

SCIENTIFIC REPORT - SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION



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PhD student

Topic: Coordination of cross-cutting issues and institutional adaptation

Field of study: Public Management

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In the framework of the COST Action IS1207, I conducted a Short Term Scientific Mission (STMS) to the Ragnar Nurkse School of Innovation and Governance at Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia) from April 14th 2014 until May 26th 2014. The hosting professor was Prof. Dr. Tiina Randma-Liv. Next to being part of the COST Action LocRef, this professor coordinated COCOPS WP 5: The Governance of Social Cohesion: Innovative Coordination Practices in Public Management¹. Most of the recent and specific scientific knowledge on coordination in Europe is accumulated here. That was my main motivation to visit this research group.

My PhD-thesis and the STSM were focused on the issue of coordination of cross-cutting policies. For the implementation of these policies, governments are increasingly dependent on a vast array of public (and private) actors. A central question for most governments is how to govern these actors in order to yield an efficient and effective achievement of the policy goals. During the six weeks that I spent at the Ragnar Nurkse School of Innovation and Governance I had various fora to discuss my on-going research and operationalization of my concepts.

In Tallinn I presented my on-going work on the coordination of austerity measures. With the valuable comments I got I will refine this paper, which is already accepted for EGPA Annual Conference which will be held in Speyer (Germany) from 10-12 September 2014. This paper has the working-title: *From cross-cutting goal to organizational actions. A FsQCA application: How do organizations adapt to austerity measures?* The aim of this paper is to understand whether and to what extent different coordination arrangements have an effect on the organizational adaption to the austerity measures.

The colleagues at the Ragnar Nurkse School of Innovation and Governance gave a lot of feedback on the instrument to assess coordination arrangements, that I developed last year. This instrument gives the possibility to specify the very many coordination arrangements by the *actors*; who's steered (e.g. diversity of actors and interdependencies), the *function*; what is governed (e.g., function of the arrangement) and *strength* (e.g. institutionalisation, power

¹ <http://www.cocops.eu/>

distribution budget visibility, accountability). It gives the opportunity to compare different coordination arrangements, across policy issues and government levels. The instrument is made up by dimensions which range from 1. strictly coupled governance arrangements (or hierarchy-based) till 5. loosely coupled coordination arrangements (or network-based). The feedback strengthened the operationalization and improved the instrument. Hopefully this paper will be of a high enough quality to publish it. The instrument has the aim to be applicable to assess coordination-arrangements on the local and central government level.

To test this instrument I set-up an expert survey during the exchange, which will be conducted among COCOPS- research teams. I discussed with the colleagues at the Ragnar Nurkse School of Innovation and Governance how we could collaborate on this project. The idea is that we collect best practices of local, regional and central administrations. The goal of the inventory is to get insight in (best) practices in European administrations on how they handle cross-cutting policy issues at the local, regional and central level in their top coordination bodies. From this study lessons will be drawn, and best practices will be reported. We will focus on (semi-) permanent top collaborative networks consisting of CEOs or general directors of local or central governments. At the administrative level these could be permanent, inter-municipal task forces and cross-cutting teams, which go beyond geographical and organizational boundaries that design, coordinate and evaluate policy implementation. This could lead to a comparative study of coordination- and consultation platforms in Europe and maybe a publication. The aforementioned instrument will be used to map the coordination practices.

The output of the STSM is a paper, with reference to COST Action LocRef which will be presented on an international conference (EGPA – Speyer, September 2014). Hopefully the aforementioned inventory will yield a lot of reactions and practices so we can accumulate the local coordination practices in a publication which will have a reference to COST Action LocRef.

The exchange amounted up in a new network for future collaboration. There are premature collaboration ideas with a few colleagues of the Ragnar Nurkse School of Innovation and Governance, but also with a visiting Professor from Universidad de la República, Ciencia Política, in Uruguay.

I am very grateful to everybody who made this valuable exchange possible. I thank the Management Committee and the Academic Project Coordinator, Christian Schwab of the COST Action IS1207, Prof. Dr. Tiina Randma-Liv and the team at the Ragnar Nurkse School of Innovation and Governance, and Prof. Dr. Koen Verhoest for hosting and giving me the opportunity to go on this exchange.

Hopefully the collaboration will continue in the future.

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