

**SGI** Sustainable  
Governance  
Indicators

## 2014 Interministerial Coordination Report

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



## 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, such as the Council of Economic Advisers, the Office of Management and Budget, and the National Security Council, among others. But the U.S. context is significantly different. 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, beginning with Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s, 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 the GO or PMO in a parliamentary system, with roughly 2,500 professionals, and a budget of \$300–0 million.

Indeed, the issue is not whether the White House has the expertise to evaluate ministerial draft bills. It is whether the White House allows the departments and agencies to play a major substantive role in drafting bills. In recent presidencies, the White House 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," (the media created the shorthand term to refer to these advisors, who have long convoluted titles) to oversee executive branch

policymaking in specific areas. The problem with the trend toward increasing White House control is the potential for policymakers to overlook important agency perspectives, information and experience.

## 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 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, Segegobhas) 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 (PMO) maintains an evaluation capacity. The primary function of the PMO 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 PMO

monitors the implementation of the Government Program and coordinates Finland's EU policy; also, among the tasks of the PMO is to coordinate communications from the government and the various ministries, to plan future-oriented social policies and to promote cooperation between government and the various branches of public administration. The PMO has five departments and three units: EU affairs, Government Administration and Specialist Services, Government Ownership Steering, Government Preparedness and Government Communications departments and the Government Session Unit, the Government Policy Analysis Unit and the Government External Economic Relations Unit. Also the steering of the "Team Finland network" takes place within the PMO. "Team Finland" is a network to promote economic relations and the internationalization of Finnish businesses and to improve the efficiency of their cooperation as well as to provide customers with easy access to services.

The PMO has a secretary of state, a permanent undersecretary of state and is well-staffed (some 250 employees) with several departments for managing specific tasks.

Citation:

PMO 2013: Team Finland. [http://vnk.fi/toiminta/Team\\_Finland/en.jsp](http://vnk.fi/toiminta/Team_Finland/en.jsp) [13.6.2013]

## Hungary

### Score 9

Prime Minister Orbán has steadily expanded both the competencies and the resources of his personal Chancellery. As the latter has become ever more powerful, the former Prime Minister's Office has been moved to the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice. Orbán has been able to draw not only on his official staff, but also on a network of three research institutes lavishly financed by the Chancellery and a number of personal confidants and advisors with no official functions. The three research institutes were established when Fidesz was still in opposition. Századvég (The End of the Century), a political think-tank originating from the 1990s, has increasingly influenced economic policy. The government's key spin factory is the Nézőpont (Viewpoint) Institute, which observes day-to-day politics and media coverage for the government, usually preparing public opinion surveys both for influencing the public and for the use within government. The Institute for Public Policy Research (KKI) is ex officio a government agency that collects information and statistical data for policy analysis in all fields. Given this expertise, the top decision-makers in the Chancellery sometimes have access to more information than do ministers or their state secretaries.

## Poland

### Score 9

The Tusk government has continued strengthening the policy expertise of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister. 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 Policy and Implementation Unit (PIU) in the Prime Minister's Office continues to be a potent tool for the evaluation of ministerial draft bills, but the primary coordinating role is undertaken by the Cabinet Office which has expertise in all areas of government. According to its website, it has over 2,000 staff and has responsibility for the National Security Council as well as the primary role in "making government work better." The staff of the PIU are policy experts from the civil service with good networks into the ministries and excellent substantive expertise, and 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 spending departments also contributes to inter-ministerial coordination.

Politically, the creation of a coalition government has increased the need for coordination, as Deputy Prime Minister Clegg maintains his office in the Cabinet Office. The reorganization of the Number 10 Policy Unit temporarily weakened evaluation capacity, but that has been restored with an increase in staff numbers and the creation of the above-mentioned PIU.

## France

### Score 8

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 heard. 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, and it has to be underlined that 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.

## Latvia

### Score 8

The formation of the PKC, which reports directly to the prime minister, has ensured government-office input into the substance of line-ministry proposals. 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 Latvia's long-term strategy documents (the National Development Plan and Latvia 2030).

The PKC is limited by its staff's ability to handle the flow of material; it 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 have failed in post-1997 Mexico. The problem is not lack of policy expertise but rather political roadblocks. A lot of staff work involves negotiations with influential figures from other political parties in the (often vain) hope of getting their votes for legislation approval.

## 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. A special minister was appointed in 2009 with aim of increasing the government's coordination capacity further.

## 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 office of the president (known as the Blue House) has the power and expertise to evaluate line ministries' draft bills. As the real center of power in the Korean government, the Blue House has divisions corresponding with the various line ministry responsibilities. It 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. After taking office, President Lee dramatically reduced Blue House staff, potentially weakening the office's expertise. However, many of the initially abolished positions were reinstated over time, as problems with expertise and implementation emerged.

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 Council of Ministers or Government Office (Ministry of the Presidency, Ministerio de la Presidencia), the prime minister's Private Office and his Economic Office are the administrative departments associated with the Spanish leadership that are tasked with evaluating line ministry proposals from a political and technical point of view. These bodies are from a functional and even physical point of view 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 organization of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) (both the private and the economic offices) vaguely reflects 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 in the PMO are not truly independent, since most of them are insiders. Nevertheless, and 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.

## Belgium

### Score 7

The prime minister's office contains a "strategic cell" which helps the prime minister evaluate and steer policy across all levels. Typically, this oversight is shared with deputy prime ministers (one per party in the coalition, apart from the party from which the prime minister hails) in a regular "kern" meeting. Each of the advisors and experts in the cell specializes in one field. They assess 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 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. It has a total of around 100 employees, spread more or less evenly between the three groups of academics and technical and administrative staff.

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 prime minister has three portfolio tasks: the North Atlantic area (e.g., Greenland and the Faroe Islands), the press and constitutional law.

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.

In Denmark 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.

Citation:

Website of the Prime Minister's Office: [www.stm.dk/](http://www.stm.dk/)

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

## Italy

### Score 7

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 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. Under the Monti government, in view of its very focused mission – overcoming the budgetary and debt crisis – the control of the PMO over important bills has been more rigorous than in the past.

## 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 announced it would reverse this organizational reform, reorganizing the Prime Minister's Office once again into a Government Office. Under the Kubilius government, a number of additional evidence-based decision-making instruments were developed, including a monitoring information system, a budget-program assessment system and an impact-assessment system. These instruments increased the capacity of the core government to monitor and evaluate draft government decisions based on the government's political priorities. However, their effectiveness has varied by instrument, as well as with the relevance and quality of the empirical evidence available for decision-making.

## New Zealand

### Score 7

The policy advisory group in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) currently consists of 14 staff who cover 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. A new commission during the period was the prime minister's Youth Mental Health Project, which developed initiatives to respond to mental health issues among young people.

Citation:

Annual Report for the Year Ended 2012 (Wellington: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2012).  
Policy Advisory Group: <http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/pag> (accessed May 9, 2013).

## Sweden

### Score 7

Inter-ministerial coordination has been a significant problem in the Swedish system of government for a long time. 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 government office 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 makes 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 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 (forthcoming), *Governing the Embedded State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

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

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

## Germany

### Score 6

The 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 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 budgetary government guidelines. In addition, it appears that its capacities are generally lower than those of the line ministries.

## Greece

### Score 6

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has adequate sectoral policy expertise, thanks to the appointment of lawyers, economists and academics in its various divisions. There is also a separate unit supervised by the prime minister – the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG). This unit on the one hand prepares the meetings of the Cabinet and on the other hand receives and evaluates draft bills. Before the economic crisis, this task was performed rather loosely, as individual ministers felt free to pursue their own policy choices, but in 2011 – 2013 things changed.

Since 2011, the Troika's requirements and deadlines for taking specific policy measures have resulted in the PMO and the GSG playing a much more substantive role than in the past with regard to the policy content of line ministry proposals. However, they do not have the final word on draft bills, as both the previous caretaker government led by Papademos in the winter of 2011/2012 and the tripartite government led by Samaras in 2012 – 2013 relied on the parliamentary support of three parties in order to govern. In other words, it is party leaders who decide whether important draft bills will eventually be submitted to the parliament.

## Iceland

### Score 6

The Prime Minister's Office has a comparatively small staff of experts. Indeed, this office has the fewest staff members of any of the country's ministries, and consequently has a rather limited capacity for independently assessing ministerial draft bills. The 2009 – 2013 government coalition reduced the number of ministries from 12 to eight by merging several of them, a long-overdue reform. A primary justification was that some ministries lacked broad-based expertise, and the merger would render this expertise more widely accessible. This seems to have shown to be effective in some cases at least. The new coalition government of the Progressive Party (Framsóknarflokkurinn) and the Independence Party (Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn) has already partially reversed this reform by splitting up the Ministry of Welfare, thereby increasing the number of ministers from eight to nine.

## Ireland

### Score 6

The ability of the prime minister's office to alter the views taken by the line ministries is crucially dependent on the analytical skills of its staff. In a public service that is short on analytical skills and training, the prime minister's office is not preeminent, a fact that weakens its influence. The Department of the Taoiseach has been reduced in size with the aim of turning it into the equivalent of a cabinet office. The Programme for Government Annual Report for 2012 says that "A significant number of staff were transferred to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. In addition, a new EU Affairs Division was established, together with an Office of the Tánaiste and a Programme for Government Office."

The Troika agreement calls for a significant enhancement of the analytical skills and expertise of the finance ministry and this is occurring. It will tend to reinforce the dominance of finance at the expense of the prime minister's office.

#### Citation:

The Programme for Government Annual Report for 2012 can be found at:

[http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications\\_Archive/Publications\\_2011/PfG\\_Progress\\_Report\\_March\\_2012.pdf](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_Archive/Publications_2011/PfG_Progress_Report_March_2012.pdf)

## Japan

### Score 6

Under the central-government reform implemented by the Koizumi government in 2001, the role of central institutions was considerably strengthened. While retaining and making use of the substantially strengthened resources of the Cabinet Secretariat, the DPJ-led government in power from 2009 put particular emphasis on transferring effective control over the budget away from the Ministry of Finance.

However, results in this regard were disappointing, and the Ministry of Finance regained influence through its privileged participation in the budget-drafting process. Under Prime Minister Noda (2011 – 2012), some mechanisms to support strategic decision-making at the central level remained. Continuing from the earlier phase of the DPJ-led governments, a Government Revitalization Unit was created to review the need for and effectiveness of various government institutions and programs. A proposal-based policy-review process, which involved public meetings, was intended to make the appraisal of policies more transparent, while simultaneously strengthening the involvement of central authorities. Noda also set up a Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, made up of senior ministers and leading private-sector figures, and tasked it with discussing issues of

strategic importance. However, the council's lack of a legal mandate meant that it lacked clout.

The new LDP-led government seems to be intent on strengthening the central government's strategic capacity again.

## 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. 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.

## 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 first speaker to the press and in the States General, and especially in international fora and arenas (e.g., European Union and the United Nations) on behalf of the Council of Ministers and Dutch government as a whole.

The prime minister's own Ministry of General Affairs office has some 14 advising counsels (raadadviseurs, with junior assistants) at its disposal. The advising counsels 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 (regerackoord).



## Citation:

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

[http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/selectielijsten/BSD\\_Coordinatie\\_algemeen\\_regeringsbeleid\\_stcrmt\\_2009\\_63.pdf](http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/selectielijsten/BSD_Coordinatie_algemeen_regeringsbeleid_stcrmt_2009_63.pdf)

## Additional reference:

R.B. Andeweg and G.A. Irwin ( 2009), 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 for the various policy areas. With the bailout terms and with the achievement of the budgetary targets becoming paramount in 2011 – 2013, the assessment of policy has largely been centered on its budgetary implications, notably in terms of reducing costs and/or increasing revenue. To this end, the Ministry of Finance plays a more central role in the assessment of policy proposals, alongside the PMO.

## Romania

### Score 6

The prime minister evaluates important draft bills. He can draw on the sectoral expertise of a set of about 15 state counselors that are part of his Chancellery. The depth of the expertise varies by sector.

## Austria

### Score 5

Two aspects of Austria's governance system limit the efficiency of interministerial coordination. First, members of the Council of Ministers all enjoy the same legal status. The federal chancellor, who chairs the Council of Ministers, 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 federal Cabinet is de facto a collective leadership, complicated by the conflicting interests of coalition partners.

## 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  
value\_6

The GO capacities were substantially weakened in 1992 in the process of governmental reform. Currently, the GO and prime minister's structures have the main function to consult and monitor the governmental processes and to provide technical (judicial) expertise. There is no capacity to perform substantial evaluation of line ministry proposals. As a result, as the OECD governance report pointed out, policymaking lacks coherence and inter-ministerial cooperation.

Citation:  
OECD (2011) Public Governance Reviews - Estonia: Towards a Single Government Approach.  
<http://www.oecd.org/estonia/publicationsdocuments/reports/>

## Israel

Score 5

The Prime Minister's Office relies on sectoral policy expertise (primarily on issues of security) but does not evaluate draft bills.

Citation:  
Asher Arian, Politics In Israel: The Second Republic, 2nd Edition 2005.

## Slovakia

Score 5

Slovakia has a strong tradition of departmentalism and collegial cabinets (Blondel et al. 2007). 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. Under the Radičová government, the tensions within the governing coalition inhibited a strengthening of the Government Office and even the full use of its policy expertise. As part of his attempt to build a “shadow Cabinet” within the Government Office, Prime Minister Fico has sought to strengthen the policy expertise of the Government Office.

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 Ministry 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 established the General Directorate of Laws and Decrees and the General Directorate of Legislation Development and Publication to scrutinize bylaws prepared by ministries and public agencies and to examine the congruity with the constitution of draft bills, decrees, statutes, regulations and Council of Ministers' resolutions; the directorates also review laws, general principles of law, development plans and programs as well as the government's program. This unit is the primary government office entity in terms of drafting and coordinating new regulations. However, not all draft bills are the product of expert advice. Recently the number of adjustments to draft bills during the parliamentary approval process showed that standards were only partially upheld.

## Bulgaria

Score 4

The government office in Bulgaria – the Council of Ministers' administration – plays a mainly administrative role. It prepares cabinet meetings but lacks the capacity for an in-depth evaluation of the policy content of line ministry proposals. Specialized directorates of the Council of Ministers' administration do review submissions from the line ministries, but this is less in terms of

substance than in terms of ensuring that the submissions are presented in the appropriate format. The prime minister's political Cabinet is relatively small and has little expertise to evaluate the policy content of line ministry proposals.

## Malta

### Score 4

Government ministries in Malta enjoy almost complete autonomy, with limitations only in the form of budgetary constraints imposed by the Ministry of Finance, even though most policies and projects require Cabinet approval. The Prime Minister's Office relies largely on the attorney general's office to evaluate draft bills.

After the March 2013 general election, the government appointed a minister, as part of the Prime Minister's Office, to oversee the implementation of the winning party's electoral program. As the position is new, it is yet unclear whether the position will contribute sectoral policy expertise to the Prime Minister's Office.

Interestingly, when a ministry faces policy difficulties, the practice has been that the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) steps in and assumes the ministry's portfolio. Under the previous government, the number of ministries was slowly reduced from 14 to nine, and policy expertise in these areas was instead provided by the PMO. At the time of writing, the justice portfolio has been recently shifted to the responsibility of the PMO.

#### Citation:

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

## 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. Prime Ministers Pahor and even more so Janša made little use of the policy expertise available at the Government Office.

## Croatia

### Score 2

In Croatia, the Prime Minister's Office lacks a central policy unit able to evaluate and coordinate the activities of the line ministries. Its sectoral policy expertise is thus limited.

## Cyprus

### Score 2

Under Cyprus' presidential system, draft bills are prepared by the responsible ministry and sent to the secretariat of the Council of Ministers for inclusion on the agenda of the Council of Ministers. Advice, limited to the constitutionality of the draft, is 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 prevailing laws. However, neither this body nor any other presidential-palace institution has sufficient sectoral expertise or capacities to evaluate them.

## 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, Segegobhas) 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. During the last two years, however, some proposals have been stopped directly by President 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 is 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).

## Hungary

### Score 10

Under the Orbán government, the Chancellery has played a dominant role in policy coordination. The autonomy of line ministries has been limited, and all important personal, political and policy decisions are taken by the prime minister and his confidants. In the case of foreign affairs, for instance, Péter Szijjártó, state secretary of foreign policy and foreign trade in the Chancellery, exerts more power and influence than the foreign affairs minister.

## Iceland

### Score 10

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has no formal authority to return items envisaged for cabinet meetings, but can do so in principle. The working rule is that items can be approved in cabinet meetings only if all ministers achieve consensus. The prime minister can return items even if this authority is not 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 allocates the responsibility for coordinating decision processes, and may choose to emphasize White House or cabinet responsibility in varying degrees, in organizing the White House and establishing his advisory arrangements. In recent presidencies, a strong and consistent trend has favored White House control, and President Obama has pushed White House preeminence to a new level – with a new set of White House “czars” coordinating specific areas of policy. So in the Obama administration, the White House controls policy management and thus the presentation of decision materials, almost completely, with cabinet officials in subordinate roles. We note again that the context of this arrangement is one in which the departments and agencies may have agendas and interests that conflict with the president's, motivating the president's strong efforts to exert control.

## 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. However, the fact that most governments have been minority governments implies that consensus and negotiation is involved.

Citation:

Jørgen Grønnegård Christensen et al., Politik og forvaltning, 2007.

## 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.

## Italy

### Score 9

In the Monti government, the position of the prime minister vis à vis the other ministers was particularly strong as a consequence of his rather autonomous role in their designation. Moreover none of the other ministers had a comparable political weight. This has given the PMO a particularly strong gatekeeping role during this period. This was particularly evident on policy matters that were related to the main mission of the government.

## Luxembourg

### Score 9

The long period of leadership of 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 in general is able to withdraw a project or a draft bill also without formal procedures. The prime minister also acts as a first among equals (*primus inter pares*) and therefore should be reluctant to interfere in dossiers handled above all 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.gouvernement.lu/gouvernement/membres-gouvernement-2009/>

<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)

## Malta

### Score 9

Malta's system of government is based on the Westminster system, and in theory the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) can return most items on policy grounds. But as the PMO does not have procedures in place for sectoral policy overviews, in practice policies are adopted or rejected following discussions in the Cabinet. 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. Some oversight does come from the Cabinet, but also from the PMO.

## 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.

## Portugal

### Score 9

The Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) is able to return proposed legislation on the basis of policy considerations. However, in the period of 2011 – 2013, its de facto power to return legislation is constrained by the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This means that changes in measures in the MoU have to be negotiated with the EC–ECB–IMF Troika partners and cannot unilaterally be decided by the PMO. The priority given to budgetary consolidation means that the Ministry of Finance has seen its power increase, giving it also a de facto veto power over policy.

## 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 the meetings as he 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 for the president.

## Spain

### Score 9

Materials earmarked for cabinet meetings 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, formally 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. Items subject to GO and PMO evaluation and potential return for reconsideration include draft bills and internal appointments of top officials.

## Sweden

### Score 9

The GO or PMO always have the final say on policy decisions and can return items on grounds or technical grounds.

However, given the distinct top-down nature of the work in the GO, items rarely proceed very far without an approving nod 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.

## 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. Council of Ministers members 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. Considering the provision of Article 109, under which the prime minister appoints ministers, his/her oversight power over ministerial proposals is 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 that all public institutions, entities and corporations in which more than 50% of assets are publically held – excluding municipalities and special provincial administrations – must get permission from the Prime Minister's Office before selling, renting, transferring, allocating and bartering any real estate holdings.

The hidden budget is allocated by the approval of the prime minister and the finance minister, with its amount increased to \$385 million in 2012.

Citation:

Circular, 2012/15, 16 Haziran 2012, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskil er/2012/06/20120616-6.htm>

## Finland

### Score 8

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) can return items envisaged for the cabinet meeting on policy grounds. Because the PMO coordinates the making of drafts and also arranges the agenda for cabinet meetings, it does not often occur that the PMO returns items. The rule is that line 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 the line minister represent different parties and perhaps differing political interests which need to be reconciled. Yet controversial items are often discussed in informal meetings beforehand. The institutionalized unofficial meeting of the Cabinet (the iltakoulu, or evening session), led by the prime minister, has an important function in consensual decision-making.



In any case, the position of the prime minister is not dominating. It is a leadership position, but a leader among equals and decision-making must depart from the task of building consensus between colleagues. A model which gives the government office the right automatically to return items does not fit the Finnish political reality.

## Greece

### Score 8

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) can return all items on policy grounds, not so much because a draft bill may not find the prime minister in agreement, but rather because in times of prolonged economic crisis many new policy proposals are rejected because they cannot be funded or are returned to line ministries if they deviate from the concrete policy guidelines included in the Memoranda of Understanding signed between Greece and its creditors in 2010 – 2012 as part of the bailout.

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 representatives of the Troika. The Troika in turn reports to the European Commission, the ECB and the IMF, while Greece's progress with regard to reforms is also regularly discussed in European economic policy institutions, such as the Euro Working Group and the Eurogroup. One can go as far as to claim that in Greece in 2011 – 2013 there were multiple gatekeepers – some domestic and some foreign.

## Poland

### Score 8

The gatekeeping role of Prime Minister Tusk and his Chancellery has been strong. 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 Council of Ministers.

## Belgium

### Score 7

Each potential project envisaged by the government is beforehand submitted to the ministers' council, which meets weekly. The council is composed of a secretariat, who 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. Each project is debated and decisions are based on political consensus, not on majority voting.

Either directly or through the council's secretariat, the prime minister, whether a project does not fit the government agreement or conflicts with one of the coalition parties, or for any other reason, can block any item presented and either return it for redrafting or turn it down completely. All government members must in contrast defend an accepted project collegially. Altogether, the detailed government agreement, informally referred to as "the bible," provides an easy argument to reject projects that would be politically difficult to handle; if a project does not directly relate to the governmental agreement, it is likely to be turned down.

Citation:

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

## Israel

### Score 7

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) previously did not have the ability to return items to Cabinet meetings. This was changed in 2012 when the prime minister filed for an amendment to standard practice, which was then ratified by the government. This amendment included giving the PMO more authority, among which was the power to delay the implementation of a government decision by returning an issue to the Cabinet and requesting a re-vote.

As the amendment has been relatively recently enacted, and although it was legally approved, it could be argued that the amendment has not been de facto enforced. Some legal experts have put forward that the amendment was designated mainly for rare or critical matters.

Citation:

"Government bill proposal 868," Official government papers 5.4.2009 (Hebrew)

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

## Japan

### Score 7

Present guidelines for policy coordination make the Cabinet Secretariat the highest and final organ for policy coordination below the Cabinet itself. This has de jure enabled Japanese 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 intercoalition conflicts, even at the Cabinet level. This was witnessed

on several occasions during the coalition government of the DPJ, the People's New Party and the Social Democratic Party.

Formal input into law-making processes is provided by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau. This body's official mandate is to support the correct legal framing of proposed laws, not 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.

Specialized groupings often have and continue to be used to circumvent entrenched interests in the statutory coordination organs. A recent example following the December 2012 election was the establishment of the Headquarters for Japan's Economic Revitalization under the umbrella of the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy. This body is headed by the prime minister, consists of all state ministers and is administered by the Cabinet Secretariat. While its composition is thus quite similar to the Cabinet itself, it offers a much more direct tool for the prime minister.

## 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., agreement has been achieved among ministries).

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 Prime Minister's Office has no power to return items envisioned for the cabinet meetings on the basis of policy considerations (although proposals must be reviewed by the Ministry of Justice before they can be considered at cabinet meetings). 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.

## United Kingdom

### Score 7

The creation of a coalition government and the need for bipartisan approval has somewhat changed the role of the Cabinet Office and the Prime Minister's Office because policies have to be consistent with the coalition agreement. There is an informal cabinet committee comprising of two cabinet ministers from each of the coalition partners – with the cabinet secretary in attendance – which assesses policy proposals. The coalition has decentralized power, and the “no surprises” rule leaves little scope for discretion. Cabinet Committee papers have to circulate for 10 days to ensure collective approval, and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office provides alternative ways to launch items. Nevertheless the power structures in the British system mean that the prime minister is still in a position to question most policy materials.

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.

## 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, he or she 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 its initial position on a matter returned for reconsideration, the decision must be promulgated through publication in the official gazette. Despite this theoretical course of decision-making, no specific cases of discord have ever been reported between the president and the Council of Ministers. The extent to which decisions echo the views of dissenting parties in case of actual differences is unclear.

## Czech Republic

Score  
value\_6

The Office of the Government of the Czech Republic has primarily administrative functions. It supports the work of the various expert bodies attached to the Cabinet as well as the work of ministers without their own department. The Office of the Government 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.

## 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. In both Rutte I and II this has become a major driver in better gatekeeping and policy coordination.

Citation:

Europa NU, Coördinatie nationale economieën ([www.europa-nu.nl/id/vg9pni7o8qzu/coördinatie-nationale-economieën](http://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vg9pni7o8qzu/coördinatie-nationale-economieën))

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 ( 2009), 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 discussed beforehand at the coalition meetings, mostly just between presidents of coalition parties, and then 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.

## Bulgaria

### Score 5

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. In the case of the GERB government, however, a single-party government with a leader-based ruling party, the political authority of the prime minister was so strong that Prime Minister Borisov had a strong influence on the cabinet agenda.

## Croatia

### Score 5

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has the political authority to return policy proposals it receives from relevant ministries. Whereas Prime Minister Kosor stuck to the monocratic style of her predecessor Ivo Sanader and made heavy use of this authority, the PMO played only a subordinate role in interministerial coordination under the Milanović government. The gatekeeping role of the PMO is limited by its weak sectoral policy expertise.

## Germany

### Score 5

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 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 meeting on the basis of policy considerations.

## Slovakia

### Score 5

The Government Office has the formal power to return draft laws on policy grounds. In the case of the Radičová government, however, the gatekeeping role of the Government Office was of limited importance only, as most legislative projects were discussed in the coalition council and underwent a complex process of interministerial coordination. Prime Minister Fico has tried to strengthen the gatekeeping role of the Government Office and has exerted his control over the Cabinet in a less informal way than during its first term.

## 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.

## 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

Each potential project envisaged by the government is beforehand submitted to the ministers' council, which meets weekly. The council is composed of a secretariat, who 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. Each project is debated and decisions are based on political consensus, not on majority voting.

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

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

## Hungary

## Score 10

Building on the approach of its predecessor, the second government of Prime Minister Gyurcsány, the government under Prime Minister Orbán has radically limited the role of line ministries to favoring decisions taken by the prime minister. Line ministries have mostly acted as executive agencies following orders from above, and their activities have been controlled in detail by the Prime Minister's Chancellery and the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice (KIM), a special ministry that grew out of the former Prime

Minister's Office and headed by Deputy Prime Minister Tibor Navracsics. To ease central control, the number of line ministries has been limited to seven, with portfolios for foreign affairs, defense, interior, national economy, national development, human (earlier national) resources (EMMI) and rural development (VM). The small number of ministries has complicated their representation on the various EU councils, and created additional confusion with regard to coordination efforts during the Hungarian EU presidency in 2011.

## United States

### Score 10

In the U.S. system, the comparable issue is how the executive departments and agencies involve the president and the White House. The president and the White House are dominant within the executive branch, and therefore, they can prioritize issues they see as important to the president's agenda. There are two main kinds of such cases. If a department or agency is engaged in seeking significant legislation, then, as we have noted (see "GO gatekeeping"), 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.

Secondly, if the agency is developing an important administrative regulation or other policy that does not require legislation, then the administration's political appointees in the agency – there are roughly 700 such appointees in the executive branch, including the heads of most agencies – 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. In the Obama administration, one of the White House "czars" is likely to become involved. If the matter is not judged important for the president, the agency – mainly the political appointees, with advice from career bureaucrats – may act on their own.

Citation:

Colin Campbell, "The Complex Organization of the Executive Branch", in: Joel D. Aberbach/Mark A. Peterson (eds.), *The Executive Branch*, New York: Oxford UP, 2005, 243-282.

## Australia

### Score 9

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet is always involved at an early stage in assisting with the development and drafting of any significant government policy and the resulting legislation. The Department of Prime

Minister and Cabinet 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, Segegobhas) 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. But to achieve coherent government policy, interdepartmental coordination takes place. This is not a hierarchical coordination, but is rather based on negotiations. The prime minister has a special place given his constitutional prerogatives as the person who appoints and dismisses ministers. The cabinet holds weekly meetings in which a number of political issues are debated under the chairmanship of the prime minister. The last check of proposals comes in these weekly cabinet meetings (regeringsmøder). Major issues and strategic considerations are dealt with in the government coordination committee (regeringens koordineringsudvalg) involving the prime minister and other key ministers.

The Ministry of Finance also plays an important role whenever financial resources are involved. No minister can go to the finance committee of the

People's Assembly (Folketing) without prior agreement from the Ministry of Finance.

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*, 2007.

## 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 administration. Given this framework, rather than line ministries involving the government office in policy preparation, the expectation is that the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) involves line ministries in its own policy preparations. In practice, of course, the patterns of interaction are transverse. For one thing, policy programs and other inter-sectoral subject matters in the Cabinet program are a concern for the PMO as well as the line ministries, and efforts must be coordinated. Also, as decision-making is collective and consensual in nature, attempts on the part of line ministries to place items on the Cabinet's agenda without involving at least to some extent the PMO in preparations will fail. This is partly for political reasons, as broad-based coalition governments in Finland amalgamate and encapsulate ideological antagonism and thereby prevent a fragmentation along ministerial and sectoral lines.

Citation:

Jaakko Nousiainen, "Politiikan huipulla. Ministerit ja ministeriöt Suomen parlamentaarisessa järjestelmässä", Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1992, p. 163.

## France

### Score 9

Line ministers have to inform the prime minister of all their projects. Strong discipline, even at the informational 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 is one of the

most powerful people within that machinery. He can step in case the coordination or control process at that level has failed to stem the expression of differences within the government.

## 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 May 9, 2013).

Cabinet Manual: <http://www.cabinetmanual.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/3.28> (accessed May 9, 2013).

## South Korea

### Score 9

The Korean political system has become more hierarchical in the last two years. 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 an exchange of information, as most strategic decisions are made in the Blue House. 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 during the president's lame-duck period, the Blue House could not overcome the bureaucratic politics.



## Turkey

### Score 9

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, which may cast their ministry in a bad light. From time to time policymaking is tarnished by issues of bureaucratic competition, including among politicians.

## United Kingdom

### Score 9

The coalition government has created a system of regular informal meetings to take account of the increased requirement for coordination, but the Cabinet Office remains a powerful force in the preparation of policy proposals. There are regular meetings of the chief advisers to Cameron and Clegg whose goal it is to enforce the policy cohesion of the coalition. In terms of its potential to undermine or disturb the prime minister's agenda, the Treasury is the most important ministry, as was evident during the Blair governments when Gordon Brown was chancellor of the exchequer. However, the Cameron/Osborne partnership has been strong since the beginning of the coalition government and central to its success on the Conservative side, and therefore no rival tendencies have impaired the coordination of policy proposals from that side.

## Estonia

### Score 8

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 taken in the meetings, the main function being to exchange information and to prepare for formal government sessions.

## Iceland

### Score 8

Due to a long and strong tradition of ministerial power and independence, line ministries have considerable flexibility in drafting their own policy proposals without consulting the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). If a line minister belongs to the same party as the prime minister, there is usually some PMO involvement. However, little or no such involvement takes place if the line minister is a member of a different party. After the publication of the parliament's Special Investigation Committee (SIC) report, a committee was set up to evaluate and suggest necessary steps toward the improvement of the state administration. As one means of improving the overall work routines and conditions of the executive branch's political head, this committee proposed clarifying the leading role of the prime minister in law and even in the constitution. As of the time of writing, this suggestion had not been implemented.

Citation:

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

## Italy

### Score 8

The Prime Minister's Office was 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 started from the early stages of drafting and was more significant, involving not only formal but also substantive issues. In the fields less directly connected with the main mission of the Monti government, exchanges were more formal and occurred only when proposals had 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 limitations 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.

## 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. There are no institutionalized mechanisms of coordination between line ministries and 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, since 2009, the prime minister no longer holds the strategic finance portfolio, his central role in governance has not been weakened.

Citation:

Arrêté grand-ducal du 27 juillet 2009 portant constitution des ministères

<http://www.gouvernement.lu/gouvernement/membres-gouvernement-2009>

## Netherlands

### Score 8

Generally, the initiative by a line ministry to start drafting new legislation or a white paper is rooted in the government policy accord, EU policy coordination and subsequent Council of Ministers decisions to allocate drafting to one or two line ministries. With 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 decision-making stages in ministerial and Council of Ministers committees, and comes under the formal review of the prime minister again. Meanwhile, the prime minister is obliged to rely on informal coordination with his fellow ministers

Citation: R.B. Andeweg and G.A. Irwin ( 2009), *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

The formal and actual involvement of Prime Minister Tusk's Chancellery in the preparation of policy proposals by the line ministries has become stronger. While conflicts have occurred, the cooperation has been smoother during the period than in the past.

## Germany

### Score 7

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, in the case of the government in power during the review period, FDP ministries appeared to display increasing autonomy from the government and the CDU/CSU-controlled ministries.

## Greece

### Score 7

Before the economic crisis, line ministries involved the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the preparation of policy proposals primarily when the proposals dealt with the major electoral promises of the governing party or with reforms that would cause strong political reactions by the opposition and/or interest groups. Otherwise, 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 cadres. In other words, the prime minister was a sort of "primus inter pares", while his office often lacked the resources to coordinate the preparation of policy proposals.

In 2011 – 2013 in the wake of the economic crisis, the PMO, probably at the insistence of Troika, upgraded its resources by hiring competent staff and adopting more efficient methods of monitoring policy proposals from line ministries. The PMO's staff kept records on the progress made by line ministries in preparing policy proposals in line with the Memoranda of Understanding signed between Greece and its creditors and kept track of the pace at which such proposals were prepared, screened by the PMO and submitted to parliament as draft bills.

## Israel

### Score 7

The 2011 report of the Trajtenberg Committee identified administrative problems within the planning and allocation departments (mainly within the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Ministry of Finance) and within other executive line ministries. The source of these problems were pointed out to be the country's highly fragmented party system, in which ministers are nominated according to political alliances; and the overly centralized budgeting process, which forces line ministries into complicated relationships to secure their strategic interests.

The Trajtenberg Committee report helped to highlight and reinforce reforms that were already in the works. To wit, the Prime Minister's Office in 2006 had issued a planning guide for the government budget, highlighting long-term policy planning as well as financial considerations. The report also clarified the need for regular contact between the PMO and line ministries to reach approval for decisions in the different stages of the budgetary process.

The PMO also makes a point of making information accessible, and welcomes questions and consultation to ensure line ministry plans agree with the government's vision. More than just a formal gesture, this process has borne fruit, since as of 2012 the PMO has collected annual plans from each ministry; and each plan has been published on the Internet. In late 2012, the governance committee recommended that the budget process should change so that more budgeting authority would be assumed by line ministries. Thus overall the relationship between line ministries and the government has moved toward more inclusiveness, corporation and transparency.

#### Citation:

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

"The system," Policy planning PMO website (Hebrew)

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

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

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

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

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

## Japan

### Score 7

In Japan, instead of a dichotomy between government office (GO) or prime minister's office (PMO) and line ministries, one must also consider the explicit role of governing parties, with the result visualized as a triangle. When the LDP was in power, 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.

This configuration was challenged once the DPJ gained power in 2009. Cabinet-level involvement and initiative was strengthened, and the DPJ at least temporarily abolished its own Policy Research Committee in order to centralize policymaking. Given the strong intraparty resistance to this move, the DPJ leadership subsequently backpedaled, with Prime Minister Noda (2011 – 2012) confirming that draft legislation had to be cleared by party organs first.

As of the time of writing, it remained unclear how the “triangle” power structure would evolve under the new LDP government. When it came to formulating the core features of the fiscal 2013 – 2014 budget, Prime Minister Abe showed some desire to isolate himself from his party and to contain ministerial influences.

## Lithuania

### Score 7

Under the Kubilius government, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) became more actively involved in the preparation of policy proposals dealing with the government's political priorities. Under this system, the PMO was kept informed about important policy developments, and also participated in the activities of working groups set up by line ministries. In some high-priority areas, the PMO even led the preparation of policy documents through working groups chaired by top prime-ministerial deputies such as the chancellor or deputy chancellor. The PMO was also regularly briefed on the key results of policy implementation in top-priority issue areas. However, the fact that governments since 2000 have been coalition governments has meant that line ministries have often had considerable autonomy, as they are led by ministers with a different party affiliation than the prime minister.

## Mexico

### Score 7

Cabinet ministers are respectful of and even deferential to the presidential office. After all, cabinet ministers dismissed by the president rarely find a way back into high-level politics (though there are exceptions). Senior figures in the presidential office are therefore very powerful people because they can have an influence on ministerial careers. Yet there have been problems of coordination, particularly on the security side where anti-drug policies were sometimes frustrated for this reason. However, President Pena Nieto has built his Cabinet around two super-ministries, namely the finance minister and the minister of interior. There is a sense in which 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.



These interests include foreign, EU and security policy; economic measures and structural reforms associated with the crisis; regional affairs (particularly on Catalonia or, to a lesser extent, Basque Country); and justice and home affairs. Consultation between the PMO and the rest of the government could be compromised if line ministers fear that the prime minister and his advisers might use it as an unwelcome filter of ministry proposals. Equally, line departments may seek to influence the prime minister's advisers in order to secure backing at a higher level. 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 centralization of all legislative relations with the General Courts.

## 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.

## Switzerland

### Score value\_6

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. 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. In the case of the GERB government, the political authority of the prime minister sometimes led line ministers to inform the prime minister relatively early about their plans.

## 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 Office of the Government. This consultation process primarily focuses on technical issues. However, the Office of the Government has substantial informal power over major issues such as relations with the European Union or the state budget.

## 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 Office is not systematically involved in line ministries' preparation of policy proposals. Once the government manifesto and, in the case of coalition governments, the coalition council have defined certain projects, the full responsibility for drafting bills has traditionally rested with the line ministries. In its attempt to formalize his leading position within government, Prime Minister Fico has increased the monitoring activities of the Government Office.

## 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, with each president setting these structures 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 Council of Ministers. However, this body has limited capacity to draft laws or to review proposed policies. The Attorney General's Legal Office is the sole body involved in the examination of policy proposals and draft laws, and provides no more than legal advice. Ministries tasked with drafting a law can refer to policies formulated by the government, and in some cases frameworks proposed by an interministerial committee or issued by the cabinet. Draft laws are discussed only during the deliberation process in the Council of Ministers.

No evidence or information is available about systematic consultation before proposals are made between line ministries and the presidential palace or the secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

## Malta

### Score 3

There is to date no interrelated capacities for coordination in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and in line ministries. The government has established during the period an office to coordinate the policies of the ruling party's electoral manifesto within the PMO. The main task of the new office is to coordinate policy across different ministries, as previously ministries were largely autonomous. The PMO may also seek to review its own policies through the help of the Management Efficiency Unit (MEU) and Malta University Service (MUS), and may also utilize foreign consultants; line ministries can also do the same.

## 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, the 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

Government ministers meet every week. Their meeting is called the council of ministers (conseil des ministres), which is one of the central components of the government. Each minister is responsible for drafting a proposal, and then submitting the proposal 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? Proposals are debated by ministers only if they pass this first filter, which allows ministers to directly focus on the strategic aspects of the issue. However, the most important strategic considerations are mainly political in many cases as each minister will be mindful of best reflecting the influence of his or her political party.

To reach the council of ministers, a given project is always discussed beforehand in formal or informal inter-cabinet meetings, meetings that gather experts and senior officers of the respective ministerial cabinets whose policy field is touched upon. Most arbitration is made at this stage and, if necessary, further fine-tuned in the "kern" meeting for more important or sensitive policy issues.

### Finland

## Score 10

Cabinet committees effectively prepare cabinet meetings. The government has four statutory cabinet committees, namely the Committee on Foreign and Security Policy (which meets also with the president whenever current business requires so), 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, like the current Information Committee on Cost and Income Developments. 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, for example the government working group for the coordination of research, foresight and assessment activities, chaired by the state secretary of the Prime Minister's Office.

The primary task of these committees and groups is to prepare cabinet meetings, and the task is facilitated in terms of consensus-building by the structures encompassing and involving a large number of ministries and interests. In all, a large majority of issues identified by the as important 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. Since 2001, there have been five to six such cabinet committees. As of the end of the review period, the following standing cabinet committees existed: the coordination committee (chaired by the prime minister), the economy committee (chaired by the finance minister), the security committee (chaired by the prime minister), and the appointments committee (chaired by the prime minister). There are also temporary commissions dealing with growth, education and integration.

This system has been strengthened under the most recent 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 12 May 2013)

## Netherlands

### Score 9

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 by 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.

## 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 2011 to 30 June 2012, the full Cabinet met 41 times, with on average 15 items on their agenda per meeting, while Cabinet committees met 155 times, with on average seven items on their agenda per meeting. A revised Cabinet committee structure was implemented in early 2012 following the formation of the new government after the 2011 general election. This resulted in the disestablishment and merger of a number of Cabinet committees, reducing the number from 14 to 11.

Citation:

Annual Report for the Year Ended 2012 (Wellington: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2012).

## Spain

### Score 9

Spain's only Council of Ministers committee composed exclusively of Council members is the Foreign Policy Council (Consejo de Política Exterior) which meets only from time to time, although there are plans to revitalize it according to a bill passed in 2013 to regulate external action and the foreign service. Ministerial committees (composed of several ministers and individual non-cabinet members such as secretaries of state) are regulated by the Royal Decree 1886/2011 which names six ministerial committees that receive the official name of Delegate Committees of the Government: Economic Affairs, National Security, Intelligence Affairs, Science and Technology Policy, Equality Policy, and Cultural Affairs. With the exception of the Delegate Committee on Economic Affairs, no other committee meets regularly or helps to prepare systematically the Council of Ministers' meetings, although the Committee on National Security (Consejo de Seguridad Nacional) may gain relevance and regularity in the future.

The Committee for Economic Affairs normally meets on Thursdays to review and schedule economic or budgetary interministerial coordination. This committee was traditionally chaired by the minister for economy and finance, who was normally the second deputy prime minister as well, but when Prime Minister Rajoy arrived in office in late 2011 he decided to divide the superministry into two separate departments (Economy and Competitiveness and Finance and Public Administration) and to chair the committee himself with the help of the director of his Economic Office. Although this committee only discusses economic proposals, it effectively filters out or settles issues a day before the Council of Ministers meetings.

## United Kingdom

### Score 9

The importance of cabinet meetings and committees diminished under the Blair governments, with an increase in so-called “sofa government” in which the prime minister and the chancellor tried to resolve their many political differences. The coalition has instead seen a revival of the importance both of full cabinet meetings and of committee work. Committee membership, which in the past was used by prime ministers to determine results in advance, is now carefully calibrated to ensure fair representation of both coalition parties, and there is a powerful coalition committee, chaired jointly by the prime minister and deputy prime minister. One recent innovation is the creation of the National Security Council. Cabinet committees now serve as a forum for policy debate and decision, but are also the place where the resolution of interdepartmental conflicts takes place. An informal Coalition Operation and Strategic Planning Group with two relatively low profile ministers from each party plays an important political role in resolving coalition tensions. Overall political direction is provided by “the quad,” comprising the prime minister, deputy prime minister and two cabinet colleagues.

## 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.

## France

### Score 8

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.

## 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.

## 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 2011, cabinet committees considered 253 issues, of which 193 were sent on to cabinet.

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

Citation:

State Chancellery (2011), Report, Available at (in Latvian): <http://www.mk.gov.lv/vk/gada-parskats/>, Last assessed: 20.05.2013.

## 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.

## United States

### Score 8

The comparable 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 across the presidential administration, as it is coordinated from 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 (for example, the degree of White House confidence in various cabinet officials). Typically, important decisions are “staffed out,” with some organized committee process. However, the ad hoc character of organization (compared with a parliamentary cabinet secretariat), along with the short-term service of political appointees – resulting in what one scholar has called “a government of strangers” – makes the quality of these advisory processes unreliable.

It is difficult to assess the overall performance of a presidential administration in committee-based advisory processes. In general, although many of Obama’s decisions and strategies have been controversial, the general quality his administration’s decision-making appears above average in a U.S. context.

## 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 proposals of greater strategic or financial importance. These are normally coordinated effectively.

## 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 Planning 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 in that it has four Cabinets: economic, social, political, and security. As a result, Mexico in practice has a system of cabinet committees each of them normally chaired by the president. 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, for example replacing the Secretariat of Administration (Funcion Publico) with a national anti-corruption commission. Another example is in education where the government has pledged to introduce a national institute for education evaluation that will answer to the central government and not the Education Ministry. 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.

## Slovenia

### Score 7

Cabinet committees play an important role in the preparation of Cabinet proposals in Slovenia and settle issues prior to the Cabinet meeting. There are three standing Cabinet committees: the Committee of State Matters and Public Issues, the Committee of National Economy and the Commission of Administrative and Personnel Matters. In addition, there are temporary committees established for particular tasks.

## 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. Most experts believe that coordination between ministers is too weak, although the Blue House plays an increasingly active role in ensuring cooperation.

## 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 covering particular issues. As there is little ex ante coordination among ministries, controversies are often pushed upwards, so that Cabinet committees play an important role in reconciling conflicts

within the Cabinet. However, the quality of coordination suffers from the fact that Cabinet committees are absorbed by disputes and matters of detail.

## Hungary

### Score 6

Given the dominant role of the Prime Minister's Chancellery, cabinet committees have played a much less significant role than under previous governments. The main exception is the Government Committee for National Development, consisting of the prime minister, the state secretary of the Chancellery, the minister of national development (NFM) and the minister of national economy (NGM). The committee was established in July 2012 when the government had realized that it had failed in its goal to spend EU transfers in a timely fashion.

## Iceland

### Score 6

Cabinet committees prepare cabinet meetings in a comparatively small number of cases. A Budget Committee and some ad hoc committees do prepare items for cabinet meetings, but the majority of items on cabinet-meeting agendas are prepared by individual ministers. Often, two or more ministers coordinate and consult with one another in the course of their preparations for cabinet meetings. The aftermath of the 2008 economic collapse led to more and broader cooperation between ministers, particularly between the prime minister, the minister of finance and the minister of commerce. However, this was a temporary arrangement intended to coordinate the cabinet's immediate reactions to the economic crisis. Five ministerial committees exist, aimed at coordinating issues that overlap between two or more ministries' policy areas. 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 European Affairs (Ráðherranefnd um Evrópumál), with four ministers; the Ministerial Committee on Equality (Ráðherranefnd um jafnréttismál), with four ministers; and the Ministerial Committee on Economic Development (Ráðherranefnd um atvinnumálum), with two ministers. In February 2013, new regulations for ministerial committees were put in place. These permit the prime minister to nominate new ministerial committees on single issues in order to secure coordination on matters of overlapping authority. Records must be taken of all meetings in ministerial committees, but these are not made public.

#### Citation:

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

## Israel

### Score 6

According to Basic Law: The Government as well as government standards, the government can appoint cabinet committees (though it does not have to do so). Cabinet committees can be permanent and statutory committees, but can also be appointed ad hoc to examine a specific issue.

Cabinet committees are authorized to make decisions on behalf of government. Specifically, if no Cabinet member has filed a petition within two weeks of the issuing of a committee recommendation, the findings formally become a government decision.

Ministers can file proposals without having the proposal reviewed prior to a Cabinet meeting. However, all Cabinet proposals, whether filed by ministers or by committees, must be reviewed by the ministerial committee for legislative affairs.

Citation:

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)

## Portugal

### Score 6

Most ordinary meetings of the Portuguese cabinet – the Council of Ministers – are predominantly 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 has deepened – and with a coalition government in office – the committee meetings are increasingly failing to settle all issues prior to Council meetings. This has led to some very long – and seemingly not entirely conclusive – Council of Ministers meetings, especially from the second half of 2012 onwards.

## Slovakia

### Score 6

In Slovakia, the importance of Cabinet committees has varied and every government has established its own committee structure. Prime Minister Radičová's attempt to coordinate ministers by establishing a special ministerial council and various Cabinet committees failed, as she did not enjoy sufficient support from the coalition partners or even her own party. In

fact, the Ministry of Finance and the Foreign Minister dominated the government and played a major role in interministerial coordination. The Fico government does not have any Cabinet committees composed exclusively of ministers. However, ministerial committees consisting of ministers and senior civil servants and chaired by the five newly appointed vice prime 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.

## Turkey

### Score 6

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) established in November 2004 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, with the participation of officials from ministries of foreign affairs, justice and other security departments – composed of ministers, experts, bureaucrats and also some sub-groups (such as those on legislation techniques, legislation stock management and administrative simplification, and regulatory impact analysis) when important or common issues were under consideration.

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

#### Citation:

ÖmerÖz, Regulatory Oversight Bodies in Turkey. Better Regulation Group, The Prime Minister's Office of Turkey,

31 May 2011.

<http://www.hazine.gov.tr/default.aspx?nsw=ZpCrg0/W8ucJJWnpypCj+w==H 7deC+LxBI8=&nm=1006>

## 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.

## Czech Republic

### Score 5

In the Czech Republic, a large number of ministerial committees exist, some on a permanent, some on a temporary basis. The most important permanent committees are the Council for National Security and the Committee for the European Union. The latter is in charge of the coordination and analytical preparation of Czech positions in meetings at the European Union and is led by the State Secretary for European Affairs. The unit also participates in the preparation of mandates, instructions and positions for negotiations with EU bodies and prepares positions and analyses of individual materials relating to economic and financial matters, including reforms of the Economic and Monetary Union. The committees discuss and approve policy documents, thereby filtering out issues and saving time in cabinet meetings. However, they are still not formally and 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. Nonetheless, individual ministers' maneuvering room is circumscribed by the cabinet principle and the chancellor principle. According to the cabinet principle, all important decisions have to be made by the cabinet as a whole. However, the cabinet only rarely discusses policy issues. For most day-to-day issues, line ministries briefly present their proposals, and the cabinet simply accepts them.

Most bills are effectively rubberstamped by the cabinet committee, as most controversial issues have already been settled before reaching the cabinet agenda. The dominant mechanism for conflict resolution is the coalition committee. In some rare cases, the cabinet will meet for a weekend to discuss disputed policy matters or to try to bring about consensus if substantial conflict exists.



## Greece

### Score 5

The Cabinet consists of 17 ministers who meet neither frequently nor on a regular basis. Meetings of the Cabinet are not preceded by meetings of cabinet or ministerial committees. There are cabinet committees assigned to oversee specific policy sectors which, however, convene only when a major policy decision has to be taken. For instance, in May 2013 the Government Council on Foreign Affairs and Defense (KYSEA), a ministerial committee composed of ten ministers and the head of the joint chiefs of staff of the Greek armed forces and directed by the prime minister, convened in a special session and approved a new organizational structure for the Greek armed forces. Another example is the meeting of the Government Council of Reform, a cabinet committee focusing primarily on administrative reform, which took place in April 2013. The meeting, which was only the fourth in a span of 12 months, was presided over by the prime minister and was attended by ten ministers and deputy ministers. In other words, substantive policy work is done at line ministries and the Prime Minister's Office before issues arrive at Cabinet and ministerial committees, which perform an important symbolic function by engaging the majority of ministers in important policy choices.

## Ireland

### Score 5

Ireland does not have a well-developed or highly institutionalized system of cabinet committees. To the extent that they are used, this takes place on an ad hoc basis.

However, 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.

## Japan

### Score value\_6

Following the government reform in 2001, government committees were established in a number of important fields; in these, 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.

Seeking to break the Cabinet's dependence on the national bureaucracy, the DPJ-led government abolished the administrative vice-ministers' meeting which had previously served to determine the agenda of weekly Cabinet meetings. There was also some partial attempts to introduce "real" Cabinet committees. However, the politician-led government advocated by the DPJ government ultimately lacked in terms of effectiveness and professionalism. As a consequence, the DPJ, in particular the Noda government that took office in 2011, reintroduced several cross-cutting mechanisms such as the administrative vice-ministers' meeting. A Council on National Strategy and Policy, created by Noda, was continued after the LDP took office. Prime Minister Abe in turn set up the Headquarters for Japan's Economic Revitalization as a "quasi sub-committee" of the CEEP that encompasses all state ministers. However, it remains unclear how effective this body will be.

## 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. For example, a cabinet committee was tasked with preparing policy for Malta's turn as European Union president in 2017. Occasionally ministers form cabinet subcommittees, in which ministers work to coordinate policies between ministries. The chair of the subcommittee, however, would not be from the ministry from which the policy originated.

## 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. Moreover, in the last year the continuity of such committees was undermined by the frequent personnel changes in the ministries (particularly at the top level) and in May 2012 Prime Minister Ponta issued a number of ordinances abolishing ministerial commissions established by his predecessors (such as the ministerial committee on tourism set up by the ex-Prime Minister Emil Boc) while establishing several new ones.

## 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.

## Cyprus

### Score 4

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. However, the period under review saw ministers frequently making contradictory statements and issuing dissenting views on important issues, which is perhaps indicative of flawed coordination. This could be due to disagreement between ministries on policies or the lack of clear policy frameworks, among other factors.

Coordination tends to take place on specific topics and on a short-term basis, rather than being focused on strategic planning. In-depth analysis of the policy issue at hand is comparatively rare.

## Poland

### Score 4

Under the Tusk government, the number of cabinet committees has been limited. The two most important cabinet committees are the Development Policy Coordination Committee and the Committee on European Affairs. Whereas the former is in charge of coordinating the country's development strategy, 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.

## 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 special subcommittee within the cabinet that coordinates issues on difficult or sensitive topics.

## 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 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 process of concertation regarding each amendment or policy proposal before either is brought to the government. In addition to this formal procedure, senior civil servants of different 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 of the internal politics and practices of the Cabinet and ministries are that ministers are dependent on senior officials and senior officials are dependent on ministers. One expression of this mutual dependence and the trust and confidence that follow in its wake is, according to the same analysis, that ministers do not necessarily pay much attention to each and every matter but trust in the collaborative preparatory work that is done in the ministries by civil servants and articulated in reports. This work extends to practically all items on the Cabinet's agenda.

As it comes to policy programs and similar inter-sectoral issues, coordination between civil servants of separate ministries is a matter of course. In specific matters coordination may even be dictated. For instance, statements from the Ministry of Finance must be obtained on matters under preparation in other ministries in case these matters carry economic and financial

significance. On the whole, given the decision-making culture, civil servants of individual ministries are certainly expected to coordinate with other ministries. An unwritten code of behavior prescribes a harmonious and undisturbed mode of action, and it is therefore the task of a minister or a ministry to bring projects which are financially burdensome or sensitive from a political point of view to a collective examination and testing.

Citation:

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.gouvernement.lu/publications/luxembourg/guide\\_redaction/](http://www.gouvernement.lu/publications/luxembourg/guide_redaction/)

## 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. 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 May 9, 2013).

CabGuide – Role of the Cabinet Office: <http://cabguide.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/context/definitions/cabinet-office> (accessed May 9, 2013).

## Portugal

### Score 9

Since the mid-1980s the practice has remained one of prior preparation of cabinet meetings by senior ministry officials, such as junior ministers or director generals (who are also political appointees), depending on the issue. Under the Memorandum of Understanding and with the existing budgetary constraints, this coordination is often carried out with the Ministry of Finance. The ministry keeps very close control over all expenditure. This reached its most extreme form for a period in April 2013, when any expense by a ministry or public service had to receive prior authorization from the Ministry of Finance.

## 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. 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 as some are essentially more equal than others; for example, the finance minister is a crucial and omnipresent partner. 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 “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 effective coordination at risk. In 2011 and 2012, a respective 35% and 34% of all issues before cabinet were fast-tracked. 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 inter-ministerial working groups to prepare policy proposals. These methods are widely used, but are not mandatory.

Citation:

State Chancellery (2011, 2012), Reports, Available at: <http://www.mk.gov.lv/vk/gada-parskats/>, Last assessed: 20.05.2013.

## 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.

## United Kingdom

### Score 8

The inter-ministerial coordination of policy proposals is officially a goal in the Whitehall policy machine. 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; on the other hand, the coalition's spending cuts, which have hit parts of the ministerial bureaucracy very hard (30% of senior civil servant jobs have been abolished). Relations between Whitehall and the government have suffered accordingly, and so has the efficiency of policy proposal coordination. Nevertheless, as explained above, the Cabinet Office is the body which assures coordination at the level of officials and feeds into cabinet committees.

## 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 with other ministries 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. However, according to the 1969 law on the Icelandic state administration, no cooperation between ministries is presumed in cases when the ministers themselves are not involved. The involvement of too many ministries and ministers has in some cases been found to be a barrier to progress in policymaking, a consequence of strong ministerial powers and independence. Today, coordination between line ministries does not take place on a regular basis, and occurs essentially randomly in those instances when it does take place. While the prime minister has now been given the power to nominate coordination committees, the period under review did not see an increase in the frequency with which such committees were created.

## Japan

### Score 7

When the DPJ and its coalition partners gained power in 2009, a number of high-profile measures were put in place aimed at reducing the influence of civil servants in policymaking. One measure was to abolish the administrative vice-ministers meeting. Without sufficient support by bureaucrats, the new government subsequently appeared uncoordinated and amateurish on a number of occasions. The DPJ thus later tried to establish a more constructive working relationship with the bureaucracy. As a consequence,

the influence of civil servants (and their role in coordinating policy proposals) has grown again. This is most visible in the reappearance of the administrative vice-ministers meeting. Another particularly important mechanism is the clearing of budget requests, in which the Ministry of Finance has again been taking a stronger role. The new LDP-led government sent signals in early 2013 that it would like to work effectively with the bureaucracy.

## 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

There is some coordination between civil servants of different ministries but much of this cooperation is informal. 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 look down on civil servants from ministries they see as “second tier,” such as the labor ministry or the environment ministry.

## Spain

### Score 7

There is some degree of effective coordination of policy proposals made within the Spanish administration before the Council of Ministers’ meetings. Bureaucratic coordination at the highest level of hierarchy is more efficient than at the middle levels of the organization.

Thus senior ministry officials (the Spanish junior ministers, known as secretaries of state, and leading civil servants in the 17 ministries, known as undersecretaries) effectively prepare the Council of Ministers’ meetings. They meet every Wednesday in a committee (the Comisión General de

Subsecretarios y Secretarios de Estado), two days before the weekly Friday Council of Ministers meeting. All issues arrive in time to be reviewed and filtered first by this committee. 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. The GO also collects and circulates all relevant documents for the Council of Ministers' meeting among line ministers. A provisional agenda (known as the "black index") is published a week before the cabinet meeting.

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 political either by nature or because a lack of ministerial consensus). Nevertheless, although the senior ministry officials effectively filter out and settle almost all issues, 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.

Regarding coordination by line ministry civil servants, the truth is that there is no Spanish tradition 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 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 on a political dimension, it is “lifted” to the political level.

Coordination within the GO remains a major problem, as mentioned earlier. Despite sustained efforts to increase coordination among the departments in order to steer the agencies more effectively, many departments still find it difficult to coordinate policy across departmental boundaries. During the period of review, there were still “gaps” between the line ministries and some ministries still maintained their own “subcultures”.

## Turkey

### Score 7

The ministerial undersecretary, under the authority of a minister and his/her aide, executes services on behalf of a minister and is a political position that is achieved through merit and a successful political career. There are also deputy-undersecretaries in the ministries who may help in conducting ministerial affairs.

Turkey has pursued reforms to better coordinate public administration and government legislation. In addition to the implementation of the Department of Strategy Development, Turkey has introduced an e-government project and pursued improvements in electronic communications and information technology, while further efforts are needed to bring communications legislation in line with European standards (e.g., regarding market access and interconnection). Nevertheless, during the review period there was an increasing tendency to draft and adopt legislation without appropriate consultation. Since the creation of more ministries and agencies, the fragmentation of responsibilities increasingly complicates ministerial coordination, for example in budgeting and medium-term economic policymaking. The oversight bodies under the Prime Minister’s Office should therefore not only be responsible for coordination and scrutiny of legal drafts but also should monitor legislation implementation.

#### Citation:

European Commission, Turkey - 2012 Progress Report, SWD(2012) 336, Brussels 10.10.2012.

ÖmerÖz, Regulatory Oversight Bodies in Turkey. Better Regulation Group, The Prime Minister’s Office of Turkey, 31 May 2011.

## Ireland

### Score 6

Responsibility for policy coordination lies with the Department of the Taoiseach. Its effectiveness in this area is difficult to judge, but may be assumed to depend on the powers and competence of the department. As outlined in response to earlier questions, these are limited and as a result it is likely that, despite much rhetoric about “joined up government,” the coordination of policy proposals is relatively weak.

## Netherlands

### Score 6

Since the 2006 elections, politicians have demanded a reduction in the number of civil servants. Firstly, this has resulted in a loss of substantive expertise as civil servants became process managers. Secondly, it has undermined the traditional relations of loyalty and trust between (deputy) ministers and top-level officers. The former have broken the monopoly held by senior staff on advice and information by relying increasingly on outside sources – namely, 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.

#### Citation:

R.B. Andeweg and G.A. Irwin ( 2009), *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

## 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 comprises deputy ministers from the ministries. The Committee for European Affairs, in charge of EU coordination, has also relied strongly on coordination by top civil servants. In contrast, bureaucratic coordination at lower levels of the hierarchy is limited. The legal requirements for consulting other ministries at the preparatory stage of legislation are weak, and there is still a strong culture of departmentalism.

## Romania

### Score 6

Much of the coordination takes place in interministerial committees, which are usually presided over by a minister but composed primarily of secretaries of state (political positions) and top civil servants and seem quite effective. Moreover, even in the absence of interministerial committees, normative acts are subject to interministerial consultation by being sent for review to the ministries affected by such an 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 a given proposal in order to harmonize their views. While these procedures promote coordination, the capacity limitations of many ministries, combined with 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 done by civil servants. Senior civil servants and the members of the Cabinet are always heavily involved in the coordination of legislation. The effectiveness of coordination has suffered from the deteriorating quality and the increasing politicization of the civil service in Slovenia.

## 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.



## 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 playing a significant role – in most cases, they are at best informed of ongoing discussions and are simply asked to deliver data and information.

## Bulgaria

### Score 5

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.

## Czech Republic

### Score value\_6

As part of the interministerial coordination process, some coordination among line-ministry civil servants takes place. However, strong barriers between the ministries exist, and cross-cutting project groups are rarely established.

## 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. Proposals are often heatedly discussed in public by party politicians, ministers or the

federal-state minister-presidents before any interministerial coordination takes place. 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.

## Hungary

### Score 5

Given the small number of ministries in Hungary, interministerial coordination has partly been replaced with intra-ministerial coordination. In addition to policy coordination by the Prime Minister's Chancellery, there is some coordination by ministry officials. Senior ministry officials meet for the preparation of cabinet meetings, and there is an Interministerial Coordination Committee for European Affairs (EKTb), a committee in charge of coordinating EU-related issues, consisting of senior ministry officials.

## Israel

### Score 5

Israel has over the past decade explored projects to improve the sharing of information electronically, such as through the "Sharing Project" led by Minister Michal Eitan, the applications of digital education company Mercava and other similar efforts. Yet despite such projects experts have found that government administration is still essentially territorial in nature, and the open sharing of information between ministries is difficult at best. This lack of communication can be seen as a power struggle resulting from the government's highly centralized budget process, which gives the Ministry of Finance substantial power over other ministries. Thus public servants and government departments feel often that they are pitted against each other and that by sharing or cooperating, they may ultimately lose resources. This does not mean however that there are no venues for intergovernmental cooperation. Discussion formats such as "roundtables" do exist, but seem to be less productive in Israel than in other countries. The Israeli government has been trying to improve communications by strengthening non-sectoral ministries such as the Prime Minister's Office and establishing special inter-departmental committees. The situation has improved but there is still much work to be done.

#### Citation:

Haber, Carmit, "Managerial culture blocks to implementing open government policy," The Israel democracy institute (March 2013) (Hebrew)

"The division of electronics and technologies," Accountant general website (Hebrew)

"Failures of the public sector and directions for change," The committee for social and economical change website (Hebrew)

"About: Public sharing," Sharing official website (Hebrew)

## 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 very few 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 will change the ways in which it does business, but it is not clear what the final consequences will be.

## 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 Fico government has been a single-party government, the autonomy of the ministries and of the ministerial bureaucracy have declined and the coordination within the Smer-SD party has gained importance.

## Croatia

### Score 4

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

## Cyprus

### Score 4

Line ministries appear as fiefdoms, with each claiming sovereign rights within its area of responsibility. 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 if this is deemed useful.

Ministry staffers occasionally seek the assistance of other sections within their ministry. Line ministries sometimes – but rarely – ask the views of other ministries on a matter, or attempt to coordinate policy proposals.

## Greece

### Score 4

Greek bureaucracy is over-politicized and under-resourced. Each minister has a fluctuating number of political advisors at his or her disposal. Policy proposals are rarely prepared by civil servants in line ministries, as they 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 in 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. If there is a need for interministerial coordination, ministers assign the task to their advisors, who communicate with advisors of ministers in other line ministries and the Prime Minister's Office in order to achieve administrative coordination. Even though this informal institution of coordination involving ministers and their political entourage bypasses the civil service, it can prove efficient at times of crisis, when time pressure is very high.

## Malta

### Score 4

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. Once a week, the commission of

permanent secretaries meets to coordinate policy; the meeting agenda is open. The activity is as follows: on a Monday, the chiefs of staff meet to draft memos for the Cabinet; on a Tuesday, the Cabinet meets and makes a decision; and on a Wednesday, the permanent secretaries meet to decide on how to implement the policy decided upon.

From time to time interministerial committees help coordinate policy before the drafting process is started. One recent example of this was an interministerial committee that was set up with the goal of securing for the city of Valletta the title of Cultural City of Europe in 2018.

## 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

Inter-sectoral coordination has generally been perceived as an important issue, but rather few institutional mechanisms have in fact been introduced. One of these is the so-called iltakoulu, or evening session, which is an unofficial negotiation session of the Cabinet. To a considerable extent, though, coordination proceeds effectively through informal mechanisms. The recent large-scale policy programs enhance inter-sectoral divisions in policymaking and administration. Additionally, Finnish EU membership has of course brought forth the need for increased interministerial coordination. Recent research in Finland has only marginally focused on informal mechanisms. Separate case studies suggest, however, that the system of coordination by advisory councils in use has performed well.

## Hungary

## Score 10

The strong formal role of Prime Minister Orbán and his Chancellery has been 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 meets his closest 20 to 30 people regularly, and many important decisions stem from these personal encounters. Second, Orbán from time to time convenes some officials from the larger circle to whom he gives instructions. Many decisions originate from these meetings, and such decisions are processed through the system informally before any formal decision is taken. These informal coordination

mechanisms make rapid decisions possible. Given the pivotal role of the prime minister, however, such a process also creates a bottleneck in decision-making.

## Luxembourg

### Score 10

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 are responsible for various projects at the same time, have a huge workload and represent the government within different bodies, boards and committees.

## Belgium

### Score 9

Belgian governments are always broad coalition governments (made up of at least four political parties), and mechanisms such as the council of ministers have been established to enforce effective coordination within the government coalition. It is also important to note that political parties are strong and well-organized. Party presidents are dominant figures who enforce strong coordination both within the party and across government levels (local and national). They can thus impose interparty coordination when needed. In addition, some of the larger parties have well-organized study centers that provide extensive policy expertise.

Both at the national and regional level, there is first a government formation stage, during which each party negotiates the government agreement. This agreement operates as an ex ante contract that limits possible deviation once the coalition is in operation. 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 set by the government agreement, coalition committees (inter-cabinet meetings) and the weekly meetings of the council of ministers effectively coordinate policy proposals. The previous government at the time of writing suffered from lack of effective coordination of this type and ended up falling before its term. The new government is fraught with tension, given the breadth and multiple (and often opposite) views of several parties in the government coalition. Thus, its stability crucially hinges on effective coordination to keep the government in operation.

Regional elections are scheduled for 2014 and, given the reinforced power of regions in Belgium's institutional architecture, both formal and informal coordination mechanisms risk being weakened.

## 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 (12) 3 "National-led Administration: Consultation and Operating Arrangements" defines the relationship between government ministers and ministers from parties that are officially not 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 (12) 3 (Wellington: Cabinet Office 2012).

## 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

The informal coordination which was a hallmark of the Blair governments was reduced under Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Under the coalition government, the political necessity of coordinating different political forces and parties has led to additional cabinet committees, as well as the more informal "quad" of top ministers as a means of resolving tensions. Whether these are informal or simply a pragmatic adaptation of the established form of governance is a question of semantics. Given the propensity of the UK electoral system to result in single party governments, there is likely to be a reversion to the status quo ante after the next general election.



## 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 either.

## 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 could be characterized as "formal informality," for in the daily political practice informal coordination mechanisms are as institutionalized as the formal ones. The functionality of this coordination mechanism has not significantly changed under the new government since 2011.

## 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.

## 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 super-elite level of politician, 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.

## Ireland

### Score 8

The coalition government agreed on a joint program following its election in 2011. This outlined the policies agreed between the coalition partners for implementation over the government’s five-year term. The continued survival of the coalition depends on the successful coordination and implementation of this program. In March 2013, the second annual review of progress in implementing this program was published. One innovation is that the government also set up a program for the Government Office. The Government Office monitors the implementation of the commitments contained in the program across all departments. It also ensures that all departmental strategy statements reflect the programmatic commitments for which that department is responsible. An annual report, published in March, then sets out the progress made across government towards meeting those commitments and reflects the priorities for the coming year.

Despite strains and stresses, the coalition has survived for two years, which indicates some effective policy coordination. 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.

During 2013, however, strains between the coalition partners have become more visible over some key issues. The poor electoral performance of the Labour Party in a by-election provided strong evidence that its supporters

had lost patience with, and trust in, the austerity program that has been pursued since 2011. By summer 2013, tension had also emerged between the two coalition parties over the wording of legislation to regulate abortion in Ireland.

It is generally believed that these strains will not lead to the break up of the coalition because neither party would relish the prospect of fresh election at the present juncture.

Citation:

[http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications\\_2013/Programme\\_for\\_Government\\_Annual\\_Report\\_20131.pdf](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_2013/Programme_for_Government_Annual_Report_20131.pdf)

## Italy

### Score 8

New informal mechanisms of coordination were required by the Monti government's special role as a "technical government" with the parliamentary support of an oversized but heterogeneous majority of parties which had not agreed formally a common program. In general the meetings between the prime minister and the leaders of the three main parties supporting the government (the Democratic Party or Partito Democratico, the People of Freedom or Popola della Libertà Party and the Union of Christian and Center Democrats or Unione dei Democratici Cristiani e di Centro) have been the most important instrument of coordination.

## Japan

### Score 8

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. It has been suggested that under LDP rule, the directors of the LDP's policy-research departments, which closely mirror the government's ministry structure, may have been as or even more powerful than the serving ministers. With the advent of the DPJ-led government, this system came to a halt. Upon coming to power, the DPJ immediately abolished its policy-research division. Under Prime Minister Kan, however, the DPJ Policy Research Committee was revived. With the new LDP-led coalition government in power, it can be expected that informal, closed-door agreements on policy will again gain in importance.

## South Korea

### Score 8

Most coordination between ministries is both formal and informal. Informal coordination sometimes works better. 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, and look down on other ministries. 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.

## 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 people and their personal networks, basically 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 communication network and contribute significantly to policy preparation.

## 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 Nečas government, coalition party leaders met as required to resolve major policy disputes, including one renegotiation of the coalition agreement caused by the split within the Public Affairs Party (Věci veřejné, VV). The effectiveness of this practice in resolving disagreements is clear from the infrequency of open disputes in government.

## 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 governments' associations. However, local governments often hold opposing positions to the central government, which makes reaching an agreement difficult. Because local governments and their associations cannot veto the process, their position is often just 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 some evidence of rising levels of informal cooperation between groups of ministers outside cabinet meetings, or in the context of "super-ministerial groups," as they were called in the parliament's Special Investigation Committee (SIC) report. The SIC pointed out that examples of such cooperation dating from the time immediately after the collapse demonstrated a need for clear rules on reporting what is discussed and decided in such informal meetings. The SIC report also identified a tendency to move big decisions and important cooperative discussions into informal meetings between the chairmen of the coalition-government parties. However, the report's call for clearer regulation was not acted upon during the period under review, the informal meetings without any reporting requirements still remain.

The SIC report also pointed out that the minutes kept at ministerial meetings have been inadequate, as have those taken during committee meetings in the Althing.

Citation:

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

## 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 engage in policy coordination at the managerial level.

## Mexico

### Score 7

There are informal mechanisms for co-ordinating policy. This is normal in a presidential system when only a few cabinet secretaries have independent political bases. Ministers retain their positions, for the most part, at the will of the president. The Mexican constitution, significantly, refers to cabinet

“secretaries” (not ministers) to establish that they are servants of the president. Cabinet secretaries who go out on a limb generally enjoy a short political life.

It is important to note, however, that some cabinet secretaries are more equal than others. The Finance Ministry has clearly assumed a hegemonic role under President Pena Nieto and it seems likely that the interior secretary will also take on a leading role in the new administration.

Moreover, in the later stages of a presidential term, informal competition for the succession is likely to politicize co-operative arrangements within the Cabinet.

## Netherlands

### Score 7

Very little is actually known about informal coordination at (sub)Council of Ministers level regarding policy- 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 political parties that support the coalition in the States General. Coalition Councils of Ministers 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 that support the Council of Ministers.

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 as well as personal chemistry among civil servants is 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 ( 2009), *Governance and politics of the Netherlands*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 169, 181-183, 204.

## 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

While the formal mechanisms of interministerial coordination have been strengthened under the Tusk government, informal coordination mechanisms have continued to play an important role. As one example, meetings of the government coalition partners have been used for solving conflicts between Civic Platform- and Polish People's Party-led ministries. For another, many ministers have been active and high-ranking party members, so that part of interministerial coordination has taken place within the Civic Platform (PO) and Polish People's Party (PSL) leaderships.

## Slovakia

### Score 7

Informal coordination has played a significant role in policy coordination under both the Radičová and the Fico government. In Radičová's four-party government, most major decisions were prepared and taken in the Coalition Council as well as in informal meetings within government or with predetermined groups of government members. 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, advisors and economic and social stakeholders to settle issues prior to Cabinet meetings.

## Slovenia

### Score 7

In Slovenia, with its tradition of coalition governments, informal coordination procedures have played a significant role in policy coordination. Both during the Pahor and the Janša government, the leaders of the coalition parties met frequently and took major decisions at the coalition meetings. Press



conferences and public statements after these meetings were rare, and only very limited information about the decisions taken was given to the public. The dominant role of the party leaders in their parties also meant that a lot of policy coordination took place in party bodies.

## Spain

### Score 7

The 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.

At a more political level, these informal mechanisms are less necessary, since the Spanish stable experience of single-party governments with strong prime ministers requires less coordination than coalition cabinets. Notwithstanding this, informal coordination procedures also exist with exchange of views and occasional meetings of an inner core of ministers politically closer to the Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, such as the deputy prime minister, 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 governing 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 who is also the president of the Castile-La Mancha autonomous region.

## Austria

### Score value\_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.

## 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. The coalition committee is typically expected to meet regularly at least once a month, or can be convened at the request of any of the coalition partners. However, during the final months of the review period, in which intragovernmental tension was rising, the coalition committee rarely met. Indeed, agenda-setting and policy formulation within the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition government proved to be much more difficult than originally expected. More than once, the coalition partners publicly displayed a substantial and sometimes fundamental discord.

## 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) with or without the prime minister. Decisions taken at such meetings are then followed up by meetings of advisors to ministers and/or person-to-person contacts between staff members of the PMO and advisors to ministers.

## 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 when the GERB government did not have a majority in the National Assembly and needed ad-hoc parliamentary support. Moreover, within his Cabinet, Prime Minister Borisov relied heavily on his authority as leader of the ruling party, thereby inhibiting the development of formal coordination mechanisms.

## Israel

### Score 5

The communication issues and general tensions among government ministries are well established and the government has for some time attempted to ameliorate the issue. The situation stems from the government's highly centralized budget process in which ministries and other government administration feel they must fight to secure budget allocations. The government's informal coordination should be viewed in this context. Despite several important reports (such as the Kuverski Report and the Gal-Nur Report) that have recommended serious changes to the government's coordination capacities, the quality of government coordination is still mostly motivated through power struggles.

Indeed, the annual reports of the state comptroller have pointed out that long-term interministerial disagreements have had a negative financial effect not only on the ministries but also on the public. Thus in general, a high level of informal coordination is not practiced among government ministries.

Citation:

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

## Croatia

### Score 4

Informal coordination has featured prominently under both the Kosor and the Milanović governments. In case of the Kosor government, Prime Minister Kosor regularly met the leaders of her coalition partners, the Croatian Peasant Party (Hrvatska seljačka stranka, HSS) and the Serbian Independent Democratic Party (Samostalna demokratska srpska stranka, SDSS). In the case of the Milanović government, meetings are mostly held by Social Democratic Party (Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske, SDP) and Croatian People's Party – Liberal Democrats (Hrvatska narodna stranka – liberalni demokrati, HNS) leaders, while the other coalition partners –Istrian Democratic Assembly (Istarski demokratski sabor, IDS) and the Croatian Party of Pensioners (Hrvatska stranka umirovljenika, HSU) – stand aside. A strong reliance on these informal coordination mechanisms has helped to maintain the tradition of keeping strategic decisions and policy coordination largely within political parties and has prevented the development of more formal and transparent mechanisms of policy coordination and a strengthening of the role of public administration.

## Cyprus

### Score 4

The post-2010 economic difficulties led to a number of meetings at various levels and between a variety of actors. This included (mostly informational) meetings between president and his ministers and party leaders, as well as informational meetings between the minister of finance and party leaders, aimed at restoring confidence in the economy. The minister of commerce used this informal mechanism frequently when dealing with the issue of natural gas. Consultations promoted by the minister of finance (August 2011 – March 2012) resulted in agreements between the parties on specific measures, and their subsequent passage in parliament. However, this type of meeting does not take place on a regular basis.

## 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 is less true, however, over issues and policies that deal more with domestic concerns.

## Portugal

### Score 4

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 has become all the more relevant in the 2011 – 2013 period, as the current government is composed of a coalition between two parties. The failures in informal coordination between the coalition partners led to the most substantial crisis in government during this period, notably in September 2012 over proposed changes to social security contributions. These failures in coordination led the two parties to create a Council for Coalition Coordination in the same month. However, this does not appear to have resolved the coordination difficulties between the two parties entirely.

## Romania

### Score 3

Informal coordination mechanisms – which in the case of political appointees are often based on partisan affiliations – can act as a double-edged sword. In some instances they complement the formal mechanism of interministerial coordination, in others they easily undermine their success.

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