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Panel: Public Service Reform in the Post-Soviet Countries

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Title **Trajectories of Civil Service Development in the Former Soviet Union Countries**

Abstract This paper provides a critical analysis of civil service reforms in the countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU) (excluding the Baltic states) and of the different paths each country followed in establishing democratic systems of governance and transforming ineffective and inefficient bureaucracies into merit-based and transparent public organisations. The paper focuses on the experience of the region's governments in civil service reform and development from independence to date; while, at the same time, it reflects on whether a "new model" of civil service development in the region has emerged.

These countries share a common past, stemming from their Soviet legacy and its inherent characteristics, i.e. authoritarian regimes, high levels of bureaucracy and very limited participation of citizens in the policy-making process. Overall, the declared objective of civil service reforms in the region was to shift from authoritarian, corrupt and command-and-control modes of government towards merit-based, transparent and customer-oriented civil service systems and participatory governance systems. The country strategies in implementing civil service reforms varied, heavily influenced by the extent of political commitment to conduct such reforms, political ambitions to follow recommendations of international institutions and of the international community, and availability of human capacity as well as of the necessary financial resources. Progress of civil service reforms, in their approaches, timing and results differed to a varying degree from country to country.

The analysis is based on the practical experience that both authors possess having worked in the Civil Service of Kazakhstan, as well as on their experience gained through observing and assessing reforms in other countries of the region, while working for international organisations and academic institutions, respectively. The study is also based on an extensive academic literature review, and an analysis

of legislation, international reports, state programmes, policy documents, media articles, etc.