

**INFORMAL MEETING
OF EU PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MINISTERS
22 June – Lisbon
Centro Cultural de Belém - Headquarters of the Presidency**

BACKGROUND AND CONCEPT NOTE

Seven years after the last EU Informal Meeting of Public Administration Ministers, EU Ministers responsible for Public Administration are invited by the Portuguese Presidency to meet on 22 June in Lisbon.

Together, Member States will have an opportunity to contribute to shape the near future of European cooperation for a closer and more innovative, participative, open and transparent Public Administration.

WHERE TO START?

It is hard to tackle the public administration field in a simple way.

On one hand, public services are a means of policy delivering, in all fields. On the other hand, public administration management is a policy field itself. Thus, Public Management is so much about politics as it is about administration and management. This is the starting point to define what kind of public administration we want or need.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS: WHAT FOR?

The function of Public Administration impacts citizens' well-being; civil society thriving and economic prosperity, as well as countries' growth potential.

In the light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and its recovery, Public Administrations have been the support of new and often swift implementation of public policies that had to be put in place in order to save lives and keep economies running. Solid and secure digital infrastructure and solutions proved to be crucial for delivering high-quality services to citizens and businesses, which is only possible through an efficient, innovative and interoperable public administration.

Strong and agile Public Administrations are required to carry on the ambitious package of reforms and investments of Member States' Recovery and Resilience Plans.

A NEW VISION FOR PA: HOW?

INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT - FOSTERING EUROPEAN COOPERATION AND BUILDING BRIDGES TOWARDS INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND NEW WAYS OF WORKING IN EU PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

Human capital is the most valuable asset of modern societies. Investing in people's skills and qualifications is the one of the most relevant investments to assure innovation, sustainable development and social and economic prosperity.

Public sector has been looking for more flexible ways to respond rapidly to ever-changing priorities in the future. New policies emerge regarding the hybrid working model, remote work and offices' organization. In the global crisis we are facing, international and

European cooperation is a key factor for successfully overcome the various challenges provoked by Covid-19 but also to better design and implement recovery policies.

Therefore, leadership, digital and linguistic skills must be developed hand in hand, as they are necessary for the overall modernization of public administrations, for embracing the new hybrid way of working and to foster cooperation among public administrations.

European cooperation has not been stopped by Covid-19, and public administrations were able to keep up the collaboration mainly due to online platforms. EUPAN, DISPA and CIO Network, among other European and informal *fora*, continued to meet and work together. These online experiences will certainly stay in the post-pandemic and recovering times ahead, but they must be complemented by mobility mechanisms that allow physical mobility. Exchanges of public officials between national administrations, including with the European Commission are an important tool for sharing culture and good practices in Public Administration and enhance mutual understanding. This also means that Member States and European institutions must continue their efforts on promoting equal opportunities and balanced representation among public servants and leaders in national and European administrations. Thus, a high-level discussion on best practices, measures and policies to promote gender balance and diversity in national and EU administrations, including geographical balance, will help Member States and EU to design and implement policies that allow its administrations to better reflect the society they serve.

EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY AND REINFORCING PROXIMITY AND INTEROPERABILITY - PROMOTING SECURE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WHILE LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

States set an example when it comes to digital transformation: towards a more agile public administration, offering better public services to citizens and companies in an European context. Digital transformation of public administration leaves no one behind and provide the means to have the time and opportunity to innovate towards closer and more open and transparent administrations, properly engaging citizens and civil society.

Digital transformation is therefore a pillar of the European social and economic development, and the public sector must lead by the example. The EU public administrations must be able to provide secure, integrated, human-centric and rights-based, 24/7 digital services, while fostering trustful governments that base their public policies on reliable and cross-sector data.

The Commission has recently presented a Digital Compass to translate the EU's digital ambitions for 2030 into concrete terms. Regarding public administration, it is expected that by 2030 all key public services should be available online and 80% citizens should use an eID solution. Member states are called to build the future together and meet these targets in due time.

Aligned with such goals, the European Commission is currently working with Member States to create the forthcoming *European Interoperability Strategy*; Member States recently signed the *Berlin Declaration on Digital Society and Value-based Digital Government*; the *Resilience and Recovery Facility* has a strong focus on digital transition; the *EU cybersecurity strategy* emphasises the need for Member States and EU public administrations to strengthen their cybersecurity, and several other actions are in place to enable more connected, resilient and innovative public administrations.

OUTCOMES

The main outcome of this Meeting will be a document of *Conclusions on close, innovative, participative, open and transparent Public Administration*.

A framework for a future EU public managers' exchange will be presented in the meeting, as well of a set of guiding principles for a human-rights based approach on public service and a brief paper on the challenges and opportunities of disruptive technologies to accelerate the digital transformation of European public administrations, prepared by Portugal.

KEY OBJECTIVES

1. To promote a dialogue around innovative ways of working in the public sector;
2. To share good practices in human resources management, namely on training, leadership, mobility, diversity and inclusion;
3. Enable the exchange of knowledge and experiences in exploring technology while leaving no one behind, as well as to discuss policies and initiatives advancing digital transformation in support of the Berlin Declaration;
4. Agree on a set of ministerial conclusions towards closer and more innovative, participative, open and transparent Public Administration in EU.

FORMAT

The Meeting will last one day and will include:

- opening and closing sessions;
- points of information on the topics of resilience and European recovery and global cooperation;
- discussion sessions on investing on people, developing management, exploring technology and reinforcing proximity in Public Administration;
- adoption of the Conclusions of the meeting.