

The 72nd EUPAN Directors General Meeting Atmosphere Report

Time: 3-4 June 2019

Place: Bucharest, Romania, the Palace of Parliament, Avram Iancu Hall

Participants: Representatives of the public administrations in 23 Member States of the European Union and in 3 observer countries (Iceland, Republic of North Macedonia and Switzerland), the European Commission, academic experts as well as representatives of European Public Administration Employers – EUPAE.



Opening session

Vasile-Felix COZMA, DG for EUPAN and President of National Agency of Civil Servants opened the meeting by ringing the traditional bell, welcoming everyone to the astounding Palace of Parliament and to the meeting organized by the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Virgil-Alin CHIRILĂ, Secretary of State within Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration addressed a warm welcome to all participants and invited them to have fruitful discussions.

Adriana CÎRCIUMARU, member of EUPAN and Director of Communication and International Relations the National Agency of Civil Servants continued to moderate the discussions, introducing the Romanian EUPAN team, briefing the DGs on the meetings organized during the Romanian Presidency and presenting the meeting agenda.



Strategic Issues

Report regarding the EUPAN's main results in the period of the Strategy Paper July 2016-June 2019

In order to prepare for the future of EUPAN, the Romanian Presidency made an assessment of the current Strategy Paper (SP), in addition to the evaluation made by the Austrian presidency, taking into account the EUPAN Handbook which provides that "the implementation of the SP as a guideline for designing Rolling Programme shall be reported at the end of a current SP".

This assessment was based on a questionnaire regarding the events organized and the surveys/ reports/ studies made during the presidencies covered by the First SP – Slovakia, Malta, Bulgaria, Estonia, Austria and Romania. The report was elaborated and presented by Maria Cristina PANȚÎRU, public manager at National Agency of Civil Servants.

Findings:

The main topics tackled by EUPAN Presidencies between July 2016 and June 2019 were: performance management, remuneration and benefits in central public administration, effects of ageing workforce on public administration, the use of Regulatory Impact Assessments, motivation, public services closer to citizens (one-stop-shops), the relations between public administration and stakeholders / interested parties, development of mid-level managers, the „once-only” principle, open government, leadership development, process optimization in public administration, public service delivery standards, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), policy labs, new way of working in public administration, strategic planning, the integration of persons with disabilities at the workplace, ethics as part of the organizational culture, challenges in the use of electronic services in public administration, competencies necessary for e-government.

All Presidencies organized the core 5 meetings mentioned in the EUPAN Handbook: EUPAN 5 Secretariat, EUPAN 5 DG Secretariat, EUPAN WL Meeting, EUPAN DG Meeting and the European CAF Users Events. The 9th Quality Conference was organized in 2017 by the Maltese Presidency. In addition, the Austrian Presidency organized a conference regarding *Impacts on Performance Management*. No ministerial-level meeting took place during the period of the Strategy Paper.

The Report identified 17 surveys, research and publications elaborated during the period of this Strategy Paper as well as the following strategic resources for EUPAN: the EUPAN Handbook (2016), the updated EUPAN website (2019), the updated EUPAN Strategy Paper (2019), the update of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF 2020) (ongoing).

EUPAN's importance, primarily for its members, is demonstrated by the use of EUPAN resources and "products" like CAF, the surveys and studies.

Recommendations:

- In the next Strategy Paper the strategic domains will be linked with the EUPAN domains presented in the EUPAN Handbook. Under each strategic domain several topics of interest will be listed, as examples.
- The upcoming Presidencies have flexibility to choose topics for their activities, linked with the strategic domains.
- The Rolling Programme will be presented in a table format with each strategic domain from the Strategy Paper as a column.
- To measure EUPAN's impact the next Strategy Paper and Rolling Programme may propose objectives and indicators.

The report is published on the new EUPAN website: <https://www.eupan.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Report-EUPAN-Results-Strategy-Paper-2016-2019.pdf>.

The EUPAN Strategy Paper July 2019 – June 2022 and the Rolling Programme July 2019 – December 2020



The EUPAN Strategy Paper July 2019 – June 2022, elaborated during the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union within EUPAN 5 working group, with representatives of Romania, Austria, Finland, Croatia, the European Commission. The document observes the provisions of *The EUPAN Handbook*, takes into account the evaluation of the previous Strategy Paper elaborated during the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the *Report regarding the EUPAN's main results in the period of the Strategy Paper July 2016 – June 2019* elaborated during the Romanian Presidency, the strategic domains agreed at the EUPAN Working Level Meeting on 8-9 April 2019, the input provided by members of EUPAN 5 and representatives of the six upcoming Presidencies

(Finland, Croatia, Germany, Portugal, Slovenia, France), as well as the feedback from other EUPAN members, received during the online consultation period and the discussions at the EUPAN DG meeting on 3 June 2019.

The following specific strategic domains were agreed by EUPAN members, to concentrate on during the next three years:

- Digitalization and innovation,
- Ethics and organizational culture,
- Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM).

These are linked to the two main domains of EUPAN: Human Resources Innovation & Organizational Development and Service Innovation and Delivery, outlined in the EUPAN Handbook.

The draft EUPAN Strategy Paper July 2019-June 2022 and the consultation process were presented by Maria Cristina Pantiru from NACS.

The Romanian Presidency thanked the EUPAN members for their good cooperation and contribution for the EUPAN Strategy Paper July 2019-June 2022. During the discussions, Directors General appreciated the collaboration and consultations during the elaboration of the EUPAN Strategy Paper presented for discussion. Several topics of interest were added to the document, and then **the EUPAN Strategy Paper for July 2019 – June 2022 was adopted alongside the Rolling Programme for July 2019 – December 2020.**

The EUPAN website



Thomas Pappenscheller from Austria presented the great news that **the new EUPAN website (www.eupan.eu) is online and functional starting June 2019.** He showed the website to the participants at the meeting.

There were some comments and requests from the participants after the meeting on the information on it. The new website couldn't be updated during the Romanian Presidency, therefore it will be used starting

with the Finish Presidency.

Austria supported Romania by updating the website with the most important outcomes of the Romanian Presidency: the Report on the First Strategy Paper and the New Strategy Paper.

Romanian Presidency thanked the Austrian Presidency team and EIPA for the new EUPAN website.

Surveys carried out during the Romanian Presidency

1. Ethics, an integral part of the organizational culture



Survey objectives: To map the current trends regarding the promotion of ethical conduct in public administration.

Main research questions: What is the trend regarding ethics codes in European countries? How are ethical dilemmas tackled? What tools are used to promote ethical decisions in the public administration? What challenges are anticipated for promoting ethics in the public administration?

The survey collected responses from 26 EUPAN members / country representatives (including the European Commission).

Main research findings:

There is a common ground regarding ethics codes, in the sense that they are pervasive at the European level and tackle similar issues such as: rule of law, impartiality, respect for human dignity, non-discrimination, transparency, responsibility, public interest, conflicts of interest, rights and duties, disclosure of wrongdoing.

Across Europe there are similar tools for tackling ethics in public administration: ethics procedures and special committees, designated advisors for ethical issues, institutions that investigate allegations regarding breaches of ethics codes, feedback mechanisms from public administration employees and citizens.

Ethics challenges for the future: The main challenge anticipated is promoting trust in the public administration (24 out of 26 responses), disclosure of wrongdoing, the involvement of stakeholders, independence from political or business influence, tackling wellbeing, the use of artificial intelligence in public administration.

Recommended future topics for EUPAN:

- Wellbeing at work (including health and safety), preventing harassment, mediation of conflicts, etc.
- Trust in public administration, in relation to: prevention/ management of conflict of interests, the use of technology, artificial intelligence, social media in public administration, disclosure of wrongdoing/ whistleblowing, leadership and policy-making, participation of citizens in the design of public services, public administration values in practice.

This survey was elaborated and presented by Maria Cristina Pantiru, public manager at NACS. The corresponding survey report on *Ethics, an integral part of the organizational culture* will be available on the EUPAN website as soon as possible.

2. Competencies necessary for e-government

Survey objectives: To map the current situation regarding the strategic and institutional frameworks for e-government, to facilitate experience exchange within EUPAN regarding e-government institutions, the use of competency frameworks for e-government.

Main research questions: What competencies are necessary at strategic and operational levels for providing quality e-government services in European countries? How to develop a framework of competencies necessary for e-government? What

challenges are anticipated, from a human resources management perspective, with regard to e-government services in European public administrations?

The survey collected responses from 24 EUPAN members / country representatives (including the European Commission).

Main research findings: There is a common ground across European countries regarding the strategic framework for e-government services (strategies, specific institutions), implementation of the European e-Competence Framework (or similar).

However, the range and quality of e-government services varies greatly across Europe. The following factors were identified as important for developing e-government services: political endorsement, legislation, financial resources, user-centered design.

The main challenges for e-government services outlined in the survey were: recruitment and selection of candidates with the required competencies, the involvement of stakeholders in the design of e-government services, cybersecurity, job attractiveness, team design, ethical issues regarding the use of technology.

Recommendations for EUPAN: exchange of experience regarding practices for job attractiveness (e.g. information campaigns, IT hub), staff training for developing competencies for e-government, ethical issues regarding the use of artificial intelligence.

This survey was elaborated and presented by Maria Cristina Pantiru, public manager at NACS. The corresponding survey report on *Competencies necessary for e-government* will be available on the EUPAN website as soon as possible.

3. Challenges in the use of electronic services in the public administration



Barriers/ obstacles in the use of electronic services (questionnaire analysis):

- Lack of awareness among citizens with regards to the electronic services that are available to them;
- Lack of digital skills of potential beneficiaries;
- Perceived complexity of the services and of online platforms;
- Lack of trust of potential users with regards to the safety of their personal data.
- The insufficient user-friendliness of online public administration services;
- The dispersion of information over multiple websites;
- The lack of availability of e-identification services (and of the e-signature).

Solutions implemented in order to overcome barriers in the use of electronic services:

- Awareness raising initiatives and training solutions (either for citizens or for the public administration);
- Common guidelines and inter-institutional collaboration for designing of public electronic services;
- The development and implementation of one stop shops solutions;

- Solutions for the single authentication for multiple electronic services.

Barriers/ obstacles in the providing of electronic services:

- Lack of specialized human resources and to the absence of financial resources;
- Organizational barriers - from difficulties in activating cooperation between different administrative institutions to the manner in which public administrations are organized;
- Legislative barriers.

Implemented solutions in order to surpass above mentioned difficulties:

- Complex large-scale programmes designed to sustain the development of digital skills;
- Allocating, where possible, EU-funding for the development of public e-services;
- Improving coordination between public entities through regular coordination;
- Adopting digitally-friendly legislation as well as guidelines for legislators on how to design digital-friendly legislation.

4. Impact of strategic planning documents on the central public administration performance

The survey collected responses from 23 respondents from 22 countries and 1 from European Commission, and input from 21 participants in 2 sessions at EUPAN WL workshops.



Results from the survey

- Documents usually contain performance indicators, but they are not always relevant
- Result of consultation process
- A special body in charge of monitoring implementation of strategic planning document
- Assessment is usually made by an internal department

Consequences of document's assessment

- "Based on the results of the assessment the strategic planning documents will be updated and/or modified"

- "The results of the assessment will be taken into consideration to revise other related strategic planning documents".

The documents raise awareness about objectives, mobilize stakeholders and enhance transparency in public administration. However there are some challenges such as unclear objectives, lost confidence, lack of appropriate skills, lack of information data, lack of coordination and political vision, turbulent times, political and policy cycles, reforms and overlapping strategies.

Possible solutions:

- Bottom-up approach, open dialogue
- Combating formalism through involvement of DGs and staff
- Creating meaningful, realistic objectives and goals
- Adopting a mission to facilitate the civil servants-politicians dialogue

The main conclusion of the survey was that a workable strategy demands unconventional approach to achieve desired results.

Presentations connected to the Romanian EUPAN themes



The meeting kicked-off with a presentation on the reform undertaken in Human Resource Management in the Romanian Public Administration by Dragoș NEGOIȚĂ, Director of the Department for Coordinating Policies and Priorities within at the General Secretariat of the Romanian Government.

He outlined the main objectives and actions of the current EU-funded program for human resource management reform in Romanian public administration implemented by the General Secretariat of the Government, the National Agency of Civil Servants and the Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, with technical assistance from the World Bank. Regarding the civil service, the main objectives of the project are: the elaboration and implementation of a competency framework, a new online competency-based recruitment system, an improved performance management system, as well as the development of NACS database for personnel evidence and data management.



In the second day of the meeting, Elisabet SUNDÉN INGESTRÖM, Senior Advisor at the Swedish Agency for Government Employers presented their *Digitalization and employer policy* Report. The report brought to the attention of the EUPAN members the effects of the new technology on the labor market, and the way Sweden has tackled them through flexible forms of employment. Moreover, the report makes an inventory of the consequences for future employer

policy, such as: job protection and flexibility, work environment, leadership and co-workership, urbanization and the localization of central government operations and so on.



Hector CASADO LOPEZ, Chairman of SDC CGA, presented the recent works at the European Sectoral European Social Dialogue Committee for the Central Government Administrations (SDC CGA) and some updates of the project *Improving Work-Life Balance: opportunities and risks coming from Digitalization*.

He made a short follow-up on the texts adopted by SDC CGA, such as the agreement on information and consultation rights of workers, the Framework Agreement for a quality service in Central Administration with all it involves. Also, all the activities in the work-life balance and equal pay between women and men were presented.

Hector informed on the guidelines on prevention of third-party violence and harassment, which were adopted by the SDC CGA in December 2018 and on the latest activities during the 'Improving Work-Life Balance: opportunities and risks coming from Digitalization' Project.

World café



The World-Café took place in the first day and consisted of four tables with different topics. There were three rounds of 30 minutes each so that participants were able to follow more topics. The tables were hosted by experts in those particular fields who moderated the discussions and presented a brief summary in the plenary, in the second day of the meeting.

Each table had a flipchart sheet on which key ideas from all rounds were written down by the host. The sheet was posted on the flipchart near each table. Each participant was encouraged

to write, doodle and draw key ideas (words) on post-its found on each table. All the post-its were stuck to the flipchart near the respective table, and after all the rounds were finished, participants were invited to take a gallery tour of all tables, find out what had been further discussed.

World café topics were linked with the EUPAN Strategy Paper July 2016 – June 2019 and also with the EUPAN Strategy Paper July 2019 - June 2022:



Table 1. Ethics, an integral part of the organizational culture, moderated by Radu NICOLAE, Chair of the Syene Education Center

1) A period of change!

The participants agreed that ethics is a dynamic process/work in process and the current period poses continuous ethical challenges. Main processes that impact on our ethical judgment were mentioned:

- New expectations and requirements on managing personal data;
- New technologies that develop new spaces for social deliberation: social media, communication platforms that allow input/opinions from citizens, but also artificial intelligence;
- New demands and expectations from citizens regarding the public sector (mind-set is changed, behavior is changed, example: anti-corruption protests); citizens are aware of their full rights;
- New forms of mass-media;

2) Integrity values

Public sector ethos is under pressure by lack of stability (more than one contact over a carrier), extensive regulation (compliance vs. ethos: hide behind rules), multiple contacts (that could generate conflicts of interests) or different working environments. Civil servants have to adapt and internalize new rules, but the management is not so attentive to integrity.



Under this period of change, our core constitutional values (democracy, rule of law, fairness, fair treatment, inclusiveness) are challenged (by fake news, illiberalism, anti-immigration etc.). Public sector have to provide legitimacy, integrity, transparency (where the taxpayers' money go?), objectivity (common interest/common good), and non-discrimination in order to maintain or rebuild trust. Public trust is a feeling that needs to be nurtured by continuous alertness to ethics. In order to achieve this, corruption is strictly forbidden, also conflicts of interests. Leading by example is the correct path.

3) New instruments to foster ethics

Participants shared good practices and instruments to foster ethics in public administration:

- Code of elected officials/ policy makers in public administration to regulate the dialogue between elected officials and public servants;
- Training on ethics to policy makers/ politicians;
- Campaigns on ethics (to raise awareness on the value of ethics);
- Mandatory integrity e-learning or classic ethical training;
- Ethics counselling available to public sector employees;
- Revolving doors (ask for permission to apply to certain jobs in the private sector) / cooling off periods (one/two years period);
- Whistleblowing (feeling secure to report);
- Recruiting ethos and also talent in public administration (programs for young civil servants);
- Internal discussions/ reflection afterwards (workshops): one day per year to talk about ethics in our organization (also internal/specific cases to be analyzed, debated);
- Internal audit on organizational climate (toxic environment audit);
- Ethical guidelines;
- Better performance management (incentive for improvements);



Table 2. Challenges in the use of electronic services in the public administration moderated by Andrea FLORIA, Consultant, General Director ACZ Consulting

The debates carried out in three rounds during this session were structured around four key issues:

- The limits of the public services digitization process;
- Advantages of the public services digitization process;
- Resistance factors to the changes generated by the public services digitization process;
- The role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in delivering public services.

Regarding the limits of the public services digitization process, it was agreed that the assumed goal of streamlining and digitizing administrative processes is generally pursued by EU Member States in junction with citizens' preferences. The importance of the human factor in the interaction of citizens with the public administration, the limited trust in electronic solutions in the field of public services, the gap between generations when it comes to the use of technology and the increasing need for transparency regarding the management of citizens' data and the maintenance of the proportionality of public actions even when they become digitized, all these have been identified as factors that impose limits on the digitization of public services and its evolution in time.



With regards to the identified advantages, one of the most important aspects mentioned was that digitization creates the premises for a process of transformation of public services, its efficiency being considered dependent on the simplification of the administrative procedures and on the role that the public administration assumes in the process. Last but not least, by streamlining administrative procedures, the digitization will reduce the environmental footprint (for example, by reducing the use of paper).

Regarding the factors of resistance to the change generated by the digitization process of the public administration, the most important elements identified during the debates included the reluctance of the public administration work force to modify its way of working and the reluctance of the institutions and their staff to lose power and autonomy while sharing data and coordinating delivered services.

As for the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the delivery of public services, it is believed it increases the efficiency of the administrative processes underlying the delivery of public services on the one hand, and it ensures a more equitable treatment of the beneficiaries, on the other hand. Nevertheless, the increasing use of AI solutions in

public administration is considered to be problematic as it will require more skilled and prepared human resources that will have to perform more complex tasks, which could not be solved via AI.



Table 3. Impact of strategic planning documents on the central public administration performance, moderated by Fabrice LARAT, Deputy-director for training and education in charge of masters programmes and Director of the Research center of public administration at École Nationale D'Administration, France

The discussions were split into 3 sub-topics, one per group:

1. What are the main obstacles met in the process of choosing / implementing a strategic plan?
 - the lack of hierarchy between different strategies affects the quality of the implementation process
 - too many strategic planning documents
 - a problem of change and evolution as for the political decision makers involved, making any strategy vulnerable to these components, especially in term of continuity and consistency



2. Strategic planning instruments often have a contractual dimension between those who define the strategy, set the objectives and provide the resources needed, and those who are in charge of the implementation and who are accountable for their organization's performance. Reporting obligations, especially with regards to performance indicators may lead to cases of formalism from the side of the bodies in charge of implementing the elements of the strategy and who may be tempted to provide pro forma or inaccurate information on the results obtained. With regards to your experience, to which extend is this phenomenon common? What are the consequences? How to prevent it?
 - the lack of realism during the definition of objectives by political decision makers
 - the danger of creating a strategic planning documents as a mere tool box without vision or coherence

- there is a discrepancy in temporalities between administrative and political time, and this gap can generate issues in the creation and implementation of such documents
 - the main challenges seem to be the duality between “differentiation vs generalization”; there are often big differences between fulfilling goals and achieving results, which makes the implementation process a crucial yet delicate one
 - key success factor is maintaining a dialogue during implementation. This dialogue has to involve as many stakeholders as possible, from civil servants, to actual users, in order to ensure the right objectives and to sketch a realistic strategy. Another conclusion has to do with how these documents have to be perceived – they should be understood as a framework, a direction, rather than a rigid contract.
3. How can central administrations make sure that political decisions regarding strategic planning will be implemented as meant and foreseen?

The solutions considered by the group were as follows:

- Limited number of goals that are related to core tasks
- Bottom-up definition of goals
- Develop ownership
- Qualitative instead of solely quantitative indicators
- The possibility to experiment and to learn from mistakes
- A stronger focus on change management
- The need for more critical thinking and a greater consideration of social sciences knowledge/research results, as they can help increase the quality of outputs through higher productivity the sense of involvement.



Table 4. Competencies necessary for e-government, moderated by dr. Diana-Camelia IANCU, Dean of the Faculty of Public Administration, at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

The table dedicated to e-government and its challenges, tackled two main questions, namely:

1. How does new technology impact the relationship between their clients (citizens, organizations, etc.) and their organization, respectively, the public sector at large, in their represented country?
2. How does new technology impact recruitment and training in their organization and in public administration in general?

In three rounds, the participants have actively engaged in informal exchanges of views and best practices, on:

- Whether the expectations of their customers visibly changed in the past few (five) years. Questions were asked pertaining to current expectations of more speedy, qualitative and/or diverse services and to the organizational mechanisms used in coping with these (new) expectations.
- What new (e-) competencies are required to perform the (changed) organizational tasks? Are they included in the recruitment / selection process and/ or the training sessions provided to public personnel by their respective organizations?
- How can e-government assist the process of strengthening public trust in government and develop new competencies?



Several conclusions stem from the exchanges, namely:

1. Customer expectations are constantly evolving: in fluid and diverse political and socio-economical contexts, public sector organizations strive to contribute to the welfare of all their clients, regardless of their age (millennials or senior citizens), residence (urban or rural) or education (graduates or illiterates). Governments are asked to guarantee equal access, speedy delivery, and qualitative services, and to stay competitive on markets that increasingly value flexibility and innovation.
2. The administrative capacity needs consolidation: While observing the changing expectations about how and when services are being delivered, governments are expected to spend less, often relying on scarce and poorly motivated human resources. Brain drain or high mobility of civil service are also symptoms that require careful examination and targeted actions. Attracting highly performant and motivated workers to the public sector, and retaining them requires further reflection and commitment of the political leadership.
3. Trust builds on partnership: Transparent exchanges between clients and their administration, and between different institutions of the public sector are the cornerstone of building trust. Co-creation of public solutions to public concerns is necessary both for better understanding of the contexts, as well as to ensure the internalization of different norms. The partnership with academia was particularly encouraged by the discussants.

Currently, E-government addresses all these topics, being a tool to keep track and respond to the changing expectations in real time (or as close as possible to the moment of their initiation), consolidate the administration and co-create services in the attempt to strengthen the trust citizens, administrations and international community show in different governments. Moreover, e-government has the potential to allow better coordination between agencies and, as such, eliminate discrepancies and reduce the existent economic and social discrepancies across Europe.

In terms of the competencies needed to efficiently run an e-government, participants agreed that they are not significantly different to the old competencies (as workers in public sector should show the ideal type Weberian attributes: "vocation" and "esprit de corps"). However, they need to possess computer literacy and show flexibility, curiosity, critical thinking, readiness to innovate and take risks so to solve the "tragedy of the commons" (E. Ostrom) and address the collective needs. Although ideally, academia should plant / water the seeds of these (transversal) competencies, participants tended to agree that internal training and mentorship at the working place are crucial for consolidating the necessary profile of competent e-workers.

Questions that remain to be addressed in the future by the Network and the political leadership on the topic of e-government include issues such as:

1. How to narrow the digital gap between different regions and ensure access of all to all public services?
2. How to attract e-competent and highly committed personnel to public sector and how to motivate it to effectively pursue the public interest?
3. How to stimulate the co-creation of public services in the current context provided by the digital reform?



Socials events

In the first day of the meeting the EUPAN members were invited to take a guided tour of the building, the venue of the meeting – the Palace of Parliament.

Following tradition, the first day of the DG Meeting ended with dinner hosted by the Romanian Presidency at Hanu' lui Manuc, inside an inn built in 1808, famous for its hospitality and delicious traditional food.

During dinner, the participants had the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences in a relaxed, traditional atmosphere, to enjoy Romanian traditional food, to listen to folk music and even dance "the hora".

The evening ended with the traditional handing of the symbolic bell to the next presidency. Felix COZMA handed the bell to Juha SARKIO, the Finish DG, a very important moment for the Romanian team, symbolizing the great cooperation and the continuity of our work. The Romanian DG also expressed gratitude to all EUPAN members for their support and wished the Finish colleagues good luck during their presidency, ensuring them of the Romanian team's full availability for a good cooperation.

Presentation of Finland's Presidency priorities



Juha SARKIO, Director General of the Public Governance Department, Ministry of Finance Finland presented the Finish Presidency's aim for EUPAN, namely better understanding:

- the meaning of trust in the ways we can develop public administration
- the possibilities digitalization and the use of artificial intelligence provide to public administration development

by taking a closer look at following topics:



- Horizontal cooperation in data-driven decision making
- The use of artificial intelligence and robotics in customer service
- Building a culture of integrity and trust
- Leading of life-long learning in public administration

Any other business

1. As the Handbook on the functioning of EUPAN states, it is a tradition to invite a delegation of TUNED to be part of the EUPAN DG meetings, usually in the second day.

TUNED representatives couldn't attend the DG Meeting, due to overlapping with the EPSU Congress.

2. At the CAF National Correspondents WG Meeting in Bucharest, CAF National Correspondents have been informed that Serbia (the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government) and the Regional School of Public Administration in the Western Balkans wish to become observers within the CAF NC Network.

At EUPAN DG meeting in Bucharest on 3-4 June, we agreed to send to the DGs the CAF National Correspondents Network's proposal to approve the request of Serbia and the ReSPA to become observers within the CAF NC Network for comments.

No objection was raised in what concerns Serbia, therefore the request of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government in Serbia is considered accepted.

We received two comments in what concerns ReSPA, from Spain and Finland. Both comments referred to the EUPAN's Handbook allowing the admission of observer countries only.

In respect to ReSPA, Spain raised also the question of Kosovo (not being recognized in terms of statehood), taking into account that the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration (KIPA) is designated as ReSPA's National Coordinator, although it's underlined that this designation is "without prejudice to positions on status, and it is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence".

After consulting with the Finish Presidency, the Romanian Presidency asked the directors general to express their thoughts on the matter of ReSPA by July 31st.

There were received several comments from Switzerland, Luxemburg, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, Sweden, Croatia and Czech Republic.

There were some objections on the admission of ReSPA as an observer taking into account EUPAN Handbook's allowing only countries as observers, several positive comments that support the admission of ReSPA, adding the need to change the EUPAN Handbook in the future.

Spain maintained the former opinion, mentioning that in case ReSPA is finally accepted as observer and, consequently, the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration (KIPA) is designated as ReSPA's National Coordinator, Spain requests that this designation is "without prejudice to positions on status, and it is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence", and therefore this statement has to be expressed in all circumstances related to the designation as observer and in all references to KIPA.

Taking into account the lack of consensus, there is the need to further discuss the matter in the future meetings of the network.