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Towards Inclusiveness in the Civil Service?

European Perspectives on Representative Bureaucracy

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European societies have grown increasingly multi-cultural and ethnically diverse. And yet, most civil service systems on the European continent have tended to be rather mono-cultural ‘closed shops’ against representation of minority groups in society. It flows from this that the theory and practice of representative bureaucracy has become more significant as issues of ethnicity, gender and social equity have moved center stage in current political debates. This challenge gives rise to a number of questions central to a relationship between societal trends, political authority and civil service reform: How does the composition of the public sector workforce impact on administrative performance? What contextual factors shape trajectories of national civil service systems to become more representative of the societies they are supposed to serve? Drawing from empirical evidence from European countries, this presentation will eventually refer to the German experience to illustrate how issues of diversity and inclusion in the public sector play out when concerns with representativeness meet with traditions of a deeply-entrenched Weberian meritocratic bureaucracy.

Wednesday, October 19th, 2016

4217 Posvar

12—1:30 p.m.

Made possible through generous support from the European Commission

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