



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate General for Structural Reform Support
Support to Member States Reforms
Governance and Public Administration

31 March 2022

1st TECHNICAL MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

Executive summary

The first technical meeting of the Expert Group on Public Administration and Governance of the European Commission (“Expert Group”) took place on 31 March 2022 on a virtual session from 10:00-12:30 CET.

Representatives from the Member States included officials from national authorities responsible for horizontal issues, policy, coordination or modernisation in the area of public administration.

Mr Daniele Dotto, Deputy Director of Directorate B¹, chaired the meeting and steered the dialogue between the Commission and the Members of the Expert Group. He also presented the formal position of the Commission regarding the war of Russia against Ukraine, while referring to the strain that the refugee flows pose on certain Member States’ public administrations and to the need to respond to multiple crises and challenges.

The Members of the Expert Group adopted the agenda presented and the following topics were discussed:

1. Rules of Procedure and Working Methods

Ms Athina Manta, policy officer of DG REFORM², presented briefly the templated draft Rules of Procedures, shared in advance with the Members of the Expert Group in the three working³ languages of the European Commission. She focused on the role, status and rights of the Members, the Observers and the Experts respectively, as well as on the rules on transparency. She also invited the Members to provide their opinion for maximizing the benefit from Observer’s presence, including associations of local and regional administration, international organisations and research institutes. She also suggested various alternatives for working methods of the Expert Group, including the frequency and nature of high-level vs. technical meetings, interpretation, and the creation of a shared space for direct communication among the Members and the potential establishment of sub-groups at a later stage.

The Member States agreed in principle with the Rules of Procedure, whose formal adoption will be finalised via a short written procedure.

The points of attention raised, and largely shared, in principle, by the Commission, will be addressed via the working arrangements.

¹ Also Head of Unit B.2 - Governance and Public Administration of DG REFORM.

² Unit B.2 - Governance and Public Administration of DG REFORM.

³ English, French and German

2. Results of the survey

Ms Mina Shoylekova, policy officer of DG REFORM⁴, presented the results of the survey that the Members filled in as preparation of the technical meeting. She explained that most Members are interested in the elaboration of studies for shared challenges among public administrations, aspects of their functioning and organisation and multi-country projects. Several Members and services of the Commission (DG HR) indicated that the participation in studies should be voluntary and that studies of existing networks such as EUPAN and OECD or studies like the EUPACK, should be used and disseminated for common knowledge and for the avoidance of duplication of work. The topic of peer reviews and bench-learning sessions was clarified, following which several Members expressed their interest. As regards the ranking of the topics to be discussed during the technical meetings, Ms Shoylekova presented the order of preference stemming from the survey: a) management of the digital transformation; b) people-centred services; c) measuring public administration capacity and performance; d) common standards and principle of public administration; e) implementation of EU instruments; f) multi-level governance; g) attracting talent to public administration; h) skills in public administration. The topic of civil service issues relating mainly to human resources management systems was clarified and several Members explained that it was a core issue and hence should accordingly be dealt with in the works of the Expert Group. The topic of the attractiveness of civil service was indicated as a highly interesting subject.

3. Proposed work programme for 2022-23

Ms Nicole Donkers, policy officer of DG REFORM⁵, presented the proposed work programme of the Expert Group for 2022-23 based on the replies received in the survey, the initial reaction during the meeting as well as Commission priorities. Ms Donkers referred to the next High-Level meeting to be organised in Athens on 30 June 2022, with a focus on the Technical Support Instrument call for 2023, the exchange initiative of European civil servants, the Recovery and Resilience Facility- supported reforms, the principles of public administration and the measurement of public administration capacity & performance. She also proposed topics for the technical meetings for September/October 2022 (management of digital transformation, new technologies (AI) & people-centred (digital) services) and December 2022 (trends in public administration, evidence-informed policy making). One High-Level meeting and three technical meetings were suggested to take place in 2023.

An open and inclusive dialogue followed each presentation with several interventions from a number of Members representing France, Hungary, Austria, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Romania, Latvia, Sweden, Belgium and Greece.

Mr Dotto concluded the works of the technical meeting and thanked the Members for participating with constructive interventions and in a spirit of sincere, open and transparent collaboration. The Chairperson explained that all relevant materials would be circulated to the Members following the conclusion of the meeting.

⁴ Unit B.2 - Governance and Public Administration of DG REFORM.

⁵ Unit B.2 - Governance and Public Administration of DG REFORM.