The object of this study are the recent administrative reform programmes of the European Commission that were started in 1995 with the taking office of the Santer Commission. The main efforts were gathered under three programmes: SEM-2000 (Sound and Efficient Management) 1995, MAP-2000 (Modernisation of Administration and Personnel Policy) 1997 and DECODE (Dessiner la Commission de demain - Designing Tomorrow’s Commission) 1997.

The study aims at analysing to what extent do the reforms of the Commission resemble the reforms that have taken place in the EU member states’ administrations. As a point of comparison is used the shift that has taken place in the Western European public administrations from a Weberian bureaucracy towards more 'hybrid' models of organisation along the lines of new public management -type of reforms that have sought to introduce private sector practices to the public sector. These two strands of administrative thinking - Weber's bureaucracy theory and new public management philosophy - are outlined. The central arguments of the study are that firstly, despite the dual role of the Commission as an administration and a motor for European integration it can usefully be compared to the national administrations. Secondly, it is established that though reforms in the Commission have been modest, they bear clear connections to the new public management -type of reforms.

Besides literature, the main materials used are EU documents and a small number of interviews conducted for the study.