Recommendations for the future of EUPAN

(submitted to the Directors General responsible for Public Administration in the EU Member States on December 3rd, 2015)

Content

1   Preliminaries

The starting point of the EUPAN evaluation process was **the DGs resolution from Rome, December 2014, which fixed 3 main areas where further reforms could be envisaged in EUPAN**: make EUPAN cooperation more relevant and focused with clear deliverables; find an effective way of selecting practical topics for a common agenda in line with MSs and EU level priorities; focus on ways to develop a shared view and improve the organisation and working method of the network.

The current document is a set of concrete recommendations/scenarios for the future of EUPAN based on the aggregated discussions of all TF meetings, the HR/IPSG meeting on October 15th in Luxembourg and the aggregated comments and reactions received since then and until now from MS.

These discussions have been informed by the summary of recommendations and insights collected during the preceding broadly instated analyses and reflection phase and the decisions taken and mandate issued at the DG meeting of June 2015 in Riga.

While compiling an exhaustive inventory of all recommendations and ideas collected from the different open answers to the questionnaires by Member-States and from stakeholders' interviews, it appears that the recommendations have to address the following areas of concern for strengthening EUPAN's position and functioning:

1. Mission statement clarification – definition of EUPAN's current role, ambition priorities, strategic action and scope
2. Political commitment – involvement of Ministers and DGs in order to create more impact
3. Governance and consistency and continuity of agendas – concentrate on fewer topics and define strategic domains in cooperation with MS, EC, and Presidencies to ensure better continuity
4. Type of results – create more actionable EUPAN specific results at a strategic level that don't overlap with other network's outputs
5. Dissemination of results at European level and within national Public Administrations
6. Working methods – start using and experimenting with more actionable, collaborative and interactive state of the art working methods for meetings, actions and remote collaboration
7. Working groups – give the structure flexibility to allow working on the relevant and pressing PA topics in an appropriate way
8. Support activities – monitoring and data collection; knowledge management and collaboration, website, handbook, permanent contact point, resources

The green texts explain in more detail the "why" of these recommendations as identified during the analyses and reflection phase.

The current document will be submitted to the December 3th, 2015 DG meeting to be held in Luxembourg.

Topics and elements not covered in the current document continue to be ruled by the current version of the handbook. The present recommendations, once accepted by the DG meeting will inform a new updated version of the handbook.

Implementation of these recommendations should be experimental making use of pilot projects and prototypes. This experimental and flexible approach will allow assessing their worthiness.

Implementation actions can be designed and executed after that DG meeting.

The whole discussions that took place during the TF lifespan clearly showed that the strength of EUPAN lies in its informality and that improving the quality of results can be achieved by defining a more fluid governance and process model, by creating more opportunities for strategic action but also by an updated work culture that adapts to today's disruptive challenges in leadership, management and innovation capacity building, taking into account the cultural and structural diversity of PAs in the different MS.

2 Governance

2.1 Strategy paper

2.1.1 Content & design

The SP defines **strategic domains to be dealt with at an operational level** during each Presidency (and within a rolling program).

Examples for such domains and wider themes, also inspired by the identified challenges during the EUPAN evaluation phase could be:

- ***Strategic HRM*** *(Talent, retention and succession management, employer branding, diversity… etc.)* & ***Organizational development*** *(Management & collaboration 2.0, leadership 2.0, strategic planning, digital transformation, process management, organizational learning & knowledge management… etc.)*

- ***Principles of good policy making and service design & delivery*** *(evidence-based management, co-creation, easy access to services, impact assessment..etc)*

- ***Innovation*** *and quality management frameworks and capacity building*

- ***Public administration reform implementation***

- ***Open government, Trust & transparency*** *(open government data, participation and collaboration with citizens and civil society stakeholders, …)*

- *etc*

- An EUPAN **strategy paper (SP)** is developed for a **period of 3 years** (6 Presidencies). The strategy paper is a short and focused statement and vision document highlighting a limited number of major strategic domains (3-4) to be dealt with during the next 3 years.
- **All MS have to be involved** and consulted in the process at DG level.
- **EUPAN DGs have to be involved in drafting** the SP, after suitable consultation with their Ministers.
- SPs should define **strategic domains that value EUPAN's capacities and uniqueness**.
- SPs should **reflect identified and most important challenges for the future of Public Administrations** in national, international and European contexts.

2.1.2 Reporting

- The experience of an SP and the way it was executed and/or respected as a guideline for designing rolling programs (see hereafter) should be reported in some way at the end of a current SP.

- The report will also inform the design of the next SP.
- Expected results will be defined under the RPs.

Why?

- ✓ *Current EUPAN activities and governance model don't embrace a long term perspective.*
- ✓ *EUPAN action should become more strategic and more flexible to deal with a fast moving, diverse and complex world, first and foremost to create more impact.*
- ✓ *MS including their DGs and Ministers should engage more in strategic planning and steering of EUPANs activities in order to create more traction but also to treat topics according to their operational (and hierarchical) positioning.*
- ✓ *Current MTP format is in fact at the same time a strategic document and a work program and was established for 3 semesters by the Trio under which each Presidency defined its actions.*
- ✓ *18 months for the current MTPs is too short to guarantee strategic continuity and to long as a work program.*
- ✓ *To clarify the separation of strategic directions and questions (based on major PA challenges) and operational activities, the creation of two different instruments seems necessary: A strategic paper (every 3 years) and a rolling program RP (see 2.2), the latter being updated by each Presidency.*
- ✓ *Under the specific guiding priorities of an SP, subsequent RPs will be better integrated and guarantee more continuity and focus. That's the reason for the proposed name: 'Rolling Program'.*
- ✓ *In order to create more strategic impact, SPs should be regularly checked against predefined actionable criteria to help refocusing operational activities when needed and as soon as possible.*
- ✓ *National cultural and structural specificities of MS should be better taken into account during the whole course of action.*

2.2   Rolling Program

2.2.1   Content & design

The current MTP format governed by a TRIO will be replaced by a Rolling Program (RP) that will continuously be defined and updated by successive EUPAN 5s (E5), composed by the leaving Presidency, the current Presidency and the 2 following Presidencies and the EC, under the direction of each successive Presidency and within the SP currently in force.

It's the overlapping nature of the E5 body that will ensure a better continuity as one of the main objectives of the proposed governance model SP – RP.

In other words, each Presidency RP will have a 6 month life span but smoothly linking activities and actions within E5s and the SP currently in force. That means that each RP

always operates in a fluid 18 month programming perspective as each RP is designed in the perspective of 3 active Presidencies plus the leaving Presidency to ensure continuity and the EC. In that perspective, this includes the possibility that any topic driven by a Presidency could also be launched before that Presidency starts and it could continue after the end of that Presidency.

The inspiration for specific operational tasks under the RPs should be balanced between the SP currently in force, the EU agenda, the current Presidency agenda and MS consultations.

The RPs should have a short and concise format listing key elements in a structured tabular way.

The RP will be validated during a DG meeting, after preliminary consultation that takes place at least once per Presidency. (DG's will also decide whether an activity will be continued or not.)

The RPs are EUPAN's work programs for the successive E5s.

2.2.2   Drafting a Rolling Program

- The RP should define the quality of the specified expected results.
- The RP must argument the choice of each topic in terms of problems to be solved, desired outcome and added-value to be created for EUPAN as well as ways to measure those.
- The successive RPs should be submitted for discussion and involvement at the DGs meetings.
- It has to be managed and executed by the EUPAN delegates at their respective working levels.

2.2.3   Monitoring

- At the end of each Presidency, the current E5 should deliver an executive summary report of EUPAN's activities (meeting of expectations, topics covered, results created…etc.).
- The report should have a short and concise format listing key elements and results in a structured tabular way to be submitted to DGs.
- The report should include feedback on dissemination reach and impact of EUPAN results within national PAs.

2.2.4 Operations

- Current EUPAN operations will be assured by the current E5 under the leadership of the current Presidency.
- RP will be designed in order to sustain continuity of operations between subsequent Presidencies under a given SP.
- There will be at least one DG meeting per Presidency prepared sufficiently in advance to enable strategic and informed decision making at the DG level.
- A special attention will be given to continuity, complementarity and transferability of topics and activities between the ministerial level, the DG level and the working group level.

Why?

- ✓ *RPs (which are in fact work programs) should emphasize on fewer topics and outcomes to bundle resources and create more impact (lack of impact being EUPAN's most cited weakness).*
- ✓ *Topics should take into account different stakeholders and different structures around a RP: EU agenda, current Presidency, E5 and MS consultation.*
- ✓ *RP action description should include desired outcomes and impact and the way how those will be assessed (thereby strengthening EUPAN's strategic management capacities).*
- ✓ *We have to ensure strong enough DG level involvement and engagement in decision making.*

2.3 Membership

- Membership is defined in the current handbook: EUPAN is an informal network of the DGs responsible for PA in the MS of the EU, the EC and observer countries.
- A membership vademecum will be developed, defining minimal rights and duties of being a EUPAN member. This membership vademecum, summarized in a few lines, will be integrated in an updated EUPAN handbook.
- Each EUPAN member should nominate 2 permanent EUPAN delegates in their respective MS in line with the working level domains defined at section 3.3 in order to ensure continuity at the WG level. Delegates can be accompanied by topic experts where needed. Although, total number of MS participants to WG meeting should be limited to two in order not to overcharge the Presidency budgets.

Why ?

- ✓ *In order to maintain EUPAN's uniqueness, membership shall be limited to EU member states, the EC and observer countries.*

✓ *In order to foster engagement (and thus impact), members' minimal rights and duties shall be better defined.*

✓ *In order to guarantee continuity and collaboration also at the interpersonal level and to keep traction within EUPAN's activities, each member should designate two EUPAN delegates (which can be the current WG regular members) who can also better serve as a single national point of contact and dissemination channel.*

2.4 Partnerships

- EUPAN has a long tradition in partnering and cooperating at different levels with other organizations (i.e. academic institutions, other relevant professional organizations). EUPAN will continue to cultivate these partnerships where relevant in the frame of the respective RPs and SPs.

- The informal social dialogue between EUPAN and TUNED will continue to be governed according to the decisions of June 2012 under the Danish Presidency.

3 Type of activities and results

3.1 Minister meeting

- EUPAN ministers <u>preferably</u> will meet at least every 3 years to validate a forthcoming SP and to discuss evaluation of the leaving SP. In case Ministers cannot meet, the SP will be validated by DGs.

3.2 DG meeting

- DGs will meet at least once per Presidency to discuss strategic DG level topics in line with SP and RP. They should produce specific DG level results.

3.3 Working level meeting(s)

3.3.1 Meeting domains

- EUPAN will continue to cover the existing two main areas of interest at the Working Level.
- These Working Level domains will be widened in their conceptual frame and will consist of
    - HR Innovation & Organizational Development (internal PA perspective)
    - Service Innovation and Delivery (external PA perspective)
- Meetings and topics should be **treated within the perspectives of the SP currently in force**.

3.3.2 Meeting frequency

- Each Presidency will hold at least one WL meeting covering the two domains but can decide to hold additional meetings (unless exceptional circumstances justify otherwise).

3.3.3 Meeting structure

- Groups in repeating parallel sessions (and joined meetings) to allow each participant to dive into each topic to foster horizontal & joined approaches

3.3.4 Meeting composition & representation

- Each country nominates two permanent delegates, one per domain.
- They will also be the permanent EUPAN contact points in their respective countries.
- Meetings can be joined by national topical experts where needed
- (At least one of the two permanent EUPAN delegates should participate at each Working Level meeting)

Why ?

- ✓ *In recent years more and more subjects that are of high interest to EUPAN didn't really fit within one of the existing working groups or that some Presidencies "invented" content and input for one of those working groups to provide them with content. EUPAN performance and resource allocation efficiency is negatively impacted by those circumstances.*
- ✓ *At the same time, it is important to maintain the historic networks and links of existing WG members to avoid losing pace and traction of EUPAN activities. In such a way current working group topics and teams could continue to be represented in the Working Level meetings and activities of each Presidency, along with an opening towards other subjects and experts as a reaction to the first argument.*
- ✓ *WG meetings should also be systematically assessed for continuous improvement and impact strengthening.*

3.4   Conferences

- EUPAN will maintain and develop events like the **Quality Conference, CAF event and others** (social gathering, exchange of good practices and frameworks, testing of innovative working and collaboration methods). The topics treated at the quality conference will be in line with the current and/or forthcoming SP.
- EUPAN will restate the objectives and intended outcome of the QC and monitor impact and results.
- EUPAN will consider additional conferences and / or expert seminars on specific topics of strategic relevance and interest.

Why ?

- ✓ *These type of events remain an excellent tool for personal real-life networking, collaboration and knowledge exchange, in an informal and social atmosphere.*

3.5   Studies

- EUPAN will continue to initiate and coordinate prospective and comparative studies on different topics in line with SP and RP together with other partners including academia.
- Studies can be extended over several Presidencies / RPs in order to strengthen the quality and the depth of their results.
- Studies should define criteria for ex-post quality assessment of results already at the definition phase of the study.
- Studies will better consider context and transferability of results.

Why ?

- ✓ *High quality studies often require more time than 6 months.*
- ✓ *MS have heterogeneous cultures, structures, processes and mandates. Each type of activity and result should better take into account these differences, find ways to "normalize" insights and thereby facilitate transferability.*

3.6   Discussion notes

- EUPAN can publish discussion notes on topics in relation to SP and RP. These discussion notes should be short and concise, clearly pointing to the actual question / problem (2 pagers).
- EUPAN can publish position papers on different topics where needed, if approved upon by all MS.

Why ?

- ✓ *EUPAN should increase its impact and strengthen its position also via more discussion notes in streamlined and focused formats ('2 pagers').*

3.7   Good practices & case studies

- EUPAN will continue to collect, analyze and disseminate good practices, case studies and frameworks via different acquisition and publishing channels by paying a special attention to context-sensitivity within and transferability amongst part of MS.
- Type of good practices and case studies should mainly be in line with SP and RP.

3.8   PA database

- EUPAN will dynamically define a minimum set of basic PA data from all EUPAN members to be collected and updated according to new information provided anytime and at least once a year.
- This basic datasets will be made available in a harmonized and normalized frame to official EUPAN members.
- Availability of these data to other partners will have to be discussed and negotiated on a case by case basis.
- They may include statistics, HR data and analytics but also fact sheets on major reforms going on in EUPAN MS, PA ministries mandates and organizational models…etc. Delivering these data is part of the membership code of conduct duties.
- The detailed design of the PA factsheet template and its primary content will be part of the implementation phase as it requires a deeper analyses of specific needs & purpose as well some benchmarking, including the level of open access to the gathered

- data.

Why ?

- ✓ *To better focus EUPAN's activities and inform action and priority setting, a regularly updated database of basic PA data from MS is needed.*

3.9 Presidency summary

- Each Presidency will have to organize at least 1 working level meeting and 1 DG level meeting.
- It also has to animate virtual digital collaboration between EUPAN delegates as well as provide content for updating the website.
- The current RP will define which type of result and activity has to be produced on top of that.
- It will also take over the single point of contact from the leaving Presidency (see Communication hereafter, including Website updating).
- It will be responsible for updating the PA database (see 3.8).

4 Working methods

4.1 Experientialism

- EUPAN will embrace new and more innovative working & workshop methods and prototype them at all possible occasions ("Design Thinking mindset"). The experience and outcome of these experiments will be systematically documented and assessed.

4.2 Collaboration & interactivity

- Collaboration and meetings will be made more interactive and participatory.
- WG meetings will be divided in smaller topical sub-groups working in a complementary or competitive fashion.
- WGs will intensify virtual collaboration (see "Knowledge Management" hereafter) in an ongoing basis and between physical meetings.

4.3 Flexibility

- Sub groups may also work on specific topics of shared interest within a subgroup of members.
- Working group topics can cover all kinds of topics in line with SP and RP.

Why ?

- ✓ *One of EUPANs main objectives is to bring forward PA knowledge and public management capacities. In transformational and disruptive times like ours, it is therefore necessary that EUPAN embraces itself new innovative working methods and models, also to maintain and strengthen credibility towards EUPAN's stakeholders and target audiences.*

5 Knowledge management

5.1 Benchlearning

- Benchlearning is and has always been at the core of EUPAN activities and related value creation which underlines EUPAN's legitimacy and uniqueness.
- As a concept, benchlearning is an effective way of knowledge sharing and acquisition.
- Benchlearning can have many different formats depending on the objectives and available resources.
- Additional benchlearning activities that are in line with current state of the art innovation practices could be
  - The exchange of civil servants between member states (for example for transferring Presidency know-how)
  - Discussion forums with specific user groups (employer branding & talent management, open innovation…etc)
  - …etc

5.2 Intranet / Digital collaboration

- Consider the setting up of a social Intranet for digital collaboration, by considering the following possibilities / ideas that can directly inform a specification document:
  - Use a modern "Enterprise Social Network (ESN)" like tool that allows for free horizontal and transparent information and discussion flows and connection between participants (with subgroups based on interests, topics and on memberships in particular working groups and hierarchies (DG group, E5 group , Topic XYZ group, EC group, HR group, Presidency group, Quality group,….etc.).
  - Reduce emailing and use the social collaboration tool instead for most communications (creates "intrinsic" and semi-automated knowledge management").
  - ESN members (users) can connect to each other based on shared interest or just by curiosity.
  - A simple process should allow creating additional groups for discussing topics of relevance and interest at a strategic level: This helps to create an ongoing exchange of information and discussion on topics of shared interest, thereby naturally generating higher engagement, discussions outside of organizational silos, revealing patterns of what really matters in daily and strategic PA business.
  - A "social Intranet" will also serve as a MS delegate maintained contact directory and for collaboration with external partners (in dedicated closed discussion groups).
  - Using an ESN requires writing down governance and editorial guidelines and some community management activity and can be integrated into the handbook (handed over from Presidency to Presidency).

- o Using an ESN fosters collaboration, speed and transparency.
- o Upcoming Presidencies should analyze the needs for improved digital collaboration in more detail and define under which conditions (financial resources, human resources and technological constraints) a new tool could be put in place and tested, including more detailed specifications for such a tool (knowing that today the management model is the technology and vice-versa).

Why ?

- ✓ *The value of an organization lies more and more in its capacity to unleash its collective intelligence, instate efficient processes and constant knowledge flows as well as in the quality of knowledge and collaboration management, in a transparent and horizontal manner.*
- ✓ *More collaboration is needed between EUPAN events and meetings in order to increase impact and the quality of outcomes.*
- ✓ *The flexibility offered by the informal character of the EUPAN network should be better exploited in terms of knowledge acquisition and sharing.*

5.3 Handbook

- The handbook will be reedited/updated based on the validated recommendations worked out by the current TF.
- Add more practical information and road maps for Presidencies like timetables, procedures and templates to be used in order to guarantee consistency, comparability and relevance of these different types of documents (emails, letters, topical 1 or 2 pagers, other notes, meeting minutes and invitations, discussion notes, surveys and studies, SP, RP, website management, standard tool for accreditation…etc.).
- Make the handbook more modular (so that individual parts can be used and updated in context).
- Generally, the handbook should bring practical information on EUPAN functioning, structure & procedures (along with the mission statement) and define minimum standards for each EUPAN output.

Why ?

- ✓ *The handbook is an important tool for communicating and defining a new governance model and strategic visions.*
- ✓ *It also helps formalizing and communicating EUPAN processes and intended recurring outcomes.*
- ✓ *Together with its content, it should communicate modernism and innovation mindset through the format in which it is designed, thereby embracing a more agile composition of its elements.*

✓ *The handbook, together with other knowledge related activities should strengthen the support for the successive Presidencies.*

6 Communication

6.1 Website

- Currently, the website is EUPAN's central communication channel with the public and between EUPAN members, thereby influencing how EUPAN is publically perceived and also reflecting EUPAN's self-image.
- Before proceeding to any kind of possible upgrade, the concrete objectives of the Website should be defined, key target audiences identified in perspective of the current evaluation process and expressed needs (or reconfirmed, as similar exercices have already been undertaken) and accordingly a content and feature structure blueprinted.
- A survey amongst member states could then determine whether they are ready to contribute financially to an upgrade of the EUPAN website (upgrading the existing website or building a new one from scratch) to bring it to the "state of the art" and to reflect the aspiration of EUPAN within the frame of Public Sector Innovation & capacity building.
- Guidelines on the maintenance of the Website should be defined (or updated) : responsibilities, frequency of updates, type of updates, etc.…
- An upgraded website should also include SEO (referencing) and analytics in order to better track usage and adapt the content accordingly.
- Upcoming Presidencies should analyze the needs for a better web communication in more detail and define under which conditions (financial resources, human resources and technological constraints) a relaunch of the current website should be instated or not.

Why ?

- ✓ *More impact and a better performance require a better organization and communication, including dissemination of results.*
- ✓ *Today, a website, apart from its content and functionalities, also communicates the culture of the owner organization via its look and feel and state of the art in Web publishing.*
- ✓ *"There is only 1 chance to give a first impression."*

6.2 Single point of contact

- EUPAN will create a single point of contact (basically a permanent email address) that will be handed over from Presidency to Presidency and guidelines on how to answer requests per email shall be defined. The handling of that email address should be guaranteed by the current Presidency's mandated national EUPAN delegates.

- At the same time, each member state will instate a national EUPAN single point of contact by creating a country specific EUPAN email address (managed by the 2 'official' EUPAN delegates).

Why?

- ✓ *Streamlining communication channels will reduce administrative overload in network communication, improve targeted and quick communication as well as positively impact EUPAN's external branding (considered being a problem during the EUPAN evaluation process).*

7 Implementation strategy, design & actions

The EUPAN network usually deals with PA challenges and future evolutions and solutions. It should thus adopt itself new ways of working and thinking in governing its own activities at all levels (credibility and leadership). This will also be a nice test environment and laboratory for emerging program design & implementation practices that shape the future of PAs under changing paradigms.

Our world has become a VUCA world (Volatility-Uncertainty-Complexity-Ambiguity), an ongoing beta mode, where the new success factors for organizations are dynamic capabilities, absorptive capacity, resilience and agility.

Experimentation, prototyping, piloting, co-creation and constant feedback monitoring together with other new working methods are thus the necessary practices and ingredients to face these challenges and guide the implementation of the Task Forces' recommendations as well as most other future EUPAN activities and intended results (including experimentation, protoyping, feedback gathering and adaptation).

The following subpoints are an illustration of the most important implementation domains and actions that can be directly deducted from the reccommendations. A more detailed list of possible and/or necessary implemention actions will be bundled in the documents submitted at the DG meeting, also to inform the first RP pilot as well as the resolution.

7.1 Strategy paper

As proposed by the upcoming Dutch Presidency, a prototype of the proposed SP could be prototyped in a dedicated working level activity (i.e. workshop). The experiences gathered could inform a final format for the future or an additional experimentation round.

7.2 Rolling Program

In the same spirit, the best way to design RPs under the SPs should be prototyped, tested and constantly adapted.

7.3 Working level meetings

The new working level meeting model should also be first prototyped, tested and constantly adapted and fine-tuned in search for increased flexibility, agility, impact, quality of results and more dynamic processes within EUPAN.

7.4 PA factsheets

The detailed design of the PA factsheet template and its dynamic content will also be part of the implementation phase as it requires a deeper analyses of specific needs & purpose as well some benchmarking against existing initiatives, including the level of open access to the gathered data.

7.5   Knowledge management

As more distributed digital collaboration has the potential to increase the speed and the quality of EUPAN output and results, new ways of working implying new tools should be tested and evaluated before taking a final decision.

7.6   Communication

Before proceeding to any kind of possible website upgrade, it's concrete objectives should be defined, key target audiences identified and accordingly a content and feature structure designed (or updated or reconfirmed).

7.7   Handbook

The handbook should be gradually updated with the new elements that will be approved at the DG level meeting in to be held in December 2015, as well by the conclusions of the different resulting experiments and pilots. It shouldn't be to prescriptive and built and managed in an evolutionary, dynamic and modular way.