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**CONCLUSIONS OF THE
INFORMAL MEETING OF EU
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
MINISTERS**

22 june, Lisboa

Conclusions of the Informal Meeting of EU Public Administration Ministers

on innovative, participative, open and transparent Public Administration close to people

IN THE CONTEXT OF:

The Trio Presidency Programme, which commits the three Presidencies to pay special attention to digitalization of public administration, and the Trio Presidency Declaration on Gender Equality, that bonds the three Presidencies to stand and act united to strive for gender equality in Europe;

The Portuguese Presidency's Programme, envisaging a more agile public administration, with a human centric approach, closer to citizens and businesses and capable of providing better public services;

The Berlin Declaration on Digital Society and Value-based Digital Government, strengthening the pioneering role of public administrations in driving a value-based digital transformation for European societies, translating the European social and fundamental rights that must lead the digital transformation of the public sector;

The "Lisbon Declaration – Digital Democracy with a Purpose", underlining the principles of human-centric design, including in digital public services;

The Recovery and Resilience Facility as the key instrument of the *NextGenerationEU*, being an opportunity to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in European societies and economies;

The Digital Compass 2030 presented by the Commission, setting out a European way for the digital decade;

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, presented by the Commission, specifically setting its priorities regarding access to essential services, education, training and life-long learning, inclusion as well as work-life balance;

The Porto Declaration and Porto Social Commitment, valuing social dialogue and the engagement of civil society and private stakeholders towards the implementation of the European Social Model;

AWARE THAT:

The Covid-19 crisis must not slow down the pace towards our European common goals and recovery efforts shall meet our vision for a greener, fairer and digital European Union.

Public Administrations can contribute to drive and rebuild societies and economies after this sanitary crisis, being an effective contribution towards a:

Resilient Europe

Public Administrations have been the support of new and often swift implementation of public policies that were put in place in order to save lives, to ensure public services and keep economies running, in the light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and recovery. These times of emergency that Europe and the world has been living since March 2020 were a stress test for States as public services providers. In order to continue to fulfil its role, the public sector has quickly adapted to more flexible ways of working to respond to the sanitary crisis and several lockdowns that Member States have faced.

As for the future, strong and agile Public Administrations are required to carry on the ambitious package of reforms and investments of Member States' Recovery and Resilience Plans, contributing to improve citizens' trust and transparency in public finances, management and control procedures of EU funds and its final beneficiaries.

Green Europe

Public administrations should lead by example when it comes to the implementation of sustainability goals and climate neutrality and take all possible measures to reduce their own carbon footprint. Being the structure for the development of all policy fields, public organizations are crucial for mainstreaming practices of green-thinking and behaviors, designing and evaluation of public policies, so that climate neutrality becomes a reality.

Mind-set change is a challenge all Member States are facing when tackling climate change and the European Green Deal targets. Therefore, sharing of own experience and good practices and knowledge can be a starting point for mainstreaming into the daily working environment of public administrations, as well to develop green policies and deliver green or do-no-harm services.

Digital Europe

Smart and reliable digital infrastructure and solutions are crucial for delivering safe high-quality and user-friendly services to citizens and businesses, which is only possible through an efficient, innovative and interoperable public administration. European public administrations should lead the way in ensuring that they provide a cyber-secure digital infrastructure that supports the exchange of data and seamless service delivery, while having a simple and inclusive front office to deliver public services in a human-centric perspective. Exploring technology while leaving no one behind means to promote digital inclusion in a broad sense - improving accessibility, usability and assisted digital services, bearing in mind people's special needs, territorial cohesion and physical proximity, especially in peripheral, rural and other potentially vulnerable regions, while also providing alternative solutions for people who cannot use digital services and helping them develop the necessary skills to be more self-reliant in the future .

Social Europe

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.

New policies emerged from the Covid-19 crisis regarding hybrid working models, remote working and workplaces' organization. Nevertheless, old inequalities remain, and work-life balance challenges must be tackled considering equal opportunities for women and men.

In parallel, EU public administrations must be able to provide integrated, human-centric and rights-based services, while fostering trusted governments that base their public policies on reliable and cross-sector data.

Global Europe

From Europe to other parts of the globe, and vice-versa, solidarity was key to combating the pandemic and the global threat it posed. Furthermore, international cooperation was further strengthened during Covid-19 and public administrations were able to keep up the collaboration, using communication technologies and online platforms.

In the global crisis that EU Member States are facing, international cooperation is a key factor for successfully overcoming the various challenges provoked by Covid-19 but also to better design and implement recovery and resilience policies.

MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AGREE:

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

On mobility and exchanges

- *Welcoming* the general framework proposal by Portugal for a future EU leadership exchange programme as an idea for flexibly and voluntarily fostering exchanges for public managers on a bilateral or multilateral level, between Member States and/or with EU institutions. The idea for an EU leadership exchange programme may complement existing bilateral schemes between Member States, secondments of National Experts to EU institutions and short duration exchange formats like the recently founded EUPAN Summer School.
- *Learning more about* the pilot project to be hosted by Portugal in 2022 based on this framework. Ministers *invite* next Presidencies to follow up on this process and to stimulate the sharing of experiences and good practices across EU Public Administrations, namely in the context of the current active networks EUPAN and DISPA and by promoting common training for public servants.
- *Recognizing* that the secondment of National Experts constitutes an added value for the Member States and for the European Institutions.
- *Acknowledging* the importance of promoting learning of foreign languages among civil servants, which is a precondition for effective exchanges.
- *Committing* to value the experience that civil servants have gained through secondments in other public administrations, including the EU administration, in their career assessment and progression.

On diversity and inclusion

- *Underlining* the importance of comprehensive geographical balance in the recruitment policies of the EU Institutions, as enshrined in the EU Staff Regulations, and the critical need to take appropriate measures and to promote best practices, including the regular

and systematic availability of data on geographical balance in the EU Institutions to pinpoint specific challenges and to measure progress, in view of addressing the existing shortfalls, in closer cooperation between Member States, EU Institutions and other stakeholders, while keeping a merit-based selection system and the transparency of procedures.

- *Emphasizing* that potent and comprehensive anti-discrimination, equality and diversity policies must be developed and implemented in order to ensure that the public sector attracts the most skillful and best performing staff and talents, thereby breaking down both social and cultural barriers and prejudice and ensuring that the civil service represents the plural and diverse society it serves, both at national and European level.
- *Highlighting* the importance of public employers leading by example when it comes to inclusion in the workplace offering opportunities and providing adequate working conditions for people with disabilities.
- *Welcoming* the initiatives already taken by the EU institutions to enhance diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process bearing in mind that diverse and inclusive teams perform better.

On new ways of working and leadership

- *Building on* the impact that Covid-19 had in the ways of working in public administration, continuing to take advantage of information technologies, digital transformation and their impacts and to address emerging needs and desires related to remote working and office organization, namely by exchanging best practices on new ways of working and on the management of hybrid teams amongst our public administrations.
- *Promoting* skills and qualification policies for public managers and workers, so that civil service may be equipped with the necessary tools and know-how, in particular managerial and digital skills, to provide a high-quality service to the public.
- *Underlining* the need for policies and measures that promote women's participation and gender balance in management posts, as well as the relevance of sharing best practices.
- *Noting that* life-cycle oriented human resources policies can help fostering in work-life balance as well as tackling age imbalance in the public sector so that public administration, remaining an attractive employer for the younger generations.

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

On Interoperability and Cybersecurity

- *Promoting* the work of the forthcoming European Interoperability Policy and its common standards and solutions, towards a digitally transformed and interoperable public administration, at the local, national and European level
- *Furthering* digital sovereignty, trust and security within the European Union's public administrations, through data protection, a secure digital identity environment and governance.
- *Assuring* that public administrations stand at the forefront of the continuous strengthening of cybersecurity, including through a closer cooperation between public administrations to address jointly the increasing number and sophistication of cyber-attacks on public administrations, while investing in their strategic autonomy and thus protecting citizens and business.
- *Promoting* the continuation of a regular cooperation, in particular with regard to the delivery of personal security clearances (PSC) as well as the handling of classified Information (EUCI) based on user-friendly secure tools.

On innovative, data-driven and cross border digital public services

- *Promoting* innovation towards seamless and proactive services whenever possible and appropriate, namely by serving as pilot or innovation partner, both nationally and across borders and across sectors, answering to the progressively higher expectations of citizens in this digital age, and improving the overall experience for citizens and businesses, in a user-centric approach.
- *Committing* to the use and reuse of available data, in accordance with ethical and responsible principles, fostering interoperable data-driven and transparent public administrations, mainstreaming of digital audits for the management and control of public finances, accelerating innovation and promoting productivity and growth.

On human-centric, inclusive and value based public digital transformation

- *Closing* the digital divide by providing services in a coherent and convenient way, omnichannel and assisted digital services whenever necessary, and strengthening territorial cohesion by promoting proximity services.
- *Acknowledging* the importance of a human-centric and ethical approach to the digital transformation that ensures the inclusion and engagement of all citizens and stakeholders in regards to services' design, usage and evaluation, going beyond customer experience and focusing on public participation and digital democracy;
- *Fostering* participation towards a progressive broad and inclusive participatory ecosystem as cornerstone for innovative democratic governance models, improving public sector capacity, people's trust in institutions and legitimacy, contributing to a full digital democracy that frames free, informed, inclusive and secure options.

FOLLOW-UP

- *Inviting* all Member States, through EUPAN, DISPA and CIO Network, to support, promote and implement the present conclusion's principles and objectives;
- *Inviting* the French Presidency of the Council of the EU to take stock of the implementation of the conclusions in the first half of 2022.



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ANNEX

Protocol Statement of Hungary to the Conclusions of the Informal Meeting of the EU Public Administration Ministers

Equality between women and men is enshrined in the treaties of the European Union as a fundamental right. Hungary ensures equality between women and men within the framework of the Hungarian national legal system in accordance with internationally binding human rights instruments and within the framework of fundamental values and principles of the European Union. For these reasons in place where the Conclusions refers to gender equality, Hungary will interpret it as equality between women and men, according to Article 8 TFEU.