

THE TRANSFER OF EUROPEAN BEST PRACTICES IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Veronica Lebedinschi*

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

Abstract

The paper examines the transfer of European best practices in human resource management within the public sector of the Republic of Moldova, in the context of European integration and the modernization of public administration. The research has a theoretical–analytical character and is based on a comparative analysis of relevant European models, including Romania’s experience in the professionalization and evaluation of civil servants, Poland’s model built on competency frameworks and performance-based promotion, as well as the practices of the Baltic states oriented toward the digitalization of human resource management and the use of data-driven management tools. The findings highlight the interdependence between the professionalization of human resources and job satisfaction, factors that directly influence institutional performance. Based on the analysis, several policy directions are proposed: the institutionalization of a central HR governance structure, the implementation of a unified digital HR management system, the adoption of a national competency framework for the civil service, the integration of job satisfaction indicators into institutional evaluation, and the development of continuous training programs focused on digital competencies. The contribution of the study lies in the operationalization of an adaptive transfer framework that connects European HR standards with operational instruments applicable to public administration in the Republic of Moldova.

Keywords

human resources, European best practices, professionalization, job satisfaction, public administration, HR digitization.

JEL Classification

H83, J24, M12, O15

* Corresponding author, **Veronica Lebedinschi** –lebedinskii.v.v@gmail.com

Introduction

Reforming public administration in the Republic of Moldova is one of the major strategic directions of the European integration process. At the heart of this transformation is the human component – the civil servant, the professional who translates policies into administrative reality. Over the past two decades, European countries have demonstrated that investment in human capital in the public sector is the foundation of institutional efficiency, transparency, and citizens' trust in government. The Republic of Moldova, through its path towards closer ties with the European Union, faces the challenge of adapting its own human resource management model to European principles and standards, while ensuring an organizational climate that promotes job satisfaction and employee retention.

A recent framework in the non-profit sector shows that retention and satisfaction can be strengthened without financial incentives, through person-organisation fit, communication and psychological empowerment, structured motivation (ADPCV) and individual performance appraisal, lessons that are transferable to the public service [22].

The concept of "transfer of good practices" involves not only adopting models that have been tested in other contexts, but also the ability to adapt them to specific national administrative, cultural, and economic conditions. From this perspective, the process of Europeanization of Moldovan public administration is not limited to harmonizing the regulatory framework, but also involves internalizing the values of a modern administration: professionalism, ethics, competence, responsibility, and performance orientation [21].

As a regional benchmark, Latvia's administrative-territorial reform—the transition from 548 to 119 units through voluntary mergers followed by mandatory mergers—shows that a "single-level" model can increase the efficiency of public services and fiscal autonomy. For the Republic of Moldova, the Latvian experience is often proposed as a transferable model to accelerate decentralization and reduce administrative costs without degrading service quality [4].

The literature emphasizes that the mechanical adoption of certain procedures "will not lead to the expected results," as it is necessary to identify and benchmark practices, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators to establish performance benchmarks [16].

At the same time, the quality of human resource management in the public sector cannot be assessed solely by formal indicators (number of employees, personnel costs, salary levels), but by qualitative dimensions such as job satisfaction, motivation, degree of autonomy, and level of involvement in decision-making processes. Thus, the interdependence between European integration and job satisfaction becomes an essential benchmark for an efficient and sustainable public administration. The key question is not whether we import practices, but how we articulate them with the "specificities of the administrative context" and the local organizational culture in order to ensure sustainable effects.

The main objective of this article is to outline the theoretical and conceptual framework for the transfer of European good practices in the field of human resource management, with an emphasis on the adaptability of these practices to the institutional realities in

the Republic of Moldova. The research aims to argue the role of human capital in ensuring institutional performance, but also to highlight the conditions necessary for the development of a human resources system compatible with the principles of European public administration.

The paper is structured as follows: (1) theoretical framework, (2) European principles and their relevance, (3) European best practices, (4) transfer possibilities, and (5) conclusions.

1. Review of the scientific literature

Human resource management in public administration is a distinct field of management science, located at the intersection of organizational theory, public governance, and personnel policies. Unlike the private sector, where HRM has a predominantly economic purpose, in the public sector, the purpose is social and institutional: to ensure a competent, stable, and motivated civil service capable of providing quality public services and supporting the implementation of government policies efficiently and equitably.

In the literature, the evolution of human resource management in the European public sector can be grouped into three distinct conceptual stages.

The administrative-bureaucratic model (19th century – late 1980s), based on Max Weber's principles, where the emphasis was on legality, stability, hierarchy, and political neutrality. In this model, civil servants were perceived as enforcers of rules, and motivation was extrinsic, based on job security and compliance with rules [23].

The managerial model (1990s–2000s), developed under the influence of the New Public Management (NPM) movement, introduced the idea of performance, results assessment, and citizen orientation. HRM became a strategic function, and recruitment, evaluation, and training were seen as investments in institutional efficiency [1], [23]. Therefore, NPM shifted public HRM from bureaucratic compliance to performance, results, and professionalization [1].

The modern governance model (after 2010), which emphasizes transparency, collaboration, organizational learning, and the use of digital technologies in human resource management [18], [23]. At the same time, there is growing interest in the qualitative dimension of public work: job satisfaction, work-life balance, ethical leadership, and organizational inclusion.

In Europe, the literature identifies three major models of human resource organization and governance in public administration:

Career model (continental) – specific to countries such as France, Germany, Spain, and Romania. This model is based on the idea of a stable professional body, recruited through competition, promoted based on seniority and competence, and benefiting from statutory protection. The strength of this model is the professionalization of the civil service, but the rigidity of the system can limit flexibility and innovation. The OECD typology places France, Germany, Spain, and Romania in the career-based zone, defined by a stable professional body, entry through competition, and internal progression, with advantages of professionalization and limits of flexibility [20].

The positional model (Anglo-Saxon) - applied in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the Netherlands, where recruitment is for specific positions, with an emphasis on

individual skills and performance evaluation. Mobility and flexibility are higher, and the system is results-oriented and managerially accountable. In position-based systems (United Kingdom, Ireland, Netherlands), positions are competitively open on the labour market, with an emphasis on skills, mobility, and performance evaluation, with more pronounced managerial responsibility [20].

The hybrid or transitional model – characteristic of Central and Eastern European countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Republic of Moldova), which combines elements of the two models, progressively adapting to European Union requirements regarding the professionalization and depoliticization of public service. The literature shows a progressive hybridization in Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Republic of Moldova), which combines elements of career and position, against the backdrop of EU requirements for the professionalization and depoliticization of the civil service [20].

The transfer of good practices is not limited to procedures and tools, but also involves the migration of the "baggage of values, culture, and aspirations" of the source organizations, which considerably complicates the adaptation process [16]. Literature applied to the case of the Republic of Moldova consistently highlights excessive politicisation, imperfections in the legal framework, limited administrative capacity and insufficient budgetary resources as key barriers hindering the performance of the MRU and the transfer of European practices [15].

In the logic of European governance, "smart" administrations go beyond simple digitization: the success of the transformation depends on digital talent in the public sector and the digital literacy of citizens, which shifts the focus to the professionalization of MRU (skills, roles, evaluation) [17].

Human capital is considered the main strategic asset of a public organization. According to Gary Becker's theory (1964) and contemporary interpretations by the OECD, investment in education, training, and professional development generates not only technical skills but also a culture of performance and responsibility. In the public sector, human capital determines the quality of governance, the level of public trust, and the efficient use of financial resources.

Reform experiences have both positive and negative aspects, which can only be understood if they are analyzed in the context of their application and with a sufficient degree of conceptualization to allow for corrective measures in subsequent iterations. In this context, job satisfaction becomes sensitive to how well the adaptation respects the context and values of the host institution [16].

OECD 2024 data show that engagement in central administrations varies between 63.5 and 74.9 on a scale of 0 to 100, with managers consistently reporting higher levels than non-managerial staff (minimum gap of 3.4 p.p. in Latvia) [11]. In local administrations in Moldova, the satisfaction perceptions of elected officials and civil servants are directly affected by the lack of continuous training, formal evaluations that are poorly correlated with performance, and role ambiguity; these elements undermine motivation and service quality [15].

Job satisfaction, in turn, is a complex dimension, influenced by individual factors (motivation, recognition, personal values) and organizational factors (institutional climate, leadership, transparency in decision-making). Recent studies highlight that the

level of employee satisfaction in public administration has a direct effect on the performance of services provided to citizens and on institutional stability [15]. Analyses of data from the 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (US federal administration) show that engagement increases with positively perceived top leadership, professional development, work-life programs, and both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, confirming the role of Employee Engagement as a lever for performance [5]. Recent research in the EaP (the case of Ukraine) shows that, in public administration, development and retention are constrained by budgetary dependence and system rigidities, which calls for modern HR tools to maintain motivation and job attractiveness [9].

The use of artificial intelligence and new technologies directly influences job satisfaction: where employees receive training in digital skills and autonomy in the use of tools, motivation and retention increase, and the perception of social utility is strengthened [17]. Some research summarizes the impact of digital transformation in public administration, showing that digitization increases operational efficiency, service quality and e-government functionality. Based on a systematic review (Scopus/Web of Science; PRISMA methodology, 44 articles), the key technologies identified are artificial intelligence, blockchain, chatbots, and cloud/IoT solutions, with positive effects on transparency, accountability, and sustainability [10].

In the context of the Republic of Moldova, research conducted by the Regional Public Administration Network (ReSPA) shows that deficiencies in human resource management—the lack of a coherent performance evaluation system, promotion based on non-meritocratic criteria, and the lack of continuous training—affect staff satisfaction and motivation. Thus, the transfer of European best practices to the MRU becomes imperative for strengthening institutional capacity. The process of Europeanization involves aligning not only legislation, but also organizational values and behaviors. In this sense, the principles promoted by the OECD/SIGMA – legality, transparency, accountability, efficiency, and citizen orientation – become normative benchmarks for candidate and partner countries [19-20], [24], [26]. The transfer of these principles to the MRU involves the creation of a system based on merit, competence, and professional ethics, in which employee satisfaction is not an end in itself, but a consequence of a quality-oriented administration.

For the Republic of Moldova, the modernisation of human resource management is at the heart of the 2023-2030 Public Administration Reform Strategy, a strategic document that provides for the professionalisation of the civil service, the strengthening of managerial leadership and the implementation of a performance-based evaluation system [12], [13].

2. Research methodology

The research is theoretical and analytical in nature and takes a comparative approach to European best practices in human resource management in the public sector, focusing on the possibilities for transfer and adaptation in the Republic of Moldova. The methodological design combines a scoping review of literature and policy documents with a comparative analysis structured on transferability criteria.

The methodological objective is to identify, organize, and compare European models and principles relevant to the professionalization of human resources and job satisfaction in the public sector, followed by the formulation of an adaptive transfer conceptual framework for the Republic of Moldova.

The first category includes policy documents and standards such as European and international frameworks (SIGMA/OECD, European Commission, ReSPA), strategies and relevant national legislation. The second category consists of scientific literature published between 2020 and 2025. The third category comprises applied studies and comparative reports related to Romania, Poland and the Baltic states.

The searches used combinations of terms in Romanian and English (public administration human resources, civil service professionalization, HRM digitalization, EU best practices transfer, employee satisfaction public sector). The selection was carried out in two stages (screening of titles/abstracts for thematic relevance; content evaluation for conceptual adequacy, topicality, and rigour), excluding sources that were strictly descriptive, without generalizability, or without verifiable references.

The comparative analysis was guided by two complementary aspects. The first refers to the context–mechanism–result (CMR) model, used to understand how European practices generate different effects depending on the institutional context. The second aspect concerns transferability criteria, including regulatory compatibility, institutional capacity, organizational culture and ethics, resource availability and budgetary sustainability, digital infrastructure, and the potential impact on job satisfaction.

The results were integrated through narrative synthesis and comparative matrices that map European practice on transferability criteria. Based on the identified convergences, an adaptive transfer conceptual framework was derived, with operational recommendations for the Republic of Moldova. As this is theoretical research, without experimentation or primary statistical sampling, the results depend on the quality and availability of sources, and transferability is conditional.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. European principles of public administration and their relevance for the Republic of Moldova

The reform of European public administration has been built around a set of fundamental principles (SIGMA – joint OECD/EU program): legality/rule of law, transparency and accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, professionalism and merit, citizen orientation [19-20], [24], [26]. These provide a common conceptual basis for assessing and modernizing the MRU field and balance the ethical, technical, and motivational dimensions of public service. In their absence, administrations face demotivation, high turnover, and declining public trust.

The professionalization of public service is central: a high-performing system is characterized by merit-based careers, transparent recruitment, performance-related evaluation and promotion, and an institutionalized ethical culture [26]. In Western practice, transparency in recruitment processes and the existence of codes of conduct increase motivation and reduce conflicts.

In modern administration, job satisfaction is treated as an indicator of institutional performance: ReSPA and the OECD show positive correlations between satisfaction,

engagement, initiative, and loyalty, and investments in training, recognition, and organizational balance are associated with higher efficiency and stability [19–20], [24]. The Netherlands has the highest reported satisfaction (85.5%), and Norway has the highest sense of fulfilment (82.4%), confirming the link between people management and positive perceptions of work [11]. Implementing similar tools in Moldova would provide data to inform personnel policies. The 2018–2024 analysis indicates variable investments in civil servant training and the prevalence of traditional solutions (qualifications/courses), with limited impact on retention [9]. Therefore, developed European countries periodically assess the satisfaction of public employees through standardized institutional surveys, the results of which are used to adjust human resource policies and motivational strategies [2].

For the Republic of Moldova, European principles of public administration are benchmarks for reforming the human resources management system. According to the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2023–2030, the main objectives are to professionalize the civil service, depoliticize decision-making processes, and digitize administrative services [12]. In this regard, the adoption and adaptation of European best practices can support:

- restructuring recruitment processes based on skills and merit;
- developing a transparent performance appraisal system;
- creating mechanisms for continuous training for administrative staff;
- introducing job satisfaction indicators into institutional evaluation.

European reforms demonstrate that professionalizing human resources and increasing job satisfaction cannot be treated separately: they are interdependent components of institutional performance. An effective HRM system:

- attracts new talent through open and fair processes;
- retains staff through a fair organizational climate;
- motivates through participatory leadership;
- develops human capital through continuous training.

Therefore, integrating these good practices into the Moldovan context not only aligns the administration with European standards but also creates the conditions for an administrative culture oriented towards quality, innovation, and public accountability.

3.2. European best practice models in human resource management

A comparative analysis of European public administrations highlights that institutional efficiency and professional satisfaction are directly determined by the quality of human resource management. Over the past 20 years, reforms in the EU have promoted a transition from bureaucratic models to systems based on performance, competence, and motivation. The experiences of Romania, Poland, and the Baltic countries offer useful benchmarks for the Republic of Moldova, as these states have undergone similar processes of administrative Europeanization.

Romania is a relevant example of a transition from a rigid career system to a performance-oriented one. The process was initiated by Law No. 188/1999 on the Status of Civil Servants, subsequently consolidated by the Administrative Code (2019), which introduced modern recruitment and evaluation mechanisms based on

professional competencies and performance indicators. Furthermore, the implementation of the Strategy for Strengthening Public Administration 2022–2026 emphasizes continuous training, professional ethics, and the digitization of human resources processes [12]. A key element of the Romanian model is the creation of the National Agency for Civil Servants (ANFP) – an autonomous institution that ensures the unified coordination of personnel policies. Through this structure, Romania has developed a centralized database of civil servants, an electronic recruitment system, and a standardized evaluation framework. These tools have contributed to reducing arbitrary decision-making and increasing transparency, which are fundamental elements for the professional satisfaction of administrative staff [27].

Poland has implemented extensive reforms in the field of HRM since 1998, with the aim of depoliticizing and modernizing the civil service. The Polish system is characterized by a competency-based approach, which includes clearly defined job profiles, regular competency assessments, and performance-based promotion [19-20]. Polish public institutions enjoy a high degree of autonomy in human resource management, but are required to comply with unified recruitment and evaluation standards set at the central level. Another good practice is the National Public Leadership Training Program (PNFLP), which offers civil servants the opportunity to participate in internships in partner administrations in other EU countries [24]. The program has a dual impact: professionalizing human resources and creating a culture of institutional learning, which is essential for increasing job satisfaction and staff retention.

The Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) are recognized as European administrative laboratories due to the way they have integrated digital technology into governance processes. In these countries, digitization is not just a technical dimension, but a managerial philosophy that emphasizes efficiency, transparency, and collaboration [8].

In addition to digitization, local literature shows that the Baltic states have opted for single-level administrative-territorial systems, with Latvia being a frequently cited benchmark for states similar in size to the Republic of Moldova [3].

In *Estonia*, the public human resources system is managed through the HRMIS digital platform, which allows for the monitoring of performance indicators, the management of professional training, and the assessment of employee satisfaction through anonymous surveys. This practice, implemented since 2017, has become a European benchmark for the modernization of public administration [7]. Latvia and Lithuania have followed a similar model, introducing integrated personnel management platforms and mechanisms for continuous feedback between employees and institutions.

The result of these initiatives is a visible increase in job satisfaction among civil servants, coupled with a decrease in staff turnover and an increase in institutional efficiency. These countries have also succeeded in cultivating a culture of merit and responsibility, which are essential for strengthening citizens' trust in public administration.

Local data also confirm the lack of regular training and reluctance to change, suggesting that the transfer of EU practices must be accompanied by structured training programs and institutional feedback tools [15].

A comparative analysis of these models allows us to identify a set of common operational principles that are also applicable to the context of the Republic of Moldova (Table 1).

Table 1. European human resource management practices and observed effects in the public sector

Scope of intervention	Recommended European practice	Observed effects on performance
Recruitment and selection	Transparent procedures based on competencies and standardized assessment	Increasing public trust and reducing favoritism
Performance evaluation	Performance indicators and individual feedback mechanisms	Linking rewards to professional contribution
Training and professional development	Continuing education programs and international partnerships	Improving skills and satisfaction
Ethics and integrity	Codes of conduct and ethical compliance mechanisms	Strengthening organizational culture
HR digitization	Integrated personnel management and electronic evaluation platforms	Administrative efficiency and increased transparency

Source: own projection

For Moldova, the usefulness of the Latvian model lies not only in its territorial architecture, but also in the lessons learned from its gradual implementation: a clear legislative path (Reform Law, Saeima, 1998) and packages of consolidation measures (mandatory mergers where necessary) [3]. European experience shows that digital platforms are only effective if they are accompanied by occupational profiles with clear digital requirements, upskilling/reskilling programs, and feedback mechanisms with public service beneficiaries [17]. Therefore, these good practices are not just technical models, but tools for cultural and institutional transformation. They demonstrate that the efficiency of public administration cannot be separated from the professional well-being of those who comprise it.

Thus, digital transformation shifts the focus of administration from unilateral delivery to co-creation and data/AI-based decisions, redefining the skills required of civil servants. The Poland–Ukraine comparison indicates different orientations (participation vs. digital/AI), but also cross-cutting gaps that call for systemic investments in training and interdisciplinary education [25].

A summary of EC 2024 reports places the Republic of Moldova below average in terms of PAR progress, with an emphasis on the need for meritocracy and the elimination of nepotism in recruitment and promotion. The persistence of non-merit practices (nepotism in recruitment/promotion) is reported as a common barrier in candidate/potential candidate countries [14].

For the Republic of Moldova, these European experiences provide a pragmatic framework for modernizing personnel policies. The current context, characterized by the pressure of reform, the need to retain qualified personnel, and alignment with the EU acquis, makes the implementation of solutions inspired by the above-mentioned models a strategic priority.

In particular, the following directions can be exploited:

- creating an autonomous national human resources agency, similar to the ANFP in Romania;
- developing a national competency framework, inspired by the experience of Poland;
- implementing a unified digital personnel management system, based on the Estonian model;
- institutionalizing continuous training and ethical leadership in public administration.

The introduction of an annual internal satisfaction/engagement survey, aligned with the EU/OECD 2024 framework, would allow for comparability with European countries and progress tracking (Latvia recorded +28.9 p.p. in satisfaction between 2022 and 2024). We recommend adopting the set of nine items from the OECD Employee Engagement Index (2024) and reporting by segment (managers/non-managers) to capture differences in perception [11].

These measures would enable the transition from a rigid, reactive, and politically dependent administrative system to a professional, motivational, and results-oriented one, in which job satisfaction becomes a real indicator of the quality of public governance.

3.3. Analysis of institutional transfer possibilities in the Republic of Moldova

The transfer of European best practices in human resource management (HRM) cannot be conceived as a simple formal adoption of foreign models, but rather as a process of contextual adaptation, which involves adjusting European instruments and principles to the institutional, cultural, and economic realities of the Republic of Moldova. This process is complex because it involves both harmonizing the regulatory framework, strengthening organizational culture and changing administrative mindsets.

The Republic of Moldova already has a set of regulations that provide the basis for modernizing human resource management. Law No. 158/2008 on public service and the status of civil servants, supplemented by the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2023–2030, promotes principles such as meritocracy, professionalization, and transparency in decision-making [12-13]. However, the application of these principles faces difficulties related to institutional fragmentation, the lack of a unified coordination framework, and insufficient performance monitoring mechanisms.

Local studies show that, in the absence of a clear mechanism for monitoring and evaluating reforms, the effects of the Strategies remain diffuse, and their "uncertain role in the policy architecture" reduces their impact on MRU. This reinforces the need for a central entity to standardize monitoring and reporting [15].

Currently, human resources policy is managed in a decentralized manner, and responsibilities for recruitment, evaluation, and professional development vary between authorities. In the absence of a national coordinating structure, similar to Romania's National Agency for Civil Servants, the process becomes uneven and vulnerable to political influence. Therefore, one of the essential steps in the institutional transfer process is the creation of a central human resources governance entity responsible for policy development, oversight of standards implementation, and management of the single database of public personnel [27].

The practice of Member States shows that the action plans for adoption and post-implementation are explicitly based on the recommendations of the European Commission and on monitoring mechanisms associated with the stages of accession/integration [16].

The European integration process creates a favorable context for the adoption and adaptation of good practices in the MRU. Firstly, the commitments made by the Republic of Moldova under the Association Agreement with the European Union (2014) impose clear standards for the professionalization of public administration. Secondly, technical cooperation through programs such as Twinning, TAIEX, and SIGMA provides concrete support in the design and implementation of reforms [8].

In 2025, EIPA, in partnership with GIZ, launches regional support for Eastern Partnership countries (including the Republic of Moldova) by expanding CAF - Common Assessment Framework (training, CAF e-tool, learning networks between administrations) as a practical mechanism for professionalization and quality management in the public sector [6].

In Moldova, procedural digitization (online data collection and consultation tools) has supported research and perception surveys in local public administration; extending these tools to internal satisfaction surveys would strengthen the basis for MRU decisions [15].

Empirically, the Latvian reform indicates that simplifying the administrative structure (transition to a single-level LPA) creates the conditions for institutional efficiency and clarity, an option also mentioned as a reference scenario in the debates in Moldova [3]. For Moldova, convergence with EU values means not only technologies, but also standardization of digital skills in MRU, a continuing education curriculum on AI/data analytics, and periodic measurement of the digital literacy of staff and users [17].

Another contributing factor is the digitization of public administration, which has progressed significantly in recent years. Electronic governance platforms (MConnect, MPay, the Civil Servants Register) can serve as the technological infrastructure for the development of an integrated digital human resources management system.

Last but not least, academic and professional partnerships, such as Erasmus+ programs in the field of public administration, contribute to the training of a new generation of civil servants with a performance-oriented, ethical, and innovative mindset.

The literature indicates that simply copying procedures does not produce the expected results if it is not accompanied by contextual adaptation and an evaluation framework. Therefore, benchmarking and the establishment of measurable benchmarks are recommended to validate the effects of the transfer [16].

The Latvian case suggests that the reconfiguration of competencies and services becomes critical after reorganization: accessibility, service quality, and management capacity must be explicitly calibrated; structural gains do not translate into results for citizens [3].

Despite the favorable framework, the transfer of European good practices to the MRU is hampered by several systemic obstacles:

- Institutional fragmentation and overlapping responsibilities – the lack of a clear governance architecture in the area of human resources leads to inefficiency and administrative confusion;
- Excessive politicization of personnel decisions – recruitment and promotion are not always based on merit, which reduces the motivation and confidence of civil servants;
- Limited budgetary resources – insufficient funding for training and development programs reduces the impact of reforms;
- Cultural resistance to change – traditional perceptions of authority and hierarchy limit the application of modern models based on competence and collaboration;
- Lack of tools to assess job satisfaction – public institutions rarely use internal feedback mechanisms, which makes it difficult to adapt personnel policies to the real needs of employees [19-20].

Overcoming these obstacles requires a gradual approach, in which legislative reforms are linked to the development of managerial skills and the promotion of a participatory organizational culture.

Based on the comparative analysis and the existing strategic framework, the following courses of action can be proposed for the sustainable adaptation of European best practices in the Republic of Moldova:

- Institutionalization of a central MRU governance structure—subordinate to the State Chancellery, with a role in coordinating, monitoring, and developing personnel policies;
- Creating a unified digital human resources management system, inspired by the Estonian and Lithuanian models, to enable staff records, performance evaluation, and measurement of job satisfaction;
- Developing a national competency framework for civil servants, similar to the Polish one, which sets clear standards for recruitment, training, and promotion;
- Introducing job satisfaction indicators into the institutional reporting system, so that employee motivation becomes an indicator of organizational performance;

- Strengthening continuous training and ethical leadership through international partnerships and professional development programs in the field of public governance;
- Creating a permanent consultation mechanism between the administration and academia for the constant updating of human resources policies and the use of scientific research in the decision-making process.

These directions would contribute to the creation of a Moldovan model of human resource management, compatible with European standards but anchored in local realities.

A sustainable transfer of good practices requires an adaptive governance framework capable of balancing European requirements with internal needs. In this context, the role of administrative leadership becomes decisive: institutional leaders must act not only as resource managers, but also as promoters of change, organizational learning, and professional ethics [24].

Furthermore, successful implementation depends on regular progress measurement, using clear performance indicators and independent evaluations. Transfer is not a finite process, but a mechanism for continuous learning that strengthens institutional capacity and contributes to increased professional satisfaction in the public sector.

Conclusions

The modernization of HRM in the Republic of Moldova requires a profound rethinking of how human resource management is designed and implemented. The analysis shows that the transfer of European best practices represents a strategic opportunity to strengthen institutional capacity and increase the efficiency of public services. At the same time, the article highlighted that institutional performance and sustainability cannot be separated from the human dimension of administration, expressed through the professional satisfaction, motivation, and commitment of civil servants.

European reforms in the field of human resource management have shown that investment in human capital has a multiplier effect on institutional efficiency. The models analyzed—Romanian, Polish, and Baltic—confirm the interdependence between professionalization, transparency, and job satisfaction.

These administrations have succeeded in developing coherent mechanisms for meritocratic recruitment, performance evaluation, continuous training, and digitization, thus contributing to the creation of an administrative culture based on competence, responsibility, and public ethics.

For the Republic of Moldova, the integration of these practices should not be understood as an imitative process, but rather as an adaptive adoption, in which European principles are adjusted to local specificities. By combining the normative approach (alignment with EU standards) with the cultural approach (changing institutional behaviors), sustainable and measurable results can be generated.

From a theoretical perspective, research supports the idea that job satisfaction is an indirect indicator of institutional performance. In a modern public administration, personnel policies must go beyond the strictly normative paradigm and integrate the psychological dimension of motivation and professional recognition. Thus, the transfer

of European best practices involves not only the modernization of procedures, but also the construction of an organizational identity based on values: transparency, cooperation, and continuous learning.

The results of the reforms are documented as being correlated with the exchange of good practices and their use under the law, which explains the success of the implementations during the periods analyzed in the countries of the region [16].

The Republic of Moldova can transform these principles into functional tools by creating a unified institutional infrastructure for human resource management through a central coordination agency, implementing an integrated digital system for recruitment, evaluation and professional training, introducing professional satisfaction indicators in institutional evaluations and annual reports, and strengthening international partnerships for training and administrative mobility.

To avoid "reform on paper", the success of the transfer must be monitored through clear indicators (participation, transparency, skills, job satisfaction) and monitoring mechanisms linked to the needs of local public authorities. Evidence from Moldova shows that the absence of these tools reduces the visibility of progress.

These measures would enable the transition from a reactive administrative model to a proactive one, based on knowledge, motivation, and performance.

Future research directions

The research opens up several further directions, relevant to both the academic and administrative environments:

- Empirical analysis of job satisfaction in Moldovan public institutions, through surveys based on the European Civil Service People Survey methodology;
- Development of an econometric model on the relationship between investment in professional training and institutional efficiency;
- Comparative assessment of recruitment and promotion processes in central and local government;
- Study of the impact of HR digitization on the motivation and retention of public sector staff.

Such research would contribute to strengthening the scientific basis for public administration reform and to grounding personnel policies in objective data and measurable indicators.

The transfer of European best practices in human resource management is a process of institutional learning and cultural transformation, not just a technical requirement of European integration.

The success of this process depends on:

- the political will to support meritocracy and depoliticize the civil service;
- institutional coherence in implementing reforms;
- managerial capacity to inspire and motivate;
- the use of digital technology for efficiency and transparency.

Essentially, the modernization of public administration cannot be separated from investment in people—they are the bearers of European values and the guarantors of

institutional sustainability. By strengthening human capital and adapting European best practices to national specificities, the Republic of Moldova can build a modern, competitive public administration focused on professional satisfaction and the public good.

References

- [1] Bach, S., & Kessler, I. (2007). HRM and the new public management. *The Oxford handbook of human resource management*, 469-488.
- [2] Bekke, H. A., Toonen, T. A. (1996). *Civil Service Systems in Comparative Perspective (Public Affairs)*. Indiana University Press. 360 p. ISBN: 978-0253210326
- [3] Ciobanu, I., & Grumeza, S. (2019). Good practices in public administration: the Latvian administrative model. In *Perspectives and Problems of Integration into the European Research and Education Area* (Vol. 6, pp. 74-80).
- [4] Ciobanu, I., Gurițanu, M. (2022). Good practices in public administration in the post-pandemic period: the Latvian administrative model. In: *Adaptability – SOFT skills in achieving sustainability in the (post) pandemic context. Interdisciplinary approaches*, Iași, Romania, pp. 178-186.
- [5] Dent, R. I. (2024). *Employee Engagement in Public Sector Organizations*. Doctoral Dissertations and Projects. 5299. Liberty University (13). [online]. Available: <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/5299>. (Accessed on 30.09.2025)
- [6] EIPA 2025. *Promoting Public Administration Reform in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Countries*. [online]. Available: <https://www.eipa.eu/news/promoting-public-administration-reform-in-the-eastern-partnership-eap-countries/>. (Accessed on 30.09.2025)
- [7] European Commission (2023). *Digital Public Administration Factsheets 2023*. Publications Office of the European Union. [online]. Available: <https://interoperable-europe.ec.europa.eu/collection/iopeu-monitoring/digital-public-administration-factsheets-2023>. (Accessed on 30.09.2025)
- [8] European Commission (2024). *Public Administration and Local Governments Reforms in Eastern Partnership Countries*. [online]. Available: <https://www.ald-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/163-policy-paper-par.pdf>. (Accessed on 30.09.2025)
- [9] Fedotova, T., Shevchenko, Y., Romanenko, K., Nunyuk, I., & Khairulin, O. (2025). Enhancing Human Capital and Leadership in Public Administration: Training, Growth, and Retention Strategies. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, (14 (First Special Issue)).
- [10] Ferreira, A., & Santos, C. (2025). Digital Transformation in Public Sector: Systematic Literature Review. *Enhancing Public Sector Accountability and Services Through Digital Innovation*, 265-28
- [11] Government at a Glance 2025. [online]. Available: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/government-at-a-glance-2025_0efdb0cd-en/full-report/employee-engagement-in-central-administrations_591fdc1c.html. (Accessed on 30.09.2025)
- [12] Decision No. 126 of March 15, 2023, on the approval of the Public Administration Reform Strategy of the Republic of Moldova for 2023-2030.

- [13] Decision No. 352 of 07.06.2023 on the approval of the Implementation Program for 2023-2026 of the Public Administration Reform Strategy of the Republic of Moldova for 2023-2030.
- [14] Kazancı, A. (2025). Analysis of public administration reforms in candidate and potential candidate countries in the 2024 European. *Journal of West European Social Sciences* 2(2). 348-357. DOI: 10.63632/jowess.v2i2.72.
- [15] Litvin, A., Fetescu, C., & Litvin, E. (2022). Identification of intermediate barriers that hinder the transfer of management performance in the direction of rural development.
- [16] Melinte, I. L. (2022). Implementation of good development practices in Botoșani County. In *The contribution of young researchers to the development of public administration* (pp. 186-191).
- [17] Mihăilă, M. G. (2022). The transformation of Romanian society in the era of digital talent. The role of human resources. In *Smart Cities International Conference (SCIC) Proceedings* (Vol. 10, pp. 227-236).
- [18] Millard, J. (2023). Impact of digital transformation on public governance. European Union 2023. 123 p.
- [19] OECD (2022). *Digital Transformation in Public Sector Human Resource Management*. Paris. [online]. Available: <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/digital-transformation.html>. (Accessed on 30.09.2025)
- [20] OECD (2023). Public Employment and Management 2023 Towards A More Flexible Public Service. [online]. Available: https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/05/public-employment-and-management-2023_a8f17605/5b378e11-en.pdf. (Accessed on 30.09.2025)
- [21] O'Toole, L. J., Brudney, J. L., & Rainey, H. G. (2000). *Advancing public management: new developments in theory, methods and practice*. Georgetown University Press.
- [22] Pădurariu, P. S. Doctoral thesis. (2024). The implications of volunteering on human resource management. Iași, Romania
- [23] Pollitt, C., Bouckaert, G. (2017). *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- [24] ReSPA, Staff Satisfaction Survey in the Western Balkans – Comparative report 2024/2025. [online]. Available: <https://www.respaweb.eu/download/doc/Staff+Satisfaction+Survey+in+the+Western+Balkans++Comparative+report.pdf/f445b50beb9610e389925dbdd8275c4a.pdf>. (Accessed on 30.09.2025).
- [25] Rizun, N., Bartashevskaya, Y., Ciesielska, M., & Bondarovich, H. (2025, August). Interdisciplinary Competencies for AI-Enabled Co-creation: Mapping Public Sector Skills in Poland and Ukraine. In *International Conference on Electronic Participation* (pp. 137-155). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland
- [26] SIGMA/OECD (2023). *Principles of Public Administration. Revised Framework for the European Neighbourhood Policy*. [online]. Available: https://www.sigmaweb.org/en/publications/the-principles-of-public-administration_7f5ec453-en.html. (Accessed on 30.09.2025)

[27] Strategy in the field of public service for the period 2022-2027. Government of Romania.

[28] Zolak Poljašević, B., Gričnik, A. M., & Šarotar Žižek, S. (2025). Human resource management in public administration: The ongoing tension between reform requirements and resistance to change. *Administrative Sciences*, 15(3), 94.