

# Quality of Public Administration: What have we learned, what can we do better

22–23 March 2018, Brussels, hotel Crowne Plaza

## Why?

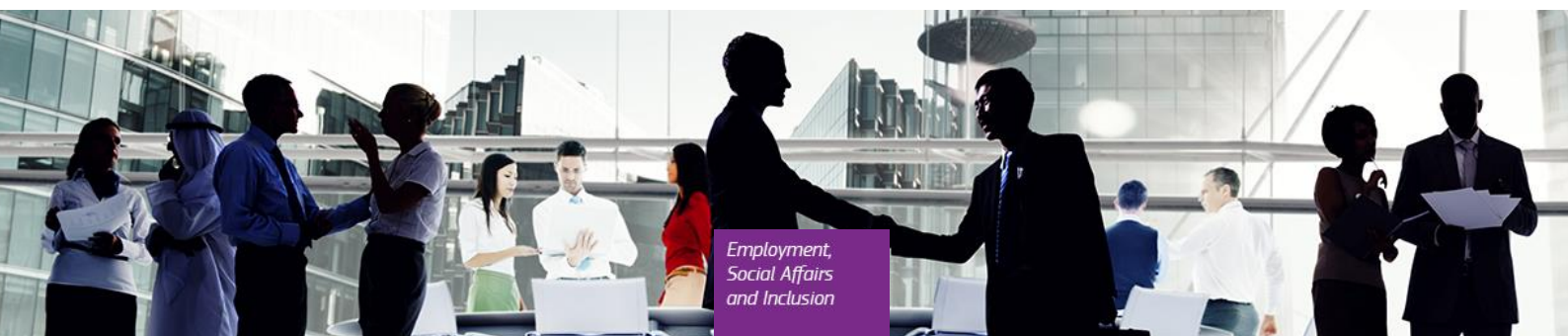
With around 75 million employees, the public administration in EU countries has an enormous influence and impact on the daily lives of our citizens and on the business environment. The quality of a country's institutions is a key determining factor for its well-being, economic competitiveness, prosperity and growth. To respond to citizens' expectations and deliver on national, EU and global objectives, many Member States are trying to improve the quality of public administration. The challenges of societal transformation that governments face are complex. They require long-term thinking and capacity at all levels. Moreover, good administrative quality and effective governance are preconditions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, to which all Member States and the EU have signed up.

In October 2014, experts from Member States, the European Commission, and researchers got together to discuss ways to achieve better results in modernisation of public

administration<sup>1</sup>. Some key conclusions from the event were that we need a regular dialogue and peer learning. Stronger commitment, better analytical capacities, better synergies between related EU instruments could enable better results. Besides the annual assessment of challenges, the Commission could play a stronger role in facilitating mutual exchange.

Since then, Member States have engaged in a wide range of initiatives to reshape their structures, systems and working methods. Some reforms aim at cross-cutting building blocks like stronger civil service, better policy making and performance, or quality of justice. Digital transformation and the pursuit of better public services have encouraged experimentation and innovation in the public sector in some Member States. Much of this activity is supported by the EU through the European Structural and Investment Funds, the Structural Reforms Support Programme, the

<sup>1</sup><http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventSld=1007&furtherEvents=yes>



Connecting Europe Facility, the ISA programme, and Horizon 2020.

### What?

Understanding better how administrative systems function and what results they produce is a critical first step towards improving and adapting public administrations to societal changes.

The European Commission has commissioned a study (EUPACK – European Public Administration Country Knowledge) to develop a consistent overview of the characteristics of public administrations and related reforms in all EU28 countries, as well as to understand better the role that EU support plays in enhancing the quality of public institutions. EUPACK started in September 2016 and is due to end in April 2018. It has produced a lot of high-quality information, conclusions and questions. EUPACK is carried out by the consortium of the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), Hertie School of Governance in Berlin and Ramboll Management Consulting, in collaboration with research teams in EU28 countries and a network of topical experts in dedicated areas.

As we start a dialogue on Europe after 2020, we invite you to take stock of what have we learned about improving the quality of public administrations and to discuss the possible avenues for future collaboration.

The seminar will focus on four topics:

- **The Member State context** – how to better understand, measure, and analyse public administration capacity, performance and development needs?

- **Steering change** – what have we learned from past experience? What makes organisational change successful and sustainable? How to inform future change?

- **Digital as a paradigm changer** – how can digital help improve the quality of public administration? What does digital transformation mean for public institutions?

- **An effective EU role** – how can the Commission better support Member States in their change efforts? What kind of collaboration between Member States, academia, experts and civil society can help improve the quality of public administrations?

The event will bring together practitioners to explore in a participative manner how to make public reform happen in Europe. It will also initiate a pragmatic discussion about the various approaches and practices to achieving – ultimately - excellent public administration in Europe. It will identify specific actions that can be taken in the short and medium term to improve change processes and maximise their success.

### Who?

The event will bring together public administration practitioners from EU Member States, the EU Funds managing authorities, leading academics, think tanks, the OECD, and the European Commission.

### When & Where?

22-23 March 2018

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Rue Ginestestraat 3, 1210 Brussels, Belgium

# Agenda

## DAY 1: Thursday, 22 March 2018

8.00 **Registration and welcome coffee**

9.00 **Welcome and framing of the event**  
*European Commission*

Maarten Verwey, Director General,  
Structural Reforms Support Service

Loris Di Petrantonio, Head of Unit  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and  
Inclusion

Emanuele BALDACCI, Director  
DG Informatics (DIGIT)

9.40 **Key findings from the EUPACK project**

Moderator: Alexander Heichlinger, EIPA

Nick Thijs: Characteristics of public  
administration in the EU28;

Gerhard Hammerschmid: Reform trends,  
processes and results;

Karin Attström : The role and effect of EU  
funding in support of public  
administration.

12.00 **Lunch**

13.00 **Parallel Workshops**

### **Topic 1. How to map and measure capacity and performance of public administration?**

*In this session the topic of measuring in Public Administration will be discussed with experts from the OECD, Oxford University, and Bertelsmann Foundation. Questions on what to measure, how to measure, how to use indicators, what are the current challenges and future opportunities will be analysed and discussed.*

Moderator: Nick Thijs

Wouter van Doren, University of Antwerp

Christof Schiller, Bertelsmann Stiftung

Lisa Jordan, UK Cabinet office

Zsuzsanna Lonti, OECD

Nicholas Charron, University of  
Gothenburg

### **Topic 2. How to manage successfully public administration reforms?**

*The session will, starting from the EUPACK lessons learned, explore the challenges in managing change/reform. Issues like “big bang” reforms vs incremental change, political support, planning and design; monitoring, evaluating and learning will be discussed in an interactive way.*

Moderator: Gerhard Hammerschmid,  
Hertie School of Governance

Marco Daglio, OECD

Vitalis Nakrosis, Vilnius University

Elke Löffler, Governance International

Nina Lagerholc, Ministry of Public  
Administration, Slovenia

15.00 **Coffee break**

15.15 **Parallel Workshops**

### **Topic 3: Civil Service Reform – what are the trends, lessons learnt and future challenges?**

*This topic deepens-out some key issues in civil service reforms. What have been key trends and lessons learnt? How to tackle some key issues on politicisation, professionalisation, capacity building and leadership?*

Moderator: Salvador Parrado, Spanish  
Distance Learning University

Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, University of  
Nottingham

Frits van der Meer, Leiden University

Katarina Staranova, Comenius University

**Topic 4: How are public administrations going digital?**

*What is the potential of digitalisation and digital tools on (current and) future reforms across policy areas?*

Moderator: Alessandro Zamboni

Samuel Arbe, Ministry of Interior, Slovakia

Frank Leyman, FPS Policy & Support - Digital Transformation Office, Belgium

Miguel Angel Amutio Gomez, General Secretariat for Digital Administration in the Ministry of Finance and Public Function, Spain

**17:15 Panel discussion on fostering learning and exchange**

*Vladimir Kvaca, European Social Fund network on public administration and governance*

*Edoardo Ongaro, the European Group for Public Administration (EGPA)*

*Juraj Nemec, the Network of Institutes and Schools of public administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPACEe)*

**18.15 Plenary conclusions from the first day**

**19.00 Dinner**

**DAY 2: Friday, 23 March 2018**

**09.00 How can the European Commission help support and improve the quality of public administrations?**

*Participative discussions on how can the Commission can help facilitate and support mutual learning and exchange of practices in partnership with Member State public administrations at different levels.*

**12.30 Concluding remarks – Outlook for the future of public administration in Europe**

**13.00 End of the event**