

Turnover in the Bulgarian Civil Service

Abstract

The paper examines turnover in the Bulgarian civil service, with the goal of understanding to what extent turnover may be linked to politicization. Turnover may be related to a number of factors within the public administration, including low motivation, low pay, flawed reward and incentive structures, as well as a wide variety of factors outside of the public administration, such as competition from the business sector or personal reasons. The paper utilizes data from the annual reports on the status of the public administration, where turnover data is provided and classified in various categories, thus, allowing to differentiate (at least in legal terms) between the various reasons for leaving the civil service. The paper examines variations of overall turnover over the last twenty years, as well as fluctuations of the various turnover categories (mutual agreement, requested by the employee, pension, etc.). In addition, the paper utilizes three large surveys on the motivation of civil servants, conducted between 2019-2021, that provide additional insight on the job satisfaction of civil servants. Beyond the Bulgarian case, the paper adds on to existing research on measuring politicization in the public administration, aiming to examine to what extent turnover may be a valid tool for measuring politicization in addition to other approaches, such as expert surveys, deputy and high-level civil service appointments, restructuring of administrative units or changes in the size of the public administration.