Zangrillo Reform on Evaluation - A Good Opportunity for Generals and Colonels?

Published on 30/01/2026

There is a point where a reform stops being a list of articles and becomes a cultural change: when it shifts the focus from pure hierarchy to the concrete quality of public service, and does so with modern, measurable, replicable tools. **The approval in the Chamber of the bill A.C. 2511 (January 28, 2026)**, in line with the political direction pursued by the Minister for Public Administration **Paolo Zangrillo**, should be read as follows: **making performance a collective responsibility and leadership a function to be earned, not a position to be held**.

The reform addresses two sensitive areas of any administration: **access and career progression of management** and **performance evaluation** of managers and staff. The message is direct: **it's not enough to “achieve objectives”, managerial skills must be demonstrated**, skills built, services improved. **And do it with clear criteria**, not with formulas that sound good but change nothing.

A Less Hierarchical and More Participatory Evaluation

The most innovative part is the overcoming of hierarchical and “unidirectional” evaluation: **no longer just a judgment from above**, but a process that **involves more internal parties** and, where possible, also **external users**. It's a modern choice because it recognizes a simple truth: **leadership is not only seen in the final result, but in the way that result is achieved**—organization, relationships, cooperation, the ability to help people grow.

The evaluation is structured **not only by objectives but also by “cross-cutting characteristics”**: relational, organizational, executive, cooperative abilities, complexity management, aptitude to overcome established patterns. **This is the heart of the “360 degrees”: not a label, but a method** that makes it harder to hide behind the role.

Zangrillo Reform on Evaluation - a good opportunity for Generals and Colonels?

A Barrier to Careerism: Not Everyone Excellent

Every evaluation system, if poorly designed, produces inflation of judgments, opaque exchanges, careers by proximity. Here comes a concrete corrective: **progressivity of remuneration linked to performance** and especially **a numerical cap on top evaluations**.

In particular, **within each general management office, “top scores” cannot be attributed in more than 30%** of the evaluations carried out for each category or qualification: meaning that “excellent” (or otherwise maximum scores) **cannot become an automatic distribution**.

Furthermore, **the recognition of “excellences” cannot exceed 20% of top evaluations**: that is, even within the group of “excellent”, only a limited share can be truly defined as “excellent”. Translated: **enough with “everyone is excellent”**. If evaluations are to matter, **they must also be able to distinguish**.

This is an essential point: **the credibility of the institution also passes through the credibility of its internal judgments**. And when the system always rewards, it rewards no one: it becomes just a language of convenience.

Clear Objectives, Readable Criteria: No Bombastic Words

The framework requires **more objective goals**, consistent with available resources and in such a number as to capture real priorities. Here lies the difference between reform and rhetoric: **fewer “ornamental” indicators, more verifiable measures**; **fewer solemn phrases, more readable criteria**. A serious evaluation is one that **is understood, can be checked, produces proportionate consequences**.

Why It Can Also Work for General and Senior Officers

And this is where the reform potentially becomes a model that speaks beyond the public administration. The Armed Forces, like all large public institutions, **are not immune to known dynamics**: careers built on belonging, evaluations too vertical, “excellences” distributed by inertia, objectives sometimes not measurable or too generic. Precisely because the chain of command is necessary, **the evaluation should be even more rigorous and more adherent to real behaviors**.

It does not mean mechanically importing civilian tools into a context with specific operational needs and constraints. It means, however, adopting a principle: **distinguishing respect for hierarchy from the quality of leadership**. And the quality of leadership is also measured by the ability to **cooperate, train, organize, execute, manage complexity** without offloading it onto others.

Zangrillo Reform on Evaluation - a good opportunity for Generals and Colonels?

The Political Opportunity: Crosetto Can Open a Front of Modernization

This is an opportunity that the Minister of Defense **Guido Crosetto** should seize: **launch a reform of the evaluation of military leadership—General and Senior Officers included—in the same direction as the public administration**. Not to “soften” the discipline, but to **make it more serious**: **fewer automatisms, fewer customary praises, more cross-cutting and verifiable evaluations**, **clear objectives**, collegiality where possible, and above all **stop the temptation of self-praise**.

Such a reform would have a double effect: **protecting the institution from destructive careerism** and **protecting people from opaque discretion**. It's not a detail: **it's moral and organizational integrity**.

Conclusion

The Zangrillo reform, in its framework, **raises the bar**: it makes evaluation **less ritualistic and more concrete**, **more comprehensive and less manipulable**. If this is the step change that the public administration is finally trying to give itself, it's worth asking—without slogans—if the same step change, with the necessary adjustments, should not also concern Defense. Because institutions are strengthened when they **stop calling themselves “excellent” and start demonstrating, with verifiable criteria, who leads well and who does not**.

News link: https://temi.camera.it/leg19/provvedimento/sviluppo-della-carriera-dirigenziale-e-valutazione-dlela-performance-del-personale-delle-pubbliche-amministrazioni.html