



LAUDATIO

Emeritus Professor Christopher Pollitt

Esteem Rector and President of the Senate,
Dear Professor Christopher Pollitt, Distinguished Guests,
Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to address you today on behalf of the Faculty of Public Administration with the proposal of awarding the title of Doctor Honoris Causa, to Professor Christopher Pollitt, Emeritus Professor of Public Management at the Public Management Institute of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

I will structure my arguments for this proposal so as to include references to the research interests, consultancy work, and academic achievements of our guest, so I kindly ask you to bear with me as I try – to my best abilities, to introduce to you the highly prestigious work of Professor Christopher Pollitt.

1. Research interests

If one decides to Google the name of Professor Christopher Pollitt, one needs to be a friend of Chronos himself to dream of exhausting all the 290.000 results in due time. Perhaps you would like to guess how many hits “public administration reform” has on Google. To save our time, let me be the one who tells you the answer: 220.000 results. Quite comparable, would you not agree? Let me say I do not see that as a coincidence. Starting with his Doctoral degree (achieved at London School of Economics and Political Science in 1980) and even long before that, while serving for the British civil service, Professor Pollitt’s works have dealt with comparisons and analyses of public management reforms and evaluated public service policies, programmes and projects.

He was one of the first to identify key features of the New Public Management (in his article of 1986 – “Beyond the managerial model” and later on, in his book on *Managerialism and the Public Services*) and to focus on the challenges of evaluating management reforms (in several articles and book chapters, 1985-1995). His comparative work since the 1990 has helped shape the debate in that rapidly growing field (e.g. *Public Management Reform*, with Geert Bouckaert, has run to three editions and currently has more than 4800 citations), challenging intellectual scholars and inspiring the most assiduous practitioners.

In a speech held in September 2012, at the Policy & Politics 40th Anniversary Conference on the topic of change and continuity in public reforms, Professor Pollitt argued that although a lot has changed in the past 40 years (e.g. White papers on reforms are not white anymore, and have become glossier, longer and more populist and the citizen is now seen or talked of as a “citizen-consumer”), less interest has been given to identifying the need, targets and costs of reform. Before you make any judgment on this conclusion, let it be said that Professor Pollitt was arguing then on the case of several White papers serving the central government reform in UK; that being the case, let ME say that similar conclusions

may be drawn after studying (for instance) central governments in Central and Eastern Europe, Romania included.

In fact, the most important argument for our proposal in awarding the title of Doctor Honoris Causa to Professor Christopher Pollitt is that his works transcend time, language and country, and still provide pertinent analysis and data on reforming paths, gaps and governmental strong points. To give just one of the many examples available: his book on *Public management reform: a comparative analysis* (3rd edition, 2011) has been published in Chinese, Czech, Hungarian, Latvian, Italian, Polish, Spanish and Romanian, and has a summarized version also available in Japanese.

2. Consultancy work

In all his activity, Professor Christopher Pollitt has tried to encourage two-way communications between academic and practitioner communities. His comparative works have been funded through collaborative research projects with French, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Belgian partners. He is regularly asked to undertake specific consultancies for a wide range of public organizations, national and international, and has lectured to practitioner as well as academic audiences in many countries of the world. To give you just some examples of the amplitude of Professor's Pollitt research and consultancy activity: in 2010 he was a member of the university partnership that was awarded a 2.8M euro EU 7th Framework Programme grant for COCOPS – 'Coordinating for cohesion in the public sector of the future', that appeared to be the biggest public management research project in Europe. He has also advised numerous central government departments, health authorities and local authorities in topics that included public expenditure management, organizational change, re-engineering, quality assurance and programme evaluation. Clients have included the OECD, the World Bank, the European Commission, and the Finnish Ministry of Finance, HM Treasury, the Danish Top Public Sector Executives Forum, the UK Local Government Management Board and various health authorities. In 2012 he was involved in work for the Swedish government on performance management and politicians, and in a new comparative study for the Finnish government (Ministry of Finance and Prime Minister's Office) on 'Government for the future'.

3. Academic achievements

Elected Fellow of the US National Academy of Public Administration (since 2012), Joint Honorary Editor of *Public Administration* (1980), Member of the Editorial Boards of *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Public Management Review* and *Evaluation and Governance*, and former editor-in-chief to the *International Review of Administrative Sciences* (2005-2013), Professor Christopher Pollitt's presence here, with us, today, honors both our Faculty and University as well as the Romanian community of scholars and practitioners in public management. His works and practical advice have



Professor's Pollitt outstanding academic career fully supports my statement. Professor Christopher Pollitt held the position of Scientific Director of the Netherlands Institute of Government (2004-2006) and was responsible for stimulating research in public administration and political science across the Netherlands. In 2004 he received the Hans Sigrist International Prize for 'outstanding research in the field of public governance' (awarded by an international panel of leading professors, under the chairmanship of the Hans Sigrist Foundation) and in 2008, the Routledge Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Public Management by the International Research Society for Public Management. He chaired the European Evaluation Society (since 1995), co-directed the Centre for the Evaluation of Public Policy and Practice (CEPPP) at the University of Brunel, London, where he also Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences (1994-1997). Professor Christopher Pollitt was Director of the European Group for Public Administration (1988-1994) and between 1996 and 2002 served as member of the Steering Committee. He received the Honorary Doctorate from the University of Vaasa, Finland and is currently Emeritus Professor of Public Management, at the Public Management Institute of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

Our University and the Faculty of Public Administration have been not too generous in awarding the Title of Doctor Honoris Causa; however, when late Professor Lucica Matei, former Dean of the Faculty first announced the proposal of awarding Professor Christopher Pollitt, we were all in support of it. So it is now, with profound respect and admiration for the work and achievements of Professor Christopher Pollitt and with utmost pride, that I propose, on behalf of the team of the Faculty of Public Administration, the award of the title of Doctor Honoris Causa to Professor Christopher Pollitt. Thank you for your consideration!

Diana – Camelia Iancu
Dean of the Faculty of Public Administration
National School of Political Studies and Public Administration