Public Administration Reform in Context: Comparative Research Pathways in Romania, Belgium and the Netherlands

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Abstract: This paper outlines an ongoing comparative analysis of key strategic and policy documents related to public administration reform in Romania, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Using the structured RADAR document-analysis methodology, the study examines how reform is defined, justified, and framed across different administrative traditions. At this stage, the Romanian case has been analysed in depth, offering insights into a reform narrative centred on professionalisation, depoliticisation, digital transformation, and alignment with EU standards. For Belgium and the Netherlands, the analysis draws on preliminary literature-based expectations, which point to divergent reform rationales rooted in collaborative governance (Belgium) and service-oriented, data-driven innovation (the Netherlands). The paper discusses the methodological approach, early findings from the Romanian dataset, and the comparative framework guiding the forthcoming analysis of the other two countries. In doing so, it highlights both shared European challenges and the value of structured document analysis for understanding how reform agendas are constructed across administrative systems.

(*RADAR - Horizon Europe project: https://theradarproject.eu)