So important a profession would attract into its ranks the ablest and most ambitious..'* Recruitment, selection, appointment and the development of top civil servants from a comparative European perspective

Connaughton Bernadette
University of Limerick, Department of Politics and Public Administration, Limerick, Ireland

Radu Bianca
Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Randma-Liiv Tiina
Tallinn University of Technology, Ragnar Nurkse Department of Innovation and Governance, School of Business and Governance, Tallinn, Estonia

Rybar Marek
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Sarapuu Külli
Tallinn University of Technology, Tallinn, Estonia

Staroňová Katarína
Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia

Abstract: The institutional model and practices used to select and appoint senior officials are key elements in defining the character of a civil service system. They represent an architecture for public service employment traditionally built around the idea of a system distinct from the private sector and justified in terms of good governance values for the wider society. The recruitment architecture is influenced by developments to modernize and reform public administration and by the cultural-political influences of tradition. This is reflected in open or closed merit-based recruitment systems for the most senior officials, and in varying degrees of politicized appointments in distinctive national institutional settings. This paper surveys the legal frameworks and practices used in the recruitment, selection, and appointment of top civil servants in a variety of European settings, including Czechia, Estonia, Ireland, Romania, and Slovakia. We will explore the implications of politicization and public service motivation, and whether the recruitment "approaches" employed are aimed at selecting the best-suited candidates with the appropriate competencies to 'rise to distinction and public eminence'.*

*Northcote-Trevelyan Report 1854.