

EUROPEAN COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR CIVIL SERVANTS (EUPACK): COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GOVERNANCE QUALITY MODELS IN EU MEMBER STATES

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the European Competency Framework for Public Servants (EUPACK) as a tool for harmonizing approaches to the assessment and development of managerial competencies in European Union member states. It outlines the structure of the EUPACK framework, describes the six competency clusters, and systematizes the indicators of the Governance Quality Index (GQI). Based on a comparative analysis, the article identifies the specific features of implementing the competency-based approach in individual EU countries. It also justifies the role of the Public Administration and Governance Competence Center (PAG) at the European Commission in disseminating best practices for civil service reform.*

Keywords: *competency model, public administration, EUPACK, managerial competencies, Governance Quality Index, integrity, civil service, European Union.*

The article examines the European Public Administration Competency Framework (EUPACK) as a contemporary instrument for identifying, assessing, and developing the professional competencies required for effective public administration in the European Union. Particular attention is devoted to the role of competency-based approaches in strengthening the capacity of civil services to respond to complex administrative challenges, digital transformation, institutional change, and increasing expectations regarding transparency, integrity, and citizen-oriented governance. The purpose of the study is to systematize the conceptual structure of EUPACK, characterize its principal competency dimensions, and explore their relevance to differences in governance quality across EU Member States.

The research focuses on six interrelated competency blocks that constitute the analytical basis of the EUPACK framework: political and strategic competencies, managerial competencies, analytical and innovative competencies, ethical and legal competencies, digital and technological competencies, and communicative and interpersonal competencies. These dimensions are considered not as isolated professional requirements but as mutually reinforcing elements of modern public-sector capacity. Their practical relevance is illustrated through behavioural indicators that demonstrate how competencies can be translated into observable professional practices, including strategic decision-making, evidence-based policy development, organizational leadership, ethical conduct, digital service delivery, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication.

The study also considers the institutional dimension of competency development within the European Union, with particular emphasis on the European Commission's Competence Centre on Public Administration and Governance within DG REFORM. This institutional infrastructure contributes to the dissemination of analytical knowledge, methodological support, and technical assistance aimed at strengthening administrative capacity and supporting public administration reforms in Member States. The analysis demonstrates that competency development should be viewed as an integral component of broader institutional and governance reforms rather than solely as an instrument of individual human resource management.

An important analytical component of the study is the juxtaposition of the EUPACK competency model with the three-pillar approach to governance quality represented by the Governance Quality Index (GQI), encompassing administrative capacity, integrity, and inclusiveness. Such a comparison makes it possible to examine the relationship between individual and organizational competencies and broader institutional outcomes. The analysis indicates that EU Member States demonstrate different configurations of administrative competencies and governance priorities. Denmark illustrates a relatively balanced configuration of governance capacities; Estonia demonstrates a particularly strong emphasis on digital transformation and technological capabilities; while the Netherlands provides an example of the substantial role of integrity and institutional accountability in public administration. At the same time, differences in governance performance among European countries indicate that the availability of competency frameworks alone does not automatically guarantee high-quality governance, since their effectiveness depends on institutional context, administrative traditions, organizational capacity, and the consistency of implementation.

The findings suggest that EUPACK should be understood as a flexible and context-sensitive framework that can support comparative assessment and the strategic development of civil servants' competencies rather than as a rigid uniform model applicable in an identical manner across all administrative systems. Its analytical potential is enhanced when competency dimensions are considered in conjunction with broader indicators of governance quality and institutional performance. The study also highlights the relevance of comparing EUPACK with the governance assessment approaches applied within the EU enlargement process, including the SIGMA Principles of Public Administration, which provide a framework for assessing the functioning and reform capacity of public administrations in candidate and potential candidate countries.

The practical significance of the research lies in the potential application of EUPACK to civil service reform, competency-based human resource management, professional development, recruitment and performance assessment, as well as the design of evidence-based public administration policies. The proposed analytical perspective may also be relevant to countries undergoing profound institutional transformation. Further research should therefore investigate the applicability and adaptation of EUPACK, in combination with governance-quality assessment instruments, to EU candidate countries, particularly Ukraine, taking into account the specific challenges of wartime governance, institutional resilience, European integration, and post-war public administration reconstruction.

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Дата надходження статті: 22.06.2026

Дата прийняття статті: 13.07.2026

Дата публікації статті: 30.09.2026