

Europeanization of Public Administration: Effects of the EU on the Central Administration in the Nordic States

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Preface

This paper is written as part of the research project «Representative Democracy, Administrative Reforms and Europeanizations», financed by the Nordic Research Council (NOS-S). The project leaders are professor Bengt Jacobsson, Södertörn College, Stockholm, professor Per Læg Reid, University of Bergen and professor Ove K. Pedersen, University of Copenhagen. An earlier version of the paper was presented at the 18th Colloquium of the European Group of Organizational Studies (EGOS), July 4-6 2002, Barcelona.

Abstract

This paper examines the Europeanization of the Public Administration in the Nordic countries and explores the apparent similarities and differences of the changes in the central administration due to EU and EEA membership. The focus is on Sweden and Finland, which recently have joined the European Union, and Norway and Iceland, which relationship to the European integration is based on the EEA treaty.

The paper is based on a survey conducted in all ministerial departments and directorates in the Nordic countries. It describes the degree to which the daily operations of the central administration are affected by the EU/EEA regarding networks of contact and participation towards the EU; towards political leadership; changes in forms of organization, identities and relations of influence.

There are significant differences in the adaptation patterns between EU members and EEA members, but also important differences between countries with the same form of affiliation to the EU. The adaptation pattern due to the EEA membership of Norway and Iceland seem to follow a somewhat different path. To understand this we have to add structural factors like the size of the public administration. Iceland has a much smaller and less specialized civil service. Also the institutional context of the domestic administrative tradition and strategy has to be taken into account. Iceland is the only Nordic state that has not applied for a membership of the EU. It is a latecomer in adaptation to European integration, the public administration has weaker experiences with international cooperation and its autonomy from political leaders has generally been lower than in the other countries.

Sammendrag

Dette paperet undersøker i hvilken grad sentralforvaltningene Finland, Sverige, Norge og Island endres som følge av endret tilknytningsform til EU. Paperet er basert på en survey som ble gjennomført til alle avdelinger i departementer og direktorater i de nordiske landene. Det undersøkes om det daglige arbeidet i sentraladministrasjonen er påvirket av EU-medlemskapet og EØS-avtalen når det gjelder kontakt og deltakelsesmønster overfor EU, politisk ledelse og internt i det administrative apparatet. Også endringer i organisasjonsformer, identiteter og innflytelsesrelasjoner undersøkes.

Det fokuseres spesielt på betydningen av formell tilknytningsformer til EU og det avdekkes tydelige forskjeller i tilpasningsmønsteret mellom EU-land og EØS-land. Men det er også viktige forskjeller mellom land med samme tilknytningsform til EU. Særlig avdekkes det forskjeller i den norske og den islandske tilpasningen. For å forstå dette må det tas hensyn til strukturelle faktorer som forvaltningsapparatets størrelse og ulike nasjonale institusjonelle tradisjoner og strategier. Island er det eneste landet i Norden som ikke har søkt om medlemskap i EU. Tilpasningen til den europeiske integrasjonen har skjedd relativt sent. Forvaltningen har mindre erfaringer med internasjonalt samarbeid og dens autonomi fra politisk ledelse har gjennomgående vært mindre enn i de andre nordiske landene.

Introduction

Europeanization implies that the integration process in the EU becomes more relevant and important as a factor leading to adaptations and changes in domestic institutional and administrative arrangements (Olsen 1996; Hanf and Soetendorp 1998; Sverdrup 2000). It refers to a process by which change occurs due to membership in or exposure to political and economic co-operative institutions in the EU. The purpose of this paper is to describe and discuss the effects of change in national affiliation with the EU upon the structure and operation of central administrative bodies.¹ The aim is to convey an understanding of how the central administration is affected by the EU in its daily undertakings. After the Maastricht Treaty on the European Union (1993), EU cooperation has been expanded and strengthened in numerous areas. A development of organizational structures and policy networks has taken place at the EU level that has formalized the interactions between the various actors. At the same time, four of the Nordic countries have achieved a more formal association with the EU.

We are concerned with Europeanization at the national level, focusing on the implications of the EU upon the national administrative apparatus and ask what happens to organized political units when they become part of a larger unit (Olsen 1996, 1997, 1998; Bulmer and Burch 1998, Hanf and Sotendorp 1998; Sverdrup 1998, 2000; Caporaso, Cowles and Risse 2001). In spite of increasing scholarly interest, the impact of European integration at the national level remains poorly understood (Knill and Lemkuhl 1999). Thus, this paper addresses a general research question that is receiving increasing attention in the literature, namely the impact of «Europe» on domestic administrative structures and behaviour. Specifically, it deals with domestic adaptation patterns of the central administrative apparatus in the four small Nordic countries, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The main questions are to what extent can we observe domestic administrative change and new administrative behaviour and practices under the impact of EU, and how can we explain the observed adaptation pattern (Knill 2001).

Form of affiliation, domestic contextual and structural features

In this paper the dependent variable is change in domestic administrative structures. By administrative structures we mean the regularized and stable pattern of interactions, entailing both formal and informal and internal and external structures. Europeanization of the administration concerns the degree and manner in which EU-

¹ This paper is part of the research project «Representative Democracy, Administrative Reforms and Europeanization», financed by the Nordic Research Council (NOS-S), see Jacobsson, Lægveid and Pedersen (2001a, 2001b, 2001c). An earlier version of the paper was presented at the 18th EGOS Colloquium in Barcelona, July 4-6 2002. We would like to thank Martin Marcussen, Morten Egeberg and Marjoleine H. Wik for help and comments.

initiated changes affect particular dimensions of change in the domestic public administration.

The general assumption is that the adaptation will vary between non-members and members. Sweden and Finland became full members in the EU from 1995. Iceland and Norway's relations with the EU are governed by the agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) from 1994. The EEA Agreement is linked to pillar one in the EU cooperation and facilitates an internal market between the EEA countries and the EU, ensuring the free movement of capital, people, goods and services. At the same time, the EEA Agreement goes beyond the free trade area and paves the way for participation in other areas such as environmental protection, statistics, education, research, consumer affairs, social issues, and technological development (Usher 1998). As a consequence of the EEA Agreement, Icelandic and Norwegian legislation has to be aligned with EU legislation in a number of areas to ensure a congruent legal framework. According to the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs Iceland adopts around 80 per cent of EU laws and regulation through the EEA Agreement (Thorhallsson 2002).

The greater the importance of the form of the association, the greater differences there will be between Finland and Sweden on the one hand and Iceland and Norway on the other hand, especially in those areas not covered by the EEA Agreement. Within the Norwegian and Icelandic administration it can be expected that the contact pattern, participation and influence are better developed in relation to the Commission System than the Council System (Egeberg and Trondal 1997).

In addition to the effect of form of affiliation we will discuss the implications of the national administrative context represented by the administrative tradition and strategy concerning European integration. Even for countries with similar form of affiliation there will be different adaptation pattern in various domestic institutions due to national administrative traditions, culture, tradition and strategy. One aspect of the domestic administrative context is the anticipation and autonomous adjustment within the domestic administrations to European integration (Sverdrup 2000). If the adaptation is primarily a process of anticipation it will occur at an early stage. Countries that are aspiring for membership in the EU will adapt a distinct policy and rearrange their institutions before the change of form of affiliation (Scharpf 1999).

Another contextual factor is the adaptation as a result of interaction. Countries that have experienced high degree of interaction in international cooperation will adapt easier to increased integration in Europe than countries that have weak international experiences. Adding to this is the fact that Iceland is the only Nordic country that has not applied for membership in the EU, while the Norwegian government has applied twice but the agreement has been turned down in following referendums.

We will also discuss the effect of structural features –of size of domestic public administration. The assumption is that small countries with limited capacity will adapt to the EU different from countries with a greater capacity in their public admini-

stration. Iceland with its small administration has fewer administrative units and thus less specialization, indicating that the scope of each unit will be broader and probably, from the personnel point of view, leading to more contact, higher participation and affectedness than in larger and more specialized civil services.

Design and data basis

Traditionally, comparative studies of the Nordic countries have often failed because of lack of variations in either the dependent or the independent variables. This is not the case when focusing on the consequences of Europeanization. Having two new members in the union and two non-member states presents a unique possibility of quasi-experimental design, allowing for significant variations in potentially important independent variables at the same time as the dependent variable response pattern might vary considerably. By studying the four Nordic countries, we capture four countries that share a cultural and geographic region as well as many features of parliamentary government, and the time of changing the form of affiliation to the EU; but which differ with regard to their formal relation to EU, the size of their administration, and the national administrative context represented by the administrative tradition and strategy concerning European integration (Bergman and Damgaard 2000). Thus we have an approximate most similar system design implying that the cases are similar on as many dimensions as possible except for the explanatory variables of theoretical interest and the dependent variables, the response patterns.

The data basis in this paper is a comparative survey undertaken in Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden comprising all ministerial departments as well as departments in central agencies and directorates. The survey was conducted in 1999-2000 in Iceland and 1998 in the other countries. We describe the response pattern by asking each individual department of its own experiences with EU/EEA cases. By using a standardized questionnaire with fixed response alternatives, the same questions were asked to equivalent populations in the different countries (Jacobsson, Læg Reid and Pedersen 2001a). Applying this systematic data collection in four countries, the study is based on a comparative approach rather than on a comparable design (Derlien 1992). The aim is primarily to present an overview, a cross section of the central administration's European alignment in the Nordic countries as experienced in 1998-2000. EU-related concerns, questions or tasks are interpreted broadly, referring to all aspects of participation and assistance in EU work.

The survey forms were answered either by the head of department, another person in a senior position, an EU/EEA coordinator, or someone else in the unit with a fair knowledge of the EU/EEA related work. The respondents were asked to answer on behalf of the unit and not on behalf of themselves. This systematic standardized data collection should make it easy to replicate the data. A total of 1060 units in the four countries replied to the questionnaire: 331 in Norway, 90 in Iceland, 381 in Sweden; and 258 in Finland. 25 percent of the units were in Ministries and 75% in

Directorates. This share does not vary markedly between the four countries. The response level was 86 per cent in Norway; 72 per cent in Iceland; 83 per cent in Sweden; and 77 per cent in Finland.

The administration's adaptation pattern towards the EU

The adaptation pattern is revealed through the following dimensions: the affectedness of the EU, participation in EU networks, participation in domestic networks, the relations between the administration and politicians, structural and cultural implication of the EU, the administrations degree of formalism and its influence.

Affectedness of EU/EEA membership

The research indicates that a greater number of departments in Iceland are significantly affected by EEA membership and the EU integration than in Norway (Table 1). They seem to have more in common with departments in Sweden and Finland. Firstly, a majority of departments in Iceland as in Sweden and Finland are significantly affected concerning issues connected with the internal market.

Secondly, around one-fifth of the Icelandic respondents state that their departments' activities are significantly affected by the justice and police cooperation. This is similar to Sweden and Finland and can be related to membership of Schengen. On the other hand, Norway sticks out as only 9 per cent of respondents state that the EU's justice and policy cooperation affect their departments. Thirdly, 14 per cent of departments in Iceland are significantly affected by cooperation in the second pillar of the EU concerning foreign and security matters. This is a higher percent than in the other states.

Table 1 Whether the EU/EEA Agreement in the following areas significantly affects the department's area of competence divided according to country. Percentage

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
Internal Market (Pillar 1)	48	55	58	61
Foreign and security policy (Pillar 2)	5	14	8	9
Justice and police cooperation (Pillar 3)	9	21	17	22

The overall assessment of respondents indicate that departments in Iceland have been more affected than departments in Norway concerning issues related to all the three pillar of the EU. This turnout may be due to the small size of the Icelandic administration and thus fewer departments and less specialization, resulting in relatively wider responsibilities and higher affectedness for each department, compared to the bigger and more specialized central administration in the other

countries. Another explanation of this is the limited adaptation of the Icelandic administration prior to the EEA membership manifested in the important changes the administration has gone through due to the EEA Agreement in the last few years. Activities related to the EEA membership are becoming increasingly more relevant. This is reflected in a higher priority which EEA issues are given within the administration. All ministries have now experts in European affairs and they all station officials in the Icelandic embassy in Brussels. This expansion and increased expertise in European affairs coincides with findings in Norway and Sweden, which indicate their need for expansion, and increased expertise in European affairs as they get more involved in European integration (Ekengren and Sundelius, 1998, Sverdrup, 1998).

Table 2 further demonstrates that the Icelandic administration seems to be more affected by European integration than the Norwegian administration, but less than Sweden and Finland. Full membership of the EU clearly has had greater consequences on administrations than EEA membership in the period from 1994 to 1998 and 1999/2000.

Table 2 Affectedness within the department of EU/EEA. Percentage

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
The department is much more affected than four years earlier	18	30	52	51
The overall consequences on the policy area have been fairly large/very large	31	64	57	57
The overall consequences on the policy area have been fairly positive/very positive	41	70	53	57

One general observation is that the four countries studied when looking at the overall consequences of the EU/EEA customization reveal that they generally are large and positive, but with a significant variation between the countries. A greater number of departments in Iceland report that the EEA membership has had significant affect on their area of competence regarding the three pillars of the EU than in Norway. Moreover, on occasion Iceland has more in common with the EU member states than Norway and is even more affected by European integration than Sweden and Finland. For instance, the survey indicates that the overall consequences of the EU/EEA integration on the departments' area of competence are greater than in the three other states. Also, Icelandic respondents find the overall consequences of the European integration on their department's areas of competence have been more positive than their counterparts in Sweden, Finland and Norway.

Participation in EU/EEA networks

Table 3 and 4 indicate that departments in Sweden and Finland participate in EU bodies more frequently and contact them more often than departments in Iceland and Norway. The form of association can explain this difference. The lack of access to a considerable part of the EU decision-making processes explain limited participation of Iceland and Norway compared to the participation of Sweden and Finland. An important difference between EU membership and EEA membership is that a country with full membership has access to all the EU's bodies, whereas participation by the EEA countries is primarily restricted to participation in preparatory and implementation committees connected with the Commission system and in comitology committees until the final stage of procedures in the committees. Norway and Iceland have very limited access to other EU bodies. Thus, their contact with the Council, the European Parliament, the Court of Justice and the court of first instance and other EU bodies, except for the Commission, are almost non-existent.

Iceland and Norway are more active within the Commission than in other EU bodies but they fell short of becoming as active as Sweden and Finland. It is interesting to note that the EEA states have significantly less contact with the Commission compared to the EU states even though they have a formal access to its committees. Similarly they do not participate in the Commission's committees to the same extent as the EU member states. This underlines that EU membership has put greater burden upon the member states than the EEA Agreement.

Table 3 Departments' staff who have had contact with the following EU bodies at least once every month during the last year. Percentage.

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
The Commission/Directorate-General	21	18	43	40
Expert committee in the Commission	14	23	31	36
Comitology committee	5	11	14	15
The Council, COREPER/working groups	1	2	23	18
Governments in EU countries other the Nordic countries	12	6	25	28

Departments in Norway have twice as many contacts with EU governments other than Nordic governments compared to the contacts that departments in Iceland have with them (table 3). However, the contacts are limited compared to the contacts that departments in Sweden and Finland have with the governments. EU membership seems to result in more contact with other EU governments.

Table 4 Departments' staff who have participated in the following EU bodies at least once every month during the last year. Percentage.

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
Preparatory/expert committee in the Commission	7	18	21	26
Comitology Committee	2	7	11	7
COREPER/working group in the Council/COREPER	0	2	17	15
Other EU bodies	3	3	13	11

The limited contacts that departments in Iceland have with governments in Europe other than the Nordic governments can be explained by the fact that Iceland has always put a great emphasis on strong links to the Nordic countries and mainly focus on the Nordic cooperation. The Nordic cooperation has been the bridge to Europe for Iceland and the Nordic cooperation has been an important pool of information of European affairs. Also, Iceland has put great emphasis on strong relations with the US because of the bilateral defence treaty. Another important factor to explain why Iceland has limited contact with governments in EU countries other than Nordic countries is the small size of the administration. The smallness of the Icelandic administration limits its capacity to increase contacts with governments in EU countries and Iceland has, for instance, only embassies in 8 out of 15 EU member states. Three of them are located in the Nordic states. For comparison, Norway has embassies in 14 EU countries.

The administration and politicians

Departments in Sweden and Finland have more contact with the government and political leadership of ministries than in Norway and Iceland (table 5). The form of association probably provides an explanation for this. Departments of EU member states need to be in more contact with the political leadership than departments in the EEA states. Iceland and Norway do not have access to the Council where ministers take an active part in the decision-making and the EEA decision-making framework do not include ministers in the day to day decision-making. Thus, the handling of European affairs is more in the hand of civil servants in the EEA states than in the EU states.

Table 5 demonstrates considerable differences between Norway and Iceland. It is also interesting that 47 per cent of departments in Norway never have contact with political leadership while the same number is only 25 per cent in Iceland.

Table 5 How frequently have executives in the department had contact with the cabinet/political leadership of the ministries in connection with EU/EEA related work during the last year? Percentage

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
Every week or more	10	15	22	22
Every month	10	11	15	10
A few times	33	49	37	29
Never	47	25	25	39

Table 6 indicates that a considerable number of civil servants in Sweden and Finland find that tight deadlines concerning EU issues make it difficult to present cases to the government and political leaderships. This is much less the case in Iceland and Norway. The different decision-making framework between the EU and the EEA may explain this. The EU member states are directly involved in the decision-making process while the EEA members only can become active in committees in the Commission and in the EEA institutions. Norway and Iceland do not experience the pressure of a more effective decision-making in the Council to the same extent as the others. Departments in the EU member states have to respond without a delay to new development in the Council. The EEA states often have got more time to respond e.g. it usually takes a long time for proposal to move through all the relevant decision-making levels within the Commission and the EEA Joint Committee only meet to decide on new EEA legislation when the EU Council has taken its final decision.

Table 6 Percentage in agreement with the following statements on the character of the EU/EEA work concerning the department's area of competence the last year? Percentages

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
Tight deadlines makes it difficult to present cases to the political leadership	18	26	46	39
The political leadership has become more directly involved in the work of the department since EU/EEA membership	9	7	23	20
Politicians interfere more in EU/EEA related cases than other cases in the department	6	3	12	14
Employees in the department have greater influence in EU/EEA cases than in other cases compared with politicians	10	18	18	27

There is also some difference between the EU member states and the EEA members concerning to what extent the government and the political leadership have become more directly involved in the departments' work concerning the EU. There is a very limited direct interference in Norway and Iceland while around and above 20 per cent of respondents in Sweden and Finland argue that the government and the political leadership have become more directly involved in the departments' work concerning

EU issues. This may be explained by the structure of the EEA-Agreement. The EEA framework does not include ministers in the decision-making to the same extent as the EU decision-making system. EEA cases are left in the hand of civil servants and politicians are largely absent from the formal EEA decision-making system. On the other hand, participation in European integration seems not to lead to greater interference of politicians in the work of the vast majority of departments. This is further confirmed in the findings that indicate that politicians only interfere to a limited extent more in EEA/EEA affairs than other matters.

Civil servants have to some extent greater influence in EU/EEA cases than in other cases compared with politicians. The findings that Iceland ranks the same as Sweden may indicate that politicians in Iceland tend to be a bit more absent from decision-making concerning EEA affairs than decision-making in other affairs. Also, a possible explanation for the difference between Norway and Iceland might be the historical greater interference of politicians in Iceland in the daily work of the administration, which cannot hold as closely within the EEA decision-making framework.

Structural and cultural implications of EU/EEA membership

When it comes to organization and structural development of the public administration with regard to EU matters, it has been emphasized that countries both within the EU and EEA do not have to follow any particular standard. How they respond to the demands, responsibilities and opportunities are mostly in their own hands (Page and Wouters, 1995, Veggeland, 1999). Nevertheless it is obvious that the European integration is a demanding task that puts a pressure on the service capacity of the public administration.

Table 7 In general, has the department needed to increase number of employees to be able to handle EU/EEA related cases in the last four years or five years?
Percentage

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
No	77	69	68	61
Yes, 1-2 employees	16	18	18	21
Yes, more than 2 employees	7	13	14	18

An indicator for the adaptation of the central public administration to the EU/EEA integration is the allocation of personnel resources to handle the tasks that are related to the EU/EEA work. In all of the four Nordic countries there have been allocated more personnel resources to this work. The increase has been largest in Finland and smallest in Norway.

The European integration process has not altered the public administration model in use in the Nordic countries (Table 8). The adaptation to EU/EEA has occurred within the established framework. That fact is also supported by Bulmer and Bursch (1998), Hanf and Soetendorp (1998), Harmsen (1999) and Beckman and Johansson (1999).

Table 8 Are there any particular units and/or special professions within the department that handle and work on EU/EEA related cases? Percentage

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
Special EU/EEA units in the department	6	12	9	7
Special EU/EEA positions in the department	34	25	28	22

Nevertheless there exists a tendency to somewhat specialize the EU/EEA related work in all the four countries, but more through specialized EU/EEA coordinating positions than specialized units. Iceland has the highest ratio of specialized units and Norway has scores highest in number of positions. Despite that, the profile that can be read from table 8 is that there are even more similarities in the profile of Iceland and Sweden rather than Iceland and Norway.

As emphasized above there has not been any radical change in the structural configuration of the public administration unit, rather the development can be characterized as a kind of gradual adaptation. The overall results are supporting that the European integration is not altering in any radical way the present organizational form of the public administration in the Nordic countries. If anything the results support that the changes are more in favour of adaptation in the bureaucratic part of the administration than in the political part.

An important premise for making an impact in the European setting is based on a wider organizational coherence both horizontally between different public authorities and vertically between the levels of administration, i.e. municipalities and the state (Jacobsson, Læg Reid and Pedersen 2001a). This coherence is supported in both directions, especially between the two EU countries in question. In this respect the data from Iceland indicates (table 9) that this contact is developed to a lesser degree regarding the horizontal contact, which indicates that the EU boundary spanning activities are less specialized in the small Icelandic administration.

Table 9 Percentage of the department's staff that has had contact with other departments, local authorities or national representatives on EU cases and matters at least once every month during the last year

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
Other domestic administration departments	42	33	61	66
Local government within the country	12	13	18	27
National representatives in Brussels	23	35	34	30

Paradoxically Iceland scores highest in relations and contacts between departments and the Brussels delegation, which can probably be explained by the fact that the representatives from each ministry in the Icelandic government in the delegation play a key role in the EU/EEA coordination in Iceland.

This assumption regarding the concentration of EU/EEA work in Iceland appears not to be conclusively supported by the information in table 10. One explanation could be that there was little horizontal coordination regarding European issues before Iceland joined the EEA treaty.

When it comes to the national and vertical coordination the results from Iceland and Norway reveal a similar pattern, and support that there is indeed a difference in the adjustment to the EU/EEA integration, which might be due to the difference in the formal structure of the association.

There are differences in the patterns reflecting values and culture in the public administration, both within the Nordic countries (Allart et al. 1981) and between the Nordic countries and other European countries (Ekengren and Sundelius 1998, Grönbeck-Jensen 1998, SOU 1996:6, von Sydow 1999). Lægreid (2000) reports on the comparison between the Scandinavian countries and Finland and it can be understood that the Scandinavian countries follow a pattern of Nordic isomorphism while Finland increasingly adopts ideals and ideas originated in the EU development.

Table 10 To what degree has the EU/EEA work influenced the departments' coordination with authorities in other sectors and within own department during the last year. Percentage agreeing with the statement

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
EU/EEA work has increased the coordination between the department and governmental authorities in other sectors	33	49	38	69
EU/EEA work has increased coordination between the section and other authorities within own departmental area	47	44	58	67
It has become more normal to formulate a common national standpoint within the section's area of competence	27	32	46	65

When the results from Iceland are compared to the data from Norway, Sweden and Finland the overall impression is that Iceland does not stand out in the Nordic pattern, although the country has a profile of its own (table 11). The importance of political evaluations falls in between Sweden and Norway and the emphasis on expert and professional evaluations in Iceland is the same as in Norway and Sweden. Finland scores high on professional evaluation and low on political evaluation.

Table 11 Emphasis on different factors when executing EU/EEA work. Percentage according the different factors significant importance

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
Political evaluations from government/ministries	46	38	36	25
Expert/Professional evaluations	67	68	69	39
Views of stakeholder and interest groups.	19	42	33	27
Cost and benefits evaluations, productivity	16	23	29	13

Iceland stands out when it comes to the weight on signals from user groups and stakeholders. This indicates that the different types of stakeholders, both for and against increased European integration, have a stronger voice and more bargaining power in Iceland than in the other Nordic countries. The relative size of the Icelandic public administration compared to the other countries may also result in capacity problems and a greater reliance on information from interests groups. There are close ties between the government and different interest groups and the fact that there are indeed short communication lines between the all the parties involved. The focus on efficiency is considered of significant importance in Iceland, which in comparison puts Iceland second highest and in between Sweden and Norway.

The administrations degree of formalism and its influence

It is very interesting to see that the situation in Iceland seems to be a unique one compared to the other three Nordic countries when it comes to the guidance and the influence that the public administration employees have to take notice of and comply. The results from Iceland indicate that the employees responsible for handling EEA/EU work are acting from a very autonomous base, which partly can be explained by the small number of employees in the public administration in general and in particular the small number of people in each department that are responsible for EEA/EU matters.

When looking at the availability of precise guidelines in handling individual cases in international EEA/EU relations from the department in question, Iceland stands out with only 14 per cent when the next lowest is 43 per cent in Norway. Iceland and Norway are similar when the question is about guidance from a higher-ranking level, but the two countries report considerable lower percentage than Sweden and especially Finland. Precise guidelines from a political level are measured very low in Iceland. Similar pattern is revealed when looking at written guidelines.

Table 12 Which guidance signals are given when employees in the section meet in international fora in connection with EU/EEA work. Percentage

	Norway	Iceland	Sweden	Finland
<i>Precise guidance signals in each individual case</i>				
- From the department	43	14	49	47
- From a higher-ranking level of administration	14	14	23	31
- From a political level (government, minister)	10	4	28	11
Written guidance				
- From the department	21	11	32	24
- From a higher-ranking level of administration	20	18	23	27
- From a political level (government, minister)	17	8	24	15

Previous findings indicate that official instructions to and guidelines for national officials taking part in EU negotiations vary according to the importance of the issue concerned and the size of the state's administration. Officials in the smaller EU states have some room for manoeuvre if the state regards an issue as not being of vital importance. On the other hand, they receive strict instructions in negotiations which concern their state's interests. Instructions to negotiators from the larger states are always fairly strict (Thorhallsson 2000). The smallness of the Icelandic administration probably contributes significantly to the autonomy of officials in dealing with EU/EEA affairs. Furthermore, this limited guidance seems to indicate that in Iceland, and probably in Norway and even Finland, that the assignment to handle EEA/EU relations is mainly in the hands of public servants and not politicians.

Departments in Finland and Sweden experience a sense of gaining greater acceptance for their viewpoints and wishes in the EU institutions than departments in Norway and Iceland, as table 13 indicates. The difference is clearest in the Council where the EEA states' influence is almost non existence because of their absent from Council's meetings. Finland and Sweden also report a greater sense of being heard among the Commissioners in the Commission and the Directorate Generals than the EEA states.

Iceland reports to have more in common with Sweden than Norway concerning the possibility of influencing the upper layers of the Commission. Departments in Iceland also state that they have a considerable chance of getting their views accepted in the preparatory/expert committees in the Commission. Iceland's greater success in having its views and aspirations accepted within the Commission compared to Norway coincides with Iceland's more extended contact and participation in

preparatory, experts and comitology committees in the Commission. These findings contradict previous findings (Thorhallsson 2001a, Thorhallsson and Ellertsdóttir 2001).

Table 13 Whether the section has largely succeeded in having its views and aspirations in EU/EEA related questions accepted in different bodies. Percentage

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Finland</i>
EU commission/Directorate Generals	17	26	31	35
Preparatory/expert committees in the Commission	22	38	34	47
Council/COREPER with working groups/committees	3	6	24	25
Domestic civil service	41	53	45	64
Domestic interest organizations	25	37	29	28
Domestic government/political leadership	38	46	49	42

A considerable number of departments in the four states report that they have largely succeeded in having their views and aspirations concerning EU/EEA affairs accepted in different domestic bodies. Departments in Finland are most successful in having their views accepted in public institutions and co-ordination committees, followed by Iceland. The departments are somewhat less able to get their views accepted by interests groups. Iceland rank highest and this probably has to do with the close consultation process between the administration and interests groups in particular sectors in Iceland, as discussed above.

A distinction cannot be made between the EU members and the EEA member states though departments in Norway seem to be less successful in having their views and aspirations accepted than departments in the other three states

Discussion

In general, there are two different expectations on the impact of Europeanization on domestic change. First, we argue that the form of association for different countries will produce different response patterns. Second, we also argue that the domestic factors like the size of administration, the experience with international cooperation and the anticipation of Europeanization will affect the domestic adaptation behaviour.

The comparison of the four Nordic countries indicates a mixed picture of response patterns. The domestic impact of EU varies not only from country to country but also across different dimensions of change. This review has shown first of all that the Nordic countries' central administrations are not closed to influence from Europe. It is not satisfactory to maintain that everything remains as it was before, and that stability and status quo characterize the development of the administration. The pattern, which has been unveiled, does not display a unique Nordic administrative regime where the administrative bodies appear with great autonomy in relation to the

EU. One interpretation of this is the EU requirements for change have remained within the range of feasible options determined by domestic administrative tradition (Knill 2001). There is an adaptation to EU along all dimensions of change but different in scope and scale. The basic formal forms of administration in the Nordic countries have, however, not been radically altered as a consequence of the EU adjustment, even though the activities and networks developed within the formal structures have changed significantly as a result of increased integration in Europe (Lægreid 2001). EU adjustment in the Nordic countries leads to significant changes in the patterns of contact and behaviour at the same time, as the formal structures of organization are fairly stable and robust. An interpretation of this is that the formal administration structures are relatively broad categories that allow fairly large variations in actual behaviour.

Domestic adaptation to the EU takes place in the context of national reforms run by an active national administrative policy and local agency-specific initiatives, and co-evolves in mutual processes that develop in transnational networks (Jacobsson, Lægreid and Pedersen 2001a, Lægreid 2000). Thus it might be difficult to isolate the effect of the EU on administrative changes. In spite of this, a plausible conclusion from this survey is that membership matters' but does not determine the adaptation pattern. Formal association with the EU turns out to have impact on how the European processes of integration influence the national administrations (Trondal 1999). Even if the EU allows significant leeway for the adjustment of domestic arrangements in the light of existing national structural features and constellations, it is fair to say that the pressure on the national administrative bodies asserted by the EU is along some dimensions stronger for member states than for the EEA countries Norway and (to a lesser degree) Iceland.

The form of association clearly influences the number of contact the states have with EU bodies and their participation within them. Sweden and Finland tend to be more active within EU bodies than Iceland and Norway and membership of the EU requires a greater administrative capacity than membership of the EEA. On the other hand, Iceland and Norway tend not to use their access to the Commission to the same extent as Sweden and Finland. The EEA states have less contact with the Commission and their participation in its committees is more limited. Officials in Iceland seem to overestimate their contact, participation and influence within the Commission. A possible explanation for this might be their greater autonomy in handling of EEA cases compared to their counterparts. This may result in an overestimation of success within the EU. Also, officials in Iceland might simply have a different view concerning what counts as a success compared to officials in Norway. Norwegians civil servants have twice been on the verge of taking a full and active part in the EU decision-making system. This has never been the case of their counterparts in Iceland since Iceland has not applied for EU membership.

The form of association also influences the consultation process at the domestic level. Icelandic and Norwegian officials have less frequent contact with politicians than

their counterparts in Sweden and Finland. Departments' in the EEA states have less contact national departments and local governments than departments in the EU states have with other national agencies. Common national standpoints seem to be more often created in Finland and Sweden and the EU work has increased coordination with other departments within them to a greater extent than in the EEA states. Sweden and Finland feel the burden of membership to a greater extent than Iceland and Norway since tight deadlines makes it more difficult for them to present cases to the government and politicians. The EU/EEA work has influenced the division of labour and coordination practices in Iceland to a similar extent as in the EU member states which can be explained by the late adaptation of the Icelandic administration as discussed above.

In summary it can be argued that there are significant differences along some dimensions between new members and EEA members even if the boundaries of the EU are both internally and externally fragmented (Sverdrup 2000). Becoming a member of the EU in the 1990s leads to a strong pressure for administrative adjustment. Membership leads to a hectic activity in order to catch up with the established member states concerning contact, participation, coordination and competence. There is, however, no automatic element in the adjustment processes and *how* and *how far* membership matters differ from country to country.

Through the EEA agreement, Icelandic and Norwegian administration is greatly affected by the EU, especially concerning the internal market. Nevertheless, EU adjustment in the *Norwegian* central administration is clearly weaker than in the EU countries of Sweden and Finland, and along some dimensions also weaker than Iceland. The Norwegian central administration is by no means excluded from Europe, but is clearly less embedded into European cooperation than the member states. The growing impact of the EU has been less in the Norwegian central administration than in the new member states, and less time is spent on such cases in Norway than in Finland and Sweden (Jacobsson, Læg Reid and Pedersen 2001b). Participatory and contact networks to the Commission system are less developed in Norway. The Norwegian central administration also has weaker signals from the government and the political leadership. In comparison with the other countries, the politicians have become less directly involved in EU/EEA work. The feeling of being heard in EU-institutions is also weaker in Norway than in the member states. All in all it is, however, a more surprising to find that Norwegian central administration, and even more so for the Icelandic case, is as «adjusted» or strongly adapted to the EU as it is without being a member state than that Norway scores lower than Sweden and Finland along most of the indicators of change.

The handling of EEA affairs within the Icelandic administration is slowly changing a particular feature of the administration, which has distinguished it from the other Nordic administrations. That particular feature or characteristic can be illustrated by the observation that the development of the administration has been moulded by the lack of regulation of working procedures. The handling of cases or individual

issues has traditionally been much less cohesive than those in other states in Western Europe. Politicians have had a strong influence on the handling of individual cases and have not hesitated to intervene into the day-to-day work of officials' (Thorhallsson 2002 p. 68). The close working relationship between civil servants and politicians is somewhat indicated in the survey since the civil servants in Iceland contact the government and leading politicians in ministries more often than their counterparts in Norway. On the other hand, the survey indicates that Icelandic politicians interfere to a very limited degree in the work of the administration concerning EEA affairs and that Icelandic civil servants have greater influence in EEA cases than in other cases compared to politicians. Also, Icelandic civil servants tend to report greater influence in EEA cases than their counterparts in Norway. Furthermore, the Icelandic administration has had to increase its number of staff to a greater extent than Norway to be able to handle EEA affairs. The influence of the EEA membership seems to be revealed in somewhat less emphases on political evaluations from the governments and ministers in Iceland than in Norway and the Icelandic administration seems to prioritise to a greater extent views of stakeholders and interest groups, cost and benefits evaluations and transparency than the Norwegian administration. Finally, Icelandic officials are less likely to receive precise guidance signals and written guidance from politicians when working on EEA cases internationally than their counterparts in Norway. Departments are also more likely to have their views accepted in EEA related questions in the government and by the political leadership than departments in Norway. As a result, the EEA Agreement seems to have strengthened the position of officials in Iceland and limited the traditional strong role of ministers in the day-to-day work of the administration. This confirms previous finding that the EEA membership is likely to develop a more autonomous administration in Iceland that serves the citizens rather than politicians (Kristjánsson and Kristjánsson 2000).

Four factors help to explain why on occasions Iceland report to be more affected by EU/EEA integration than Norway and in some cases is as affected by European integration than the EU member states Finland and Sweden.

Firstly, the adaptation of the Icelandic administration to European integration took place at a later stage than in other Nordic states. Thus, the Icelandic administration was not as prepared for EEA membership as the Norwegian administration and had some difficulties in dealing with EEA affairs in the first years of membership. A strategic adaptation within the Icelandic administration before EEA membership did not take place and Icelandic politicians did not initiate any formal mechanism in order to adjust the administration to the new environment. As a result, adaptation to membership has largely occurred by a case-by-case approach in handling of EU matters and it has taken the administration few years to adjust to membership. However, the administration has slowly gone through important changes and seems at present fully capable of dealing with EEA affairs (Thorhallsson 2002).

Secondly, there was a fundamental change in a number of policy areas in Iceland with the EEA membership. These policy-areas had not followed changes in the Nordic

states in the 1980s and the early 1990s and as a consequence the EEA Agreement had a considerable effect on the administration. Its workload increased considerably and ministries and their institutions had to oversee radical changes in policy areas such as competition, finance, telecommunication and consumers affairs.

Thirdly, Norway, Sweden and Finland have been more active internationally than Iceland. Iceland only started to take a more active role in a number of international institutions in the last four to five years. For instance, Iceland has felt the need to take a more active role in the negotiation process in connection to the Kyoto protocol, committees in Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and in negotiations concerning free trade of fish products within WTO in order to protect its interests. Furthermore, Iceland has created a peacekeeping force to take part in operations of the EU, NATO, UN and OSCE and it recently held the Presidency of the Council of Europe for the first time. Also, the administration, particularly the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has emphasised closer contacts with European states and other states of importance for Iceland. This internationalisation of the Icelandic administration has to be seen in the light of an increased awareness in Iceland of limited influence within the EEA. Moreover, experts' knowledge in European affairs was rather limited in Iceland in the early 1990s (Thorhallsson 2002). Icelandic experts in international affairs mainly focused on Nordic and EFTA cooperation, NATO affairs and the bilateral defence agreement between Iceland and US. Thus, the increased participation of Iceland in European affairs in the mid and late 1990s seems to have had a greater consequence for the Icelandic administration than the Norwegian one. This coincides with the findings that the new EU member states Sweden and Finland experience a considerable more effect on their administrative competence than the EEA member states in this period.

Fourthly, there seems to be an effect of size. One indicator of the smallness of the Icelandic public administration is that the number of people working in the Foreign Services in Iceland is 150, compared to 1150 in Norway, 1500 in Sweden and 1642 in Finland (Thorhallsson 2002). The fact that the number of departments in the Icelandic central public administration is one third of the numbers in the Norwegian administration, which is the smallest of the three other countries, affects the response pattern. Fewer departments means wider responsibilities and less specialization and thus tighter contact, higher affectedness and stronger perceived influence in Icelandic departments than reported from the more specialized departments of other Nordic countries. Even if the Icelandic departments that are strongly affected by increased integration in EU are few in absolute numbers, their relative share is large. Due to low capacity the Icelandic departments have to act more as generalist and handle a broader scope of matters than their counterparts in the other Nordic countries. The result is that the Icelandic administration as a whole report relatively more involvement in EU matters than the Norwegian not because there are more Icelandic bureaucrats on the European agenda, but because of their small size.

The smallness of the Icelandic administration made it difficult for it to cope with the EEA burden in the first years of membership. The administration had to increase its

number of staff to a greater extent than the other administrations. The result has been a rapid expansion of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. All ministries have had to specialise officials in handling of EEA cases and the requirement of experts' knowledge in EU affairs has led to hiring of young highly qualified people. As a result, the EEA membership led to a swift internationalization of the small Icelandic administration. The survey clearly indicates these drastic changes of the administration.

Furthermore, the Icelandic small administration has had to prioritize in order to cope with the EEA membership. The administration has also granted its officials autonomy and flexibility in order to deal with EEA matters. EEA cases are dealt with in an informal manner in order to implement EEA law and regulation in time and in an attempt to follow and influence decisions made within the EEA framework (Thorhallsson and Ellertsdóttir 2001). This coincides with previous findings which indicate that the working procedure of small administrations dealing with the decision-making system of the EU is characterized by prioritisation, informality, flexibility and autonomy of officials (Thorhallsson 2000).

Even though the Finnish administration is perhaps a step ahead of Sweden in its EU adjustment, this material does not show that there are dramatic differences in how Swedish and Finnish bureaucrats have mastered the EU adjustment, a finding which goes partly against other descriptions (Raunio and Wiberg 1999; von Sydow 1999).

There are, however, some interesting differences also between Sweden and Finland. A trend can be traced where the Finnish administration's EU work is more loosely coupled to the political level and slightly more characterized by an administrative and bureaucratic dominance. The Finnish EU work takes place more within a pragmatic, closed, technocratic culture in a central administrative apparatus with great autonomy, whereas the Swedish working method is more characterized by greater public accountability and participation by the government and the political leadership. The Finnish administration, appearing as the most EU adjusted over all, can also be seen in relation to the extra pressure for adjustments connected with Finland taking over the EU Chairmanship in the summer of 1999, and that Finland, in contrast to Sweden, has had a more flexible and integrative EU policy. This is expressed, among other things, through Finland being the only Nordic country that is a member of the EMU.

Summing up, these data show varied developmental traits in the Nordic central administrative apparatus' adjustment to the EU. This coincides with a pluralistic approach, which allows for various models in the national administrations' EU adjustment (Spanou 1998). There are changes in domestic structure generated by European policy and institutional changes, but the adaptation pressure varies from state to state depending on form of association to EU, but also on domestic administrative context and structural features. Even if increased integration in the EU has had relatively little impact on the formal national institutional arrangements (Eising and Kohler-Koch 1999), there have, however, been significant changes in

informal structures, rules and regulations, participation networks and contact patterns. This implies that institutional continuity and change go together.

Conclusion

The empirical and analytical discussion in this paper suggests the following conclusions. First, the Europeanization process has significant consequences on the central administrations' modus operandi in the Nordic countries. Adaptation and change are more typical than persistence and stability. Civil servants have become indispensable in European affairs (Bergman and Damgaard 2000). Second, the domestic impact of the EU on national administrations varies across the different dimensions of change. The impacts are greater on the emergence of external networks than on the internal organization structure. Third, the impact of the EU varies from country to country. This is generally greater on member states than on non-member states. This implies that the extent to which EU applies pressure for domestic change varies with the form of affiliation. Fourth, the adaptation is restricted by the institutional context of national administrative traditions.

The typical pattern of change is incremental rather than a fundamental departure from existing arrangements at the domestic level. But the adaptation pattern varies in a complicated way. This implies that we have to take account of the 'living institutions' (Olsen 2000) both within the states and between the states and the EU, and not just the formal legal arrangements when studying the impact of Europeanization on domestic arrangements. One implication of this is that the effect of Europeanization not only occurs via a vertical logic through an adjustment process downwards from the EU, but also via a horizontal logic incorporating learning and model-borrowing across national boundaries (Goetz 2001), and also through mutually dependent processes going not only from EU to the individual country but also the other way around (Jacobsson, Lægreid and Pedersen 2001). EU-related adaptation within the state administration cannot be traced back to a single explanatory factor or one basic perspective. The changes that take place in an administration as a consequence of increased integration in the EU are not purely a result of the form of affiliation. Also different features among national actors have to be taken into account as the size of the administration, the national EU strategy of autonomous adaptation to the EU, the administration's autonomy from political leaders and the experiences with international cooperation within the public administration.

To get a better understanding of the adaptations in the national administrative apparatuses it is necessary to address the complex interplay between form of affiliation, national strategies and particular path dependencies that can be traced through the administrative history of each country (Christensen and Lægreid 2001, Jacobsson 2001a, 2001b, Jacobsson, Lægreid and Pedersen 2001a). EU-integration is significant, but its significance is not as simple as is often claimed in the literature on Europeanization (Goetz 2001). This implies that it is not all formal structures but also

actors that need to be considered when studying the impact of Europeanization on domestic administration. Within the institutional constraints there is room for manoeuvrability and deliberative choices and strategic actions through an active policy-making. To get a more comprehensive understand of the adaptation processes there is a need to specify the agents who behaves and are acted upon and who is responding. But it is also necessary to supplement the outside-in perspective with a more open approach allowing for interplay between domestic and over-national entities and to take into account that the adaptation might go through stable periods and phases with significant adaptations, as revealed in this paper.

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