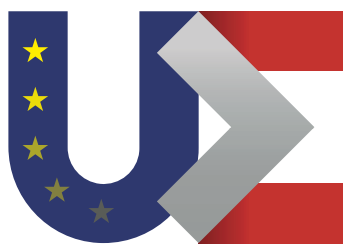




**MINISTÈRE  
DE LA TRANSFORMATION  
ET DE LA FONCTION  
PUBLIQUES**

*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*

# Strasbourg Declaration on the Common values and challenges of European Public Administrations



**FRANCE22**

FRENCH PRESIDENCY  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
EUROPEAN UNION



The European Ministers responsible for public administration, public transformation and the civil service, with the support of the European Commission, meeting in Strasbourg on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at the « Institut national du service public », as part of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union:

- Considering the implementation of the current Trio Programme of Presidencies of the Council of the European Union France, Czech Republic, Sweden and its priority themes:
  - the protection of citizens and freedoms, with an emphasis on the respect and protection of European values;
  - the promotion of a new European model of growth and investment, based on sustainable growth and the strengthening of European industrial and digital sovereignty;
  - the construction of a greener Europe, more socially equitable, and more protective of the health of Europeans;
  - a global Europe, a world player that promotes multilateralism and renewed relations with its partners;
- Underlining the contribution of public services and public workers to a new model of growth, to a humane, inclusive and solidary Europe, in line with the ambitions of the European Pillar of social rights, and to the promotion of the values of peace and democracy on the European continent;
- Recalling the Rome declaration of March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017, that stresses the commitment to work towards a social Europe, based on promoting economic and social progress, equality between women and men and rights and equal opportunities for all;
- In continuity with the conclusions' principles and objectives from their previous meeting in Lisbon on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, during the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, for an innovative, participatory, open and transparent public administration, close to the citizens;
- Underlining the mobilization and adaptation of public administrations in the context of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, to address its economic and social consequences, to deploy European recovery, and to increase their capabilities for major societal challenges, notably the green and digital transitions;
- Stressing especially the place of digital transformation, the implementation of new ways of working in public sector, the European mobility of civil servants, and the transparency and openness of public administrations;
- Taking note of the work carried out within the European networks dedicated to public transformation and the civil service, particularly in the areas of human resources management, transformation of public services and support for digital transformation, which promote a common understanding of these challenges and possible common responses;

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**Affirm their willingness to follow up on the cooperation initiated among public administrations within the European Union, while respecting the specific models and prerogatives of the Member States and the European Commission on their respective administrations, on the common issues and challenges in terms of public transformation and civil service;**

**Acknowledge the existence of common values and challenges for public administrations within the European Union based on the following three areas:**

### **I. Attractive, modern and innovative civil services that lead by example**

The European Ministers responsible for public administration, public transformation and the civil service, with the support of the European Commission, declare their intention:

- **To promote the development of all talents in European civil services to ensure the continuity and excellence of public services, by:**
  - Developing information on jobs and careers within the civil services, in order to promote and strengthen the attractiveness of public administrations in Europe;
  - Promoting a reflection on recruitment methods within public administrations and on access to public career, at all levels of responsibility and for all profiles;
  - Implementing exemplary actions within public administrations in terms of achieving gender parity in all positions of responsibility in the civil service, diversity, inclusion, and the fight against discrimination, in line with the ambitions of the European Pillar of social rights;
  - Strengthening the exchange of best practices between public administrations within dedicated networks and at all relevant levels, in order to encourage the dissemination of exemplary transformation initiatives and best practices, and to feed the discussion and investments on attractiveness, efficiency, talent and age management policies within the civil services in Europe.
  
- **To support the development of new ways of working, including teleworking, and the deployment of digital skills, for more modern administrations, by:**
  - Analysing the evolution of ways of working following the health crisis, which has led to an unprecedented rise in teleworking and hybrid work within public administrations in Europe;
  - Deepening the evolution of ways of working and organizational flexibilities within public administrations in Europe;
  - Contributing to health, safety and well-being at work in a context of new ways of working and the development of teleworking within public administrations, in accordance with legal and relevant frameworks at national level, particularly with regard to work-life balance, the right to privacy and to disconnect, and the analysis of potential risks related to the evolution of the ways of working in line with the European Pillar of social rights, whilst providing that public administrations commit to preserve, and possibly to improve, their effectiveness and operational readiness;

- Guaranteeing the development of new ways of working in a safe and trusted digital environment, with a high degree of cyber resilience and protection against computer fraud and cyber-attacks, notably by imposing where necessary the exclusive use of devices and software provided by the public employer;
- Promoting and deepening the dialogue at European and national levels, including with social partners in full respect of their role and autonomy, on the future of work, digital transformation and teleworking; the European Ministers and Commissioners in charge of public administration, public transformation and the civil service support the ongoing discussions on digital transformation and the different new ways of working in the public sector, notably within the European Social Dialogue Committee for Central Government Administrations (SDC-CGA) and the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN), whilst engaging to safeguard national legal frameworks and the right of social partners to conclude national agreements adapting and complementing the provisions to reflect country-specific circumstances.
- **To promote the development of skills and the diversification of career paths, in order to enhance and develop potential, by:**
  - Promoting training to support new ways of working for civil servants, managers and workers who must work differently, to understand these changes and support work groups;
  - Promoting the mobility of civil servants, the acknowledgement and development of acquired skills, for example through the implementation of common frameworks of professions and skills within public administrations, with special attention to the upskilling of older workers;
  - Conducting specific reflection and dialogue on management policies developed in national and European public administrations, including training and support for managers, in a context of profound transformation of ways of working and professions within public administrations.
- **To support the strengthening of the mobility of public workers in Europe in all its components, by:**
  - Noting the positive results of the first phase of the “EU leadership exchange program”, which confirm the contribution of European mobility to the development and implementation of public policies issues, to enhancing managers competences, to the promotion of cross-border cooperation in the European Union and to a culture of European-oriented public service;
  - Developing on a European scale, with the support of the European Commission, a voluntary exchange program dedicated to public transformation for civil servants between the Member States as well as with the European Commission, in order to bring out new solutions and generate knowledge sharing on priority themes for the European recovery; the European Commission, through its Technical Support Instrument, stands ready to support pilot experiences in this area upon demand from interested Member States;
  - Encouraging the organization of European seminars dedicated to the transformation of administrations, in order to deepen and complement these exchanges on a European scale,

drawing lessons from the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) summer schools following the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union;

- Strengthening the implementation of joint training activities for civil servants or future civil servants of the Member States and the European institutions, in particular on issues of common interest for public administrations and in connection with public service schools;
- Promoting the learning of foreign languages among civil servants, which is a precondition for effective exchanges;
- Considering integrating the European mobility of civil servants in human resources policies as a tool for the transformation of the civil service.

## **II. Transparent and resilient public services that meet users' expectations**

The European Ministers responsible for public administration, public transformation and the civil service, with the support of the European Commission, declare their intention:

- **To strengthen transparency on the results of public services and on the implementation of public reforms, by:**
  - Promoting the development of mechanisms for reporting to citizens on the objectives, means and results of public policies and services, in order to strengthen democratic confidence and enable citizens to monitor the results of national and European public action;
  - Developing continuous improvement approaches for public services at national, regional and local levels, based on regular user evaluations and observed results of public services;
  - Supporting the sharing and re-use of public open data, enabling administrations, companies, researchers and civil society to exploit their full potential in order to improve public service as well as the impact evaluation of public policies;
  - Ensuring transparency and accountability on the use of public finances, in particular of tender procedures, awards and grants;
  - Promoting debate, exemplary actions and good practices among European public administrations to improve efficiency and effectiveness of public action.
- **To implement a user centric approach at the heart of public action, by:**
  - Encouraging the constant involvement of all stakeholders, including citizens, civil servants and civil society, in the design and implementation of public policies and services, as well as in their improvement, in particular through platforms for collecting users' opinions and experiences;
  - Agreeing on the need to continue efforts to simplify public action by systematically placing the citizen's experience and needs at the centre of transformation and reform plans;
  - Stressing the relevance of citizen participation in the design and evaluation of public action, which can be fostered through deliberative approach based on listening and public dialogue, and the need to encourage citizen engagement in initiatives of public interest, which should lead to meaningful citizen participation.

- **To build resilient public administrations ready to face the challenges of the 21st century, drawing lessons from the health and humanitarian crisis, by:**
  - Maintaining a high level of service to users in times of crisis, adapting public services to extreme conditions, and communicating in transparency on service changes and adaptations;
  - Stressing the need for public services to promote accessibility especially in times of crisis in order to facilitate their use by all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable;
  - Supporting the continuation of the transformation of the working methods of the public administration, accelerated during the pandemic crisis, around the areas of telework and digital solutions for public workers, and supporting the development of innovative approaches in public services;
  - Developing a foresight approach to identify potential crises in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly in climate, cyber or geopolitical fields, and anticipating strategies to deal with them;
  - Promoting the upskilling among public workers and training on the critical issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as climate change and its impact on public action, and digital transformation.
  
- **To develop a public service accessible to all in Member States through various channels, by:**
  - Supporting the implementation of an omnichannel approach to public services, which can be used by the citizen according to their needs and thus guarantee them a comparable and fluid quality of comprehensible service, whatever the channel used;
  - Developing a voluntary digital inclusion policy to train and support citizens who are furthest from the digital world and give them the means to benefit from the digital transition;
  - Ensuring that in the framework of digitalization, the provision of in-office face-to-face public services is always warranted for citizens who need them, in particular those with special needs or with persistent digital divides;
  - Recognising the relevance of developing a more proactive administration that uses government-held data to simplify public procedures by proactively informing citizens of their eligibility for certain rights or benefits, or even by automatically carrying out administrative procedures in order to deliver seamless public service to all.

### III. High quality, inclusive digital public services that respects European values

The European Ministers responsible for public administration, public transformation and the civil service, with the support of the European Commission, declare their intention:

- **To make digital technology an opportunity to improve public service, by:**
  - Continuing efforts to make all administrative procedures also accessible online and digital by design, particularly in the areas of health, education and justice, by leveraging the National Resilience and Recovery Plans within NextGenerationEU, and adopting a mobile-first approach, when relevant, to ensure access to digital public services regardless of the device used;

- Stressing the need to develop inclusive digital public services, accessible to all and in particular to people with disabilities, while continuing the efforts in developing digital power of attorney solutions for those who cannot use digital public services on their own;
  - Accelerating the deployment of user-friendly digital identity solutions and wallets that respect the protection of individuals' personal data, give citizens control over their own data, and foster interoperability at all levels, following the technological development and European regulations, in particular the forthcoming revision of the Regulation on electronic identification and trust services (eIDAS) and the Interoperable Europe Act;
  - Committing to fostering the development of eco-friendly digital services in European administrations, in order to minimise the environmental impact of digital public services through the eco-design of online services, sustainable procurement and support for re-use or the extension of the life span of equipment;
  - Reaffirming the need to develop an inclusive and ethical public digital environment in line with the orientations of the "Berlin Declaration on the Digital Society and Value-Based Digital Transformation" of December 8, 2020;
  - Developing data-driven policy-making in public administrations in order to improve decision-making processes;
  - Mobilising emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public service, and ensuring they are used in an ethical, accountable and inclusive manner to build better digital services for all citizens and businesses;
  - Ensuring a high level of cybersecurity in public administrations, including through sufficient funding for preparedness, response and recovery.
- **To strengthen the interoperability and sharing of digital tools and data between Member States' administrations as well as with European administrations, by:**
    - Supporting initiatives aimed at strengthening mutual knowledge between European administrations of their digital projects and tools, such as the pitch session organized by the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union;
    - Promoting the joint work of the network of Chief Information Officers ("CIO Network") of the Member States to reinforce the mutual knowledge of digital challenges, solutions and methods among European administrations;
    - Stressing our collective interest in working towards greater pooling and sharing of digital investments between European administrations in order to benefit from high quality, shared and cross-border digital services;
    - Accelerating the sharing of prioritised information and data between administrations at European, national, regional and local levels, when relevant, in order to accelerate administrative simplification and proactiveness through better interoperability and the implementation of the once-only principle;
    - Working towards a better and secure use of public sector data by developing consolidated or interoperable public dataspace at the European level through the definition of common data standards.
  - **To develop the use of cloud computing by public administrations in a framework that respects European values, by:**



- Recognising cloud computing as a major opportunity for the digital transformation of public administrations, which can foster and accelerate the production of digital public services, that are closer to citizens, and can reduce their environmental impact;
  - Excluding the use of digital services that do not comply with European legislation such as the Union's legislation on the protection of personal data, particularly regarding data transfers to or from third countries in the face of extraterritoriality risks, or that do not guarantee the preservation of the continuity of public activities identified as the most important by each State;
  - Stressing the importance of interoperability, interchangeability, portability, reversibility and security of digital solutions to be used by public administrations, and of the appropriate assessment of actual needs and requirements for the use of digital solutions;
  - Ensuring the models and procedures adopted in this domain are sustainable in the long term and that decision-makers are trained and sensitised to interrelationships and complexity of digital solutions they use;
  - Calling for the definition of mutually compatible European criteria defining the rules for the use of cloud computing by public administrations in order to strengthen the single market in this field, an essential precondition for the development of the industrial sector and the existence of competitive and high-quality offers for public administrations.
- **To promote open source software within public administrations and their sharing, by:**
    - Recognising the major role played by secure open source solutions in the transformation of public administrations, which allow for the pooling of investments among multiple organisations, offer transparency and interoperability by default and guarantee control over the technologies used as well as greater technological independence;
    - Leveraging open source solutions to strengthen collaboration between public administrations, by promoting the sharing of such solutions created or used by administrations within the European Union;
    - Promoting a fair redistribution of the value created by open source solutions, especially for those who produce and share open source code.

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**On the basis of the three areas, the European Ministers in charge of public administration, public transformation and the civil service with the support of the European Commission:**

- Declare their intention to take into account these guidelines through the implementation of policies for the transformation of public administrations, and use support programs of the European Commission when appropriate;
- Acknowledge the work carried out in recent years in the area of public transformation and civil service and reiterate the importance of following up, and deepening, when relevant, this dialogue in order to promote the exchange of good practices for the transformation of public administrations, the implementation of reforms and the recovery;

- Express their wish to deepen their cooperation in the framework of a regular political dialogue, in particular through the organisation of regular meeting at the political level dedicated to public administration, public transformation and the civil service;
- Call on the Directors General in charge of public administrations to take into account these guidelines through dialogues and exchanges of best practices, in particular within the development of a new strategy of the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) for the June 2022 – June 2025 period, as well as on the CIO Network to take the declaration into account in their forthcoming work;
- Emphasise the importance of bringing the expertise of European civil services on the international level to promote these common values and the strengthening of public administrations and services beyond the European Union and its Member States, and of comparing European Union benchmarks and guidelines with international best practices, in particular across Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Open Government Partnership members;
- Call on the future Presidencies of the Council of the European Union to follow up appropriately on this Declaration and to make an assessment at a future meeting.

Declaration adopted in Strasbourg, on March 17th, 2022

## **ANNEX**

### **Protocol Statement of Hungary to the Strasbourg Declaration on the Common values and challenges of European Public Administrations**

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 Declaration refers to gender equality, Hungary will interpret it as equality between women and men, according to Article 8 TFEU.



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