the terms of the MoU and related policy priorities that continued through the end of the review period, its de facto power to return legislation has been constrained. The priority given to budgetary consolidation has meant that the Ministry of Finance has seen its power increase, giving it a de facto veto power over policy. While it does not officially hold this power, its powers have increased due to its influence over any policy with financial implications.

## Belgium

Score 7

Before implementation, each government project is submitted to the ministers' council, which meets weekly. The council is composed of a secretariat, which scrutinizes technically and politically each proposal before it is debated and prepares the ministers' council agenda, and 14 line ministers and the prime minister, who debate each proposal. Decisions are made on the basis of political consensus, not a majority vote.

Either directly or through the council's secretariat, the prime minister can block any item presented and either return it for redrafting or turn it down completely. This may be because a project does not fit the government agreement or conflicts with one of the coalition parties' agenda, but can be for any other reason as well. All government members must by contrast defend an accepted project collegially. In general, the detailed government agreement, informally referred to as "the bible," provides an easy justification for the rejection of projects that might be politically difficult to handle; if a project does not directly relate to the governmental agreement, it is likely to be turned down either by the prime minister or through maneuvers by some other coalition parties in the "core."

Citation:

Reference: <http://www.premier.be/fr/conseil-des-ministres>

## Finland

Score 7

The Prime Minister's Office can return items envisaged for cabinet meetings on policy grounds. As the Prime Minister's Office coordinates the drafting of proposals, and also arranges the agenda for cabinet meetings, there is rarely reason for it to return items. The rule is that ministers can place items on the cabinet's agenda even against the wishes of the prime minister. The handling of conflicts can be delicate, especially in cases when the prime minister and minister represent different parties, and perhaps differing political interests which need to be reconciled. Yet controversial items are often discussed in informal meetings beforehand. In previous times, an institutionalized unofficial meeting of the cabinet led by the prime minister, called the Iltakoulu, played an important function in consensual decision-making; unfortunately, for reasons that are not entirely clear, this arrangement is no longer used.

## Israel

Score 7

Traditionally, the PM did not have the power to return items to the Israeli general cabinet. However, in 2012 it filed to amend this standard practice; this was ratified by the government. It included expanding the PM's authority to delay the implementation of government decisions by resubmitting an issue to a vote after it was rejected as well as authorizing him or her to cancel, postpone or call meetings on government decisions. Since the amendment has only recently been enacted, it could be argued that it has not been de facto enforced for purposes of resubmitting an issue. Some legal experts claim that the amendment was mainly designated for rare or critical matters.

Citation:

Barnea, Shlomit and Kenig, Ofer, "Political nominations in the executive branch," IDI website, June 2011, (Hebrew).

Weisman, Lilach, "Expansion of the Prime Minister's authorities was approved; We must stop the madness", Globes website 12.8.2012: <http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000773448> (Hebrew).

"Government bill amendment 868 from 12.8.2012," PMO official website:

<http://www.pmo.gov.il/Secretary/sederyom/Pages/seder120812.aspx> (Hebrew).

## Japan

Score 7

Present guidelines for policy coordination make the Kantei the highest and final organ for policy coordination below the cabinet itself. This has de jure enabled prime ministers to return items envisaged for cabinet meetings on policy grounds. In reality this rarely happens, as items to reach the Cabinet stage are typically those on which

consensus has previously been established. However, contentious policy issues can produce inter-coalition conflicts, even at the Cabinet level.

Formal input into law-making processes is provided by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau. This body's official mandate is to make sure that bills conform to existing legislation and the constitution, rather than to provide material evaluation. It is further weakened as an independent mechanism of cabinet or prime minister-level supervision, as ministry representatives are seconded to the Bureau to provide sectoral competences, creating influences difficult to counter in the absence of independent expertise at the central level. In 2015, it was revealed that with respect to the controversial July 2014 cabinet decision to reverse the prevailing interpretation of Article 9 of the constitution ("Peace clause"), the Bureau communicated its approval only over the telephone, and no open records on the evaluation were filed. This can be regarded as a serious irregularity, with the process offering a rare glimpse at the true options presented to the Japan's government office.

Citation:

Editorial (no author named), Legislation Bureau misconduct, 8 October 2015, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2015/10/06/editorials/legislation-bureau-misconduct/>  
Richard Samuels, Politics, Security Policy, and Japan's Cabinet Legislation Bureau: Who Elected These Guys, Anyway?, JPRI Working Paper No. 99 (March 2004), <http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp99.html>

## Latvia

Score 7

The government office has the ability to return materials submitted for cabinet consideration based on procedural considerations. Procedural evaluation includes assessing the quality of the accompanying annotation (often in the form of regulatory impact assessment) and ascertaining whether consensus-building procedures have been followed (i.e., whether agreement has been achieved among ministries) and whether public consultation procedures have taken place.

The prime minister has the right to decide when to put issues on the cabinet agenda. These assessments are informed by expert opinions from the PKC and the government office. Controversial issues are raised in informal political consultations (coalition council) prior to placement on the cabinet agenda.

## Lithuania

Score 7

Draft government decisions advance primarily as a result of coordination between line ministries and other state institutions at the administrative and political levels. The Government Office has no power to return items envisioned for the cabinet meetings on the basis of policy considerations. However, the prime minister formally sets the agenda of cabinet meetings, thus serving a gatekeeping function. There have been cases in which prime ministers have removed highly politicized issues from a

meeting agenda, or on the contrary included such items on an agenda despite the absence of interministerial agreement.

## Romania

- Score 7** Both the Prime Minister's Chancellery and the Secretariat General of the Government can formally return proposals to line ministries. Whereas the Secretariat General of the Government focuses on technical issues, the Prime Minister's Chancellery can and does return items on policy grounds.

## Cyprus

- Score 6** The agenda of the Council of Ministers is prepared by the president "at his discretion," which means he has the ability to withhold action on an item. Decisions are made by the Council of Ministers as a whole, with the president chairing the meeting and having only the right to take part in the discussion. The cabinet can decide to send a proposal back to a line ministry. When Council decisions are communicated to the president by the secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the president has the right to return a decision for reconsideration or to veto decisions on specific matters (security, foreign affairs, defense). If the Council of Ministers insists on their initial position on a matter returned for reconsideration, the decision must be promulgated through publication in the official gazette. Despite this constitutional option, no specific cases of discord between the president and the Council of Ministers have ever been reported. The extent to which decisions echo the views of dissenting parties in case of actual differences is unclear.

## Czech Republic

- Score 6** The Government Office of the Czech Republic (GO) has primarily administrative functions. It supports the work of the various expert bodies attached to the government, including the Government Legislative Council, as well as the work of ministers without their own department. The government office takes part in the interministerial coordination process, but has no formal authority beyond that of any other participant in the discussion.

## Estonia

- Score 6** Since the evaluation capacity of the prime minister's office is very limited, policy considerations rarely serve as a reason to return the proposals. The coalition

government program and political arguments between coalition partners tend to be more important in this context.

## Germany

**Score 6** The Chancellery, and particularly its head, sets the agenda for cabinet meetings. However, real political power lies elsewhere. The cabinet's agenda is negotiated in advance between the top politicians of coalition partners, and the cabinet simply works as a certificating institution for policy matters decided by the heads of the political parties. Thus, the Chancellery will only in exceptional cases refuse items envisaged for the cabinet meetings on the basis of policy considerations. Generally, the heads of political parties, rather than the Chancellery, act as gatekeepers. During the refugee crisis, the government decided that every cabinet meeting would start with a discussion of this pressing challenge.

## Greece

**Score 6** The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) can return all items on policy grounds, but it has limited resources when it comes to reviewing legislation. In fact, it is the Ministry of Finance, along with the PMO, which may play the role of gatekeeper, as Greece's finances are closely inspected every three months by Troika representatives. During the period under review, foreign gatekeepers held sway in Greece, while domestic gatekeepers found difficulties in reviewing or returning items on policy grounds on several economic, industrial, education and migration policy issues. The PMO itself struggled to adapt to the requirements of the intense and technical negotiations with Greece's creditors and to the challenges of governing a country at the receiving end of financial assistance as well as of unpredictable large waves of incoming refugees.

## Netherlands

**Score 6** Given the nature of Dutch politics – a strong departmental culture and coalition governments – the Ministry of General Affairs has little more to rely upon in carrying out its gatekeeping functions than the government policy accord (regeerakkoord). Ministerial departments have considerable power in influencing the negotiations that take place during the elaborate process of preparing Council of Ministers' decisions. Each line ministry – that is, its minister or deputy minister – has a secretariat that serves as the administrative “front gate.” By the time an issue has been brought to the Council of Ministers, it has been thoroughly debated, framed and reframed by the bureaucracy between the ministries involved. Gatekeeping in the Dutch system is one-directional; policy documents are moved from lower to higher administrative levels. In theory, the prime minister, through his

representatives, could play a prominent role in coordinating this process. But given the limited scope of his monitoring capacities and staff, he can steer the course of events for only a fairly small number of issues. The euro crisis has provided the prime minister with a clear range of agenda-setting and policy-coordination priorities. Furthermore, pressure from the EU on member states to improve the coordination of economic and fiscal policy has resulted in both the prime minister and minister of finance taking on a more prominent role in shaping the Netherlands' fiscal and economic policies. The European Semester arrangement forces the government to update its economic policies every half year in the Nationaal Hervormingsprogramma in response to EU judgment. Under both the Rutte I and II cabinets, this has been a major driver of better gatekeeping and policy coordination.

Citation:

Europa NU, Coördinatie nationale economieën ([www.europa-nu.nl/id/vg9pni7o8qzu/coordinatie-nationale-economieen](http://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vg9pni7o8qzu/coordinatie-nationale-economieen))  
 Ministerie van EZ, Nederlands Nationaal Hervormingsprogramma 2013  
 ([ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/nrp2013\\_netherlands\\_nl.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/nrp2013_netherlands_nl.pdf))

Additional reference:

R.B. Andeweg and G.A. Irwin (2014), *Governance and politics of the Netherlands*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

## Slovenia

Score 6

In Slovenia, the Government Office has the formal power to return draft laws on policy reasons or any other grounds. In practice, however, the gatekeeping role of the Government Office is of limited importance, since most legislative projects are initially discussed at coalition meetings, generally between the presidents of the coalition parties, and subsequently undergo a complex process of interministerial coordination.

## Austria

Score 5

Although the chancellor chairs cabinet meetings, his or her office is not in practice able to control meeting agendas. The cabinet is a body of equals and must reach unanimity in its decisions. The chancellor is first among equals only. In advance of each formal cabinet meeting, coalition parties internally coordinate issues within their party. In a second step, issues identified as potentially subject to opposition or veto by other coalition parties are sent for discussion to an informal group usually comprised of one cabinet member from each party. If agreement concerning a specific proposal does not seem possible, the item will not be placed on the cabinet's agenda.

The Chancellor's Office's only true gatekeeping privilege involves its capacity to oversee the constitutionality of policy proposals. The Legal and Constitutional

Service of the Chancellor's Office is widely respected for pursuing a nonpartisan agenda. If this department identifies a proposal as a potential violation of the constitution, the proposal is either put aside or sent back to the originating ministry for revision.

Apart from constitutional matters, the chancellor's gatekeeping powers are restricted to his or her own party. As head of government, the chancellor can informally return materials within his or her own party's cabinet faction, as can the vice-chancellor within his or her cabinet faction.

The chancellor's position may have been strengthened by the following recent development: The Treaty of Lisbon has reduced the numbers of national participants at the meeting of the European Council to one. Within the context of a coalition cabinet such as that currently in place in Austria, the single Austrian representative – the chancellor (currently a social democrat) gains political visibility and this can be interpreted as eroding the political significance of the foreign minister (currently a conservative).

## Croatia

**Score 5** The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has the political authority to return policy proposals it receives from ministries. However, its gatekeeping role is limited by its weak sectoral-policy expertise. Under the Milanović government, the PMO has played only a subordinate role in interministerial coordination.

## Slovakia

**Score 5** The Government Office has primarily administrative and technical functions. It mostly supports the work of the various advisory bodies of the government, including the Legislative Council and the Council for Solidarity and Development (which includes selected civil society actors), as well as the work of ministers without their own ministry. The GO takes part in the interministerial coordination process, but while it has the formal power to return draft laws on policy grounds, its gatekeeping role has traditionally been limited. In the period under review, bodies tasked with monitoring the distribution of EU structural funds have become subsumed under the GO, which suggests that the GO is increasingly concerned with policy implementation.

Citation:

<http://www.vlada.gov.sk/poradne-organy-vlady-slovenskej-republiky/>  
[http://www.vlada.gov.sk/data/files/5863\\_organizacna-schema-uv-sr.pdf](http://www.vlada.gov.sk/data/files/5863_organizacna-schema-uv-sr.pdf)

OECD 2015: Public Governance Review Slovak Republic: Better Co-Ordination for Better Policies, Services and Results. Paris.

## Switzerland

- Score 5 There is no prime minister in Switzerland. The Federal Chancellery manages and prepares the agenda of the Federal Council, and can return items and postpone consideration of political issues if they are deemed to conflict with other policies.

## Bulgaria

- Score 4 In Bulgaria, neither the Council of Ministers' administration nor the prime minister and his political cabinet have the legal authority to return materials on the basis of policy considerations. However, Prime Minister Borrisov has been able to capitalize on his informal authority to some extent.

Indicator

## Line Ministries

Question

To what extent do line ministries involve the government office/prime minister's office in the preparation of policy proposals?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = There are inter-related capacities for coordination in the GO/PMO and line ministries.
- 8-6 = The GO/PMO is regularly briefed on new developments affecting the preparation of policy proposals.
- 5-3 = Consultation is rather formal and focuses on technical and drafting issues.
- 2-1 = Consultation occurs only after proposals are fully drafted as laws.

### Belgium

Score 10

Before implementation, each government project is submitted to the ministers' council, which meets weekly. The council is composed of a secretariat that scrutinizes each proposal before it is debated and prepares the ministers' council agenda, and 14 line ministers and the prime minister, who debate each proposal. Decisions are made on the basis of political consensus, not of majority vote.

Either directly or through the council's secretariat, the prime minister can block any item presented and either return it for redrafting or turn it down completely. This may be because a project does not fit the government agreement or conflicts with one of the coalition parties' agenda, but can be for any other reason as well. All government members must by contrast defend an accepted project collegially.

Citation:

<http://www.premier.be/fr/conseil-des-ministres>

### United States

Score 10

In the U.S. system, this item would examine how the executive departments and agencies involve the president and the White House in their work. In fact, however, president and the White House are dominant within the executive branch, and can therefore prioritize issues they see as important to the president's agenda. This tends to happen in two general ways. If a department or agency is seeking significant legislation, then the White House is essentially in charge of policy development. It may allow a cabinet official to have major influence or even appoint him or her to chair a committee tasked with formulating options for the president, or it may relegate the relevant cabinet officials to secondary roles.

If the agency is developing an important administrative regulation or other policy that does not require legislation, then the administration's generally numerous political appointees in the agency will respond to White House direction. If the matter is judged important for the president, the relevant White House experts may make the main decisions.

## Australia

Score 9 The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC) is always involved at an early stage in assisting with the development and drafting of any significant government policy and the resulting legislation. The PMC and the other relevant department have to both agree on a policy before it can be tabled in cabinet or considered by the relevant minister or ministers.

## Canada

Score 9 Line departments and central agencies have interrelated or complementary capacities for the coordination of policy proposals, with ultimate authority lying with central agencies. Thus, line ministries in Canada have a relatively high level of responsibility to involve the government office, the PCO, in the preparation of policy proposals. On the other hand, it is well known that line departments are not always forthcoming with information that may cast their departments in a bad light.

## Chile

Score 9 The Government or Cabinet Office (Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno, or Segegob) and line ministries have a strong tendency to coordinate activity, and in practice the president or Government Office and the Ministry of Finance are nearly always involved in the preparation of policy proposals. No serving minister would ignore the president's opinion in the preparation and elaboration of a policy proposal.

## Denmark

Score 9 The norms of "minister rule" and the "resort" principle (where ministers are in charge of certain areas) give the line ministries a fair amount of autonomy. It is also the line ministries that have the most technical expertise. Nonetheless, to achieve coherent government policy, interdepartmental coordination takes place. Since most governments are coalition governments this is particularly important. This is not a hierarchical coordination, but is rather based on negotiations. The prime minister has

a special place given his/her constitutional prerogatives as the person who appoints and dismisses ministers. Major issues and strategic considerations are dealt with in the government coordination committee (regeringens koordineringsudvalg) involving the prime minister and other key ministers. The standing committees are also important coordination devices. In addition, there are ad hoc coordination meetings between the leaders of the parties constituting the governing coalition. In the case of single party minority governments – such as the current Liberal Party government – the prime minister must maintain contact with the leaders of the other parties to assure him a parliamentary majority on legislation.

The Ministry of Finance also plays an important role whenever financial resources are involved. No minister can go to the finance committee of the parliament (Folketinget) without prior agreement from the Ministry of Finance. The position of the Ministry of Finance has been strengthened by the “budget law” adopted in 2012.

Apart from coordinating the preparation of next year’s finances, the Ministry of Finance is also involved in formulating general economic policy and offering economic and administrative assessments of the consequences of proposed laws.

Citation:

Jørgen Grønnegård Christensen et al., *Politik og forvaltning*, 3. udg., 2011.

“Regeringen indgår aftale om ny budgetlov,” <http://www.fm.dk/nyheder/pressemeddelelser/2012/03/regeringen-indgaar-aftale-om-ny-budgetlov/> (Accessed 10 October 2015)

## Finland

Score 9

The guiding rule in Finland is that each ministry is, within its mandate, responsible for the preparation of issues that fall within the scope of government and also for the proper functioning of the administration. Given this framework, rather than line ministries involving the Prime Minister’s Office in policy preparation, the expectation is that the Prime Minister’s Office involves ministries in its own policy preparations. In practice, of course, the patterns of interaction are not fixed. For one thing, policy programs and other intersectoral subject matters in the cabinet program are a concern for the Prime Minister’s Office as well as for the ministries, and efforts must be coordinated. The government’s analysis, assessment and research activities supporting policymaking across the ministries are coordinated by the PMO. In addition, because decision-making is collective and consensual in nature, ministry attempts to place items on the cabinet’s agenda without involving the Prime Minister’s Office will fail. Finland has a recent tradition of fairly broad-based coalition governments; this tradition amalgamates ideological antagonisms and thereby mitigates against fragmentation along ministerial and sectoral lines.

Citation:

Jaakko Nousiainen, “*Politiikan huipulla. Ministerit ja ministeriöt Suomen parlamentaarissa järjestelmässä*”, Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1992, p. 163.

## Hungary

Score 9 Orbán has designed a new structure for line ministries in order to facilitate greater control from the center. The number of line ministries was reduced to eight in the second Orbán government, with portfolios for foreign trade and foreign affairs, defense, interior, justice, national economy, national development, human resources, and agriculture. Recently, Rogán has become the ninth minister. Line ministries have mostly acted as executive agencies following orders from above, and their activities have been subject to detailed oversight by the PMO. In practice, however, ministers have been unable to oversee their portfolios, horizontal coordination has grown increasingly impossible and the involvement of the PMO has led to delays. The ministries have often made decisions that could not be implemented and led to new decisions. The flood of decisions has led to disorientation at lower levels of state administration.

## Ireland

Score 9 The Prime Minister's Office is involved in legislative and expenditure proposals. The process is a highly interactive one, with much feedback between the line ministries, the prime minister's office, and the office of the attorney general. The Department of Finance has considerable input into all proposals with revenue or expenditure implications. Any significant policy items have to be discussed in advance with the Department of the Taoiseach.

## New Zealand

Score 9 If line ministries prepare a policy proposal, they are obliged to consult other ministries that are affected as well as the coordinating units, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), the Treasury and the State Services Commission. There are clear guidelines which not only de jure but also de facto govern the coordination of policy formulation in the core executive.

Citation:

CabGuide - Consultation: <http://cabguide.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/procedures/consultation> (accessed October 9, 2014).

Cabinet Manual: <http://www.cabinetmanual.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/3.28> (accessed October 24, 2015).

## South Korea

Score 9 Executive power is concentrated in the president. Given Park Geun-hye's preference for top-down, secretariat-centric decision-making the political system has become more hierarchical. There is less autonomy of line ministries and the relative position of the Blue House has been strengthened. Many line ministries have lost influence,

been downsized or merged. The large majority of issues are settled between the line ministries and the Blue House before cabinet meetings. Cabinet meetings are limited to serving the purpose of information exchange, as most strategic decisions are made in the Blue House. There are no active debates or discussions in ministerial meetings presided over by President Park. This hampers the efficiency of horizontal interministerial coordination. But the relationship between the Blue House and the line ministries varies according to the policy cases and the political situation. The Blue House tries to dominate all ministries, but in some cases, for example during the president's lame-duck period, the Blue House has been unable to overcome bureaucratic politics. The Blue House sometimes lacks sufficient knowledge and human-resources capacity to act effectively in certain policy areas. The Blue House gets involved with and coordinates certain policies through the exertion of political dominance rather than through administrative capability.

## United Kingdom

Score 9

The Cabinet Office is at the center of policymaking. Since the May 2015 general election, all line ministries are required to prepare single departmental plans (SDP), building on a process already launched during the previous coalition government. As explained by John Manzoni, the Chief Executive of the civil service appointed in October 2014, these SDPs are intended to bring together inputs and outputs, clarify trade-offs, and to identify where departments and the cross-departmental functions need to work together to deliver the required outcomes.

The creation of implementation taskforces, working alongside cabinet committees, is intended to strengthen the central oversight of policy proposals.

## France

Score 8

Line ministers have to inform the prime minister of all their projects. Strong discipline, even at the public communication level, is imposed, and this rule is reinforced by the attitude of the media, which tend to cover any slight policy difference as the expression of political tension or party divergence. Not only the Prime Minister's Office oversees the policy process but also his cabinet assistants, in each area, supervise, liaise and coordinate with their counterparts in line ministries about the content, timing and political sequences of a project. The secretary general of the Prime Minister's Office (and his alter ego at the Elysée) operates in the shadow, but he is one of the most powerful people within that machinery. He can step in if the coordination or control process at that level has failed to stem the expression of differences within the government. As in other fields, the well-established tradition of the Fifth Republic has been shaken up by the hesitations and vagaries of the Hollande presidency, particularly in the first two years; the situation has improved since Manuel Valls became prime minister in 2014.

## Iceland

**Score 8** Due to a strong tradition of ministerial independence, ministries have considerable flexibility in drafting their own policy proposals without consulting the Prime Minister's Office. Yet, where a minister and prime minister belong to the same party, there is usually some Prime Minister's Office involvement. However, where the minister and prime minister belong to separate coalition parties the Prime Minister's Office has little or no involvement in policy development. After the publication of the Special Investigation Committee report, a committee was formed to evaluate and suggest necessary steps toward the improvement of the public administration. In order to improve working conditions within the executive branch, the committee proposed introducing legislation to clarify the role and responsibilities of the prime minister. However, this was not implemented during the terms of either the previous or current governments.

Citation:

Skýrsla starfshóps forsætisráðuneytisins (2010): Viðbrögð stjórnáskýrslunnar við skýrslurannsóknarnefndar Alþingis. Reykjavík, Forsætisráðuneytið.

## Italy

**Score 8** The Prime Minister's Office is regularly kept informed of the development of policy proposals generated by line ministries. With regard to the policy proposals of particular political relevance for the government program, the consultation process starts from the early stages of drafting and is more significant, involving not only formal but also substantive issues. In the fields less directly connected with the main mission of the government, exchanges are more formal and occur only when proposals have been fully drafted.

## Latvia

**Score 8** Since its establishment in 2011, the PKC has become increasingly involved in line ministry preparation of policy proposals. PKC representatives are invited to participate in working groups. However, capacity constraints prevent full participation in all working groups. Involvement of the PKC is at the ministry's discretion. Informal lines of communication ensure that the PKC is regularly briefed on upcoming policy proposals.

Latvia has a "fragmented" cabinet government system. Consequently, ministers enjoy relatively substantial autonomy, weakening the power of the prime minister. As a result, ministers belonging to a different party than the prime minister will

attempt to block the prime minister's office from interfering in sensitive policy issues whenever possible.

## Luxembourg

**Score 8** The Prime Minister's Office is not legally allowed to be involved in the preparation of bills or proposals by line ministries. Sensitive political proposals are often contained in the coalition program. There are no institutionalized mechanisms of coordination between line ministries, and there is no unit dealing with policy assessment and evaluation. Informally however, no sensitive proposal is presented to the Council of Ministers without being approved beforehand by the prime minister. An informal body of ministerial civil servants meets ahead of the Council of Ministers to prepare the agenda and make adjustments if needed. Even though the prime minister has not held the influential finance portfolio since 2009, his central role in the governance process has not been weakened.

Citation:

<http://eli.legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/agd/2015/01/28/n1/jo>

<http://www.gouvernement.lu/1719075/gouvernement>

[http://www.gouvernement.lu/3723809/SIP\\_Gouvernement\\_2013\\_EN](http://www.gouvernement.lu/3723809/SIP_Gouvernement_2013_EN).

## Netherlands

**Score 8** Generally, line-ministry legislative or white-paper initiatives are rooted in the government policy accord, EU policy coordination and subsequent Council of Ministers decisions to allocate drafting to one or two particular ministries. In the case of complex problems, draft legislation may involve considerable jockeying for position among the various line ministries. The prime minister is always involved in the kick-off of major new policy initiatives and sometimes in the wording of the assignment itself. After that, however, it may take between six months and an entire Council of Ministers' period before the issue reaches the decision-making stage in ministerial and Council of Ministers committees, and again comes under the formal review of the prime minister. Meanwhile, the prime minister is obliged to rely on informal coordination with his fellow ministers.

Citation:

R.B. Andeweg and G.A. Irwin ( 2014), *Governance and politics of the Netherlands*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

## Norway

**Score 8** Responsibility for the preparation of policies lies with line ministries. As a matter of routine, they will involve the Office of the Prime Minister when addressing

potentially controversial matters and for the purpose of coordinating with other policies. This interaction often involves ongoing two-way communication during the planning process. Initiatives lacking support by the Office of the Prime Minister would not win cabinet approval.

## Poland

**Score 8** Under the Tusk government, the Chancellery enhanced its formal and actual involvement in the preparation of policy proposals by the line ministries. While conflicts did occur, cooperation was in fact smoother than in the past. The Chancellery's involvement differed between PO- and PS-led ministries, as the latter typically sought to consult with Deputy Prime Minister Piechociński (PSL) before going to the Chancellery.

## Turkey

**Score 8** The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has a twofold role in the preparation of draft bills. It checks the congruity of laws from a legal point of view, and collects ministries' legal and political opinions along with opinions from civil society, interest and pressure groups, expert groups and institutions. Thus, the PMO is always directly involved in the preparation of policy proposals at a relatively early stage.

However, line ministries do not always provide all the information necessary for draft bills, particularly in the case of information that may cast their ministry in a bad light. From time to time, policymaking is tarnished by issues of bureaucratic competition, including among politicians. The PMO's inability to foster interministerial cooperation has been a serious institutional shortcoming. A recent reorganization of the PMO and line ministries led to some performance declines. Conflicting announcements regarding policy proposals made by the PMO and line ministries have been a sign of weak coordination.

According to the Decision on the Implementation, Coordination and Monitoring of the 2015 Program, the Ministry of Development is assigned to be the primary consultation body in preparing policies.

After the parliamentary election of 1 November 2015, government proposals to restructure the ministries and increase their number were made. Several new public units such as the National Mine Institute were additionally established. It remains to be seen whether this kind of institutional fragmentation of policymaking will hinder or enhance the effectiveness of policy coordination and accountability.

Citation:

TC Başbakanlık Kanunlar ve Kararlar Genel Müdürlüğü Performans Raporu 2014, [http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/\\_Article/PerfRapor2014.pdf](http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/_Article/PerfRapor2014.pdf) (accessed 5 November 2014)

2015 Programının Uygulanması, Koordinasyonu ve İzlenmesine İlişkin Karar, Resmi Gazete, 17 October 2014, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141017-11-1.pdf> (accessed 27 October 2015)

## Estonia

Score 7

Two different forms exist to communicate line ministries' proposals to the GO. Firstly, all policy initiatives are discussed in coalition council. Second, the cabinet informally examines all substantial issues at its weekly meetings. No binding decisions are made in the meetings, the main function being to exchange information and to prepare for formal government sessions. However, the coalition that came to power after the 2015 elections is less cohesive and acts in a less coordinated manner than its predecessor.

## Israel

Score 7

The PMO has been under continuous structural reforms since the mid-2000s. Several committees, including Trajtenberg and Kuchik (both established in 2011), issued recommendations regarding its working dynamics with other line ministries, taking into account the country's highly fragmented party system (in which ministers are nominated according to political alliances) and the overly centralized budgeting process.

In recent years the PMO became more involved in the preparation of policy proposals in the ministries through various channels. For example, the PMO's chief of staff heads a forum for the CEOs of all line ministries, advancing policy agendas and interministerial cooperation. The PMO is also involved with policy proposals through its professional councils and roundtable initiatives. Its oversight capabilities, demonstrated by its yearly publication of the government working plans, stimulates further involvement. However, the Kuchnik Committee noted that facing weaker ministries the PMO tends to overreach and control policy formation more than is advisable.

Citation:

Koren, Ora, "Line ministries will submit budget drafts - and will not be able to blame the treasury," TheMarker website, 13.11.2012, (Hebrew).

"About: The governance committee," PMO website, (Hebrew).

"Book of working plans 2012," PMO website ,March 2012, (Hebrew).

"Failures of the public sector and directions for change," Public sharing - The committee for economic and social change 2011, (Hebrew).

"Governmental planning guide," PMO website, september 2010, (Hebrew).

"Strengthening government's governability, planning and execution - Continue discussion," PMO website, 25.12.2011, (Hebrew).

"The committee for reviewing the PMO," official state publication, 2012:

<http://www.kucik.co.il/uploads/sofi.pdf> (Hebrew).  
“The system,” Policy planning PMO website, (Hebrew).

## Japan

Score 7

In Japan, the role of line ministries vis-à-vis the government office is complicated by the influence of a third set of actors: entities within the governing parties. During the decades of the LDP’s postwar rule, the party’s own policymaking organ, the Policy (Affairs) Research Council (PARC) developed considerable influence, ultimately gaining the power to vet and approve policy proposals in all areas of government policy. While the GO/PMO level was also involved, for instance through a technical-legalistic supervision of proposed laws in the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, in a material sense the exchange between the ministries and PARC’s associated mirror divisions were more important.

Under the LDP-led government since December 2012, Prime Minister Abe has tried to make certain that he and his close confidants determine the direction of major policy proposals. The reform program does indeed show the influence of the GO/PMO level, with the ministries either following this course or trying to drag their feet.

## Lithuania

Score 7

Under the Butkevičius government, the Government Office proposes annual political priorities, coordinates their implementation and regularly monitors progress. As a result, it focuses on policy proposals related to these annual priorities. The majority of policy proposals are initiated by ministries and other state institutions, but the Government Office is kept informed with regard to their status and content. The fact that all policy areas are legally assigned to particular ministers, coupled with the fact that since 2000 governments have been formed by party coalitions rather than a single party, has meant that line ministries enjoy considerable autonomy within their policy areas. The Government Office is sometimes called upon to mediate policy disagreements between line ministries.

## Mexico

Score 7

Given Mexico’s presidential system, cabinet ministers are respectful of and even deferential to the presidential office. Moreover, cabinet ministers dismissed by the president rarely find a way back into high-level politics, which promotes loyalty to the president and presidential staff. Accordingly, senior figures in the presidential office are very powerful, because they determine access to the president and can influence ministerial careers. Yet there have been problems of coordination, particularly on the security side where anti-drug policies were sometimes frustrated

for this reason. Thus far, President Peña Nieto has built his cabinet around two super-ministries and ministers, the finance minister and the minister of interior. The role of line ministries varies from case to case.

## Portugal

Score 7 The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is regularly briefed on new developments affecting the preparation of policy proposals.

## Spain

Score 7 Both the Government Office (Ministerio de la Presidencia, GO) and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) are regularly briefed on new developments affecting the preparation of policy proposals by line ministries. Although these are formally autonomous, the legal and political hierarchy within the Spanish government facilitates and even encourages this pattern of consultation with the prime minister's entourage. The consultation with the GO tends to focus on drafting or technical issues, while the PMO is more interested in political and strategic considerations. The process is firmly institutionalized and takes place weekly, since representatives of all ministries gather at the cabinet meeting preparatory committee (Comisión General de Subsecretarios y Secretarios de Estado), which is held every Wednesday, chaired by the GO head and the deputy prime minister. Advisers from the PMO also participate in this committee and in the important specialized ministerial committee on economic affairs (see "Cabinet Committees") that also helps to prepare the Council of Ministers.

However, even if the primary joint role of the GO and the PMO is horizontal coordination, their administrative resources are limited, and the deputy prime minister and prime minister's advisers cannot be briefed on the whole range of government activity. Therefore, they normally focus on each ministerial department's most important sectoral developments, as well as the prime minister's particular interests. Nevertheless, all legal proposals are sufficiently vetted by the Government Office before they are drafted as laws through: 1) the setting of the cabinet-meeting agenda and 2) the centralized nature of all relations with parliament having to do with legislation.

A legal reform of the new general-administrative procedure passed in October 2015 will help reinforce coordination between the GO and line ministries (see "GO Gatekeeping"). Under the terms of a new provision, all policy proposals implying legal changes would be communicated in advance by the line ministries to the GO, which would produce a centralized Annual Normative Plan. On the other hand, the changes in the Spanish party system may make consultation between the PMO and the rest of the government more difficult if future sectoral ministers do not belong to the same party as the prime minister.

## Sweden

**Score 7** The leadership of the GO and the PMO are primarily involved when policies are initiated; when final decision are to be made; and if a disagreement emerges among the governing parties or ministers. However, the line nature of the GO organization – and the chain of command between the political and the administrative levels – means that the top leadership, apart from initiating and deciding on policy, does not routinely monitor its development. There are instead regular briefings and informal consultations. This informal coordination procedure nevertheless ensures that the PMO, in line with the Ministry of Finance, play a crucial role in policy developments. Also, there are established but informal rules regulating procedures when there is disagreement among the non-political advisors on how to design policy. Essentially, the political level of the department should only be consulted when its ruling is critical to policy formulation; otherwise policy design should rest with non-partisan members of staff.

It should also be noted that line ministries frequently ask for advice from the executive agencies during the early stages of the policy process.

Citation:

Jacobsson, B., J. Pierre and G. Sundström (2015), *Governing the Embedded State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Page, E. C. (2012), *Policy Without Politicians: Bureaucratic Influence in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Premfors, R. and G. Sundström (2007), *Regeringskansliet* (Malmö: Liber).

## Switzerland

**Score 7** Switzerland's government consists of only seven ministries, each of which has a broad area of competency and is responsible for a large variety of issues. There are no line ministries. However, there are federal offices and institutions connected to the various ministries. These work closely with the minister responsible for their group. Since ministers must achieve a large majority on the Federal Council in order to win success for a proposal, there is strong coordination between offices. Indeed, political coordination among the high ranks of the administration can be rather intense, although the limited capacity and time of the Federal Council members, as well as their diverging interests, create practical bottlenecks.

## Bulgaria

**Score 6** Line ministries tend to prepare policy proposals independently and introduce them to the prime minister and the Council of Ministers when they are completed. The prime minister and the Council of Ministers' administration are consulted in advance only

when the proposals cross ministerial lines and on issues related to legal compatibility with other proposed or existing legislation. Even in such cases, the involvement of the Council of Ministers' administration tends to focus mainly on technical and drafting issues. There are no official procedures for consulting the prime minister during the preparation of policy proposals.

## Czech Republic

**Score 6** The legislative plan of the government divides tasks among the ministries and other central bodies of the state administration and sets deadlines for the submission of bills to the cabinet. The line ministry has to involve, and take comments from, a range of institutions, including the Government Office and the legislative council. This consultation process primarily focuses on technical issues.

## Germany

**Score 6** The preparation of bills is mainly the prerogative of the line ministries (Ressortprinzip). In the course of regular policy processes, the Chancellery is well informed throughout, but is not strongly involved in ministerial initiatives. Most disputes between ministries and the Chancellery are discussed and resolved in the often-weekly meetings between the state secretaries and the Chancellery's staff. However, the refugee crisis highlighted the ineffectiveness of coordination between line ministries and the Chancellery. For example, the Minister of the Interior, Thomas de Maizière, proposed a new policy idea without previously coordinating with or even informing the Chancellery. The Head of the Chancellery and the government's coordinator for migration policies, Peter Altmaier, openly declared that he was not informed and was surprised by de Maizière's policy proposals. As such, de Maizière's unilateral approach was widely perceived as an affront to Chancellor Merkel, while demonstrating fundamental disagreements within the government.

## Greece

**Score 6** Before the economic crisis, the PMO was not capable of restraining individual ministries from pursuing their own policy agendas, particularly if a minister was a member of one of the high-ranking governing party cadres. In other words, the prime minister was a sort of "primus inter pares."

During the period under review, the governing coalition of Syriza-ANEL was totally new in its composition and inexperienced in government organization. For example, it was only two months after coming to power in January 2015 that the Syriza-ANEL

government submitted its first ever bill of law to parliament. Thus, it was unavoidable that in the prolonged period of adaptation to the requirements of its new tasks, the PMO's consultation with line ministries was haphazard, while coordination with individual ministers was practiced on a trial-and-error basis. Regarding the streamlining of policy proposals and coordination, the launching of the referendum in July 2015 and the calling of snap elections in September 2015 did not make things any better.

Citation:

Kevin Featherstone and Dimitris Papadimitriou (2013), "The Emperor Has No Clothes! Power and Resources within the Greek Core Executive", *Governance*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, pp. 523-545.

## Malta

Score 5

Since 2013, a sustained effort at coordination has subsequently been made in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and in line ministries. During the period under review, the government established an office within the PMO to coordinate the policies contained in the ruling party's electoral manifesto. Decisions taken by ministries have more than once been rescinded by the PMO, a practice less common in the past. The PMO may also seek to review its own policies with the help of the Management Efficiency Unit and occasionally employs consultants. Line ministries can do the same.

Citation:

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20151021/local/gaffarena-investigation-concluded-government-will-revoke-deal-if.589092>

## Romania

Score 5

Policy proposals are usually drafted within ministries. The Secretariat General of the Government provides technical support for policymaking. The Prime Minister's Chancellery usually becomes involved only after the compulsory public-consultation procedures are finalized. While the prime minister occasionally gets publicly involved in debating certain legislative proposals and may contradict line ministers, the final decision on the content of the policy proposal tends to be made by the line ministry.

## Croatia

Score 4

Line ministries consult with the government's Legislation Office, but this consultation is mostly formal, focusing on technical and drafting issues. Ministries normally enjoy huge leeway in transforming government priorities into legislation, and there is no stable and transparent arbitration scheme that would give the Prime Minister's Office a formal role in settling interministerial differences.

## Slovakia

**Score 4** In Slovakia, the government manifesto defines certain priorities that are elaborated in legislative plans. These additionally divide tasks and responsibilities among the line ministries and other central bodies, and set deadlines for the submission of bills to the cabinet. In their policy-development process, the line ministries legally must include a range of institutions and interest groups that are defined as stakeholders in their respective fields. Ministries are also obliged to consult with the GO and its legislative council as they develop bills. However, full responsibility for drafting bills has traditionally rested with the line ministries, and consultation with the GO is mainly technical. In its attempt to formalize his leading position within the government, Prime Minister Fico has increased the monitoring activities of the Government Office, especially those related to EU structural funds.

## Austria

**Score 3** As all ministers are equal, the autonomy of line ministries is substantial. The chancellor cannot determine the outlines of government policy and does not have to be involved in the drafting of legislation. Normally, however, proposals are coordinated by the prime minister's office. Formally, the Federal Ministry of Finance can offer its opinion as to whether a proposal fits into the government's overall budget policy, even if such consultation is not required. The Ministry of Finance thus has a kind of cross-cutting power.

## Cyprus

**Score 3** The structure of functions within the presidential palace has an ad hoc character, determined by each president for the duration of his or her mandate. The secretariat of the Council of Ministers is part of the state administration, tasked with offering support and services to the cabinet. However, this body has no capacity to draft laws or review proposed policies. The Attorney General's Office is the sole body involved in the examination of policy proposals and draft laws, providing no more than legal advice. Ministries tasked with drafting laws can refer to policies formulated by the government, or to frameworks proposed by interministerial committees or issued by the cabinet. Draft laws are discussed only during the deliberation process in the Council of Ministers.

There is no reliable evidence regarding systematic consultation between line ministries and the presidential palace or the secretariat of the Council of Ministers prior to the proposal of draft laws. However, new strategic-planning structures and

mechanisms slated to be created under the law on fiscal responsibility are expected to entail a central coordinating body, enabling compliance with the government's strategic plan.

## Slovenia

### Score 3

The Government Office is not directly and systematically involved in line ministries' preparation of policy proposals. Once the coalition agreement and government program have defined certain projects, full responsibility for drafting bills rests with the line ministries. The Government Office is seldom briefed about the state of affairs. If it is, consultation is rather formal and focuses mostly on technical and drafting issues.

Indicator

## Cabinet Committees

Question

### How effectively do ministerial or cabinet committees coordinate cabinet proposals?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = The large majority of cabinet proposals are reviewed and coordinated first by committees.
- 8-6 = Most cabinet proposals are reviewed and coordinated by committees, in particular proposals of political or strategic importance.
- 5-3 = There is little review or coordination of cabinet proposals by committees.
- 2-1 = There is no review or coordination of cabinet proposals by committees. Or: There is no ministerial or cabinet committee.

### Belgium

Score 10

The council of ministers (conseil des ministres), which is one of the central components of the government, meets every week. Each minister is responsible for drafting a proposal, which gets submitted to the council. The council's secretariat then checks whether the proposal can be debated: is it complete, technically sound, does it conflict with other decisions made in the past, is it contained in the governmental agreement? Proposals are debated by ministers only if they pass this first filter, which allows them to focus on the strategic aspects of the issue. However, the most important strategic considerations are mainly political.

To reach the council of ministers, a given project is always discussed beforehand in formal or informal inter-cabinet meetings that include experts and senior officers of the relevant ministries. Most negotiation is performed at that stage and, if necessary, further fine-tuned in the "core" meeting in the case of particularly important or sensitive policy issues.

### Finland

Score 10

Cabinet committees effectively prepare cabinet meetings. The government has four statutory cabinet committees: the Committee on Foreign and Security Policy (which meets with the president when pressing business issues arise), the Committee on European Union Affairs, the Cabinet Finance Committee and the Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy. Additionally, ad hoc cabinet committees can be appointed by the government plenary session. All these committees are chaired by the prime minister, who also chairs sessions of the Economic Council, the Research and Innovation Council, and the Title Board. In addition, there are several ministerial working groups. The primary task of these committees and groups is to prepare

cabinet meetings by helping to create consensus between relevant ministries and interests. In all, a large majority of issues are reviewed first by cabinet committees and working groups.

## Denmark

**Score 9** Policy preparation tends to take place in cabinet committees (regeringsudvalg) involving a smaller number of ministers. The number of such committees has varied over time. Currently, the following standing cabinet committees exist: the coordination committee (chaired by the prime minister), the economy committee (chaired by the finance minister), the security committee (chaired by the prime minister), the appointments committee (chaired by the prime minister) and the government's EU implementation committee.

This system was strengthened under the previous liberal-conservative government and there are parallel committees of high-level civil servants.

Citation:

Jørgen Grønnegård Christensen et al., Politik og forvaltning, 2011.

Oversigt over faste regeringsudvalg, [http://statsministeriet.dk/\\_a\\_1848.html](http://statsministeriet.dk/_a_1848.html) (Accessed 10 October 2015).

## New Zealand

**Score 9** There are clear guidelines for policy formulation in the New Zealand core executive. All policy proposals are reviewed in cabinet committees. Full cabinet meetings therefore can focus on strategic policy debates and policy conflicts between coalition partners or between the government and its legislative support parties in the House of Representatives. In quantitative terms, from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, the full cabinet met 44 times while cabinet committees met 184 times. A revised cabinet committee structure was implemented in October 2014 following the formation of the government after the 2014 general election. This resulted in the disestablishment of one cabinet committee, reducing the overall number from 11 to 10.

Citation:

Annual Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2014 (Wellington: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2014).

Cabinet Office Circular CO 14) 8. Cabinet Committees: Terms of Reference and Membership, <http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/cabinet/circulars>, accessed October 30, 2015).

## Spain

**Score 9** Two powerful ministerial committees effectively prepare the cabinet meetings in Spain: the Committee for Economic Affairs, and the Committee of Undersecretaries and Secretaries of State. The Committee for Economic Affairs normally meets on Thursdays (a day before the Council of Ministers meetings) to review and schedule economic or budgetary interministerial coordination. Since 2011, this committee has

been chaired by the prime minister himself, with the help of the director of his Economic Office, and is also made up of ministers and secretaries of state with economic responsibilities. For its part, the Committee of Undersecretaries and Secretaries of State effectively filters out and settles issues prior to cabinet meetings. This committee of top officials meets every Wednesday to prepare the Council of Ministers' weekly sessions, which are held every Friday (see "Ministerial Bureaucracy" for further details). No cabinet member participates apart from the deputy prime minister, who serves as its chairperson.

Spain's only Council of Ministers committee composed exclusively of cabinet members is the Foreign Policy Council (Consejo de Política Exterior), which meets only about once a year despite plans to revitalize it under a new law on external action and the foreign service passed in 2014. Other ministerial committees (composed of several ministers and individual non-cabinet members such as secretaries of state) are regulated by Royal Decree 1886/2011 (as modified by RD 385/2013), which specifies six ministerial committees – Economic Affairs, National Security, Intelligence Affairs, Science and Technology Policy, Equality Policy, and Cultural Affairs – as official delegate committees of the government. However, with the exception of the Delegate Committee on Economic Affairs, no other committee meets regularly and helps to systematically coordinate proposals sent to the Council of Ministers, although the Committee on National Security (Consejo de Seguridad Nacional) is gaining relevance and regularity.

## United Kingdom

### Score 9

The importance of cabinet meetings and committees increased under the previous coalition government, because of the need to ensure fair representation of both coalition parties. In addition, a powerful coalition committee, chaired jointly by the prime minister and deputy prime minister, existed. The latter became redundant when the new Conservative government won power in May 2015. A number of other committees, such as a committee on banking reform, were also discontinued. However, the creation of implementation taskforces alongside conventional committees has meant a net increase in numbers. After the prime minister, the Cabinet Office Minister, Oliver Letwin, sits on the most committees.

Since the Conservative government of Edward Heath (1970-1974), it has become an established norm that decisions settled in cabinet committees are not questioned in full cabinet unless the committee chair or the prime minister decide to do so.

## Australia

### Score 8

Committees serve a purpose in dealing with various matters, which include: highly sensitive issues, for example revenue or security matters; relatively routine issues, for example a government's weekly parliamentary program; business that is labor

intensive or requires detailed consideration by a smaller group of ministers, for example the expenditure review that takes place before the annual budget, or oversight of the government's initiatives in relation to a sustainable environment. The prime minister usually establishes a number of standing committees of the cabinet (e.g., expenditure review, national security, parliamentary business). Additional committees, including ad hoc committees, may be set up from time to time for particular purposes, such as handling a national disaster.

## Canada

**Score 8** Cabinet committees have both the legal and de facto power to prepare Cabinet meetings in such a way as to allow the Cabinet to focus on vital issues. The de facto power to sort out issues before they go to Cabinet belongs to senior officials in the PMO and PCO, not to Cabinet committees. Still, this allows the Cabinet to focus on strategic policy issues.

## Italy

**Score 8** A significant number of policy proposals require de jure scrutiny by a Council of Ministers committee or even the explicit consent of a plurality of ministers. In a number of cases this is only a formal exercise and the Council of Ministers committee is not a very important mechanism. It is more significant that a number of important issues are de facto dealt with through consultations among a few ministers (and their ministerial cabinets) before being brought to the Council of Ministers, or are sent to this type of proceeding after preliminary discussion in the council. These consultations usually include the Treasury. In meetings of the Council of Ministers discussion of policy proposals are typically very cursory. Most problems have been resolved before meetings of the Council of Ministers, either in formal or informal meetings.

## Latvia

**Score 8** Cabinet committees are an integral part of the official decision-making process. If ministerial agreement on draft policy proposals cannot be reached at the state-secretary level, issues are automatically taken up by a cabinet committee for resolution. The cabinet committee's mandate is to iron out differences prior to elevating the proposal to the cabinet level. In 2014, cabinet committees considered 106 issues, of which 88 were sent on to cabinet.

The cabinet committee may be complemented by informal mechanisms such as the coalition council if agreement cannot otherwise be reached.

Citation:

State Chancellery (2014), Report, Available at (in Latvian): [http://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/page/attachments/gada\\_parskats\\_2014.pdf](http://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/page/attachments/gada_parskats_2014.pdf), Last assessed: 22.11.2015.

## Luxembourg

Score 8

There are no cabinet committees in a strict sense. The Council of Ministers (Luxembourg's cabinet) has to rely entirely on the work of line ministries or inter-ministerial groups, if more than one department is concerned. Generally, the Council of Ministers is well prepared, as only bills that have been accepted informally are presented. Moreover, bills have to be scrutinized by experts at the Ministry of Finance and the inspector general of finance (Inspection générale des finances), made up of senior civil servants and chaired by the secretary general of the Council of Ministers. This informal body insures that coherence prevails. The Prime Minister's Office has assumed some horizontal competences on issues that concern more than one ministry, notably in the field of administrative simplification, ethical and deontological questions.

Citation:

<http://www.gouvernement.lu/1719075/gouvernement>

<http://www.gouvernement.lu/482644/systeme-politique>

<http://www.igf.etat.lu/>

## Netherlands

Score 8

Council of Ministers committees (onderraad) involve a separate meeting chaired by the prime minister for the ministers involved. Each committee has a coordinating minister responsible for relevant input and documents. Discussion and negotiations focus on issues not resolved through prior administrative coordination and consultation. If the committee fails to reach a decision, the matter is pushed up to the Council of Ministers. Since the Balkenende IV Council of Ministers there have been six standing Council of Ministers committees: international and European affairs; economics, knowledge and innovation; social coherence; safety and legal order; and administration, government and public services. Given the elaborate process of consultations and negotiations, few issues are likely to have escaped attention and discussion before reaching the Council of Ministers. However, since the Rutte I and II cabinets have consisted of two or more political parties of contrary ideological stripes (the conservative-liberal VVD and the PvdA or Labor Party, in the case of Rutte II), political pragmatism and opportunism has tended to transform "review and coordination" to simple logrolling, or in Dutch political jargon: "positive exchange," meaning that each party agrees tacitly or explicitly not to veto the other's bills, in return for the same consideration. This tendency has negative consequences for the quality of policymaking, as minority views effectively win parliamentary majorities if they are budgetarily feasible without first undergoing rigorous policy and legal analyses.

## Slovenia

- Score 8** Cabinet committees play an important role in the preparation of cabinet proposals in Slovenia and settle issues prior to the cabinet meeting. There are four standing cabinet committees: the Committee of State Matters and Public Issues, the Committee of National Economy, the Committee for Housing and the Commission of Administrative and Personnel Matters. In addition, temporary committees are from time to time established for particular tasks. In its first year in office, the Cerar government established nine of them, including cabinet committees for youth issues, problems of the disabled, student questions and protection against natural disasters.

## United States

- Score 8** The question for the U.S. system is whether, on major issues, White House advisory processes prepare issues thoroughly for the president, and on lesser issues with interagency implications, whether interagency committees prepare them thoroughly for decision by the relevant cabinet members. The U.S. system of advisory processes varies considerably, even within a single presidential administration, but is largely under control of the president's appointees in the White House. The process is to a great extent ad hoc, with organizational practices varying over time and from one issue area to another, based largely on the personnel involved. Typically, important decisions are "staffed out" through an organized committee process. However, the ad hoc character of organization (compared with a parliamentary cabinet secretariat), along with the typically short-term service of political appointees – resulting in what one scholar has called "a government of strangers" – renders the quality of these advisory processes unreliable.

## Chile

- Score 7** Ministerial or cabinet committees are not necessarily central when it comes to decision-making on policy matters. Depending on the topic, ministerial committees are more or less involved in preparing cabinet proposals, especially those of relatively significant strategic or financial importance. These proposals are normally coordinated effectively.

## France

- Score 7** Coordination is strong within the French government, and is in the hands of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the President's Office, which constantly liaise and decide on issues. Coordination takes place at several levels. First at the level of

specialized civil servants who work as political appointees in the PMO (members of the cabinet, that is political appointees belonging to the staff of the prime minister), then in meetings chaired by the secretary general and finally by the prime minister himself, in case of permanent conflicts between ministers or over important issues. In many instances, conflicts pit the powerful ministers of budget or finance against other ministries. Appeals to the prime minister require either a powerful convincing argument or that the appealing party is a key member of the government coalition, as it is understood that the prime minister should not be bothered by anything but the highest level issues. While this framework remains in place, it has often been affected by the president's hesitations and U-turns.

## Lithuania

**Score 7** Although Lithuania's government can create advisory bodies such as government committees or commissions, the number and role of such committees has gradually declined since the beginning of the 2000s, when coalition governments became the rule. Top-priority policy issues are frequently discussed in governmental deliberations organized before the official government meetings. However, the Butkevičius government decided to reestablish the Strategic Committee, which is composed of several cabinet ministers and the chancellor, a top prime-ministerial deputy. A European Union Commission continues to act as a government-level forum for discussing Lithuania's EU positions, but this is made up of relevant vice-ministers, and chaired by the minister of foreign affairs.

## Mexico

**Score 7** Mexico is unusual, because the constitution does not recognize the cabinet as a collective body. Instead, Mexico has four sub cabinets, respectively dealing with economic, social, political and security matters. As a result, Mexico in practice has a system of cabinet committees each of them normally chaired by the president. The full cabinet never or hardly ever meets. Mexico's cabinet, as a collective, matters less than in most countries. The cabinet is not a supreme executive body as it is in, say, Britain. For one thing, there are a number of heads of executive agencies, with cabinet rank, who are not directly subject to a minister. The government is in the process of increasing these. Likewise, no cabinet minister is currently involved negotiations for the political, social and economic agenda known as the "Pact for Mexico" (Pacto Por Mexico) and cannot shape the political agenda at the highest level.

## South Korea

**Score 7** The cabinet plays a relatively small role in the political process, as all important issues are discussed bilaterally between the Blue House and the relevant ministry. Committees are either permanent, such as the National Security Council, or created

in response to a particular issue. Although the Office for Government Policy Coordination (OPC), a body headed by Minister of the OPC in subordination to the Prime Minister's Office, plays a major role in policy coordination for routine issues, the Blue House has taken on an increasingly active or even dictatorial role in ensuring cooperation or pursuing politically sensitive issues despite a lack of consultation and coordination. The ministries concerned rarely protest.

## Croatia

Score 6

The rules of procedure of the Croatian government provide for different kinds of cabinet committees and assign a major role in policy coordination to them. The prime minister and the vice prime ministers form the core cabinet (Uzi cabinet vlade). In addition, there are various permanent and non-permanent cabinet committees that focus on particular issues. As there is little ex ante coordination among ministries, controversies are often pushed upwards, with cabinet committees playing an important role in resolving conflicts. However, the quality of coordination suffers from the fact that cabinet committees are absorbed by these disputes and other matters of detail.

## Hungary

Score 6

Given the dominant role of the PMO, cabinet committees have played a much less significant role than under previous governments. The main exception is the new Government Committee for National Development, which consists of the prime minister, the minister of PMO, the minister of national development (NFM), and the minister of national economy (NGM). It was established in July 2012 when the government realized that it had failed to spend EU transfers in a timely fashion. This committee has been attached to the PMO which has control over EU transfers. The Government Committee for National Security has played a major role in the refugee crisis. The Committee (which consists of the prime minister, the ministers of interior, defense and economy and is coordinated by the PMO minister who also has authority over the secret services) decided during its meetings held on 25 August 2015 and 16 October 2015 to build a fence along Hungary's southern borders to keep refugees out. The Committee also coordinated Hungarian army activities with troops from other Visegrad countries.

## Iceland

Score 6

Cabinet committees rarely prepare cabinet meetings, although the Budget Committee and some ad hoc committees are exceptions. However, the majority of items on cabinet meeting agendas are prepared by ministers often with two or more ministers coordinating the cabinet meeting. In the immediate aftermath of the 2008 economic collapse cooperation between ministers increased, particularly between the prime minister, the minister of finance, and the minister of commerce. However, this

change was temporary and intended only to facilitate the cabinet's immediate reactions to the 2008 economic collapse. In February 2013, new regulations were introduced, which permit the prime minister to create single-issue ministerial committees to facilitate coordination between ministers where an issue overlaps their authority areas.

Records must be kept of all ministerial committee meetings, but these are not made public. Seven ministerial committees exist, at the time of writing, to coordinate overlapping policy issues. These include: the Ministerial Committee on Public Finances (Ráðherranefnd um ríkisfjármál), with four ministers; the Ministerial Committee on National Economy (Ráðherranefnd um efnahagsmál), with four ministers; the Ministerial Committee on Equality (Ráðherranefnd um jafnréttismál), with four ministers; the Ministerial Committee on Solutions for the Debts of the Families (Ráðherranefnd um úrlausnir í skuldamálum heimilanna), with four ministers; Ministerial Committee on Arctic Affairs (Ráðherranefnd um málefni norðurslóða), with four ministers; and the Ministerial Committee on Public Health Affairs (Ráðherranefnd um lýðheilsu) with four ministers. The most ministerial committee to have been established focused on refugee and immigrant issues. The committee was constituted in September 2015 and has five permanent ministers, additional ministers join on an ad hoc basis.

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Rules on procedures in ministerial committee meetings. (REGLUR um starfshætti ráðherranefnda. Nr. 166/2013 22. febrúar 2013).

<http://www.forsaetisraduneyti.is/raduneyti/nefndir/radherranefndir/>

## Ireland

### Score 6

There are nine cabinet committees. The most important is the Economic Management Council, which includes the Taoiseach (the prime minister, acting as chair), tánaiste, minister for social protection, the minister for finance, and the minister for public expenditure and reform. This group is widely believed to have considerable influence on economic and budgetary policy.

The other committees deal with the areas of health, justice, public-sector reform, climate change, construction, the Irish language, European affairs, and economic recovery.

Oireachtas (parliamentary) committees play an increasingly important role in parliamentary business. They can receive submissions and hear evidence from interested parties or groups, discuss and draft proposals for legislative change, print and publish minutes of evidence and related documents, and require attendance by ministers to discuss current policies and proposals for legislation.

Citation:

For information about Cabinet Committee see:

[http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Taoiseach\\_and\\_Government/Cabinet\\_Committees](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Taoiseach_and_Government/Cabinet_Committees)

<http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/economic-management-council-1.1996699>

## Israel

**Score 6** According to the basic law “The Government” and standards of practice, the government is authorized to appoint cabinet committees (called Ministerial Committees) for different policy issues and is obligated to appoint a security and state focused cabinet that includes the prime minister, minister of defense, minister of justice, foreign minister, minister of state security and minister of finance. The 34th government of the state of Israel established 19 committees during 2015, dealing with policy issues such as housing and education. During operation “Protective Edge” (2014), ministers publicly criticized the prime minister for making decisions without prior consultation, limiting their role to observers. Similar disputes over ministerial cooperation are evident with regards to the cabinet on housing. It should be noted, however, that these descriptions are mostly derived from popularized media coverage.

Citation:

Chudi, Ori, “The minister of housing boycotted the housing cabinet over dispute with Lapid,” Globes 23.6.2014: <http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000948352> (Hebrew).

Ravid, Barak, “Ministers in the cabinet: There was no real discussion during the cease fire negotiations,” haaretz 11.8.2014: <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/premium-1.2402635> (Hebrew).

Cabinet committees and their authorities,” the ministry of Justice website 24.6.1996 (Hebrew).

“The guidelines for government work,” PMO’s website, 12.8.2012, (Hebrew).

“Ministerial Committees,” PMO’s website, (12.11.2015), <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/GovernmentSecretariat/Pages/MinisterialCommittees.aspx> (English).

## Japan

**Score 6** Following the government reform in 2001, government committees were established in a number of important fields in which coordination among ministries with de facto overlapping jurisdictions plays an important role. The most important is the Council for Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP), headed by the prime minister. However, in two respects, this was never a “ministerial committee” in a strict sense. First, it has only an advisory function. Second, individuals from the private sector – two academics and two business representatives in the current configuration – were included. This can increase the impact of such a council, but it also means that it stands somewhat aloof from concrete political processes.

Current Prime Minister Abe again strengthened the role of the CEFP and set up the Headquarters for Japan’s Economic Revitalization as a “quasi sub-committee” of the CEFP that encompasses all state ministers. While the cabinet has to approve considerations developed in the CEFP or in the Headquarters, there is indeed a shift

toward first discussing policy redirections in the committees, including a discussion of basic budget guidelines.

In the sphere of science and technology policy, the role of the Council for Science, Technology and Innovation has been strengthened even further, giving it budgetary primacy over related ministries, but it remains to be seen whether this move will change the substance of policymaking.

The creation of the National Security Council in 2013 was a similar case in which interministerial coordination was intensified in the interest of asserting the prime minister's policy priorities.

## Portugal

**Score 6** Most ordinary meetings of the Portuguese cabinet – the Council of Ministers – are used for policy decisions rather than strategic policy debates. More political issues and strategic policy considerations are by-and-large prepared by the Council's inner core of a few ministers, augmented by other ministers and staff when required. However, as the economic crisis deepened – and with a coalition government in office – the committee meetings are increasingly failing to settle all issues prior to Council meetings.

Citation:  
[www.sg.pcm.gov.pt/media/8376/pa\\_2015\\_site.pdf](http://www.sg.pcm.gov.pt/media/8376/pa_2015_site.pdf)

## Slovakia

**Score 6** The importance of cabinet and ministerial committees has varied over time in Slovakia, with every government modifying the committee structure. The second Fico government has only one cabinet committee composed exclusively of ministers, the Council for National Security. Other ministerial committees consisting of ministers and senior civil servants and chaired by the four appointed vice prime ministers or line ministers have played a major role in the preparation of government proposals, and have been quite effective in settling controversial issues prior to cabinet meetings. However, they are still neither formally nor systematically involved in the preparation of cabinet meetings.

## Turkey

**Score 6** In November 2004, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) established the Better Regulation Group to ensure coordination among the related agencies and institutions and improve the process of creating regulations. In addition, the government has

created committees – such as the anti-terror commission under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which includes officials from the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, as well as other security departments – composed of ministers, experts, bureaucrats and representatives of other bureaucratic bodies (such as those on legislation techniques, legislation management and administrative simplification, and regulatory impact analysis) when important or frequently raised issues were under consideration.

The Economy Coordination Board, headed by the deputy prime minister and composed of the finance minister and state ministers responsible for economic affairs and development; customs; labor and social security; and science, technology and industry, was especially established to evaluate economic and financial matters and develop policy proposals.

An interministerial committee tasked with finding solutions to the Kurdish issue was recently established. Other interministerial bodies include the Money Credit Coordination Council, the Investment Environment Coordination Board, the Coordination Board for Combating Financial Crimes, and the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Board.

In 2014, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's government created a Reform Action Group. This replaced a Reform Monitoring Group, consisting of the same ministers (economy, justice and European Union affairs), but extending its predecessor's tasks and mission. The new body is tasked with monitoring political reforms, preparing draft reform bills, and playing an active role in securing proposals' parliamentary passage and in the subsequent implementation process. However, as of the time of writing, this body had convened only twice since its establishment, raising doubts as to its efficacy.

Citation:

Ömer Öz, Regulatory Oversight Bodies in Turkey. Better Regulation Group, The Prime Minister's Office of Turkey, 31 May 2011, <http://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/48710734.pdf> (accessed 5 November 2014).

Çözüm Süreci Kurulu Resmi Gazete'de, 1 October 2014, <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/158881-cozum-sureci-kurulu-resmi-gazete-de> (accessed 5 November 2014).

'Reform Monitoring Group for EU reforms replayed with Action Group', Hürriyet Daily News (7 November 2014)  
2015 Programının Uygulanması, Koordinasyonu ve İzlenmesine İlişkin Karar, Resmi Gazete, 17 October 2014, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141017-11-1.pdf> (accessed 27 October 2015)

## Austria

Score 5

There are no regular (or permanent) cabinet committees. In rare cases, ad hoc committees are established to deal with a specific matter. As coalitions are the rule in Austria, such committees usually consist of members of both coalition parties in order to ensure an outcome acceptable to the full cabinet.

## Cyprus

**Score 5** Interministerial committees are regularly formed in Cyprus. Committees are established on ad hoc basis, on procedural and sector-specific matters (e.g., promoting road safety, combating fire hazards, and on defense and other topics). Their work is to formulate general policy frameworks, and are supported by services or technical committees mainly from within ministries, though in some cases contributions from external experts are sought. The scope of work and the degree of efficiency in the committees' coordination are not easy to assess, as their reports are rarely made public. Coordination promoted since 2014 has focused mostly on specific topics and short-term actions and processes, rather than being a sustained result of strategic planning and implementation.

## Czech Republic

**Score 5** There are several ministerial committees in the Czech Republic, and depending on the set of issues they are tasked to address, some are established on a temporary basis while others are permanent. The most important permanent committees include the Council for National Security and the Committee for the European Union. The latter approves the mandate for the Czech delegation at the European Council and is led by the Czech prime minister. This committee also participates in the preparation of mandates, instructions and positions for negotiations with EU bodies. The committees discuss and approve policy documents, thereby filtering out issues and saving time in cabinet meetings. There are 15 such bodies under the GO and 12 advisory working bodies under different ministries. The committees are still not systematically involved in the preparation of cabinet meetings.

## Germany

**Score 5** As a rule of thumb, the cabinet functions as an institution that formally ratifies policy decisions that have been made elsewhere. In principle, line ministers are responsible for policies within their own jurisdiction. Therefore, they have at least some leeway to pursue their own or their party's interest, potentially hampering effective policy coordination. This leeway is quite substantial in international comparison, as coalition partners during the period under review mostly abstained from sending watchdogs in the form of state secretaries to ministries led by the other partner. The challenge presented by the dramatic increase in the number of refugees claiming asylum in Germany has not led to any substantive changes in the functioning of cabinet meetings. No institutional reforms to the cabinet committee system, nor any other equivalent, have been introduced to improve the government's responsiveness to dynamic policy challenges.

## Malta

- Score 5** While government officials do organize cabinet committees to assist in clarifying issues prior to full cabinet meetings, these do not necessarily correspond to line ministries but to individual issues. Occasionally ministers form cabinet subcommittees to coordinate policies between ministries. The chair of the subcommittee, however, would not be from the ministry from which the policy originated. Although plans to set up cabinet committees on EU affairs, including the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, were announced, little has been achieved. However, a cabinet committee was established to prepare for Malta's presidency of the EU in 2017.

Citation:

Harwood Mark, *Malta in the European Union 2014* Ashgate, Surrey

## Romania

- Score 5** Ministerial committees composed of cabinet and non-cabinet members (state secretaries, agency directors) can play an important role in shaping policy decisions on issues that involve multiple ministries. However, de facto coordination of the process is typically led by the line ministry initiating the policy proposal.

## Bulgaria

- Score 4** The Bulgarian cabinet does not resort to specific cabinet or ministerial committees as a way of coordinating proposals for cabinet meetings. However, there are many cross-cutting advisory councils that include several ministers or high-ranking representatives of different ministries and have some coordinating functions. These might thus be seen as functional equivalents to ministerial or cabinet committees. However, the role of the councils, which often have a rather broad membership, is quite limited in substantive terms.

## Poland

- Score 4** The number of cabinet committees was kept low under both the Tusk and Kopacz governments. The two most important such committees are the Development Policy Coordination Committee and the Committee on European Affairs. The former is in charge of coordinating the country's development strategy, while the latter is responsible for EU coordination. In both cases, however, coordination has largely been accomplished by top civil servants rather than by the ministers themselves.

## Greece

- Score 3** There are cabinet committees tasked with overseeing specific policy sectors. However, these committees meet only when a major policy decision has to be made and are not subject to systematic organization. Substantive policy work is done at the line ministries and by the Prime Minister's Office before issues are presented to the cabinet. Ministerial committees often perform a more symbolic function. This was the practice under the preceding government coalitions of New Democracy and PASOK between 2011 and 2014 and was repeated after January 2015 under the Syriza and ANEL coalition government. Only this time, committees functioned more slowly and at a lower level of coordination, a result of the fact that most ministries were consumed for seven months (January to July 2015) with the negotiations of the PMO and individual ministers with Greece's creditors. Then, snap elections were called for September 2015, which brought cabinet and ministerial committee work to a standstill. A new Syriza-ANEL coalition government was formed after these elections and started functioning only belatedly.

## Estonia

- Score 2** Estonia does not have a committee structure within government, or any ministerial committee. Ministers informally discuss their proposals and any other pending issues at weekly consultative cabinet meetings, as mentioned above. No formal voting or any other selection procedure is applied to issues discussed on consultative meetings.

## Switzerland

- Score 2** Not surprisingly, given the small number of ministries, there are no cabinet committees in Switzerland's political system. However, there is considerable coordination, delegation and communication at the lower level of the federal government. Every minister is in a sense already a "ministerial committee," representing the coordination of a large number of cooperating departmental units.

## Norway

- Score 1** There is little use of formal cabinet committees within Norway's political system. The whole cabinet meets several times a week, and generally works together as a full-cabinet committee.

The coalition partners have created a subcommittee within the cabinet that coordinates issues on difficult or sensitive topics, and a special subgroup for European affairs.

## Sweden

### Score 1

There are no standing cabinet committees in the Swedish system of government. cabinet proposals are coordinated through iterations of sending drafts of bills to the concerned departments. This usually takes place at the middle level of the departments and thus does not involve the political level of the departments.

The cabinet is both a policy-shaping institution as well as the final institution of appeal on a wide range of issues. There is also a requirement that the cabinet has to be the formal decision-maker on many issues. This means that the cabinet annually makes more 100,000 decisions (mostly in bulk).

Indicator

## Ministerial Bureaucracy

Question

How effectively do ministry officials/civil servants coordinate policy proposals?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = Most policy proposals are effectively coordinated by ministry officials/civil servants.
- 8-6 = Many policy proposals are effectively coordinated by ministry officials/civil servants.
- 5-3 = There is some coordination of policy proposals by ministry officials/civil servants.
- 2-1 = There is no or hardly any coordination of policy proposals by ministry officials/civil servants.

### Estonia

Score 10

Formal procedures of coordinating policy proposals are set in the rules of the national government. According to it, all relevant ministries must be consulted and involved in a consensus-building process before an amendment or policy proposal can be brought to the government. An online draft-bill portal (Eelnõude infosüsteem, EIS) is used for the purposes of inter-ministerial coordination and public consultations. In addition to this formal procedure, senior civil servants from the various ministries consult and inform each other about coming proposals; vice chancellors are key persons in this informal consultation process.

### Finland

Score 10

Cabinet meetings are prepared by ministry officials and civil servants. Findings from a large-scale analysis some years ago into the internal politics and practices of the cabinet and ministries emphasized the existence of a cyclical culture of dependence between ministers and senior officials. One expression of this mutual dependence, according to the same analysis, was that ministers put greater trust in the advice of their subordinate civil servants than in the advice of ministerial colleagues. This pattern extends to all aspects of the cabinet's agenda. With regard to policy programs and similar intersectoral issues, coordination between civil servants of separate ministries happens as a matter of course. In specific matters, coordination may even be dictated. For instance, statements from the Ministry of Finance must be obtained by other ministries on economic and financial issues. On the whole, given the decision-making culture, civil servants in different ministries are expected to engage in coordination. An unwritten code of behavior prescribes harmonious and smooth activity, and ministers or ministries are expected to subject projects that are burdensome or sensitive to a collective examination and analysis.

:

Jaakko Nousiainen, "Politiikan huipulla. Ministerit ja ministeriöt Suomen parlamentaarisessa järjestelmässä". Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1992, p. 128.

## Switzerland

Score 10

The federal government deliberates behind closed doors, and minutes of these meetings are not public. A leading expert on government decision processes has estimated that in most decision-making processes, "either the preliminary procedure or the co-reporting procedure leads to an agreement." The preliminary procedure consists of interministerial consultations at the level of the federal departments. After the departments have been consulted, the co-reporting procedure begins. The Federal Chancellery leads the process by submitting the proposal under consideration as prepared by the ministry responsible to all other ministries. These then have the opportunity to submit a report or express an opinion. A process of discussion and coordination ensues, designed to eliminate all or most differences before the proposal is discussed by the Federal Council.

Two instruments, the large and the small co-reporting procedures, are specifically designed to coordinate policy proposals between the ministries. These processes invite the ministries to take positions on political issues. The co-reporting procedure is largely a process of negative coordination, which highlights incompatibilities with other policies but does not systematically scrutinize the potential for synergy.

## Denmark

Score 9

Coordination through the cabinet is collegial, and officials largely carry out interdepartmental coordination through negotiations between their affected ministries, often via interdepartmental committees or working groups. There is a certain degree of congruence between such interdepartmental committees and cabinet committees, with different ministries leading on different issue areas. The PMO plays an important role, especially for issues that involve the Parliament. Other important ministries are the Finance Ministry, which prepares the annual budget, the Justice Ministry, which checks the legal aspects of all bills, and the Foreign Ministry, which gets involved in security, defense and development policies.

Citation:

Jørgen Grønnegård Christiansen, Peter Munk Christensen and Mariun Ibsen, *Politik og forvaltning*. 3. udgave. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2011.

## Luxembourg

Score 9

Senior ministry officials and interministerial meetings are important in the preparation of draft bills and for cabinet meetings. There is both formal and informal coordination in the conception of new policy, in policy modification or in the conception of a pre-draft bill. As part of the process, inter-ministerial ad hoc groups

are formed. Normally, a pre-draft bill is already the result of consultation with social partners and civil society groups. Once the pre-draft bill is published, official consultation rounds start again.

Citation:

<http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/fr/politique/institutions-politiques/gouvernement/index.html>

[http://www.forum.lu/pdf/artikel/7693\\_332\\_ThomasSchmit.pdf](http://www.forum.lu/pdf/artikel/7693_332_ThomasSchmit.pdf)

<http://www.wort.lu/de/politik/oeffentlicher-dienst-nichts-ist-perfekt-5510515f0c88b46a8ce55ffd>

## New Zealand

Score 9

The cabinet process is overseen by the cabinet office on the basis of clear guidelines. Departmental chief executives typically meet with ministers prior to cabinet meetings to discuss the agenda and clarify matters. The amount and effectiveness of policy proposal coordination varies a great deal depending on the policy field. However, there is clearly coordination in the preparation of cabinet papers and demanding processes specified in cabinet office circulars. The fact that beginning in 2009, new senior-officials' committees were established to support cabinet-committee chairs points to earlier weaknesses that needed to be overcome with a new instrument for coordination.

Citation:

CabGuide – Officials' Committees that support Cabinet Committees: <http://cabguide.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/context/definitions/officials-committees> (accessed October 9, 2014).

CabGuide – Role of the Cabinet Office: <http://cabguide.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/context/definitions/cabinet-office> (accessed October 9, 2014).

## Portugal

Score 9

Since the mid-1980s, cabinet meetings have been prepared in advance by senior ministry officials such as junior ministers or director-generals (who are also political appointees), depending on the issue. Under the MoU and the subsequent continuing conditions of budgetary constraint, this coordination has been carried out in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance. This entity closely monitors all expenditure.

## Australia

Score 8

There is generally a high level of coordination between line ministry public servants. In most cases, ministries must coordinate with the Department of Finance and the Treasury, since they are responsible for finding the resources for any new policy developments, and such developments must feed into the government's spending and budget cycle. Where there are legal implications, there must be coordination with the Attorney General's Department. Departments least likely to coordinate their

activities across the government portfolio are Defense and Foreign Affairs and Trade, since their activities have the fewest implications across the other portfolios.

Coordination is especially effective when the political leadership is driving proposals, but less effective on policy matters initiated at the level of the minister or department, in part reflecting greater uncertainty among civil servants as to the support for the proposal from the political leadership. It also reflects differences in policy priorities and culture across departments, as well as inherent competition between departments for power, relevance and resources.

## Canada

**Score 8** Many policy proposals are coordinated by line ministries with other line ministries. However, due to issues of departmental mandates and authorities, this process is generally not as effective as the central-agency coordination process. On certain issues, the line department may be unwilling to recognize the role or expertise of other line departments, or have fundamental differences of perspectives on the issue, and hence may fail to consult and/or coordinate a policy proposal with others. The paramount role of central agencies in policy development means that departments have in fact little ability to effectively coordinate policy proposals.

## France

**Score 8** If a ministry wishes to get its proposals accepted or passed, there are no other options than to liaise and coordinate with other ministries or agencies involved. For instance, the “Loi Macron” bill (2015) had to be co-signed by 13 ministers. In case this consultation has not taken place, objections expressed by other ministers or by the Council of State might deliver a fatal blow to a proposal. All ministries are equal, but some are more equal than others: for example, the finance minister is a crucial, omnipresent and indispensable actor. Usually the coordination and consultation process is placed under the responsibility of a “rapporteur,” usually a lawyer from the ministry bureaucracy. The dossier is always followed as well by a member of the minister’s staff who communicates with his/her counterparts and tries to smooth the process as much as possible. In the most difficult cases (when ministers back up strongly the positions of their respective civil servants), the prime minister has to step in and settle the matter.

## Italy

**Score 8** Before every Council of Ministers meeting there is a preparatory meeting – the so-called pre-consiglio – where the heads of the legislative offices of all the ministries

filter and coordinate the proposals to be submitted to the Council of Ministers meeting. Further informal meetings between officials of ministries take place at earlier stages of drafting. However, the bureaucracies of individual ministries are jealous of their prerogatives and are not very keen to surrender the autonomy of their ministry.

## Latvia

### Score 8

The official decision-making process mandates the coordination of policy proposals at the state-secretary level. New policy initiatives are officially announced at weekly state-secretary meetings, after the draft proposals are circulated in a transparent process providing all ministries with an opportunity to review and comment on the issues. The process is open to the public and input from non-governmental entities is welcomed. Ministry responses to draft proposals are collected and ministerial coordination meetings on particular drafts are held to achieve consensus on the substance of the proposals. In cases where consensus cannot be reached, the proposals move to cabinet committee for further consideration at the political level.

Issues can be fast-tracked at the request of a minister. Fast-tracking means that the usual procedures for gathering cross-sectoral and expert input can be circumvented, putting the efficacy of coordination at risk. In 2011, 2012 and 2013, a respective 35%, 34% and 31% of all issues before cabinet were fast-tracked. In 2014, however, the percentage of measures fast-tracked increased markedly to 42%.

At a lower bureaucratic level, coordination occurs on an ad hoc basis. Ministries conduct informal consultations, include other ministry representatives in working groups and establish interministerial working groups to prepare policy proposals. These methods are widely used, but are not mandatory.

Citation:

State Chancellery (2011, 2012, 2013,2014), Reports, Available at: <http://www.mk.gov.lv/vk/gada-parskats/>, Last assessed: 22.11.2014.

## Lithuania

### Score 8

The process of drafting laws and resolutions requires consultation with the ministries and state institutions affected by the issue. The coordination process is led by the ministry responsible for a given issue area. Coordination takes place at different levels of administrative hierarchy: coordination at the civil-servant level followed by that of managers representing the ministries at the government level. Coordination is a lengthy, well-documented process. Joint working groups are sometimes established, while interministerial meetings are used to coordinate the preparation of drafts and resolve disagreements before proposals reach the political level. All draft

legislation must be coordinated with the Ministry of Justice. However, the substance of coordination could be improved if the initiators of draft legislation were to use consultation procedures more extensively in assessing the possible impact of their proposals. The importance of coordination should be recognized not only during the planning phase, but also during the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases of the policy process.

## United Kingdom

- Score 8** The inter-ministerial coordination of policy proposals is an official civil service goal. However, problems of capacity and capability in this area have been revealed by surveys undertaken within the civil service. Two developments have contributed to disruptions in this area. On the one hand, the Civil Service Reform Plan of 2012 and, on the other hand, the coalition's spending cuts, which have hit parts of the ministerial bureaucracy very hard. For example, 30% of senior civil-servant jobs have been abolished. Relations between the civil service and the government have been affected, but the situation does not seem to have had a great impact on the efficiency of policy-proposal coordination. As explained above, the Cabinet Office assures coordination at the level of officials.

## United States

- Score 8** In general, there is an expectation of interagency coordination at various levels of the bureaucracy. The quality of this coordination varies, and as with cabinet level coordination, it is adversely affected by the short-term service of political appointees, which results in underdeveloped working relationships across agencies. The overall or average performance has not been systematically evaluated, however.

## Chile

- Score 7** Ministry staff and civil servants do not always play a dominant role in the drafting of policy proposals before those proposals reach ministerial committees. Depending on the ministry and the importance of the proposal, officials and civil servants are more or less effectively involved in the preparation and coordination process.

## Iceland

- Score 7** Ministry officials and civil servants play an important role in preparing cabinet meetings. Even so, no cooperation between ministries is presumed in cases when the

ministers themselves are not involved. As a consequence of the strong tradition of ministerial power and independence, the involvement of too many ministries and ministers has been found to be a barrier to policymaking. Currently, coordination between ministries is irregular. The prime minister has the power to create coordination committees, but there has been no significant increase in the number of active committees.

## Japan

**Score 7** During the DPJ-led governments (2009-2012) a number of high-profile measures were introduced to lessen the influence of civil servants in policymaking. Following serious policy blunders, the DPJ later tried to establish a more constructive working relationship with the bureaucracy.

After the 2012 election, the new LDP-led government sent clear signals that it would like to work effectively with the bureaucracy. The collaboration between politicians and bureaucrats has since become smoother. In 2014, the government decided to launch a Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs, which is designed to help the prime minister make appointment decisions regarding the 600 elite bureaucrats staffing the ministries and other major agencies. This significantly expanded Kantei involvement in the process. It remains to be seen whether this will create tensions with the ministries, which have traditionally chosen their own upper echelons. During the first ensuing round of reshuffles, more weight was given to promoting women as well as to interministerial exchange.

## Norway

**Score 7** Senior civil servants and political appointees play an important role in preparing cabinet meetings. This process follows fixed procedures, and matters must be appropriately prepared before being presented to the cabinet. This includes the creation of documentation alerting cabinet ministers to the essentials of a proposal, thus allowing cabinet meetings to focus on strategic issues and avoid being distracted by routine business details. Most issues on the agenda have been prepared well before the meeting.

## South Korea

**Score 7** Civil servants of different ministries regularly coordinate over commonly concerned policies. This coordination and cooperation among related civil servants across ministries can be either formal or informal, hierarchical or horizontal. Attitudes in the ministries are shaped by departmentalism that obstructs coordination. Different

ministries compete with their policies for support and approval from the office of the president. There is also a clear hierarchy delineating the ministries. Civil servants in important ministries, such as the Ministry of Strategy and Finance, consider civil servants from other ministries, such as the labor ministry or the environment ministry, as “second tier.” In 2013, the Park Geun-hye administration introduced the so-called Government 3.0 policy, aimed both at improving interministerial coordination and access to information by citizens.

## Spain

### Score 7

The two most important senior bureaucratic positions in the 13 ministries are the secretaries of state, who play a role much like that of junior ministers in other European countries, but do not belong to the government in Spain; and the undersecretaries, who are career civil servants that typically act as department administrators. These figures meet every Wednesday in the so-called General Committee of Undersecretaries and Secretaries of State (Comisión General de Subsecretarios y Secretarios de Estado). This committee effectively prepares the Council of Ministers weekly sessions, which are held two days later, on Fridays. The Government Office (Ministerio de la Presidencia, GO), directed by a minister who is also the deputy prime minister, chairs the meetings of this preparatory committee in which all draft bills, all appointments and any other ministerial proposals are discussed and scheduled as a part of the Council of Ministers’ agenda.

A provisional agenda (known as the “black index”) is published by the GO a week before the cabinet meeting. The GO also collects and circulates all relevant documents for discussion by the line ministers. On Tuesday mornings, senior Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) officials assess the relative importance of agenda items on the black index and identify where there are likely to be divergent positions. Thus, the Wednesday meetings of the preparatory committee perform an important gatekeeping function in returning problematic proposals to the appropriate line ministry and forwarding the remaining proposals to the Council of Ministers (now classified into two indexes: the green index, which covers ongoing administrative matters, and the red index, for issues which are more controversial either by nature or because a lack of ministerial consensus). Nevertheless, although senior ministry officials effectively review, filter out and settle almost all issues, thus allowing the Council of Ministers to focus on strategic-policy debates, the truth is that important political discussions in the Spanish Council of Ministers are rare.

While the coordination of policy proposals is efficient at the highest level of the bureaucratic hierarchy, this effectiveness declines at the middle levels of the organization, since there is tradition in Spain of interministerial administrative coordination. To be sure, the role of high-ranking civil servants (normally the *subdirectores generales*) is crucial in the preparation of policy proposals within every line ministry, but their subsequent involvement in horizontal coordination with other

ministries is very limited. In fact, and as a consequence of the strong departmentalization, every ministry tends to act within its area of competence or jurisdiction, avoiding proposals which may involve other ministries. Although many administrative interministerial committees formally exist, in practice these committees do not coordinate the drafting of policy proposals or decision-making between different ministries. As administrative committees do not tend to work efficiently, they have fallen by the wayside and now usually simply facilitate the exchange of information or try to settle jurisdictional conflicts.

## Sweden

**Score 7** As mentioned earlier, most of the daily coordination on policy matters does not involve the political level of the departments, but is instead handled at the administrative level. However, as soon as coordination takes place on a political dimension, it is “lifted” to the political level.

Coordination within the GO remains a significant problem, although some measures have been implemented to address that problem. Many departments still find it difficult to coordinate policy across departmental boundaries. Departments that were formed through mergers of departments tend to display “subcultures” of the former departments.

Citation:

Niemann, C. (2013), *Villkorat förtroende. Normer och rollförväntningar i relationen mellan politiker och tjänstemän i Regeringskansliet* (Stockholm: department of Political Science, University of Stockholm).

## Turkey

**Score 7** Ministerial undersecretaries, under the authority of a minister and his or her aide, executes services on behalf of the ministers. This is a political position that is achieved through merit and a successful political career. Deputy undersecretaries in the ministries also help to conduct ministerial affairs.

During the review period there was an increasing tendency to draft and adopt legislation without appropriate consultation. The creation of new ministries and agencies and the resulting fragmentation of responsibilities has complicated ministerial coordination, for example in the areas of budgeting and medium-term economic policymaking. The oversight bodies under the Prime Minister’s Office are today responsible not only for coordinating and overseeing legal proposals, but are also tasked with monitoring legislative implementation. Accordingly, inefficiencies of coordination due to institutional ambiguity and conflicts is a serious problem.

The 2014 Annual Activity Report of the Prime Minister’s Office stressed that although coordination between various national and international policymaking activities had improved, performance goals in this area are not in general

satisfactorily achieved. Similar observations have been made by the Ministry of Development, the primary policy-coordination body.

Citation:

Ömer Öz, Regulatory Oversight Bodies in Turkey. Better Regulation Group, The Prime Minister's Office of Turkey, 31 May 2011, <http://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/48710734.pdf> (accessed 5 November 2014).

TC Başbakanlık 2014 Yılı Faaliyet Raporu, [http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/docs/KurumsalHaberler/2014-yili-basbakanlik-faaliyet-raporu\\_150302134448.pdf](http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/docs/KurumsalHaberler/2014-yili-basbakanlik-faaliyet-raporu_150302134448.pdf) (accessed 27 October 2015)

2015 Programının Uygulanması, Koordinasyonu ve İzlenmesine İlişkin Karar, Resmi Gazete, 17 October 2014, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141017-11-1.pdf> (accessed 27 October 2015)

## Netherlands

Score 6

Since the 2006 elections, politicians have demanded a reduction in the number of civil servants. This has resulted in a loss of substantive expertise, with civil servants essentially becoming process managers. Moreover, it has undermined the traditional relations of loyalty and trust between (deputy) ministers and top-level officers. The former have broken the monopoly formerly held by senior staff on the provision of advice and information by turning increasingly to outside sources such as consultants. Top-level officers have responded with risk-averse and defensive behavior exemplified by professionally driven organizational communication and process management. The upshot is that ministerial compartmentalization in the preparation of Council of Ministers meetings has increased. Especially in the Ministry of Justice and Safety, the quality of bureaucratic policy and legislation preparation has become a reason for serious concern.

Citation:

R.B. Andeweg and G.A. Irwin (2014), *Governance and politics of the Netherlands*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

H. Tjeenk Willink, Een nieuw idee van de staat, *Socialisme & Democratie*, 11/12, 2012, pp. 70-78

"Is justitie politiek te managen?", in *NRC-Handelsblad*, 1 October 2015

## Poland

Score 6

Senior ministry officials play a substantial role in interministerial coordination. All meetings of the Council of Ministers, the Polish cabinet, are prepared by the Council of Ministers' Permanent Committee, which is made up of deputy ministers from the ministries. The Committee for European Affairs, which is in charge of EU coordination, also relies strongly on coordination by top civil servants. In contrast, bureaucratic coordination at lower levels of the hierarchy is still relatively limited, even though the joint administration of EU funds has helped to intensify interministerial exchange.

:

Markowski, R., M. Kotnarowski, M. Wenzel, M. Żerkowska-Balas. 2015. *Democratic Audit of Poland 2014*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Edition, chapter on Public Administration.

[www.nik.gov.pl/aktualnosci/nik-o-szkoleniach-w-administracji-publicznej.html](http://www.nik.gov.pl/aktualnosci/nik-o-szkoleniach-w-administracji-publicznej.html)

## Romania

- Score 6** Much of the coordination takes place in interministerial committees, which are usually presided over by a minister and composed primarily of secretaries of state (political positions) and top civil servants. These committees seem quite effective. In the absence of interministerial committees, normative acts are subject to interministerial consultation by being sent for review to the ministries affected by each act. If ministries do not respond to the review request within five days, the non-response is considered tacit approval. Prior to government meetings discussing a particular legislative proposal, the Secretariat General of the Government organizes working groups between the representatives of ministries and agencies involved in initiating or reviewing the proposal in order to harmonize their views. While these procedures promote coordination, the capacity limitations of many ministries and the short turnaround time allowed for review undermine effective review and hence allow for only superficial coordination in many cases.

## Slovenia

- Score 6** In Slovenia, a substantial amount of interministerial coordination is performed by civil servants. Senior civil servants and cabinet members are always heavily involved in the coordination of legislation. However, the effectiveness of this coordination has suffered from the deteriorating quality and increasing politicization of the civil service, especially among high-ranking civil servants. Under the Cerar government, several prominent and experienced high-ranking civil servants were replaced by party loyalists with limited experience and even less expert knowledge.

## Austria

- Score 5** Austria's federal bureaucracy is characterized by structural fragmentation. Each federal ministry has its own bureaucracy, accountable to the minister alone and not to the government as such. Each minister and his or her ministry is regarded as having a party affiliation according to the coalition agreement. Policy coordination is possible only when the ministers of specific ministries agree to establish such a specific coordination. As fitting in the government's ministerial structure of the government, individual ministers fear loss of control over their respective bureaucracies, and thus lasting and open contacts are possible only between the (politically appointed) personal staff of ministers belonging to the same political party.

Because the Austrian bureaucracy is organized along the lines of a (British-style) civil service system, the different ministerial bureaucracies are stable in their

political makeup and therefore immune to short-term political influences. Specific ministries are generally dominated by one party over the long term (e.g., the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (social democratic) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (conservative)).

## Belgium

**Score 5** While ministries are not significantly involved in preparing cabinet meetings, each minister has a large team of close collaborators and advisors (the ministerial cabinet) to prepare projects, which are first submitted to the minister, and then to the council of ministers. For some decisions, responsibilities are shared among several ministers, a situation that happens regularly. In this case, ministerial teams must coordinate their actions in inter-cabinet meetings before being able to submit a proposal to receive the approval of each minister. Only at this stage may the proposal be submitted to the ministers' council.

The bottom line is that top civil servants do not play a significant role – in most cases, they are at best informed of ongoing discussions and are simply asked to deliver data and information.

## Cyprus

**Score 5** Line ministries appear as fiefdoms, with each claiming sovereign rights within its area of responsibility or competence. Ministry officials and civil servants may participate in ad hoc bodies assigned to deal with specific issues, or seek coordination with other ministries in drafting proposals or implementing policies if this is deemed useful.

During the period under review, new units formed as a result of administrative reform processes have contributed to intensifying interministerial interactions. This has led to greater consultation between line ministries on policy matters and efforts to coordinate implementation of decisions.

## Czech Republic

**Score 5** As part of the interministerial coordination process, some coordination among line-ministry civil servants takes place. Senior ministry officials are generally a crucial link in collecting and discussing comments on proposed legislation. The definition of their roles and responsibilities should be improved through the new civil service law, which went into effect on 1 January 2015 and regulates the legal status of state employees in administrative offices and represents a significant step toward

establishing a stable and professional public administration. The existing committees under the GO or ministries have to contribute to the coordination process.

## Germany

**Score 5** Ex-ante coordination between the line ministries' leading civil servants has not been particularly strong under past German coalition governments. In addition, an entrenched political practice ensures that no ministry makes any proposal that might be postponed or blocked by other ministries. The federal Ministry of Finance must be involved when budgetary resources are concerned, while complicated legal or constitutional issues necessitate the involvement of the federal Ministry of Justice. But generally, every ministry is fully responsible for its own proposed bills. All controversial issues are already settled before being discussed by the cabinet. The dominant mechanism for conflict resolution is the coalition committee.

## Hungary

**Score 5** Given the small number of ministries in Hungary, interministerial coordination has, to some extent, been replaced with intraministerial coordination, primarily within the Ministry of Human Resources (EMMI), the biggest superministry, employing 1,367 persons, followed by the Ministry of National Economy (NGM) with 1,102 persons. In addition to policy coordination by the PMO, there is some coordination by ministry officials, since senior ministry officials meet in order to prepare cabinet meetings. There is also a special Interministerial Coordination Committee for European Affairs (EKTB), a committee consisting of senior ministry officials tasked with coordinating EU-related issues that is also under the auspices of the PMO.

## Ireland

**Score 5** Responsibility for policy coordination lies with the Prime Minister's Office (Department of the Taoiseach). However, to be truly effective in this area the office would require greater analytical expertise across many policy areas than it has at present. Despite much rhetoric about "joined-up government," the coordination of policy proposals across ministries is relatively weak, and conflicting policies are often pursued in different parts of the civil service. For example, employment creation can take precedence over environmental considerations and local planning processes often do not mesh with national housing policies.

## Israel

### Score 5

The government initiated actions to improve interministerial cooperation over the past decade in order to overcome its bureaucratic entanglements and political power struggles. Among others, it introduced roundtable meetings, CEOs coordination forums, guidelines and digital information platforms. Nonetheless, experts find that ministries are essentially territorial in nature, and the sharing of information between ministries is difficult at best. This lack of communication at least partly results from the government's highly centralized budget process, making public servants defensive over limited and strictly supervisory resources. Some of the results of this dynamic is the dominance of non-sectoral offices (e.g., the PMO) in policy development as well as the popularity of interministerial ad hoc committees (e.g., the housing cabinet) in order to energize policy proposals. In response to the numerous entities involved in implementing the government's goals, an expert committee recently recommended establishing a mechanism for coordination and decision-making. The committee suggested strengthening the authorities of the PMO and emphasizing its role as a coordinator between ministries.

#### Citation:

Heruti Sover, Tali. "Experts: The Number of Government Ministries should be limited to 15," *TheMarker*, 24.3.2015: <http://www.themarker.com/career/1.2597873> (Hebrew).

Bar-Kol, Yair, "Appointing a minister for inter-ministerial cooperation," *TheMarker* 3.4.2013: <http://www.themarker.com/opinion/1.1983509> (Hebrew).

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## Malta

### Score 5

Civil servants from a ministry typically coordinate policy proposals with other line ministries before policy is officially drafted. During the review period a new system was established. The cabinet director general is in charge of administrative decisions, and ensures that cabinet decisions are implemented in the different ministries. On Mondays, the chiefs of staff meet to draft memos for the cabinet. On Tuesdays, the cabinet meets and makes a decision. On Wednesdays, the permanent secretaries meet to decide on how to implement the cabinet's decisions. A commissioner for the simplification and reduction of bureaucracy has been established.

Occasionally interministerial committees help coordinate policy before the drafting process is started. Increasingly this has become normal practice as a number of interministerial committees were created to support Valletta's campaign to be the 2018 European Capital of Culture, and prepare for the Commonwealth Head of State Summit in Malta, an EU-Africa Summit and Malta's presidency of the EU in 2017.

## Mexico

**Score 5** With the possible exception of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where bureaucratic expertise plays a major role, there is little to no real distinction in Mexico between civil servants and politicians, though the relationship between them has significantly varied over time. However, the upper administration consists of several thousand presidential appointments and only a limited number of career bureaucrats. Traditionally, the political system has been weighed toward presidential appointments. The cabinet today is much more heterogeneous, however, with some figures personally close to the president and others more independent. The politicization of the cabinet, which has increased under recent administrations, is constraining its ability to coordinate policy proposals given the centrifugal tendencies.

## Slovakia

**Score 5** In Slovakia, senior ministry officials have traditionally been heavily involved in the interministerial coordination process at the drafting stage. In contrast, coordination at the lower levels of the ministerial bureaucracy has suffered from a strong departmentalist culture and the top-down approach taken in most ministries. Under the Fico government, the role of senior civil servants in interministerial coordination has decreased. As the second Fico government has been a single-party government, the autonomy of the ministries and of the ministerial bureaucracy has declined, and coordination within the Smer-SD party has gained importance.

## Bulgaria

**Score 4** While a comprehensive framework for coordination between ministry officials and civil servants exists, the quality of the coordination process is low, meaning that many issues have to be resolved at the political level. Within the ministries, a departmentalist culture prevails. This is especially true during coalition governments, when coordination between line ministries under ministers from different parties is virtually nonexistent. A case in point in the period under review was the reform of pensions. In 2014-2015, the Ministry of Finance went to the public with reform plans that were not coordinated in advance with the National Social Insurance Institute, the agency responsible for handling the first pension pillar.

## Croatia

- Score 4 The direct coordination of policy proposals by ministries is limited. There is no stable and transparent scheme for settling interministerial differences within the bureaucracy. The ministries in charge of drafting proposals rarely set up working groups that include peers from other ministries or government bodies. Deadlines for comments by other ministries are often too abbreviated, capacities for comments are sometimes inadequate, and comments made by other ministries are often not taken seriously.

## Greece

- Score 3 Greek bureaucracy is over-politicized and under-resourced. Political party cadres rather than civil servants coordinate policy proposals. Civil servants in line ministries often lack modern scientific and management skills. Policy proposals are usually assigned to ministerial advisors, who are short-term political appointees and can be non-academic experts, academics and governing party cadres. Top civil servants contribute to policy proposals by suggesting what is legally permissible and technically feasible, although even on those issues ministers often tend to trust their own legal and technical advisors. The remaining civil servants at lower levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy rarely, if ever, know of, let alone contribute to policy proposals. Moreover, there is little horizontal coordination among civil servants working in different ministries. Ministers assign the task of horizontal interministerial communication to their advisors.

Since Syriza's rise to power, in coalition with the ANEL party, in January 2015, the politicization of Greek bureaucracy was further exacerbated. For example, the minister of education replaced all 13 civil servants who were heads of the 13 regional public education services. In November 2015, the Syriza-ANEL coalition government passed a law on the basis of which heads of independent authorities, such as the Greek Ombudsman, were dismissed. In other quarters of the state administration, many, although not all, heads and members of administrative councils of public bodies and state-owned enterprises were replaced with Syriza and ANEL party cadres or sympathizers.

Indicator

## Informal Coordination

Question

### How effectively do informal coordination mechanisms complement formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = Informal coordination mechanisms generally support formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination.
- 8-6 = In most cases, informal coordination mechanisms support formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination.
- 5-3 = In some cases, informal coordination mechanisms support formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination.
- 2-1 = Informal coordination mechanisms tend to undermine rather than complement formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination.

### Finland

Score 10

Intersectoral coordination has generally been perceived as an important issue in Finnish politics, but rather few institutional mechanisms have in fact been introduced. One of these, the Iltakoulu (which translates as evening session), was previously an important unofficial negotiation session for the cabinet, but this system is no longer systematically used. To a considerable extent, though, coordination proceeds effectively through informal mechanisms. Recent large-scale policy programs have enhanced intersectoral policymaking; additionally, Finland's membership in the European Union has of course necessitated increased interministerial coordination. Recent research in Finland has only focused tangentially on informal mechanisms, but various case studies suggest that the system of coordination by advisory councils has performed well.

### Belgium

Score 9

Belgian governments have typically been broad coalition governments (the current government is more homogeneously right-wing, but still includes four parties), and mechanisms such as the council of ministers were established to enforce effective coordination. It is also important to note that party discipline is strong and party presidents are dominant figures able to enforce coordination both within and across government levels (subnational and national). In addition, some of the larger parties have well-organized study centers that provide extensive policy expertise.

The government agreement, signed at the government-formation stage, operates as an ex ante contract that limits possible deviation once the coalition operates. Once the government is formed, decisions are made collegially, and all government

officials must defend the decisions made by the council of ministers. Thus, as long as governmental decisions remain within the boundaries of the government agreement, policy proposals are well coordinated.

Importantly, the last elections produced highly asymmetric coalitions at the federal and regional levels. The federal government must be composed of the same number of Dutch and French-speaking ministers. However, only one French-speaking party is part of that government: the liberal-right MR. The coalition in Flanders is made up of all the Flemish parties in the federal government. In Wallonia, the coalition is composed of parties that are in the opposition at the federal level: the Socialists (PS) and the Christian Democrats (CDH). The Brussels government is a six-party coalition with a partial overlap between the federal and regional coalitions. The capacity to coordinate policy between the federal and the regional governments is thus much more limited than it has been in recent times.

Moreover, the fact that the MR is the sole French-speaking party at the federal level, as well as a minority party in its electoral districts, puts it in an awkward position, limiting the capacity of the MR prime minister to dictate policy and behavior to coalition partners. Finally, the federal government is unusually right-wing for Belgium, and has sought to pass a large batch of reforms despite strong opposition from the trade unions. This creates tensions between the coalition partners, who have tended as a result to engage in public displays of dissent – in particular the Flemish Christian Democrats (CD&V), which still has strong structural links with the large Christian trade union.

## Hungary

Score 9

The strong formal role of Prime Minister Orbán and his PMO is complemented by informal coordination mechanisms. There are about 150 top decision-makers within the Hungarian government that are appointed directly by the prime minister. Within this group, there are two circles of informality and confidence. First, Orbán regularly meets with the 20 to 30 people closest to him; many important decisions derive from these personal encounters. Second, Orbán occasionally brings together officials from his larger circle in order to give instructions. Many decisions originate from these meetings, which subsequently ripple informally through the system before any formal decision is made. These informal coordination mechanisms make rapid decision-making possible. Given the pivotal role of the prime minister, this system encourages anticipative obedience, but also creates a bottleneck in the implementation of decisions and precludes any genuinely efficient feedback.

## Italy

Score 9

During the Letta government, interministerial coordination was predominantly based on traditional forms of interparty consultations among the coalition partners. Under the Renzi government and the prime minister's dominant leadership, the prime

minister has exerted greater control over informal mechanisms of coordination, including the undersecretary to the presidency. Nevertheless, the Treasury continues to have a crucial role in these informal coordination mechanisms. The importance of these informal coordination mechanisms can sometimes result in poorly coordinated decisions.

## Japan

Score 9

Informal relations and related agreements are very common in Japan. Such interactions can facilitate coordination, but can also lead to collusion. In terms of institutionalized informal coordination mechanisms in the realm of policymaking, informal meetings and debates between the ministries and the ruling party's policy-research departments have traditionally been very important.

With the LDP-led coalition government in power again since late 2012, informal, closed-door agreements on policy are again of considerable importance. The leadership has to skillfully navigate between the coalition partners, including the Komeito party and LDP (and its Policy Research Council), line ministries and their bureaucrats, and a more inquisitive public. The position of the Chief Cabinet Secretary, in charge of the Kantei and with a strong role in personnel appointments, has become a key component of this approach. When the records of cabinet meetings and following informal discussions became publicly available in 2014, it was made clear that such meetings are essentially formalities, with sensitive issues informally discussed and decided beforehand. This was true even for such a controversial issue as the approval of Prime Minister Abe's planned speech commemorating the 70th anniversary of World War II in mid-2015, which was approved without discussion. The general trend toward more transparency may have even strengthened the role of informality in order to avoid awkward situations.

Citation:

Jiji News, Cabinet minutes show formality, no substance, The Japan Times, 5 October 2015, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/10/05/national/politics-diplomacy/cabinet-minutes-show-formality-no-substance/>

## Luxembourg

Score 9

There are many opportunities for informal coordination, given Luxembourg's small size and its close-knit society and government administration. Those in public administration responsible for early policy research and formulation are well familiar with representatives of social organizations and members of civil-society research institutions. There are many occasions for informal contact between public servants and experts from research institutions, businesses and civil society. Senior civil servants responsible for various projects simultaneously have a huge workload and represent the government within different bodies, boards and committees.

Citation:

<http://www.lessentiel.lu/de/news/Luxembourg/story/27428798>

## New Zealand

Score 9

In addition to formal coordination, there are a number of informal channels between coalition partners, government and legislative support parties, and ministers and their parliamentary parties. However, the Cabinet Manual seeks to at least formally clarify which procedures should be used as a guideline in case of informal coordination. For instance, Cabinet Office Circular CO (15) 1 “National-led Administration: Consultation and Operating Arrangements” defines the relationship between government ministers and ministers from parties that are not officially part of the government: “Support-party ministers are not members of cabinet. From time to time, support-party ministers and other ministers outside cabinet may seek the prime minister’s agreement to attend cabinet when significant matters within their portfolios are being addressed.”

Citation:

Cabinet Office Circular CO (15) 1 (Wellington: Cabinet Office 2015).

## Switzerland

Score 9

Given the small size of the federal administration and the country’s tradition of informal coordination, there is reason to assume the continuing presence of strong and effective informal coordination.

## United Kingdom

Score 9

Informal coordination was a hallmark of the Labour governments under Tony Blair (1997 to 2007). However, informal coordination was reduced during the Labour government of Gordon Brown (2007 to 2010) and largely abolished under the previous coalition government, because of the need for avoiding tensions within the coalition. Having returned to one-party government in May 2015, it is likely that informal forms coordination will become more common again. Although there is no clear evidence that this is the case as yet.

## United States

Score 9

The U.S. government is highly prone to informal coordination, relying on personal networks, constituency relationships and other means. As with more formal

processes, the effectiveness of such coordination is adversely affected by underdeveloped working relationships resulting from the short-term service of political appointees. The overall or average performance of informal coordination mechanisms has not been systematically evaluated.

## Australia

Score 8 Information coordination procedures exist at the level of the party, where informal consultations on policies take place on a regular basis to make sure that the party leadership supports the government's direction; this occurs regardless of which party is in office. The federal system and the division of responsibilities between the federal government and the state and territory governments means that informal coordination is always an important component of any policy that may involve the states. These procedures are ad hoc, and take place at two levels, among ministers from different jurisdictions, and at the level of senior public servants.

## Chile

Score 8 Informal coordination plays an important role in settling issues so that the cabinet can focus on strategic-policy debates. Existing informal mechanisms might be characterized as "formal informality," as informal coordination mechanisms are de facto as institutionalized as formal ones in daily political practice. The functionality of this coordination mechanism did not change significantly during the review period.

## Denmark

Score 8 The Danish administrative system is a mix of formal rules and norms and more informal traditions. As a few examples, officials hold informal talks in the halls of government, over lunch and during travel to and from Brussels. The informal mechanisms can make formal meetings more efficient. Of course, important decisions must be confirmed in more formal settings. At the political level, informal mechanisms are probably more important than formal ones among officials. The fact that most governments have been coalition governments (and often minority governments) has increased the importance of information coordination mechanisms.

## France

Score 8 A crucial factor and essentially an invisible coordination mechanism is the "old-boy network" of former students from the grandes écoles (École nationale d'administration (ENA), École Polytechnique, Mines ParisTech and so on) or membership in the same "grands corps" (prestigious bureaucracies such as Inspection générale des Finances, Diplomatie, Conseil d'Etat and so on). Most

ministers (except perhaps the least powerful or those considered as marginal) include one or several persons from this high civil servant super-elite who know each other or are bound by an informal solidarity. This same sort of civil servant works as well in the prime minister's office or the president's office, strengthening again this informal connection. The system is both efficient and not transparent, from a procedural point of view. It is striking, for instance, how much President Hollande has relied on people who trained together with him at ENA, whom he has offered key positions in the political administration (from ministerial positions to the Chair of the central bank).

## Ireland

**Score 8** Every government in Ireland since 1989 has been a coalition government. The 2016 general election is certain to result in another coalition-formed government. Coalition partners negotiate a Programme for Government (PfG), which is essentially a contract between the government parties. It plays an important role in policy coordination, but is not a self-enforcing contract. The continued survival of coalition governments depends on successful policy coordination and implementation of the PfG. An annual report, published in March, then sets out the progress made across government toward meeting those commitments and reflects the priorities for the coming year.

The impression conveyed by accounts of cabinet meetings is that the agenda is usually too heavy to allow long debates on fundamental issues, which tend to have been settled in various ways prior to the meeting. On the whole these informal coordination mechanisms appear to work effectively.

Citation:

The two most recent Annual Reports on the Programme for Government are available here:

[http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications\\_2014/Programme\\_for\\_Government\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2014.pdf](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_2014/Programme_for_Government_Annual_Report_2014.pdf)

[http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications\\_2015/Programme\\_for\\_Government\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_2015/Programme_for_Government_Annual_Report_2015.pdf)

## South Korea

**Score 8** Most coordination between ministries is both formal and informal. Informal coordination is typically more effective. There is also a clear hierarchy structuring the ministries. Staffers at the newly created Ministry of Strategy and Finance see themselves as the elite among civil servants. However, the leading role of the Ministry of Strategy and Finance is defined by the president's mandate. In addition, informal coordination processes tend to be plagued by nepotism and regional or peer-group loyalties, particularly among high-school and university alumni. There has been both cooperation and competition between the ministries. Informal networks between the president and powerful politicians work very effectively in

forwarding specific policies. However, these practices lead to corruption and an inefficient allocation of resources.

## Sweden

**Score 8** Informal mechanisms of coordination are common and important in the Swedish system, although they may not always be effective. Such informality occurs both at the civil servant level as well as at the political level. Informal coordination procedures effectively filter many, but not all, policy proposals.

## Turkey

**Score 8** The government has always held informal meetings on various topics (such as on the issue of Kurdish rights or EU accession plans) with other politicians, senior officials and consultants. However, these informal bodies, which are usually made up of senior party members and their personal networks, are typically used to sketch the framework of an issue in consultation with experts, while civil servants develop proposals, and finally the upper administrative echelons finalize policy. The higher levels of the ruling party in particular, in cooperation with ministers who have considerable experience in their fields, form a tight network and contribute significantly to policy preparation.

However, the recent allegations of an illegal “parallel structure” within existing state structures linked to the network of U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gülen placed significant strain on these informal mechanisms. As a consequence, a new generation of cabinet and administrative staffers with a high degree of loyalty and commitment to the party-state system is being groomed.

Citation:

Bülent Duru/İlhan Uzgel, *AKP Kitabı-Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu*, İstanbul: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2013.

## Canada

**Score 7** Many, but not most policy proposals are coordinated through informal mechanisms, such as informal meetings with government members or across levels of government.

## Czech Republic

**Score 7** Informal coordination mechanisms have featured prominently in Czech political culture. Under the Sobotka government, the principles of coordination and problem solving within government are described in the coalition agreement. The most important body is the coalition council.

## Estonia

**Score 7** Informal coordination plays an extremely important role in ensuring efficient policymaking. In addition to the high-ranking civil servants in ministries, the coalition committee and governing bodies of political parties are key players in this regard. Getting support from coalition partners is the first step in successfully passing legislation.

Almost as important as the political support of coalition partners is the backing of local-government associations. However, local governments often hold positions in opposition to the central government, which makes reaching agreement difficult. Because local governments and their associations cannot veto the process, their position is often ignored.

In sum, there are several mechanisms to coordinate policy proposals informally. These mechanisms, however, at times facilitate, and at other times complicate, coordination.

## Iceland

**Score 7** There is evidence that informal cooperation between ministers outside of formal cabinet meetings is increasing. These cooperative ministerial clusters were referred to in the Special Investigation Committee's 2010 report as "super-ministerial groups." The Special Investigation Committee report pointed out that examples of such cooperation immediately after the 2008 economic collapse demonstrated a need for clear rules on reporting what is discussed and decided in such informal meetings. The Special Investigation Committee report also identified a tendency to move big decisions and important cooperative discussions into informal meetings between the chairmen of the ruling coalition parties. However, the report's call for clearer regulation has not been acted upon and informal meetings continue without proper reporting. The Special Investigation Committee report also pointed out that the minutes kept at ministerial and parliamentary committee meetings were inadequate. In January 2013, legislation regulating the procedures for cabinets were introduced, but this legislation only addresses formal cabinet meetings and not informal ministerial meetings.

### Citation:

The SIC report from 2010. Chapter 7. (Aðdragandi og orsakir falls Íslensku bankanna 2008 og tengdir atburðir (7). Reykjavík. Rannsóknarnefnd Alþingis).

Reglur um starfshætti ríkisstjórnar. Nr. 11/2013. 9. janúar 2013. (Rules on procedures in cabinets).

## Latvia

**Score 7** A coalition council that represents the political parties forming the governing coalition meets for weekly informal consultations. Despite its regular meetings with formal agendas, the council is not a part of the official decision-making process. Given that cabinet meetings are open to the press and public, coalition-council meetings provide an opportunity for off-the-record discussions and coordination. The council plays a de facto gatekeeping function for controversial issues, deciding when there is enough consensus to move issues to the cabinet. The coalition council can play both a complementary role, creating an enabling environment for consensus-building, and a destructive role, undermining the legitimacy of the official decision-making process.

## Lithuania

**Score 7** Formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination still dominate the decision-making process, despite the emergence of new informal coordination mechanisms and practices at the central level of government. Political councils are created to solve political disagreements within the ruling coalition. In addition, the leadership of political parties represented in the government are often involved in the coordination of political issues. Informal meetings are sometimes called to coordinate various issues at the administrative level. Furthermore, the current government wants to develop a senior civil-service strata that can more actively engage in policy coordination at the managerial level.

## Netherlands

**Score 7** Very little is actually known about informal coordination at the (sub)-Council of Ministers level regarding policymaking and decision-making. The best-known informal procedure used to be the Torentjesoverleg, in which the prime minister and core of the Council of Ministers consulted with the leaders of the political parties supporting the coalition in the States General. Coalition governments cannot survive without this kind of high-level political coordination between government and the States General. Given the weak parliamentary support of the Rutte I and II councils of ministers (October 2010 – present), such informal coordination is no longer limited to political parties providing support to the governing coalition.

Under the present conditions, in which civil servants are subject to increasing parliamentary and media scrutiny, and in which gaps in trust and loyalty between the political leadership and the bureaucracy staff are growing, informal coordination and the personal chemistry among civil servants are what keeps things running.

Regarding interministerial coordination, informal contacts between the senior staff (raadsadviseurs) in the prime minister's Council of Ministers and senior officers working for ministerial leadership are absolutely crucial. Nonetheless, such bureaucratic coordination is undermined by insufficient or absent informal political coordination.

Citation:

R.B. Andeweg and G.A. Irwin (2014), *Governance and politics of the Netherlands*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 154-163, 198-203, 220-228.

## Norway

**Score 7** Cabinet ministers meet frequently and keep in close touch with one other on issues of policy. Efforts have been made to encourage cross-ministerial relationships on the level of lower officials as well. There is extensive informal coordination between cabinet and parliamentary committees and party organizations.

## Poland

**Score 7** Though the formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination were strengthened under the Tusk government, informal-coordination mechanisms have continued to play an important role. As one example, meetings between the government-coalition partners have been used as a venue for solving conflicts between ministries respectively led by the Civic Platform (PO) and the Polish People's Party (PSL). For another, many ministers have been active and high-ranking party members; thus, some aspects of interministerial coordination have taken place within the Civic Platform and Polish People's Party leaderships.

## Slovakia

**Score 7** Informal coordination has played a significant role in policy coordination under the Fico government. While Prime Minister Fico has extended the formal role of the Government Office in policy coordination, he has also resorted to informal negotiations with individual ministers, adviser and economic and social stakeholders to settle issues prior to cabinet meetings.

## Slovenia

**Score 7** Slovenia's tradition of coalition governments has meant that informal coordination procedures have played a significant role in policy coordination. Under the Cerar

government, the leaders of the three coalition parties met frequently, making major decisions at coalition meetings that were often also attended by the ministers and sometimes also by the leaders of parliamentary majority groups and coalition members of parliament. In press conferences and public statements after these meetings, very little information about the decisions made was provided to the public. The dominant role of the party leaders within their parties has also meant that a considerable amount of policy coordination takes place in party bodies.

## Spain

### Score 7

The relative weakness of formal coordination among ministry civil servants in Spain (see “Ministerial Bureaucracy”) is to some extent compensated for by helpful informal procedures. When administrative coordination is needed because interministerial problems are real and cannot be solved by the non-effective existing committees or by invoking vertical hierarchy, informal contacts or meetings between officials of the various ministries involved are organized. Many policy proposals can in fact be coordinated in this fashion (ad hoc working groups are rare but may also be created). As Spanish senior civil servants are clustered into different specialized bureaucratic corps, informal mechanisms rely often on the fact that officials involved in the coordination may belong to the same corps or share a network of old colleagues. Nevertheless, the existence of specialized corps tends to aggravate Spanish administrative fragmentation, since every corps tends to control a department according to its specialization.

At a more political level, these informal mechanisms are less necessary, since the stable Spanish experience of single-party governments with strong prime ministers has up to this point required less coordination than would coalition cabinets. However, informal coordination procedures do exist, with exchanges of views and occasional or urgent meetings of an inner core of ministers politically close to Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy. Participants typically include the powerful Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría (who may also lead the coordination herself), the ministers of foreign affairs or infrastructures, and for obvious reasons connected to the management of the crisis, the minister for economy and the minister for finance. Relations with the party-governance structure are channeled through the prime minister himself (who is president of the Popular Party or Partido Popular, PP) and the party’s secretary general, María Dolores de Cospedal.

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No problem has been too large or lethal for Rajoy’s deputy [www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/da60cad4-56dd-11e5-9846-de406ccb37f2.html#axzz3sAcZbXei](http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/da60cad4-56dd-11e5-9846-de406ccb37f2.html#axzz3sAcZbXei)

## Austria

### Score 6

Existing coordination mechanisms – the weekly informal meetings within each Cabinet factions and the cabinet as a whole, as well as the regular informal meetings between the chancellor and vice-chancellor – are efficient. They do not in any way

guarantee a smooth decision-making process based on consensus, but do allow the cabinet to make a realistic assessment of what collective decisions are either possible or impossible. Informal coordination mechanisms are also used to seek compromise when a proposal from one party's minister is unacceptable to the other coalition party. Each party nominates one cabinet member to a small group tasked with finding this compromise. There is no regular policy coordination, whether formal or informal, on the level of civil servants.

Initially, informal coordination within the SPÖ-ÖVP coalition seemed to function smoothly as evinced by the introduction of two separate commissions for tax and educational reform. These commissions have enjoyed relative seclusion from the press, which has allowed the coalition partners to reach joint compromises more readily. Recent developments with regard to the refugee crisis and the marketing of the tax reform have, however, cast doubt on the coalition's capacity for informal coordination.

## Germany

### Score 6

There are a number of informal mechanisms by which government policy is coordinated. The most important of these is the coalition committee, which comprises the most important actors (the chancellor, the deputy chancellor, the chairpersons of the parliamentary groups and the party chairpersons) within the coalition parties. According to the coalition agreement from November 2013, the coalition committee is expected to meet regularly at least once a month, or can be convened at the request of any of the coalition partners. The coalition committee rarely meets regularly. Only at the peak of the refugee crisis did the coalition committee meet frequently to resolve political conflicts and develop coordinated policy responses.

## Greece

### Score 6

Most coordination mechanisms are informal and complement the more meager formal coordination mechanisms such as the infrequently convened cabinet and ministerial committees. Most informal mechanisms are ad hoc meetings among ministers convened at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Such meetings are followed up by person-to-person contacts between staff members of the PMO and advisors to ministers. In the period under review, particularly after January 2015, informal coordination was frequent and was organized by close associates of PM Tsipras, minister of the state, Nicos Pappas, and minister of the state for government coordination, Alekos Flambouraris, at the headquarters of the PMO.

## Mexico

- Score 6** A number of informal mechanisms for coordinating policy exist, and given the lack of “formal” coordination capabilities within the Mexican administration, informal coordination often functions as a substitute. This is normal in a presidential system where only a few cabinet secretaries have independent political bases. Ministers retain their positions, for the most part, at the will of the president. It is important to note, however, that some cabinet secretaries are more equal than others. The Finance Ministry, and Ministry of the Interior and Police have assumed hegemonic roles under President Peña Nieto. Moreover, as in previous periods, in the later stages of the presidential term, competition to succeed President Peña Nieto is likely to further politicize the cabinet and constrain informal coordination.

## Portugal

- Score 6** Informal coordination mechanisms are central to government functioning and coordination. The horizontal informal links between ministries help compensate for the absence or rigidity of formal horizontal linkages. Informal coordination became all the more relevant in the current period, as the government was composed of a coalition between two parties. However, problems of informal coordination identified in the previous report were largely absent in this period as the two coalition parties prepared for an election in which they presented a joint list.

## Bulgaria

- Score 5** Given the weakness of formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination, informal coordination mechanisms have played a vital role in Bulgaria. Informal coordination featured prominently in each Bulgarian government of the 21st century thus far. This process is aided by the fact that all of these governments have been either coalitions, or minority governments. While this informal coordination and consultation is helpful in overcoming gaps in the formal coordination procedures, it also makes the policymaking process more susceptible to penetration by illicit, special interest agendas.

## Israel

- Score 5** Israel’s government system is greatly influenced by informal coordination mechanisms such as coalition obligations and internal party politics. However, due to its highly fragmented party system, it is hard to determine whether they support or undermine formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination. While coordination

between like-minded parties may be made easier by the situation, fragmentation may result in stagnation over disputed policies.

Citation:

Blander, Dana and Ben Nur, Gal, "Governmental coalitions: A steering mechanism in the political system," in *The political system in Israel*, 2013: <http://en.idi.org.il/analysis/idi-press/publications/hebrew-books/the-political-system-of-israel/> (English).

"Annual report 61 for the year 2010: Treatment of prolonged inter-ministerial disagreements," The State Comptroller office website (Hebrew).

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## Croatia

Score 4

Informal coordination in the form of meetings between the coalition partners featured prominently under the Milanović government. Meetings were mostly held between Social Democratic Party (Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske, SDP) and Croatian People's Party – Liberal Democrats (Hrvatska narodna stranka – liberalni demokrati, HNS) leaders, with the other coalition partners – the Istrian Democratic Assembly (Istarski demokratski sabor, IDS) and the Croatian Party of Pensioners (Hrvatska stranka umirovljenika, HSU) – playing a minor role. A strong reliance on these informal-coordination mechanisms helped maintain the tradition of keeping strategic decisions and policy coordination largely within the political parties' ambit, preventing the development of more formal and transparent mechanisms of policy coordination or a strengthening of the public administration's role.

## Cyprus

Score 4

The post-2010 economic difficulties led to a number of meetings at various levels and between a variety of actors. During the period under review, these were primarily informational meetings between the president and his ministers and party leaders, as well as meetings solely between ministers and party leaders with the goal of explaining the government's policies or convincing influential figures of the need to adopt specific legal acts. Consultations have not always resulted in consensus regarding the issues or specific measures, or in their subsequent adoption by the parliament. The frequency of informal meetings of this kind declined during the review period.

## Malta

Score 4

The government tendency toward informal coordination mechanisms has increased since Malta joined the European Union in 2004. Many directives from Brussels cut across departments and ministries, and this encourages ministries to talk to each other and work more closely together. This situation has been less true with regard to domestic issues and policies, but the PMO today exercises an expanded coordination role.

## Romania

### Score 3

Informal coordination mechanisms – often based on partisan affiliations in the case of political appointees – can act as a double-edged sword. In some instances they complement formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination, while in others they undermine these mechanisms' functioning.

## Address | Contact

Bertelsmann Stiftung  
Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 256  
33311 Gütersloh  
Germany  
Phone +49 5241 81-0

**Dr. Daniel Schraad-Tischler**  
Phone +49 5241 81-81240  
daniel.schraad-tischler@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

**Dr. Christian Kroll**  
Phone +49 5241 81-81471  
christian.kroll@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

**Dr. Christof Schiller**  
Phone +49 5241 81-81470  
christof.schiller@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

**Pia Paulini**  
Phone +49 5241 81-81468  
pia.paulini@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

[www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de)  
[www.sgi-network.org](http://www.sgi-network.org)