

An Open, Adaptable and Performing Public Administration Medium Term Priorities and Work Programmes for EUPAN

1 July 2011 – 31 December 2012

Introduction

The European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) has been existing and developing for several decades. The aim of this informal cooperation is to facilitate mutual learning, to share experiences and lessons learned and, where possible, to develop joint tools and measures that can be of inspiration for members. Through the results of this cooperation, central government administrations at national level are supported in their continuous efforts toward modernisation and obtaining efficient and effective public administrations and work places.

In order to promote the continuity of the work carried out by EUPAN and to ensure that issues of general interest to the EU member states lose no importance, multi-annual planning (medium term) of the prioritized themes and work of the network has taken place since 2001, where the first Mid Term Priorities (MTP) document was adopted.

The current MTP, which was adopted during the Swedish Presidency in December 2009, was drafted based on a new method for MTP with the aim of developing a brief strategic document presenting the priorities of EUPAN as an intergovernmental and informal network.

On 30 June 2011 the MTP 'A Performing, Sustainable Public Administration Serving the Citizens' will come to an end, but at the same time be a point of departure for the next MTP.

New prioritized themes

The purpose of the present document is to describe the new prioritized themes and work programme for EUPAN for the next 18 months, on one hand building upon the work carried out so far and on the other taking into account the current circumstances and future challenges for public administrations in EU member states.

The new MTP is developed under the horizontal theme of '*An Open, Adaptable and Performing Public Administration*'. The following pages will unfold this theme into three (sub)themes – '*In the wake of the crisis*', '*Top executives*' and '*Governing a performing organisation*'. Those themes will – separate as well as in combination – be framing the work of EUPAN, both at DG level and at working group level. The document has been developed by the countries that will take over the next presidencies starting in June 2011, namely Poland, Denmark and Cyprus and it will be approved by the DGs at their 56th meeting during the Hungarian Presidency in June 2011.

It should be noted, that, as a natural consequence of the document's life span of 18 months, specific issues, work methods and results will not be described in full details in this document, but will be elaborated and clarified further by the respective presidencies during coming months.

Expected work methods

In general, the aim of this MTP would be to 'slim-line' the work of EUPAN by, where relevant, integrating and concentrating issues to be dealt with by the permanent working groups, rather than 'growing new

branches on the trunk'. Members of the EUPAN working groups will be expected to play an active role in relation to the issues to be handled by the network. Hence, with regards to work methods, the focus would be to deliver input in form of, for example:

- sharing their experiences,
- present national cases,
- take active part in discussions and studies/surveys.

The aim is to create the basis for more interaction in the working groups and to produce results with added value for the network and at the same time take due note of the need for keeping expenses to a minimum due to the financial situation in EU member states.

In line with these principles, and following specific decisions of the working groups, temporary ad-hoc groups and/or learning teams/circles may be set up or continued in case issues need special attention for a period, cf. the EUPAN Handbook.

Concerning the temporary LT on reduction of administrative burdens for citizens, it has existed for three years and its mandate terminates by the end of June 2011. The issue of reducing administrative burdens, which is continuously of high importance for public administrations in EU member states, will instead be integrated where relevant in the future work of IPSG, giving also IPSG the possibility to take stock of and build further upon the outputs of the LT.

Output and results of EUPAN's work will be published at the new EUPAN website in accordance with the editorial guidelines. In addition, EUPAN Member states are encouraged also to disseminate relevant output and results within their national public administrations.

In connection with the planning of selected project and events, the respective presidencies could examine, in concert with EC, the relevancy of and possibilities for EU funding.

Where relevant, the network will continue to cooperate with external parties, international organisations etc.

Current circumstances influencing the EUPAN work and Working Groups

According to the DG-resolutions adopted during the Spanish Presidency in June 2010 the e-Government activities will be integrated in the HRWG and IPSG after the Hungarian Presidency, in form to be decided in connection with the 56th DG meeting during the Hungarian Presidency. Within the context of the new MTP the suggestion is to include, whenever relevant, e-government aspects in EUPAN's work on the different subthemes. The inclusion of the e-government aspect in a specific issue should be based on a strategic approach, rather than on a technical. For instance, how can e-Government buttress public administrations' reforms, both in relation to their external as well as internal impact?

Current circumstances also make it necessary to revise how the informal social dialogue between EUPAN and TUNED could be handled temporarily. Therefore, activities in the Social Dialogue Working Group are

not presented in this document. For more information on the informal social dialogue, we refer to the specific document on this issue as well as (foreseen) DG resolution from 56th DG meeting.

Horizontal theme: An Open, Adaptable and Performing Public Administration

These years, most public administrations in EU member states undergo large scale changes and reforms in order to adjust to the challenges deriving from the crisis, financial constraints, globalisation, the demographic changes (aging work force) and greater requirements and demands from citizens.

These challenges may lead not only to 'hard' austerity measures like staff reduction and pay cuts, but also to increased need for finding new and more effective ways of delivering services, and innovative solutions for public administrations, possibly in collaboration with the third sector.

Employees, leaders, organisations and citizens should anticipate changes and reforms. The question EUPAN should look into is how public administrations in member states can build upon the experiences and lessons learned in recent years, so as to facilitate the creation of the right frames that will enable change and reforms to take place, and how stakeholders can be encouraged to work in a positive and cooperative manner for their implementation.

- **In the wake of the crisis**

Impact on Human Resources and on the reform agenda in public administrations

The financial crisis has had a substantial impact on the labour markets in European countries. The private sector may have been first affected by the crisis, but also in the public sector austerity measures have increasingly been introduced during past years.

Challenges for public administrations

General cutbacks, staff reductions, decrease of wages, streamlining of work processes are among the measures that have been taken, albeit of varying scope, in many central government administrations all over the European Union.

Measures that had to be taken while at the same time governments and public administrations are trying to prepare for how to meet other challenges such as the demographic changes, i.e. how to ensure sufficient work force in a future marked by aging population and how to ensure services adjusted to the needs of elderly people on the one hand while meeting the challenges of information society and needs of younger generation.

This presents a kind of a paradox, challenging the effective implementation of necessary measures and the way they are communicated to those affected by them.

Enhanced focus on flexicurity

The crisis has also reinforced the need for finding new ways of balancing flexibility and security in the field of public administration, The flexicurity concept – understood as a combination of flexibility in the labour market, social security and an active labour market policy - could in public administrations be a means to modernise and stay up to date with the surrounding society and the citizens' demands and needs.

The question is to what extent flexicurity organisational measures are used by public administrations and whether there is a need for redefining the 'security' aspect in the flexicurity concept? Is there a trend

towards changes in contractual security and the employment status of members of civil service, what is flexicurity impact on performance?

Crisis lead to austerity measures and created need for reforms

Working on the theme 'In the wake of the crisis' EUPAN will take a glance back and draw lessons from specific examples of measures taken in central government administrations in order to adjust to the circumstances deriving from the crisis, e.g. cutbacks in salaries and personnel, organisational changes, redeployment.

Focus will also be on the changes in public administrations that are now or in near future, stimulated by the crisis and the other challenges for public administrations. The need for reforms, innovative solutions and new way of collaboration in order to provide better services, as well as the need for training and new competences for top executives will be explored.

- **Top executives**

Future-proofing of the Senior Civil Services

Top executives in central government administrations are in positions where they are, to a large extent, responsible for creating the frames for handling the multi faceted challenges for public sectors in member states.

Top executives are to a large extent navigating in close relation to the political level and the decision making process. They need to be able to constantly adjust to changing circumstances and demands from society, citizens and employees. In the aftermath of the crisis, top executives have been met with the challenges of 'doing more with less' while continuously delivering public services of high quality.

Given the high level of importance for public administrations in member states, the theme 'Top Executives' has been on the agenda of EUPAN at regular intervals. Many aspects of leadership have therefore already been examined. Future work within this MTP on this subject is therefore intent to be stream-lined and focused on new challenges for top executives, as well as take due note of and build upon already made work and gathered information.

Competencies required

This requires that top executives have a comprehensive understanding for key coherences in the public sector and also good knowledge of how centrally decided initiatives are implemented in practise. At the same time, enhanced European cooperation and globalisation create the need for top executives with insight in international and European matters and decision making processes. A flair for innovative solutions, and how to foster and promote them, is also required of modern top executives.

In short, strong and operational top management and leadership is required.

New frames for recruitment and development

Thus, appropriate selection and recruitment methods as well as training and development of qualified top executives are imperative for innovation and development in the public sector. But can member states rely on having always a sufficient pool of talents to fill each top executive position? Or should a frame, strategy and systematic approach for the selection/recruitment and development of top executives in central government administrations be developed?

Internal and external cooperation

The complexity of daily challenges calls for stronger coordination, cooperation and collaborations among top executives. Benefits of public administrations cooperation with 'think-tanks' or other external units of resources will also be explored, due to its increasing role and value-added.

Performance-orientation

Regarding performance orientation, either bottom-up or top-down, innovative solutions in public administration and their successful implementation can be assured only by strong commitment and support from top executives. In times when service delivery in public administration begins to resemble the private sector's patterns, the role of open-minded and result-driven managers is increasing. Being aware of the changing role of public administration resulting from new challenges (IT development, demographic changes, management systems' development, volatile economic conditions) more and more top executives turn to performance-oriented initiatives and get involved personally in change implementation. In short, top executives need to be enablers of change. The issues to be explored in this respect cover the measures needed to support steering of the administrations in the right direction (eg. development of new performance contract models) as well as cutting-edge examples on the top executives' capacity to innovate.

Handling the impact of the crisis

It is also interesting to explore the experiences of member states concerning the preparation and development of top executives, e.g. through specific training, in order for them to be empowered to effectively meet the challenges in the aftermath of the crisis and to identify their role in such times.

- **Governing a performing organisation**

Maintaining effectiveness, quality and trust in public administrations on the move

'Governing a performing organization' is a broad theme that will cover a number of aspects relating to the capacity, adaptability, performance, service delivery, quality and management of trust in public administrations.

Implementation and follow-up on reforms

Central government administrations in EU member states constantly keep a clear focus on quality in public services and quality development, e.g. through minor- or large-scaled reforms.

But are administrations using the proper means for and appropriate resources when it comes to the actual implementation of reforms, the follow-up on reforms and their evaluation? Which implementation cultures exist? How can e-government support a successful implementation of reforms? Are results properly documented and evaluated in each case?

Constant focus on quality

The focus on outcome and effectiveness of measures is also relevant in the continuous work on ensuring high quality of public services.

In a result-oriented environment the role of the beneficiary is crucial and it is necessary to keep on exploring how the involvement of citizens and customers supports public administrations towards better results and outcome.

In shifting the approach towards better service delivery, public administrations look for the best examples to follow. A Quality Conference¹ sets the frame for the exchange of good practises and experiences in these matters however changing circumstances require adequate measures to be taken to provide sustainability of such initiatives.

Having in mind the continuity dimension of quality and efficiency improvement of public services further developments on Common Assessment Framework are scheduled, in cooperation with EIPA.

Ethics and trust in public administration

The effectiveness of reforms, rules and policies is also interesting when it comes to ethics and trust. How effective are ethic rules, codes of conduct, training and awareness raising, not only with regard to the public employees' conduct, but also with regard to the citizens trust in public administrations? And how could ethics systems/infrastructure be managed to improve its effectiveness and efficiency? Trying to recognise the recommendations to these questions, identification of main challenges/critical elements in ethics rules' implementation processes seems to be crucial.

Building image of public administration

Civil service branding is much more than a logo or a slogan. It is more like a "promise" for current and future citizens, employees, politicians. Have branding initiatives in member states had any impact on building trust in government? How to provide efficient tools for marketing public administration developments aimed at better service delivery and creation of constructive dialogue with stakeholders? Is it the right way to build civil servants' trust and pride, and encourage them to act as ambassadors for their organization, values, product and services? How to measure a picture of civil service in the society using the qualitative and quantitative research?

HR units as proactive partners for the organisations

The well-functioning of the individual organisations and agencies play a crucial role for the general perception and performance of the entire sector. When central government administrations are undergoing reforms and organisational changes these years, institutions and agencies etc. are influenced to a large extent. These developments put new focus on the role of the HR units in the ministries and agencies.

¹ The Quality Conference 'Doing the right things right. A more result-oriented public sector in Europe' is scheduled in September 2011. During the two days about 300 participants will try to get an insight into the different aspects of effectiveness and efficiency of public administration.

The main topics of the discussion will be: 1. From outputs to outcome – broadening the efficiency debate towards an effectiveness debate. 2. From micro management to meta management – outcome oriented management takes place across and above the organisational borders, thinking in chain and network constructions is crucial. 3. Citizen / Customer effectiveness – can the involvement of citizen/customers support organisations in working more result-oriented? 4. Towards result-oriented leadership in public sector organisations – If public managers are accountable for the policy and the results of the organisation, are they also giving autonomy to manage? 5. Installing a culture of result thinking in public sector organizations – how do public sector organizations make a shift towards a culture of being more result oriented?

Also, the trend of centralizing administrative (HR-related) tasks in larger units (e.g. in joint 'service centres') while at the same time decentralising more HR-tasks to middle managers bring attention to the need for redefining the role and tasks of the HR unit.

It would therefore be relevant to explore if there is a need for new types and roles of HR units and how they could become a proactive partner for the organisation as such as well as for the individual middle managers.

Work programme EUPAN 1 July 2011 – 31 December 2012

An Open, Adaptable and Performing Public Administration						
Theme	Presidency	Subtheme	Work level	Method [t.b.c.]	Results [t.b.c.]	
In the wake of the crisis	PL	The future of employment status	HRWG	Questions to HRWG, presentation of selected cases	Brief report based on discussions and national cases	
		Flexicurity and motivational instruments	HRWG	Introductory lecture on flexicurity. Presenting sharing and discussing best practises.	Identify flexible work time arrangements/systems and their impact on attractiveness of PA as an employer	
	DK	Impact on Human Resources	HRWG (+IPSG)	Collection, presentation and discussion on selected cases. Workshops in WGs.	Publication, presentation to DGs. Where possible draw general conclusions.	
		Impact on the Reform Agenda	IPSG (+HRWG)	Collection, presentation and discussion on selected cases. Workshops in WGs. where relevant connect with the theme top executives, and build further upon work during Polish presidency (top executives as enablers of change)	Publication, presentation to DGs. Where possible draw general conclusions.	
	CY	The role of top executives as key actors during times of crisis and in its aftermath		HRWG + IPSG	Collection of information, presentation of conclusions and selected cases	Brief report based on analysis of collected information and presentation

Top executives	PL	Coordination, cooperation and collaboration at Top Executives level	HRWG	Presentations of national cases by Member States, regarding co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration of PA Top Executives, including Polish case “Top executives’ collaboration within the Forum of the Civil Service’s Directors General”.	Collection of approaches and present outcomes to the Directors General
		The role of think-tanks in supporting decision making processes	HRWG + IPSTG	Discussion about experiences of member states regarding rules of cooperation, statuses of think tanks (financing, legal bases, etc.). Presenting findings from the Polish project assessing the role of think tanks in the process of modernization of public administration.	Collection and exchange of practices and views regarding think tanks in member states.
		Top executives as enablers of change and innovation	IPSTG	Discussion on presentations of selected national cases on capacity to innovate.	Identification of good practices; share of experience and publishing the cases for wider public on the EUPAN web site
	DK	A frame for recruitment, selection and development	HRWG +	How are existing	

		of Top Executives	IPSG DG	programmes designed, which lessons learned, systems under construction, spread inspiration and support processes underway. Preparatory work in WGs, prepare platform for strategic discussion at DG meeting	
		Performance contract models	IPSG (+HRWG)	Preparatory work in WGs, prepare platform for strategic discussion at DG meeting	List of general recommendations possible to draw up, e.g. processes for evaluation of reforms?
	CY	Training and development, empowerment and reinforcement of top executives in the new environment/order of things	HRWG + IPSG	Collection of information on good practices, presentation and plenary discussion	Report/presentation on good practices
Governing performing organisation	a PL	Effectiveness of ethics and trust measures	HRWG in cooperation with EIPA	Policy study including also empirical questions and discussions in the workshops during HRWG meetings. Cooperation with PGC OECD forseen (integrity mix concept).	Publication of the report and dissemination of its results in national public administrations. Broadening knowledge about ethics infrastructure/integrity systems in Member States and its relations with public trust. Recommendations regarding effective management of ethics infrastructure. Outcomes presentation to the Directors General.
		Building a positive image of the civil service	IPSG +	Presentations and	Discussion on strategic

			HRWG	discussion on national approaches to building a positive image of PA, during IPSG session and subsequently during joint session of the HRWG and IPSG. Presenting project "Building a positive image of civil service", which is based on three separate modules focusing on qualitative and quantitative research as well as media analyses of public debate on government and its public administration.	approach to PA image in the society; possible continuation of the work by IPSG (e.g. "brand equity" for the civil service / CS goodwill, especially useful in times of crisis or policy change).
		Quality Conference	IPSG	Quality Conference 2011 - a two day event with participation of top managers, policy advisors and other key actors having an influence on the strategy building and management of public sector institutions - up to 300 participants, representatives of European countries administrations.	Dissemination of good practices regarding strategic topics discussed and presented during conference. Increase of knowledge among 300 participants representing EUPAN Members States and invited guests, including representatives from Eastern Partnership countries.
		Quality conference – new framework	IPSG	Research on indicating	Presenting a résumé with

				which countries have possibilities to organize events, implement other projects co-financed by the European Funds. In cooperation with the EC exploration of other possible European sources of Community funds to be used to co-finance EUPAN activities.	possible solutions to run Quality Conferences and if possible other initiatives of EUPAN with new sources of financing and (new) organisational framework.
		CAF	CAF/IPSG	CAF evaluation and update. Aligning the CAF expert group intentions with the overall EUPAN goals and perspectives.	Delivery of new CAF Action plan.
		CSM	CSM/IPSG	Development of a guidebook on how to transform results of measurement into reforms. Assessment of the LT on CSM and discussion on potential future of the LT	Presentation of results of the work of LT. Publication of guidebook. Preparation of the policy note on LT to be delivered to Directors General.
	DK	Effective implementation of and follow-up on reforms.	IPSG (+HRWG)	Collection of examples, lessons learned, discussion, workshops etc.	Concluding document
		Involvement of citizens in the follow-up and evaluation of reforms	IPSG (+HRWG)	Collection of examples, lessons learned,	Concluding document

				discussion, workshops etc.	
		CAF	CAF/IPSG in coop. with EIPA	Continued work on new model	Further development and promotion of CAF model
		Need for new types of HR Units?	HRWG	Examine general trends of centralising administrative tasks + decentralising tasks to middle managers. Examine how HR units can become a proactive partner for the organisation	Concluding document
		European Year 2012 for active ageing [to be considered, e.g. in coop. with CY]	HRWG	Examine how p.a. contribute to active ageing. Means used, incentives to stay longer in the job etc.	Concluding document
	CY	CAF-Ongoing CAF activities, possible revision of CAF model (version 2012)	CAF/IPSG, coop. with EIPA		Further development and promotion of CAF model