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ABSTRACT of PAPER

**“Political Leadership
and Public Administration Reform in Greece.
Lessons (not) learned during crisis.”**

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Political leadership and public administration reform in Greece.

Lessons (not) learned during the crisis.

The constant discussion and the pursuit of development, in terms of sustainability and social prosperity, a discussion intensified during the crisis, highlights and confirms - as commonplace- the existence of an appropriate institutional framework and practices of good governance (capacity, quality, effectiveness) as *conditio sine qua non*.

In this context, public administration, as the most complex and crucial “mechanism” of the Greek State, has been for decades at the center of this debate and interest, unfortunately due to the *incurable pathogens* and unsolved problems that prevent it from becoming a lever of development. Problems and issues (internal and systemic) which were most revealed after the outbreak of crisis and confirmed -to an important extent- as reasons and causes for the extent and depth of the crisis in Greece, since the previously attempted initiatives and interventions didn’t manage to prevent crisis’ impact.

Despite the lessons of the crisis, in conjunction with the obligations applying the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and the fiscal adjustment programs, public administration reform remains the most outstanding issue with serious consequences in combating the recession and achieving development.

Seeking the causes of the maintaining the public administration’ s status quo in the Greek case, even under the crisis -widely considered as a window of opportunity for change- the primary and crucial role of political leadership on the determination of any political and administrative choice/action, including the reform, is inevitably emerged and demonstrated.

In a context where, apart from some significant exceptions, adopted «reform» policies have not delivered the expected results and in some cases have completely failed, or

even other most needed interventions have never been placed in the agenda or adopted or implemented, in this context of inaction and regressions, unsuitable policy formulation and limited implementation and evaluation, the explanation for the incomplete or/and unsuccessful reforms through the over-simplified (still valid) view of *the lack of political will*, should not be considered sufficient.

Seven years since the outbreak of crisis, three and a half MoUs with programs of fiscal adjustment and structural reforms, seven different governments, nine different ministers of administrative reform, experiences drawn from the perspective of political leadership in the management of the conjuncture, on this characteristic field of public policy, emerge complex issues for consideration and analysis: from the existence (or not) of policy making skills to the capacity of leading and owing the reform(s) at all stages; From the pre-elections rhetoric of reforms to the readiness to implement; From the fear of political cost to the ideological rigidity; From the fragmentation of the policies to the commitment for the continuity of the State.

The very same experiences impose almost instructively the existence of efficient and realistic policy suggestions (first of all) for the *reform* of the way the political system understands its mission, and widely the well and long -established factors in *the field* of political leadership that prevent the change.