



PRESIDENCY REPORT

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Table of contents

Introduction	3
1. Working Level Meeting – Budapest, 7th and 8th of October 2024.....	4
2. Directors General Meeting – Budapest, 28th and 29th of November 2024.....	4
3. Central themes and touched upon areas	5
3.1 Legal and structural development of HR policy and generational research.....	5
3.2 User friendly digital public services on mobile devices and the future use of AI	6
3.2.1 User friendly digital public services	6
3.2.2 The integration of AI in public administration	6
3.3 Greening of public administration	7
3.4 HR government decision-making support	8
4. EUPAN matters	9
4.1 Evaluation of the EUPAN Strategy Paper 2022-2025.....	9
4.2 Observer status of Albania.....	10
4.3 Uzbekistan's request for cooperation with the EUPAN.....	10
4.4 EUPAN eNews.....	10

Introduction

This document is summarising the programme and activities of the 2024 Hungarian EUPAN Presidency.

The Hungarian EUPAN Presidency programme was performed by the Ministry of Public Administration and Regional Development and the Ministry of Interior in close cooperation with the Ludovika University of Public Service, and distinguished experts were invited from related agencies as well as from other Hungarian universities. In addition, DG HR, DG Reform, the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, the European Institute of Public Administration and the Regional School of Public Administration contributed to the programme, too.

During the Hungarian semester the following events were held:

- Working Level (WL) Meeting on the 7th and 8th of October, Budapest
 - online WL Secretariat Meeting on the 17th of September
- Directors General (DG) Meeting on the 28th and 29th of November
 - online DG Secretariat meeting on the 12th of November

In addition, the Hungarian EUPAN team participated at

- the CAF correspondents' meeting organised by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) on the venue of the WL meeting on the 9th of October
- the Working Party for Staff Regulations (WGSR) on the 9th of October in Brussels.

The Hungarian Presidency developed its programme based upon the three main domains of the EUPAN Strategy Paper and in collaboration with the EUPAN 5 Secretariats. Accordingly, the following key themes focused at:

I. Strategic Domain

Legal and structural development of HR policy and generational research

II. Strategic Domain

User friendly digital public services on mobile devices and the future use of AI

III. Strategic Domain

Greening of public administration

Government decision-making support

Legal and structural development of HR policy and generational research

This topic was elaborated by the Hungarian Ministry of Interior in collaboration with the Ludovika University of Public Service. An online survey was carried out among the EUPAN

members, and the research results were reported in a study and presentations, and discussed in workshops. (Please find the study as an attachments to this report. It is going to be uploaded to the EUPAN website as well.)

User friendly digital public services on mobile devices and the future use of AI

This topic was dealt with in the form of plenary and workshop presentations followed by discussions. At the Working Level Meeting, the evolution of user friendly digital services were put into the centre, while at the DG Level Meeting more focus was given to the use of AI in public administration.

Greening of public administration

This topic was elaborated first in a workshop of the Working Level Meeting aiming at exchanging good practices and agreeing upon some guiding principles to assist member states in formulating their green transition policies. To provide a comprehensive academic background to the work on greening public administration, the Ludovika University of Public Service was commissioned to carry out a study, which was presented in a workshop at the DG Level Meeting. (Please find the study as an attachment to this report. It is going to be uploaded to the EUPAN website as well.)

HR government decision-making support

This topic was elaborated within the framework of the online survey carried out by Ludovika University of Public Service on generations, and the results constitute a part of the earlier mentioned research report. In addition, the Hungarian Governmental Personnel Decision Support System was introduced in a dedicated workshop and the participants had the opportunity to exchange thoughts on this innovation. During the DG Level Meeting, a presentation was also given on this topic.

1. Working Level Meeting – Budapest, 7th and 8th of October 2024

The Working Level Meeting was held in Budapest on the Campus of the Ludovika University of Public Service. It was attended by the majority of the EUPAN member and observer administrations, the European Commission, and experts in various fields.

The plenary sessions and workshops were organised around the legal and structural development of HR policy and generational research as well as user friendly digital public services on mobile devices. Conclusions of the presentations and discussions on these topics were built into the programme of the DG Level Meeting.

The event was highlighted by a guided tour introducing the Top 5 treasures of the Hungarian National Museum and a gala dinner offered in the spectacular Banquet Hall of the museum.

2. Directors General Meeting – Budapest, 28th and 29th of November 2024

The Directors General Meeting was also held in Budapest, this time at the Bálna Event Centre, which is a modern building connecting beautifully restored historic warehouses from the 19th century. It was attended by a hundred of high-level participants from EUPAN member and observer countries, the European Commission as well as national and international experts.

This event had a stronger focus on greening public administration and the use of AI beside the themes of HR and user friendly digital public services. The final results of the research on generations and government decision-making support were presented as well as the study of “*Towards Green Public Administration: Goals and Principles*”.

The participants had the opportunity to continue their informal professional exchanges while enjoying a boat trip from the venue of the meeting to the Parliament, in which latter they were guided through the marvellous building and admired the Holy Crown of Hungary.

The tour was followed by the gala dinner in the magnificent Hunter's Hall, where the guests could enjoy the amazing view of the illuminated Danube bank from the terrace while tasting some delicious Hungarian wines.

3. Central themes and touched upon areas

As mentioned in the introduction, the Hungarian EUPAN Presidency focused on the generational research, the support of governmental decision-making in the field of HR, digital services including the use of AI and the green transition of public administration in its programme.

3.1 Legal and structural development of HR policy and generational research

This topic was elaborated by the Ministry of Interior in collaboration with the Ludovika University of Public Service. To set the scene, the Hungarian public administration system was introduced, followed by the presentation on the results of the generational research carried out as part of the presidency programme.

Ageing of civil service pose a serious problem in most of the European countries. This was the point of departure of the Ministry of Interior when it decided to carry out an organisational development and generational research questionnaire among the EUPAN members in collaboration with the Ludovika University of Public Service.

The research results revealed that a strategic recruitment management system exists in only about half of the responding countries, and one third of them addresses the generational issue strategically. Some countries focus on attracting young people, others on continuing employment of older workers beyond retirement age, and some use both approaches. Employer branding is used by 44% of the respondents. The idea of serving the community and social responsibility was rated the highest, above opportunities for training and development, work-life balance, and employment security, while the appropriate handling of generational challenges was less prevalent.

In terms of learning and development, public administrations offer a wide range of tools, considering factors like age and career stage. There is a growing demand for self-directed and individualised learning, with online learning platforms leading the way.

Regarding organisational development, only 9 out of the 27 countries have undertaken central-level initiatives to improve organisational structures or processes. Possible reasons for this include cultural differences, policy continuity, differing national priorities, or a lack of resources. Nevertheless, it appears to be an area with potential for further investment.

Significant progress was detected in HR assessment, forecasting expected changes, and developing strategic frameworks for HRM.

There were two workshops organised related to this dimension, one on HR decision-making support system, and one during which participants had the opportunity to overview the findings of the generational research and exchange good practices, ideas, and perspectives.

3.2 User friendly digital public services on mobile devices and the future use of AI

3.2.1 User friendly digital public services

Another main theme of the Presidency was the digital transition of public administration. In this regard, the recent EU digital policies were presented as well as national initiatives such as the Hungarian *Digital Citizenship Programme* and the Irish "Life Events" programme (also in a workshop), and some challenges were also mentioned, such as the harmonisation of the different legal instruments, and data protection, the latter hindering the further development of user-centric public services.

In total, three workshops were organised on this topic. At the WL Meeting, the Customer Service Bus was introduced, which is a Hungarian invention for bringing public administration services to spots where otherwise citizens have limited or no access. Another workshop was held at the DG Meeting showcasing the Maltese Queue Management System and Customer Relationship Management and the planned Hungarian Virtual Government Service Centre, applying primarily digital solutions. The exchanges of experience and discussions in the workshops concluded that digital transition contributes a great deal to quality digital service provision, however for the time being, opportunities for in person administration should be provided in order to ensure equal opportunities for the citizens.

As an example, the Hungarian *HealthWindow* application (window to health data) aroused also great interest among the participants.

3.2.2 The integration of AI in public administration

The integration of AI in public administration was a leading theme of the presentations and workshops at the DG meeting. AI holds great potential to improve efficiency, enhance decision-making, and better serve the public. However, this transformation comes with significant challenges that must be carefully navigated. On the plenary session, the regulatory framework for artificial intelligence was introduced, and another presentation highlighted the possible impact of adversarial attacks on governmental AI applications.

Ensuring consistency across departments, fostering public trust in AI-driven processes, and mitigating potential risks such as privacy concerns and bias in algorithms are essential to creating a responsible and effective AI strategy. Additionally, there is a growing need for workforce adaptability, as employees must acquire new skills and adapt to AI tools. Balancing these opportunities with the complexities they bring is key to establishing good practices for AI in the public sector.

The workshop presentation on the use of AI by public administrations in the EU provided an EU wide review of developments and highlighted future challenges. These include the implementation of the AI Act, understanding generative AI's risks, assessing workforce preparedness, and setting the stage for a discussion on responsible AI use in the public sector.

Meanwhile, the tension between rule-based governance and the unpredictability of AI models were also showcased. It was underlined that, rather than rejecting AI, a trustworthy and controlled approach is essential, with transparency and reliability as key to public acceptance. Human control shall be kept over automatization processes and the use of AI.

At the DG plenary session, a presentation on the decarbonisation effects of digital solutions highlighted an important link between digital and green transition.

3.3 Greening of public administration

The greening of public administration was an important priority of the 2024 Hungarian EUPAN Presidency. It has been also tackled by the Belgian Presidency in the context of sustainability, and the Polish Presidency is going to continue the work on this subject as well.

In the light of this objective, the Hungarian EUPAN Presidency

- carried out a query among the Hungarian capital and county government offices concerning their greening practices,
- organised a workshop at the WL Meeting on greening public administration, at which, along with the presentation of the Hungarian examples, the Dutch and Danish activities were also introduced and discussed,
- commissioned the Ludovika University of Public Service to prepare a paper on *“Towards Green Public Administration: Goals and Principles”*, which establishes a comprehensive framework and provides guidance for public administrations in their greening efforts,
- organised a workshop at the DG Meeting for the presentation and discussion of the paper and the goals and principles.

At the WL workshop, three principles were agreed upon: 1. leading by example; 2. ensuring that no one is left behind; 3. measuring and following the results.

Participants emphasised the important role public administrations play in raising energy and environmental awareness among both colleagues and the broader society. They stressed that a successful transition to sustainability must not come at the expense of people, meaning that social aspects – such as employing people with disabilities – must also be considered in the shift towards a climate-neutral and circular economy. Being able to measure the effects of greening initiatives helps to communicate the positive messages of green transition and facilitate social dialogue as well.

Having taken into consideration the WL workshop results, the paper on *“Towards Green Public Administration: Goals and Principles”* was prepared and presented in the DG Meeting workshop.

Goals and Principles for GPA



The workshop participants discussed the ways in which the proposed goals and principles can be made actionable and suggested that they might be taken into consideration when developing the new EUPAN Strategy Paper.

3.4 HR government decision-making support

This topic was handled partly within the framework of the research carried out by the Ludovika University of Public Service, as there were questions included into the survey regarding this issue as well. According to the research results, personnel decision support is mentioned in 21 cases, mostly involving data tables, reporting on personnel, and data used for workforce planning.

The Hungarian Governmental Personnel Decision Support System (KSZDR) was introduced within the framework of a workshop as one of the most important development projects in the field of HR policy in Hungary since 2010. Public sector organisations required by law to join include public healthcare institutions, government offices, law enforcement agencies, ministries, and educational district centres, with local government offices still in progress. The system contains accessible personal data for over 260,000 individuals.

The introduction of the KSZDR serves multiple purposes:

- To provide the data and analyses necessary for the development and implementation of the Government's personnel policy,
- To provide staffing and salary data for analysis to government agencies,
- Increasing the decision-making competence of the National Assembly,
- Employers and supervisory organizations receive up-to-date information about the personnel,
- To provide data to international relations,
- To perform statistical queries.

It enables the Government to make swift, data-driven HR policy decisions by providing automated and real-time access to verified HR data from public sector organizations. At the

same time, it enhances the organization's development, HR activities, and human resources efficiency. They gain access to an IT tool that allows them to design their internal organizational structure and allocation of their human resources. Furthermore, by utilizing the system the previous, often paper-based, ad-hoc data provision process is transformed, and a modern information system takes over the potential data collection functions, which unifies data analysis at government level. By taking full advantage of the system's capabilities, governmental organisations can significantly reduce their workload related to data provision.

The subsystems of KSZDR are:

- Public administration personnel interface as a data collection module,
- A statistical module,
- Position Registration System,
- New personnel registration and administrative system.

Only government administrative bodies are required to join to the Position Registration System, while central government administrative bodies and law enforcement agencies are required to use the personnel registration and administrative system.

It is a supporting tool of the government's personnel policy and as such, it targets the public service. However, its operation only extends to a part of the public service statuses.

During the discussion, many participants noted that their member states do not have such a comprehensive, multi-system solution, even though it would be a great help for HR policy. However, some member states face IT challenges hindering the development of such a solution.

4. EUPAN matters

4.1 Evaluation of the EUPAN Strategy Paper 2022-2025

According to the EUPAN Handbook, the new Strategy Paper has to be developed by the sixth presidency. As a first step in this process, the WL 5 Secretariat of the fifth presidency was tasked with the evaluation of the current strategy document. Hungary carried out this task based on the presidency reports and the analysis of the 28 survey responses provided by the Member States. Drafts of the evaluation report were shared with the Secretariat but also the members for comment, and its main findings were presented on both the WL and DG meetings. (Please find the final version of the Results of the Evaluation of the EUPAN Strategy Paper, 2024 attached to this report. It is going to be uploaded to the EUPAN website as well.)

All in all, the current Strategy Paper proved to be sufficient and flexible enough in providing the strategic framework for the network activities, and it was suggested at the DG meeting that the current structure should be kept. However, responses indicated ambiguity or relatively less interest on behalf of the members in certain areas. Consequently, it might be worth to reconsider whether all the topics meet the needs of the next period.

According to the survey results, the new Strategy Paper might seek synergies with related EU strategies and activities of relevant groups and international organisations. It might also focus more on supporting mobility and staff exchanges among EUPAN member states. Regarding indicators, only 50% of respondents found the number of EUPAN events relevant, while common projects were highly valued. Many respondents indicated that they use EUPAN information only occasionally or rarely for comparative analyses, relying more on international

data sources and policy development than in previous periods.

During the discussions it was stressed that EUPAN should integrate inputs from other networks, while maintaining independence. When designing the new Strategy Paper, future guidelines should not be overly restrictive. It was also suggested to strengthen foresight in the future and put performance and workload more into the centre of attention. Topics such as an ageing workforce and the integration of different generations continue to be in the centre of attention.

The upcoming Polish EUPAN Presidency indicated that they are going to develop the first version of the Strategy Paper 2025-2028 in collaboration with the next six presidencies, taking into consideration the Strasbourg and Ghent declarations as well. It is going to be discussed at the WL Meeting in Warsaw in March 2025.

4.2 Observer status of Albania

At the end of its semester, the Belgian Presidency received a request from Albania to join EUPAN as an observer state. The silence procedure conducted by the Hungarian Presidency concluded successfully, with no objections raised. The WL Meeting was reported accordingly, at which no objections were raised either. As a result of the approval of the Directors General, Albania became a permanent observer starting with the Polish Presidency.

4.3 Uzbekistan's request for cooperation with the EUPAN

Another request was forwarded by Hungary's Permanent Representation to the EU to the EUPAN Presidency according to which Uzbekistan would like to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with EUPAN. Within the proposed framework, they would like to collaborate and exchange experience focussing on four main areas: (a) joint educational and research activities; (b) participation in seminars, academic meetings and conferences; (c) exchange of academic materials, publications, and other open-source information; and (d) special, short-term training programs.

EUPAN operates as an informal network, and its primary focus is on EU Member States and European observers (EU Candidate and EEA countries), which limits the scope for formal cooperation, including the signing of Memorandum of Understandings with non-European partners.

However, exchanging open-source information and good practices, as well as ad hoc invitations to certain activities based on the individual decision of the future presidencies seem to be possible.

4.4 EUPAN eNews

The Hungarian Presidency has prepared one edition of EUPAN eNews on recently launched digital public service innovations thus contributing to the spread of European public administration reforms. It is going to be made available at the EUPAN website as well.

Thank you for your kind cooperation and support!

