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Slovensko predsedovanje Svetu Evropske unije  
Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

# **Results of the Evaluation of the EUPAN Strategy Paper July 2019 – June 2022**

**January 2022**



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## Summary

Based on the presented analysis, it is evident that the main topics of the EUPAN presidencies between January 2020 and December 2021 were heavily influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic started after the Finnish presidency, it was not affected. All of the following presidencies – Croatia, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia – were affected by the changes in the whole world resulting from the pandemic. Understandably, this not only affected the implementation of the meetings, workshops etc., but also the focus point of the topics of interest.

Despite these exceptional circumstances, the presidencies followed the main topics that they set in the Rolling Programmes, but incorporated the effects of the pandemic.

The strategic domains were *Digitalization and innovation*, *Ethics and organizational culture* and *Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM)*, while the main challenges were the COVID-19 pandemic, trust in public administration, digitalization, transfer of knowledge between generations and intergenerational cooperation, sustainable public finances, and result-oriented and outcome-oriented public administrations.

The results of the questionnaire analysis show that the SP is flexible and the topics are set broadly enough to allow the above topics to be addressed from different angles due to the changed situation.

Most of the topic examples stated in the SP were indicated as important or very important, therefore it would be reasonable to take them into account going forward. Under each strategic domain, comments were written by respondents on the experiences and challenges they faced during the COVID-19 crisis in their public administrations. They can provide valuable guidance in designing the new SP.

The meeting formats were also adjusted to the crisis (the vast majority was carried out in an online format instead of a live event) and they were seen as suitable. However, it was stated by many respondents that the online format is suitable for Secretariat meetings but for the Working Level and Directors General meeting, it is far more valuable to have a live event due to the lack of informal interaction when conducting them online.



## Introduction

The EUPAN Strategy Paper (hereinafter: SP) is a short, focused statement and a vision document defining and highlighting major strategic domains (3-4) and topical areas of EUPAN, to be dealt with at the working level during each presidency. The objective of the SP is to focus on a limited number of strategic domains that value EUPAN's capacities and uniqueness and encompass the most important challenges for the future of public administration in national, European and international contexts.

The SP is developed for a period of three years (six presidencies) and approved based on consensus. All EUPAN Members have to be involved and consulted in the process at the Directors General level. In case any new developments during the duration of the SP require changes, the current presidency together with the EUPAN 5 WL Secretariat takes care of the process of updating the SP involving all Directors General.

Prior to the conclusion of the current SP the process starts for creating an updated SP for the next three-year period. The preparation of the updated SP should take into consideration the evaluation of the previous SP, an updated trend analysis, an updated SWOT, a stakeholder' analysis and an updated playing field overview. In order to have an updated SP by the end of the three-year period, it is recommended to start the preparation process during the 5th presidency of that period. In general, the EUPAN 5 WL Secretariat is responsible for the process.

Slovenia, as the fifth consecutive presidency in the period of the SP, valid from July 2019 to June 2022, started the preparation activities for the new SP for the next three-year period. In this regard, Slovenia carried out the evaluation process of the currently valid SP.

The three main activities were:

- the analysis of the reports from the presidencies carried out in the three-year period of the current SP, in particular the comparison between the strategic domains and deliverables.
- the comparison between workshop topics and strategic domains.
- the preparation of a questionnaire for the Member States (hereinafter: MS) on the current SP and the analysis of answers received.

This document contains the results of the evaluation activities described above.

## Analysis of the reports from the presidencies carried out in the period of the current EUPAN Strategy Paper

The SP that is set for the period of July 2019 – June 2022, contains three specific strategic domains that were agreed by EUPAN members: digitalization and innovation, ethics and organizational culture and future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resource management (HRM).

In the period July 2019 to June 2022 the countries presiding over the EUPAN network are the following: Finland (1 July - 31 December 2019), Croatia (1 January - 30 June 2020), Germany (1 July - 31 December 2020), Portugal (1 January - 30 June 2021), Slovenia (1 July - 31 December 2021) and France (1 January - 30 June 2022)<sup>1</sup>.

This chapter will focus on the analysis of the presidency reports of the individual country, in particular the activities of each presidency and the correlation between the strategic domains and two areas: presidency deliverables and workshop topics.

### EUPAN meetings and related events

	Finland	Croatia	Germany	Portugal	Slovenia
<b>EUPAN 5 Secretariat</b>	Helsinki, 15 August 2019	Videoconference, 13 March, 2020	Videoconference, 2 October 2020	Videoconference, 19 March 2021	Videoconference, 10 September 2021
<b>EUPAN 5 DG Secretariat</b>	Helsinki, 10 October 2019	Videoconference, 15 May 2020	Videoconference, 8 October 2020	Cancelled	Videoconference, 8 November 2021
<b>EUPAN WL Meeting</b>	Helsinki, 19-20 September 2019	/	/	Videoconference, 22 April 2021	Videoconference, 11 October 2021
<b>EUPAN DG Meeting</b>	Helsinki, 28-29 November 2019	/	Videoconference, 17 November 2020	Videoconference, 17 June 2021	Videoconference, 13 December 2021
<b>European CAF Users Events</b>	Helsinki, 1-2 October 2019	/	/	/	/
<b>CAF National Correspondents meeting</b>	Helsinki, 1-2 October 2019	Videoconference, 16 April 2020	Videoconference, 25 September 2020	Videoconference, 21 April 2021	Videoconference, 3 November 2021
<b>DISPA Meeting</b>	Helsinki, 7-8 November 2019	Videoconference, 2 July 2020	Videoconference, 3 December 2020	Videoconference, 26 May 2021	Videoconference, 29 November 2021

<sup>1</sup> The analysis of the French Presidency will be supplemented at the end of their presidency, which will take place in the first half of 2022.

As shown in the table, not all EUPAN and EUPAN-related events and meetings were carried out in the last three years. This was due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which started at the beginning of 2020. Even though physical meetings were not possible or were not advised because of the spread of COVID-19, virtual meetings in the form of videoconferences were established and enabled the holding of meetings and continuation of the work in the EUPAN network.

## FINLAND

1 July – 31 December 2019

### Finnish Rolling Programme

I Digitalization and innovation	II Ethics and organizational culture	III Future-oriented strategic, efficient, and effective HRM
<p>Trust as a basis for good governance</p> <p>Innovations and horizontal cooperation in data-driven decision making, evidence-based policy-making and digital, customer-focused service delivery require trust between different actors</p> <p>The use of artificial intelligence and robotics in customer service</p> <p>Expected results: policy briefs, workshop conclusions</p>	<p>Trust as a basis for good governance</p> <p>Towards an ethically sound, courageous and value-driven leadership for trust</p> <p>Ethics in the workplace: building a culture of integrity and trust</p> <p>Expected results: policy briefs, workshop conclusions</p>	<p>Trust as a basis for good governance</p> <p>The use of artificial intelligence and robotics in HR and in internal service delivery in government</p> <p>E-learning/digital learning in government</p> <p>Expected results: policy briefs, workshop conclusions</p>

The activities of EUPAN focused on two main themes: the meaning of trust and the ways we can strengthen it, and the possibilities that digitalization offers for public governance development. These main themes were examined by taking a closer look at the workshop topics: Horizontal cooperation in data-driven decision-making, the use of artificial intelligence and robotics in public services, building a culture of integrity and trust, and lifelong learning in public administration.



Topics tackled in the Rolling Programme and EUPAN events organized	Link with the strategic domains in the SP identified during analysis
The meaning of trust and the ways we can strengthen it (one of the main themes)	Ethics and organizational culture
The possibilities that digitalization offers for public governance development (one of the main themes)	Digitalization and innovation
Horizontal cooperation in data-driven decision-making (workshop topic)	Digitalization and innovation Ethics and organizational culture
The use of artificial intelligence and robotics in public services (workshop topic)	Digitalization and innovation
Building a culture of integrity and trust (workshop topic)	Ethics and organizational culture
Lifelong learning in public administration (workshop topic)	Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM)

It was the Finnish Presidency's aim to lay foundations for further work on the main themes of the EUPAN SP. The Finnish Presidency also experimented with some new ways of working. In the spirit of the EUPAN SP, the presidency wanted to increase the visibility and accessibility of EUPAN's work by streaming parts of the Working Level and Director General meetings and making the recorded webcasts available online. In addition, the Finnish Presidency published a series of policy briefs, the online presentation *Glances at Public Governance in Finland*, and the development tool *Game of Trust*.

The EUPAN SP also highlights the importance of strengthening communication and partnerships with relevant stakeholders and universities. The Finnish Presidency cooperated closely with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Group for Public Administration (EGPA), and Open Government Partnership (OGP), who share common interests with EUPAN. The Finnish Presidency also worked closely with universities and researchers, University professors and scholars also had a visible role in the agendas of the EUPAN Meetings. The Finnish Presidency did not conduct any surveys but cooperated with academic research in the preparation of the EUPAN activities.

## CROATIA

**1 January – 30 June 2020**

EUPAN WL and EUPAN DG meetings were cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation, therefore no workshops were held during the Croatian EUPAN Presidency. Because of the inability to gather and engage in discussions no joint conclusions were made.

However, Croatia conducted research of the topics stated in their Rolling Programme and produced four short Research Findings.

### Croatian Rolling Programme

I Digitalization and innovation	II Ethics and organizational culture	III Future-oriented strategic, efficient, and effective HRM
<p>Strengthening trust in public administration through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Development of complex digital services for citizens and businesses</li> <li>•Application of new digital technologies in public administration</li> </ul> <p>Expected results: policy briefs, workshop conclusions, experience exchange</p>	<p>Strengthening trust in public administration through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Implementation of innovative tools in the ethics infrastructure</li> <li>•Management of employee performance and wellbeing in the civil service</li> </ul> <p>Expected results: survey summaries, policy briefs, workshop conclusions, experience exchange</p>	<p>Dealing with the challenge of achieving efficient and effective HRM by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Tackling the challenge of employment and retention in the civil service</li> <li>•Strategic workforce planning and capacity building until 2030</li> </ul> <p>Expected results: survey summaries, policy briefs, workshop conclusions, experience exchange</p>

Topics tackled in the Rolling Programme and EUPAN events organized	Link with the strategic domains in the SP identified during analysis
Tackling the challenge of employment and retention in the civil service (one of the main topics/researches)	Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM)
Innovative tools in ethics infrastructure (one of the main topics/researches)	Ethics and organizational culture
Development of complex digital services for citizens and business (one of the main topics/researches)	Digitalization and innovation
Blockchain technology in public services (one of the main topics/researches)	Digitalization and innovation

The two EUPAN 5 Secretariat meetings took place via videoconference. The topics discussed in these meetings were primarily of a technical nature, ensuring basic continuation of the work done by EUPAN. A few video meetings for the CAF correspondents' network were held during the Croatian EUPAN Presidency.



## GERMANY

### 1 July – 31 December 2020

From 1 July until 31 December 2020 Germany held the presidency, during which the COVID-19 pandemic was still ongoing, therefore no physical meetings were held. There were nonetheless events regarding the EUPAN SP which were all held online: two secretariat meetings (Working and Directors General Level) and the EUPAN Directors General meeting.

Topics covered by the German Presidency regarding the SP were mostly focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and indirectly on the topics of the Rolling Programme.

#### German Rolling Programme

I Digitalization and innovation	II Ethics and organizational culture	III Future-oriented strategic, efficient, and effective HRM
<p>Development of digital services on all public levels, recruitment of IT-experts, education and training of IT-experts and active staff</p> <p>Expected results: Policy briefs, workshop conclusions, experience exchange</p>	<p>Ethics and integrity as an essential part of the public service</p> <p>Expected results: Policy briefs, workshop conclusions, experience exchange</p>	<p>Demographic challenges to the public service e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working time</li> <li>• mobility</li> <li>• flexible working lifetime</li> </ul> <p>Expected results: Policy briefs, workshop conclusions, experience exchange</p>

Firstly, the German Presidency wanted to establish a comprehensive and thorough assessment of the situation in EUPAN members' administrations, which they did through a COVID-19 questionnaire with emphasis on collection of different experiences and not the collection of numerical data to provide the EUPAN Members with information about good (and bad) practices in place in their respective public administrations.

Secondly, the idea of creating a EUPAN Summer School was presented at the EUPAN DG meeting, creating a space for exchange for a group of public servants from all EUPAN MS, Observer States and staff of the European Commission. The Summer School would deal with all topics relevant to EUPAN and could concentrate on specific issues of the network. Common subjects would be identified jointly. The first European Summer School was held in November 2021.

Next, during Germany's presidency, a publication "Public Administration in Germany" was published to portray the structure of Germany's public administrative system with a differentiated and comprehensive analysis of its key elements. During the EUPAN DG meeting the Germany Presidency held a Workshop "A Journey to an Inclusive Organisation", which focused on different angles of inclusion and diversity – both

practical and academic. The goal is to find out what works and does not work, always keeping in mind that the public service answers to our (changing) society and needs to exude trust and integrity. The EUPAN DG meeting also included Portugal's and the European Commission's joint proposal for a EUPAN meeting on the EUPAN ministerial level.

Topics tackled in the Rolling Programme and EUPAN events organized	Link with the strategic domains in the SP identified during analysis
Experiences made by public administrations in handling the (first wave of the) pandemic - COVID-19 questionnaire reflecting the Ethics and integrity and demographic challenges to the public service e.g. <b>(Welcome letter of the German Presidency)</b>	Ethics and organizational culture Digitalization and innovation Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM)
Lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis and a presentation on how the COVID-19 crisis has been handled in Germany up until November 2020, which led to a discussion regarding the increase of remote work and new leadership skills needed for it <b>(Directors General Meeting)</b>	Ethics and organizational culture Digitalization and innovation Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM)
Launch of the EUPAN Summer School covering the topics of integrity, trust and professionalism <b>(Directors General Meeting)</b>	Ethics and organizational culture (transfer of knowledge) Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM)
During the Directors General Meeting, Germany and the Dutch EUPAN delegation held a <b>Workshop "A Journey to an Inclusive Organisation"</b>	Ethics and organizational culture
Published a <b>Publication</b> - Public Administration in Germany	Ethics and organizational culture
During the EUPAN Directors General meeting, an initiative for a Ministerial Meeting was proposed by Portugal and the Commission	

## PORTUGAL

**1 July 2021 – 31 December 2021**

During the Portuguese Presidency the COVID-19 crisis was still ongoing. Five meetings were initially scheduled online: EUPAN 5 Working Level Secretariat, CAF Working Group, EUPAN Working Level, EUPAN 5 Directors General Secretariat, EUPAN Directors General meeting. The informal meeting of public administration ministers, with a hybrid format, face-to-face and virtual, was held on 22 June.

## Portuguese Rolling Programme

I Digitalization and innovation	II Ethics and organizational culture	III Future-oriented strategic, efficient, and effective HRM
<p>Innovation in the delivery of digital public services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerators of digital transformation</li> <li>Networks of collaboration and communities of practice</li> </ul> <p>Expected result: Policy brief</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical leadership</li> <li>Trust during COVID-19 pandemic</li> </ul> <p>Expected result: Report on leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff motivational factors</li> <li>COVID-19 impact on motivation</li> </ul> <p>Expected result: Study on motivation</p>

Topics tackled in the Rolling Programme and EUPAN events organized	Link with the strategic domains in the SP identified during analysis
<p><b>EUPAN eNews</b> was established to enhance knowledge and experience sharing between EUPAN administrations</p>	<p>/</p>
<p>A <b>questionnaire</b> “Emergent technology” was sent out prior to the DG meeting. It focused on the perspective of the participants and their position towards the application of emerging technologies in the public administration. The questionnaire was divided into ten technologies –Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Virtual and Augmented Reality – Big Data &amp; Analytics, 5G, Drones and Autonomous Vehicles, IOT, Robotics, Biometrics and Wearables &amp; Implantables</p>	<p>Digitalization and innovation</p>
<p>A <b>Workshop</b> “Accelerators of Digital Transformation of Public Administration” was held online, and it focused on the three technologies considered high risk in the questionnaire – Biometrics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Drones &amp; Autonomous Vehicles. After the first period of discussion, a second exercise was launched that sought to find actions that the public administration can take up until 2030 to implement the technologies.</p>	<p>Digitalization and innovation</p>
<p><b>Research</b> on leadership during the pandemic crisis, where employees and managers’ perceptions were identified, and limited in time to the end of the pandemic first wave. The empirical research was based on the results of the <i>EUPAN 2020 Motivation and Leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic surveys</i>.</p>	<p>(Leadership values-driven) Ethics and organizational culture (transfer of knowledge) Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM)</p>



<p><b>Public employees' motivation</b> was analysed through the <i>EUPAN 2020 survey on motivation</i>. It is important to gain an understanding of what motivates employees, which helps when it comes to recruiting young talent and keeping them, and also to understand the decision-making over transiting from work to retirement. Motivated employees show lower levels of absenteeism and turnover, are more productive, innovative, and committed - contributing to the long-term organisational success - less stressed and conflictive, have a greater enjoyment of work and responsiveness to customers and are physically and mentally healthier. The motivation of older employees becomes more important in the context of a shrinking working population due to demographic changes and financial constraints that have been aggravated by the pandemic crisis that is actively hampering development opportunities.</p>	<p>Professional life cycle motivation Starting functions Professional development End of career Ethics and organizational culture (transfer of knowledge) Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM)</p>
<p>The <b>Study on the CAF Challenges to Promote Public Sector Capacity</b> encompassed templates to be filled out by the CAF National Correspondents, and an online questionnaire was prepared to be filled in the CAF national correspondents meeting.</p>	<p>Ethics and organizational culture (transfer of knowledge) Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM) Quality of public management or the governance of public sector organisations</p>
<p>The Informal Meeting of the EU Public Administration Ministers was a hybrid event, organised by the Portuguese Presidency in partnership with the European Commission where the <b>leadership exchange programme, a toolbox on new ways of working for public workers and guiding principles for a human-rights based approach on public services</b> were produced and endorsed.</p>	<p>Digitalization and innovation (Leadership values-driven) Ethics and organizational culture (transfer of knowledge) Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM)</p>

## SLOVENIA

1 July 2021 - 31 December 2021

The Slovenian Presidency carried out all the events and meetings that were envisaged for the six-month period. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, they were planned to be carried out in an online format, with the exception of the EUPAN Directors General meeting in December 2021. That event was then also carried out in an online format because of the resurgence of the spread of the COVID-19.

The underlying topic of the Slovenian presidency was ageing and talent management in public administration. Therefore the topics in the Rolling Programme under the individual strategic domain were connected to the primary topic.

## Slovenian Rolling Programme

I Digitalization and innovation	II Ethics and organizational culture	III Future-oriented strategic, efficient, and effective HRM
<p>Ageing workforce and talent management by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening digital competencies in public administration</li> <li>Digitalization of HR processes</li> </ul> <p><i>Expected results:</i> study summaries, presentation and exchange of good practices</p>	<p>Ageing workforce and talent management by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting employees' wellbeing and positive work environment</li> <li>Development driven leadership</li> </ul> <p><i>Expected results:</i> presentations, study summaries</p>	<p>Ageing workforce and talent management by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attractiveness of jobs in public administration</li> <li>Intergenerational cooperation and knowledge transfer</li> </ul> <p><i>Expected results:</i> study summaries, workshop conclusions, experience exchange</p>

Topics tackled in the Rolling Programme and EUPAN events organized	Link with the strategic domains in the SP identified during analysis
EUPAN eNews continuation initiative	/
eNews issue on attractiveness of jobs in the public administrations	Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective HRM
eNews issue on strengthening the digital competencies of civil servants	Digitalization and innovation
Study on ageing and talent management in European public administrations	Digitalization and innovation Ethics and organisational culture Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective HRM
<p>Workshop at the EUPAN WL: participants shared their perspectives on implementing the recommendation of the report on ageing and talent management in European public administrations. Sharing of good practices and potential struggles at any stage of development of the practice was encouraged.</p> <p>The second part of the workshop was devoted to a discussion on how talent management can in 2021 better prepare for a possible future where certain situations might occur (for example, if retirement no longer exists, etc.).</p>	Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective HRM



<p>Workshop at the EUPAN Directors General meeting: The participants were sorted into five breakout groups, each discussing a certain area that was covered in the study (intergenerational cooperation, attraction, recruitment and retention, inclusive ageing at the workplace and succession planning, employee mobility, development-driven leadership in the context of talent management). The discussion revolved around three questions: 1. Based on this presentation, what is your administration least prepared for? 2. What are the strengths of your administration in the area that your group will discuss? 3. What are your current or planned reform priorities in the area that your group will discuss?</p>	<p>Ethics and organisational culture Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective HRM</p>
<p>EUPAN and CAF joint policy note on the improvement of Human resource management and development in European public administrations</p>	



## **Results of the questionnaire on the EUPAN Strategy Paper July 2019 – June 2022**

The questionnaire for the evaluation of the EUPAN SP for the period July 2019 - June 2022 was prepared in collaboration with the EUPAN 5 WL Secretariat (PT, SI, FR, CZ, EC).

The request for answering the questionnaire was distributed among the MS on 22 October 2021 in an online form on the specialized survey platform 1ka.si. The questionnaire was available on the web platform until 12 November 2021.

The main sections of the questionnaire were:

- Revision of the tools (presidency reports, results, organization of meetings, indicators for measuring the impact of the EUPAN network).
- Impact of crisis (such as COVID-19) on the EUPAN network (impact on format of meetings and topics, the role of the SP, its flexibility and adaptability to emerging topics).
- Strategic domains and topics of interest for the new SP, where we asked MS to indicate the importance of each individual strategic domain and topic of interest for the period of the next SP.
- Any further comments or suggestions.

There were two types of questions used in the questionnaire: a 6-point Likert-scale (ranging from “very irrelevant” to “very relevant”, “never” to “very frequently”, “very unsuitable to “very suitable”, “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, “not important at all” to “very important”) and open questions.

The questionnaire was answered by 21 countries and also the European Commission. The respondents, in alphabetical order, were the following: AT, BE, CZ, CY, DK, EC, EE, ES, FR, GR, HR, HU, IT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK.

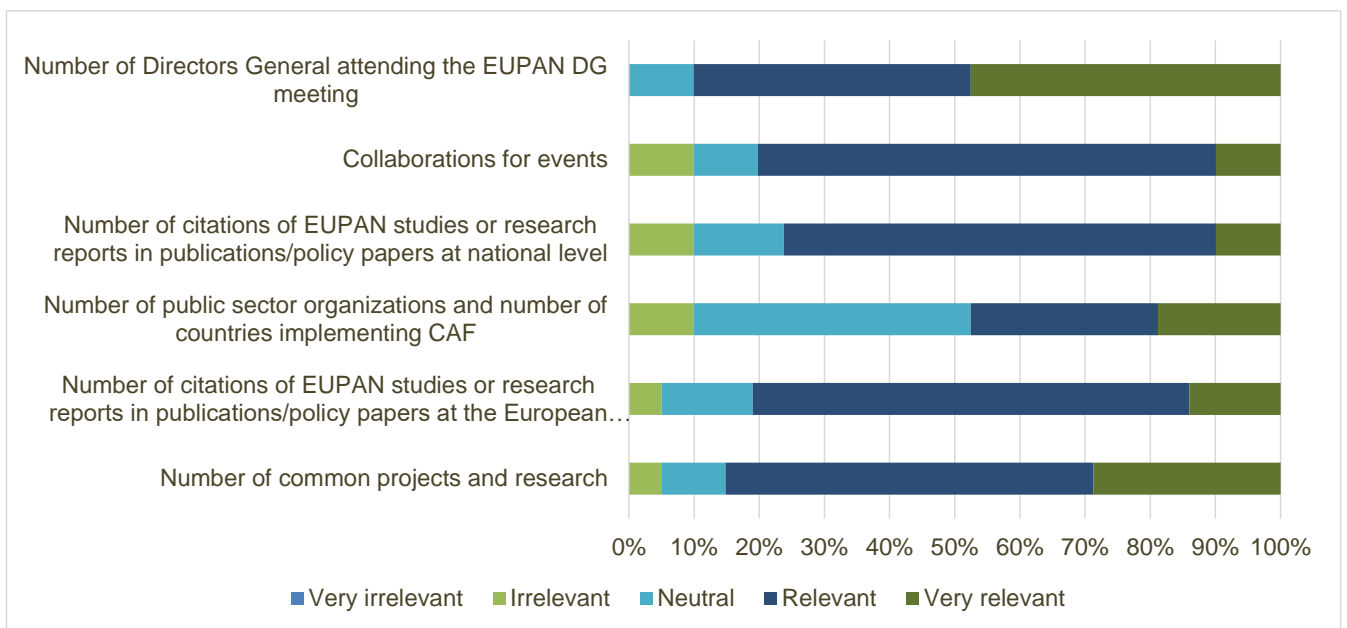
The following analysis will serve as a basis for the update of the current SP. The updated SP will be in force from 1 July 2022 until 30 June 2025.

## Tools in the EUPAN network

The first section contained information on different tools used in the EUPAN network, such as presidency reports, indicators for measuring the impact of the EUPAN network, organization of meetings and presidency results.

### **Indicators for measuring the impact of the EUPAN network**

The current SP states that the impact of the EUPAN network could be measured or monitored through several indicators, and we wanted to evaluate their relevance.



A total of 91% of the respondents found the indicator *Number of Directors General attending the meeting* either a relevant or very relevant indicator to measure the impact of the EUPAN network. The majority of respondents find all of the indicators relevant with the exception of the *Number of public sector organizations and number of countries implementing CAF*, where 43% of all respondents expressed neutrality regarding its relevance.

The number of citations of EUPAN studies or research reports in publications or policy papers at either national or European Commission level was recognized as a relevant indicator.

### Comments

In the comments, two respondents highlighted that the indicator *collaboration for events* is unclear as to what this section refers to. Also the number of citations at national level seems to be difficult to verify.



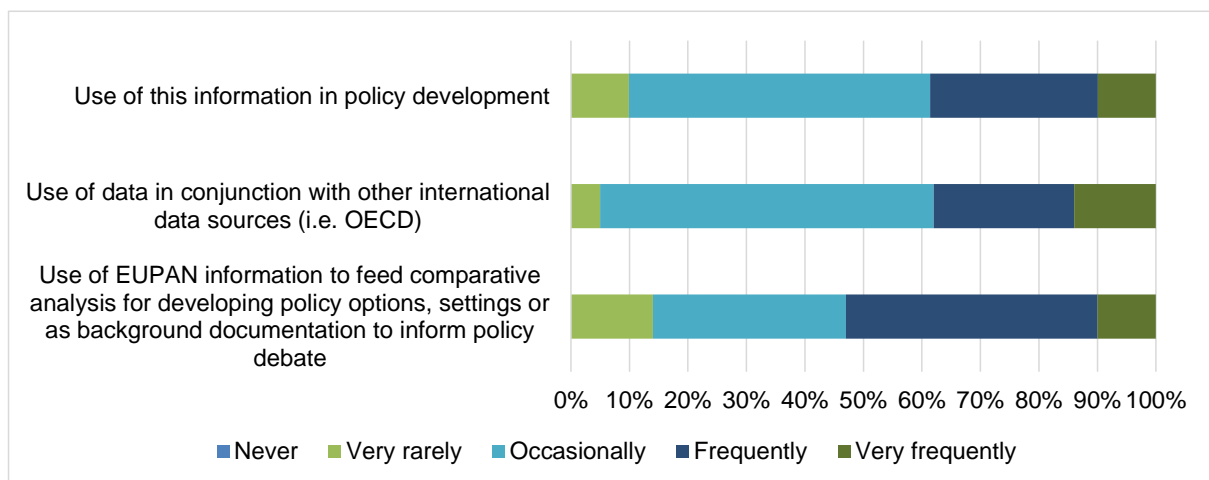
The number of DG attending the Directors General meetings indicates the interest of the topics under discussion and implicitly the importance attached to the work carried out in the network.

The number of citations of EUPAN studies, research reports or policy papers at national and international level is also a very relevant indicator as it allows the usefulness and impact of EUPAN products to be assessed, reinforcing the network role in research and document production on public administration. The aim is to associate the name of EUPAN with the production of credible and updated information, which can be used by different administrations, European institutions, international organisations such as OECD, academia and others. The number of citations of EUPAN studies or research reports seems to be difficult to verify in practice.

A proposal for including the number of initiatives taken during the period of every SP (6 presidencies) or each presidency was highlighted as a possible important indicator.

The indicators on the collaboration of events, common projects and research were noted as relevant as they contribute to strengthening the spirit of sharing and collaboration that EUPAN wishes to promote among MS, and it is believed that this is an area that should be boosted within the network.

### ***The use of EUPAN results***



The use of EUPAN results in policy development or in conjunction with other international data is occasional, at 52% and 57% respectively. EUPAN information to feed comparative analysis for developing policy options, settings or as background documentation to inform policy debate is being frequently used by the participants.

### **Comments**

Being part of the EUPAN network offers the opportunity for MS to send queries to other MS, not only for the priorities of each presidency, but also for issues related to the EUPAN network. Exchanging practices and information becomes essential and useful when a public administration is looking to design or redesign policies and practices and enhance cooperation among MS.



In the case of the Portuguese administration, comparative analyses on specific topics are often requested by the member of the government responsible for this sector, prior to any legislative initiative. It has become a practice in MS administrations to request information from the network according to national needs.

The example of annual consultation of the EUPAN network regarding salary negotiations was noted.

The EUPAN eNews was highlighted as a good idea which should not be used too often, but is useful for getting a quick overview of what is going on in other MS. And when relevant, the information of the eNews can be forwarded to Director Generals and HR heads of the central government agencies.

The example of occasional bilateral consultation on specific issues with other MS was made.

At the European Commission, not all the information from the EUPAN network is directly relevant to its policy development, however it is frequently very useful in developing options and informing debate.

#### Current work organisation and tools used

An open question regarding the current work organisation and tools used among EUPAN was asked. The answers referred mostly to the EUPAN webpage and EUPAN eNews. Attention was put also on establishing sharing of information, gathered through inquiries to all EUPAN members, as a regular practice.

The EUPAN website was indicated as a useful tool and it is important to keep it up to date. The website is clear and regularly updated, and is therefore recognised as a useful source of information. Nevertheless, it is little used as an exclusive source of information and documents. Also, there is a significant and obvious overlap with the use of the presidency portal to share the documents of EUPAN meetings.

The EUPAN eNews provide a highly appreciated snapshot of what is going on in our administrations. They could be more closely linked with the EUPAN SP by organising one eNews each year focused on each of the strategic domains, in addition to the statistical issues. Collecting more comparative data via the statistical issues would be useful and also be in line with the EUPAN Handbook. It is seen as a very important tool for exchanging practices and approaches and contributing to greater awareness of policies/practices in place in other MS.

The practice of sharing the information collected through questionnaires, and specific questions via email on a particular topic, would be good to generalise. The information is needed at a given time for the development of some project or legislative change within each MS public administration. It would also be useful to look at the way in which each MS administration internally publicises the network and the work carried out in it. The diffusion of the network outputs helps in its dissemination to the public, and also promotes EUPAN's image. As far as e-mail queries are concerned, it is always useful

to send a copy of the questionnaire in printable format because it allows for internal discussion and consultation of experts before answering the questionnaire online.

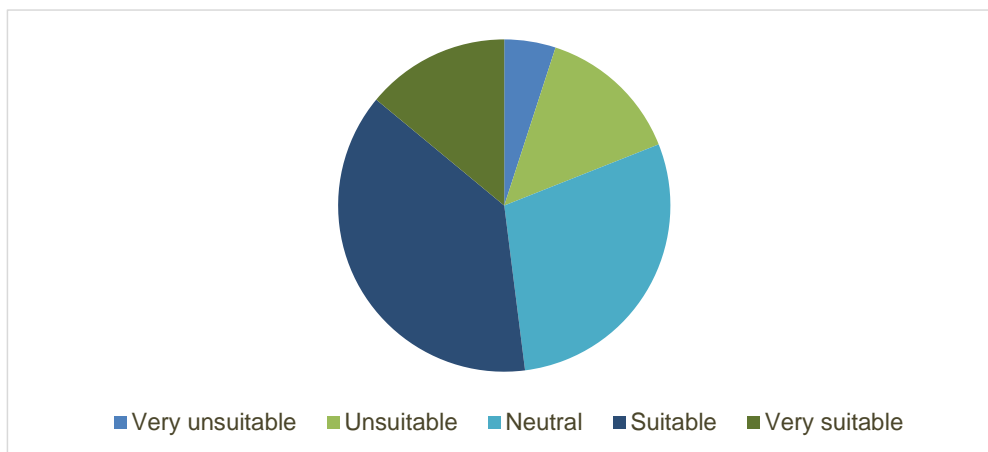
A proposal for potential development of a database for easier research on the contents produced among EUPAN was made.

### **Impact of crisis (such as COVID-19) on EUPAN network**

The following chapter was devoted to the assessment of the impact the current health crisis had on the EUPAN network.

#### ***Suitability of the meeting format during the crisis***

The majority of participants found the format of the EUPAN meetings during the COVID-19 crisis suitable.



#### **Comments**

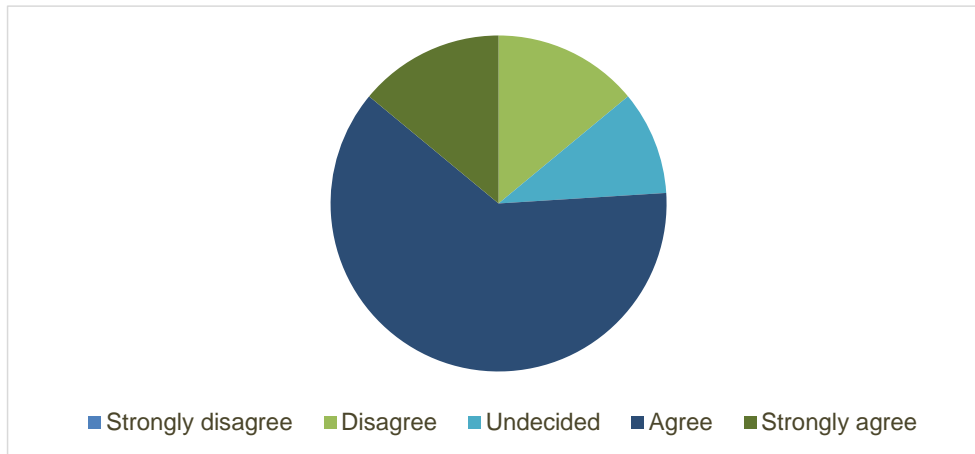
In the comments, the online meetings were accepted as a necessity in order to ensure the continuity of work in the EUPAN network – however, they were proven to be very useful. It was also determined as a much better option than having no meetings at all.

Some respondents welcomed the practice of carrying out EUPAN WL and DG Secretariat meetings in an online format and would propose the continuation of this practice going forward. Online meetings save time and resources and are more environment-friendly. The same format was on the other hand found unsuitable for the WL and DG meetings due to the lack of informal and one-on-one interactions and discussions, along with not having the opportunity to enhance their relationships and exchange approaches in informal conversations.

Other respondents highlighted the informal contact in the network as an added value of the EUPAN meetings, which is completely ignored with the online meetings. When there is no crisis, they would prefer to always have face-to-face meetings as opposed to online meetings, which cannot be seen as an alternative despite cost-cutting considerations and austerity measures.

The digital technologies may also allow other formats to be explored, such as shorter meetings dedicated to one theme for the relevant experts.

### ***Suitability of topics in the current SP in regard to needs arising from the crisis***



The majority (62%) agrees that the topics set in the current SP meet the needs that arose from the COVID-19 crisis. The comments provided generally support the results presented in the chart above.

The participants believe that the themes are broad enough to allow EUPAN members to deal with relevant topics following the COVID-19 crisis. The current SP proved flexible enough to adapt to the changing situations while allowing for structure and continuity in the workshop themes. The topics for the EUPAN meetings were quickly adjusted to the new priorities and ways of working.

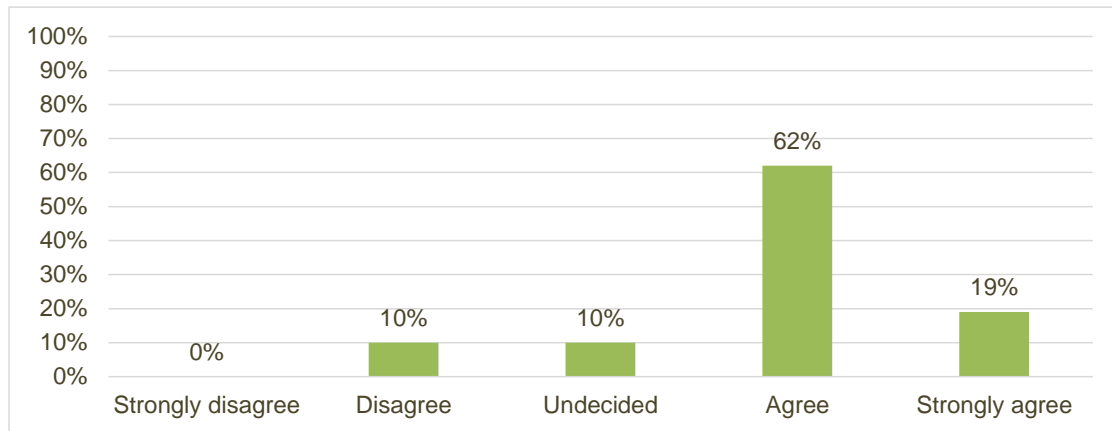
One comment indicated that the current SP predated the COVID-19 crisis, and therefore specific topics arising from the health crisis could not be integrated.

Given the wide scope of topics that are included in the SP under the three domains (digitalization and innovation, ethics and organisational culture, HRM), it allows basically for almost any topic to be involved. The current division into three domains can quite well accommodate all sorts of topics and this wide structure should be kept in the future as well.

The comments also indicated that the flexibility of work, different, new, forms of working, new (COVID-19 impacted) HRM tools, and ethics as a part of organisational culture seem to be especially relevant these days.

A proposal was made to add the topics of the current SP that met the needs of today and became particularly important during the crisis, to the next SP (tools and instruments to foster resilience and agility, HR and organisational strategies to manage and anticipate uncertain futures and guarantee an effective foresight planning). Other proposed topics that could be relevant were digital leadership, collaborative working and preventive tools which promote the health and wellbeing of public officials throughout their career.

### **Flexibility of the content of the currently valid SP**

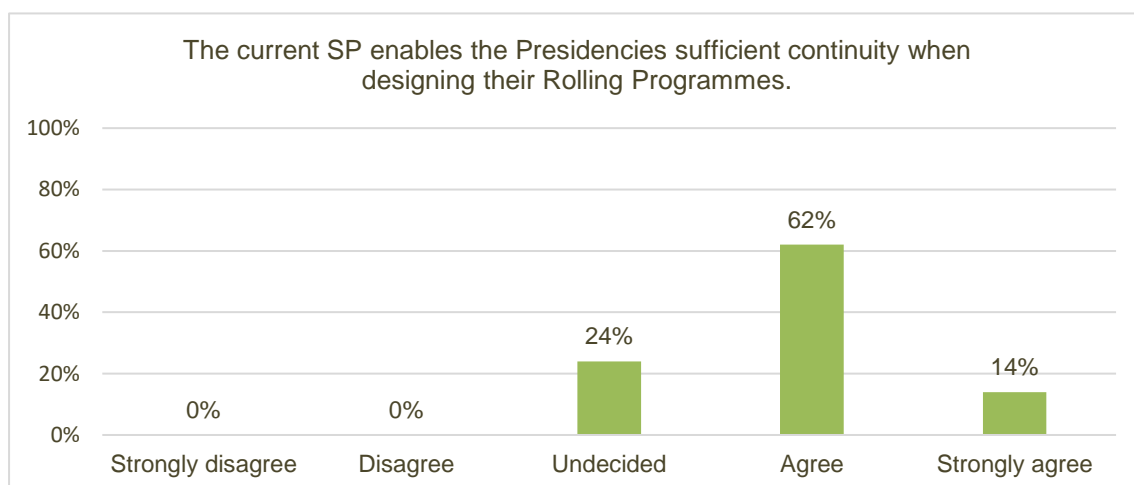


The vast majority (81%) either agrees or strongly agrees that the current SP content is flexible enough to be adapted to emerging topics in relation to the existing crisis, and to one that may occur in the future.

#### Comments

The content of the current SP demonstrates a comprehensiveness capable of addressing the issues and challenges that have arisen from the crisis, such as hybrid work model, innovation, diversity and demographic change. The same topic can be approached from various perspectives, so the respondent believes there is scope to address new challenges that may arise in the meantime.

The COVID-19 crisis has taught us that anticipation and foresight planning in public administration are key in times of uncertain futures. A suggestion for a new domain, called ‘anticipation and foresight planning’ was made, which would include topics such as HR and organizational strategies to manage and anticipate uncertain futures, agile ways of working, effective foresight planning, scenario-building etc.





The broadness of the SP allows MS to set their priorities during their presidency. Also, the commitment of each presidency to present topics under each of the three strategic domains was much appreciated and allowed continuity in the EUPAN network.

### **Strategic domains and topics of interest for the new SP**

In the SP July 2019 to June 2022, three specific strategic domains, which were agreed by EUPAN members to concentrate on during this time period, were set: digitalization and innovation, ethics and organization culture and future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resource management (HRM). Under each strategic domain, there are examples of topics of interest that were also provided by EUPAN members. For the evaluation of the strategic domains and topics of interest set in the current SP, we asked the respondents to indicate the importance of each individual strategic domain.

Almost half of the period that the current SP covers was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. All countries dealt with the challenges brought by this crisis to the best of their abilities. Consequently, there are many experiences and lessons learnt that emerged from it and some can be helpful or crucial for reflection in the next SP. In this regard, the respondents were asked to write any experiences or lessons learnt during the COVID-19 crisis that were relevant for the individual strategic domain and can in any way contribute to the development of the next SP.

#### *General comments on the strategic domains and topics of interest*

The strategic domain “Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resource management (HRM) in public administration” seems to be a real backbone theme of the EUPAN network.

Demographic change should be included as a key issue in strategic human resources planning.

The current structure, having three domains that cover a very wide scope of activities, proved quite well even in the crisis. Therefore it makes sense to keep this wide structure in the future.

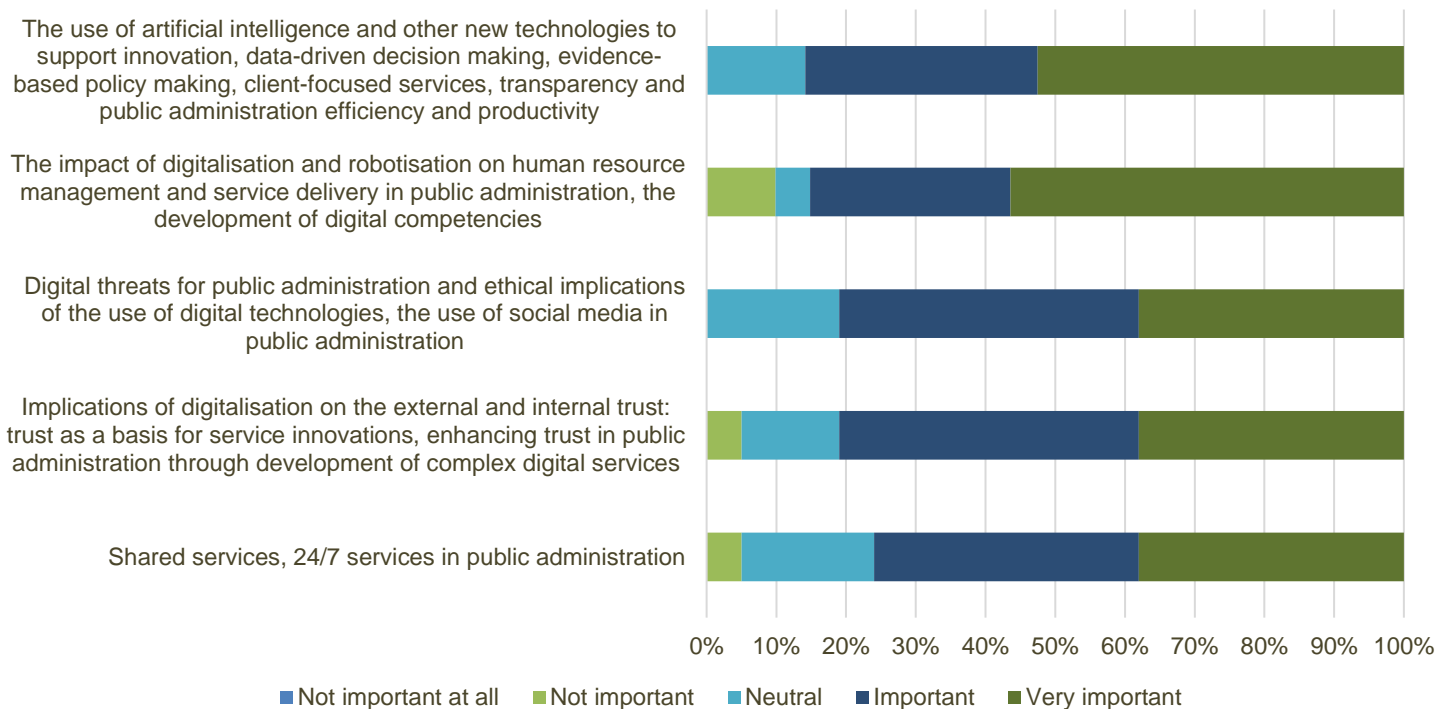
The topics related to digitalization of public administration are important, but there are doubts whether the EUPAN is well suited to discuss such issues. The discussions on topics related to the digitalization of public administration have so far been quite shallow and not very productive. Many of the participants taking part in the network are no experts on these topics, therefore separate expert-meetings might be an activity that does not fit into the concept of EUPAN.

The strategic domain *Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM) in public administration* is perceived as too broad to be included in the updated SP in this form because in the existing formulation, it includes all areas of HR.

## Digitalization and innovation in European Public Administration

The strategic domain *Digitalization and innovation in European Public Administration* was indicated as either important or very important by all respondents.

Topics of interest under the first strategic domain



None of the topics of interest under this strategic domain were indicated as not important at all. The impact of digitalization and robotisation on human resource management and service delivery in public administration and the development of digital competencies are very important to 57% of the participants.

### Lessons learnt

The COVID-19 pandemic has given a boost to digitalization, which must be pursued now and also further extended even in the time when there is no crisis.

The importance of all the above-mentioned topics of interest was enhanced. Also, the pandemic crisis has highlighted the importance of digitalizing procedures and being able to offer 24/7 public service in times of confinement. The development of teleworking was highlighted as well.

Disinformation is a topic that needs to be looked at more closely in relation to other topics such as importance of artificial intelligence in HR development.

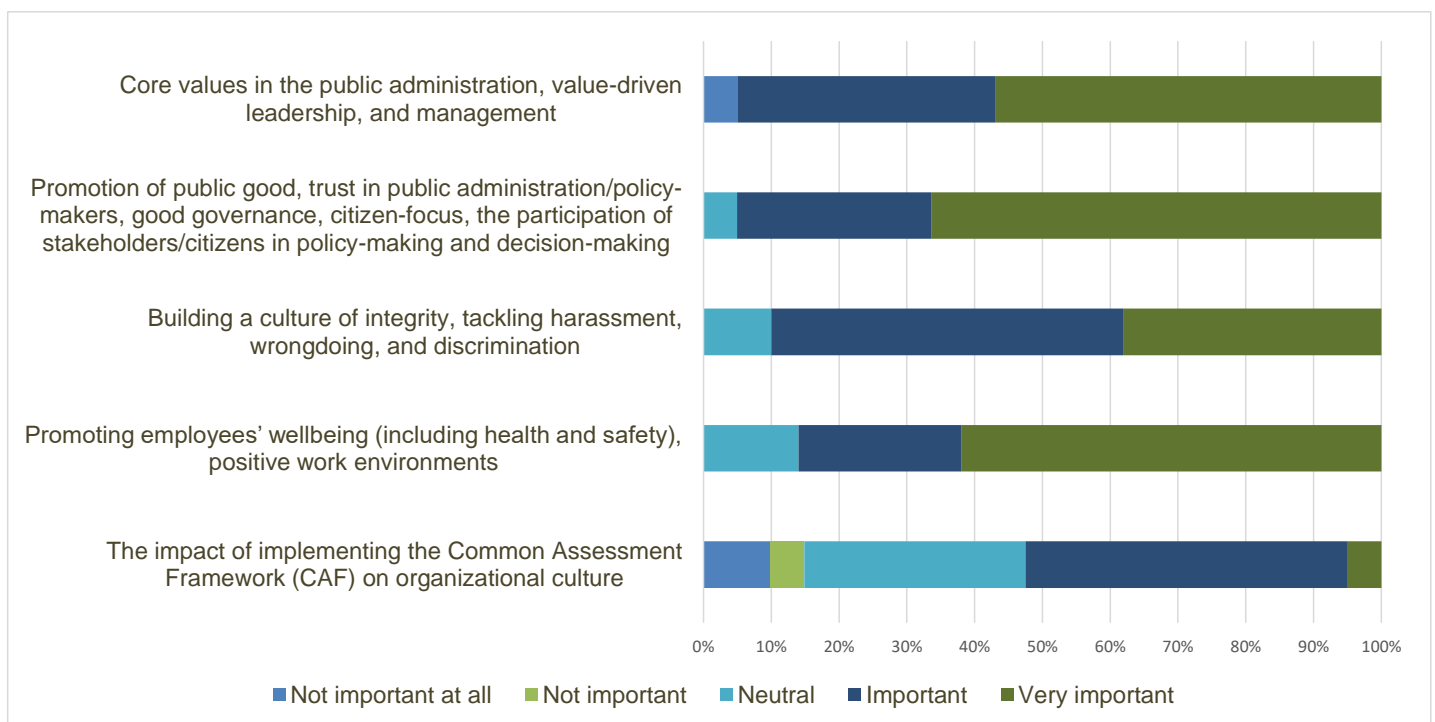
The pandemic crisis showed the importance and urgency of public services being provided digitally. This led to the availability of new digital public services during the

crisis period and with it the need to strengthen cybersecurity, interoperability of systems and data protection in the digital environment. On the other hand, the need for the acquisition or reinforcement of digital skills by PA employees has become more visible. It has been proven that digital skills can be acquired very quickly if it is urgent to do so. However, there is a need for more trainings because covering just the basic skills is not sufficient.

The digital tools have helped public administrations to continue to function, but they cannot work when laws and regulations put barriers in place. Therefore, to reap the full benefits of digital transformation for Europe, with truly European public services working across borders and across sectors for everyone in Europe, interoperability is key. We must ensure that policies are built with digital in mind from the very start, that they take full advantage of innovation partnerships and that all MS are able to set the interoperability priorities together. Strengthened EU public sector interoperability and cybersecurity cooperation support the EU and its MS in the response to the pandemic, and in the necessary recovery and future resilience efforts (helped by the new EU budget).

### Ethics and organizational culture in public administration

The strategic domain *Ethics and organizational culture in public administration* was indicated as either important or very important by 85% of respondents, while 14% expressed neutrality regarding its importance.



The promotion of public good, trust in public administration/policymakers, good governance, citizen-focus, the participation of stakeholders/citizens in policymaking



and decision-making is very important to most respondents (67%), followed by the promotion of employees' wellbeing (including health and safety) and positive work environments with 62%. The topic of interest that is perceived to be the least important for the next SP under this strategic domain is the impact of implementing the CAF on organizational culture.

### Lessons learnt

The COVID-19 crisis showed the critical importance of values-driven leadership to build trust between employees and managers. The ethical side of leadership became more important in order to lead dispersed teams. The ethical challenges during this period were fairness, respect and sensitivity, as well as empathy. Regarding empathy, managers' awareness and concern with employees' physical and emotional well-being needs to be reinforced.

Leading in a remote environment exposed the leaders' need to acquire or strengthen e-leadership skills. Managers have globally handled the pandemic context with agility, resilience and commitment to the organization, however, new and faster ways of internal (with employees) and external (with citizens and other stakeholders) communication need to be developed.

THE COVID-19 crisis stressed many aspects that are in need of further discussion, e.g., usage of remote working that brings forth the ideas of trust (both between employees as well as towards public), values that play a crucial role, and last but not least, remote working requires further fine tuning e.g. regarding surveillance, management of the online team, health and safety at remote workplaces etc.

Teleworking is appreciated by staff, contributes to a better work-life balance and even has a positive impact on performance and productivity in the institution. A greater reliance on teleworking also requires appropriate safeguards to separate personal and professional life.

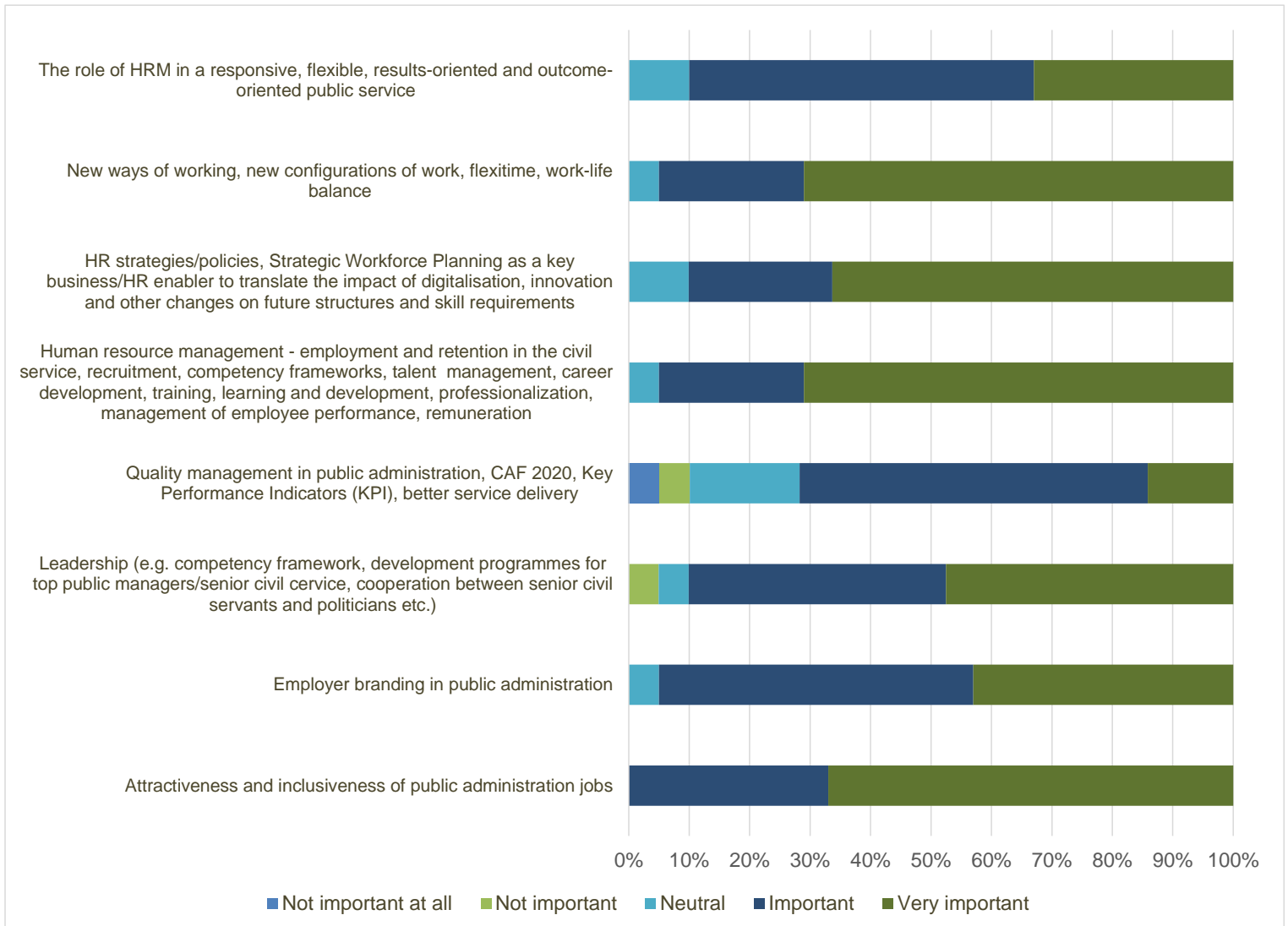
The COVID-19 crisis has also revealed challenges in terms of lack of social contact, creative processes, and corporate team spirit, in particular for on-boarding new colleagues. The issue of employees' wellbeing and health has become particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, and will continue to be so for the period of the next SP.

Ethics and integrity are very relevant issues worth further and constant elaborating, especially now when we are facing so many challenges in public administration. Ethics in general seem to also have a crucial impact on motivation in these specific times

Building integrity has had a crucial impact on functioning of the civil service during the pandemic, when traditional work and teamwork were somehow abandoned. Transparent work of the public service has really been shown to be a key factor when building or maintaining the trust of citizens.

The impact of CAF in the area of resilience of public organizations was highlighted.

## Future-oriented strategic, efficient and effective human resources management (HRM) in public administration



### Lessons learnt

Ways of working as a topic has only become more important because of the current COVID-19 crisis. There was a massive adoption of teleworking and adherence to the remote working format, especially in its hybrid version, immediately after the lockdowns. The crisis has accelerated the trends towards flexibility and digitalization of the workplace.

The implementation of new ways of working is inevitable and is driven by several factors, such as positive results of employee performance, commitment and in some cases productivity, identified during the period of mandatory teleworking, the acceleration of digitalization, the contribution to work-life balance, and the feeling of autonomy and accountability in the execution of the tasks experienced by employees. The need for promoting teleworking in public administrations has been highlighted.



To create a flexible working environment, we must promote management by results, based on flexibility as a norm, a culture of trust and empowerment, and openness to continuous improvement.

The new ways of working are not limited to the use of technology in the performance of functions, but include the adoption of new forms of planning, communication, organisation of work, human resource management, training (e-learning), recruitment and selection (e-recruitment, remote recruiting processes) and team management. The COVID-19 crisis also shed new light on civil service/servants and may contribute to changing their image.

Leaders in the public administration had to face a different way of managing their employees. They also had to put a lot more effort into building trust and positive connections. All these new or renewed processes require employees and managers to re-train and upskill to keep up with the rapid and constant services' digitalization.

On the downside, the issue of the impact of remote working and the lockdowns on employee wellbeing and mental health, especially due to employee isolation, was raised, along with the risk of pre-existing gender inequalities being reinforced with teleworking. The importance of interpersonal relationships at work was confirmed as an aspect, valued by employees, that contributes to their well-being. Human resources management during the pandemic became more demanding as it had to adapt to the new context and to remote management. The issue of vertical and horizontal communication was also another aspect that has shown a need for improvement. The crisis has shown us that it is important to have a strategy and an action plan also for the HR area for times of crisis.

The implementation of the CAF model has been shown to have a positive impact on the agility of human resources management in public sector organizations during the crisis. Work on CAF2020 supported a lot national administrations in increasing the quality of public services.

After this crisis passes, it will be crucial to take advantage of these experiences. This is why this strategic domain in particular should be continued in the next SP, with the relevance of the issue of new ways of working highlighted by the pandemic meriting scrutiny. In addition, demographic change will also be an important topic for HR management.

## **EU policies that had the most impact on EUPAN**

We asked the participants to cite three EU policies which in their opinion had the most impact on EUPAN and its members in the last three years. The responses are gathered below.

Some respondents indicated that in their opinion there was a limited direct impact of EU policies on EUPAN. EU policies in general do not concern the civil service, which



is the responsibility of the MS. An indirect impact may be exerted by digitalization, and also free movement somehow impacts mobility issues.

The policies that were cited are the following:

- Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European parliament and of the council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing council directive 2010/18/EU.
- Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European parliament and of the council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union.
- Thematic objective 11 of the EU cohesion policy: support for public administration reforms through cohesion policy is linked to country specific recommendations, economic adjustment programmes (where applicable) and national reform programmes.
- The whistle-blower directive.
- Recovery and resilience plan.
- European skills agenda – skills for jobs & the digital Europe programme.
- the exclusion of support for public administration from structural funds on the MS level in the 2021+ financial period.
- Proposal for a regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence.
- EU gender-equality strategy.
- EU green paper on ageing.
- EU green deal.
- EU social pillar.
- EU digital policy.
- European semester.
- Digital single market.
- GDPR (if it counts as policy, but not limited to).
- Fiscal policy and employment.
- A Europe fit for the digital age.
- Quality in public administration.
- Innovation, also public innovation.
- Social inclusion.
- Public employment.



## Other comments

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were given the option to provide any other comments they may have. The responses are gathered below.

The presidencies (4 out of 6) had to cope with the COVID-19 situation, which was challenging and demanding. EUPAN had to cope with the new conditions and proceeded with online meetings, online queries and online surveys. Taking into account the current situation, it was very important that the network was active, initiatives were launched and meetings were very well organized and interesting.

The quite broad flexibility of the current SP was highlighted as an important advantage for the presidency in determining the specific issues to be dealt with in the working programmes. It was especially valued due to the specific circumstances of the pandemic and functioned very well, allowing presidencies to adjust their programmes accordingly. This flexibility also enabled MS to discuss relevant challenges connected with actual pandemic circumstances and not to discuss irrelevant issues determined before the pandemic.

On the other hand the current SP was labelled as perhaps too widely set in respect to the topics. The wide framework is good when a MS is designing the Rolling Programme, because it gives it a lot of room to include various topics during its presidency. On the other hand, it is not optimal, because it is hard to evaluate the importance and added value of the topics when there are a lot of topics under each strategic domain. If it is set too wide, it makes everything of importance, therefore future development is not as focused as it should perhaps be. If there are too many topics to cover, it is difficult to really explore one topic in depth. For the future SP, some MS would suggest framing the topics more narrowly. Since the document is set for a three-year period, it provides more opportunity to design it in line with current matters.

The strategic domains and topics of interest should more explicitly include the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration. These are key topics for a well-functioning public administration meeting the needs of citizens, probably even more so in the post-pandemic era. Another key topic that should be included more explicitly is coordination in central public administration. Dealing with issues that involve more than one part of the public administration (ministries, agencies, etc.) are challenging for the public administration, and EUPAN could do more to facilitate discussions and find solutions on how to tackle these challenges.

The importance of ethics and integrity is crucial in reforming public administration, which was confirmed also during the already completed first EUPAN summer school. This important topic should be reflected on and included in the next SP. The document itself, thanks to its construction, leaves a lot of freedom to presidencies to deepen the



issues that are really important for them, which should be definitely evaluated positively.