

Polska Prezydencja w Radzie UE Polish presidency of the Council of the EU Présidence polonaise du Conseil de l'UE



POLISH PRESIDENCY OF EUPAN

REPORT

1st January– 30th June 2025



Chancellery of the Prime Minister Republic of Poland





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This document is a summary of the main themes and activities of the Polish presidency of the EUPAN during the period from 1st January to 30th June 2025.

1. Overview of the events

The Polish presidency of EUPAN has been held by the Civil Service Department of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister. The Polish EUPAN team has been part of the EUPAN Secretariat along with the DG HR at the European Commission, Cyprus, Danmark and Hungary.

During the Polish presidency the following events were organised:

- 1. EUPAN 5 WL Secretariat Meeting, 20th February 2025, online
- 2. Working Level Meeting, 13th-14th March 2025, Warsaw
- 3. 10th European CAF Users' Event, 10th April 2025, Warsaw
- 4. CAF National Correspondents Meeting, 11th April 2025, Warsaw
- 5. EUPAN 5 DG Secretariat Meeting, 30th April 2025, online
- 6. Directors General Meeting, 27th-28th May 2025, Warsaw

2. Alignment with the EUPAN Strategy Paper

The Polish presidency has developed its priorities based on the three strategic domains of the EUPAN Strategy Paper 2022 – 2025:

Transformation of the civil service and HR policies	Transparent, accessible, resilient and green public services that meet public users' expectations	Organizational changes, public innovation, digital transformation and "greening" of public administrations
 working conditions and well-being at work attractiveness of public administration and retention of talents skills, skills development and training in accordance with European skills agenda 	 integrity and trust accessible services to all 	 innovative infrastructures for public services and for the future of work "greening" of public administration using Al in an ethical manner promotion of the quality management in public administration through popularisation of CAF model

Scheduled activities

In addition, the main responsibility of the Polish presidency was to develop a new Strategy Paper for 2025-2028 and submit it to the EUPAN Directors General for adoption.





3. Working Level Meeting – Warsaw, 13th – 14th March 2025

EUPAN Working Level Meeting was held at the Conference Centre of the National Stadium in Warsaw. Conference amenities of the stadium was a central place for the most of the meetings during the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first semester of the 2025. It was attended by delegations from 27 EUPAN members including European Commission, 6 observers and 4 cooperating institutions.

Agenda of the meeting, composed of the plenary and the parallel break-out sessions focused on the main priorities of the Polish Presidency in the EUPAN: well-being and work-life balance, effectiveness of innovative ethics policies, proper use of AI, accessibility of public services for people with disabilities, greening of public administration and attractiveness of the civil service as an employer and innovative public administration.

Participants discussed also draft EUPAN Strategy Paper 2025-2028 developed in cooperation and broad consultation with the network by the Polish Presidency.

4. Directors General Meeting – Warsaw, 27th – 28th May 2025

EUPAN Directors General Meeting was held at the Conference Centre of the National Stadium in Warsaw. It was attended by delegations from 26 EUPAN members including European Commission, 5 observers and 5 cooperating institutions. The meeting was chaired by **Anita Noskowska-Piatkowska**, Head of Civil Service in Poland and **Marta Kuzawińska**, Director of the Civil Service Department in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister.

Agenda of the meeting was built around priorities of the Polish Presidency. During the meeting the final reports on the main two comparative studies were presented and discussed during the workshops. Professor **Christoph Demmke** shared with the participants main outcomes of the study on effectiveness of innovative ethics policies, and **Anna Dyjas-Pokorska** from Foundation "Institute of Market and Social Research" – IBRIS, presented findings of the study on well-being and work-life balance.

EUPAN Directors General approved the EUPAN Strategy Paper 2025-2028, which will serve as a road map for the next six presidencies of the network. DGs also accepted request of Bosnia and Herzegovina and granted EUPAN observer status to this country.

5. 10th European CAF Users' Event "Smart Governance: People-Centred, Efficiency-Driven" – Warsaw, 10th April 2025

The 10th European CAF Users' Event, organised in cooperation with the European Institute of Public Administration, brought together over 130 participants from more than 20 countries at the Conference Centre of the National Stadium in Warsaw.





A central highlight was the presentation of the "Golden 18" – accurate selection of outstanding CAF-based practices from Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, and Spain. These initiatives showcased innovation in leadership, employee engagement, digital transformation, and service delivery, demonstrating the tangible impact of CAF on public sector excellence.

One of the results of the Polish Presidency of the EUPAN Network is the publication of a conference report featuring a collection of best management practices. This initiative aims to promote the use of quality management tools, including the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), and to support good governance in Europe and beyond

Critical to the success of the Event was the involvement and support of the international community, including CAF National Correspondents and experts, as well as ReSPA, GIZ, OECD/SIGMA and the Polish National School of Public Administration (KSAP). Their active support and enthusiasm helped shaping the agenda and ensured broad participation from across Europe.

The event reaffirmed the CAF as one of a cornerstone of quality management in public administration, promoting resilience, agility, and citizen-centric services across Europe.

6. CAF National Correspondents' Meeting – Warsaw, 11th April 2025

The CAF National Correspondents Meeting brought together nearly 40 representatives from EU Member States, candidate countries, and Eastern Partnership countries at the Conference Centre of the National Stadium in Warsaw. The meeting followed the 10th European CAF Users' Event and served as a platform to reflect on its outcomes and on future directions for the CAF.

Key discussions focused on the development of a "SMART CAF" – a modernised, digital, and more efficient version of the CAF model. Coordinated by the European CAF Resource Centre, this initiative aims to enhance usability while maintaining the model's core principles of excellence.

Further priorities included reviewing the upcoming CAF Excellence Recognition (CER), a revised version of the Procedure for External Feedback (PEF); promoting the use of CAF in the education sector; developing a centralised CAF Knowledge Platform; and drafting a strategic framework to align CAF with broader EU public sector reforms.

These initiatives underscore CAF's evolving role in fostering quality, innovation, and good governance across Europe.





7. Main outcomes EUPAN events

7.1 Study on "Innovation and Effectiveness of Ethics Policies in Central Public Administrations in Europe"

This study was conducted by professor **Christoph Demmke** and **Anna Le Bihan** from the University of Vaasa (Finland) as part of the Polish Presidency of EUPAN's priority theme "Integrity and trust".

Drawing on survey responses from 26 countries and EU institutions, the research examines how ethics management frameworks are evolving in response to societal, political, and technological changes. It highlights significant variation in how countries define, institutionalize, and enforce ethics policies. In all countries, ethics systems are becoming ever more complex, institutionalized and differentiated. While some countries adopt centralized systems, others rely on decentralized approaches. In most countries, ethics systems are highly fragmented and not sufficiently integrated. Despite growing awareness of the importance of ethics in public service, many administrations face challenges related to allocating sufficient resources to implementation and monitoring of policies, measurement, data quality, enforcement, and coordination.

Key findings of the study include:

- Ethics policies are often reactive, driven by scandals rather than strategic planning.
- There is no one-size-fits-all model; effectiveness depends on national context and integration with broader governance systems.
- Ethical leadership, organizational culture, and professional HRM are critical to success.
- The rise of AI in public administration introduces both opportunities and ethical risks, particularly in HR analytics and data protection.
- Monitoring and enforcement remain weak points, with limited data on outcomes and costs.

The report calls for better integration of ethics into public management, improved measurement tools, and more investment in implementation. It also warns against overbureaucratization and the instrumentalization of ethics for political purposes.

Ultimately, the study underscores that ethics policies are not just about compliance – they are foundational to trust, legitimacy, and the effective functioning of democratic institutions.

The study involved input from number of national institutions, ethics and anti-corruption bodies, and Al offices, with additional in-depth contributions such as a national survey in Latvia - making it the most representative and comprehensive empirical study on the effectiveness of innovations in ethics policies in Europe to date.

The full survey report is available on the EUPAN website.





7.2 Diagnosis of the Functioning of Well-Being and Work-Life Balance Solutions in EUPAN Countries

This study was conducted by the Institute of Market and Social Research (IBRiS) (Poland) as part of the Polish Presidency of EUPAN under the priority theme "working conditions and well-being at work." It aimed to assess the implementation, effectiveness, and accessibility of well-being (WB) and work-life balance (WLB) practices in public administrations across EUPAN member and observer countries. It involved 32 countries, including EU member states, observer countries, and the European Commission. Data was collected between February and May 2025.

Key findings of the study include:

- The most widely implemented and recommended practices include providing comfortable (exceeding standard) working conditions taking care of temperature and air quality, remote work and flexible working hours.
- Senior care subsidies and mental health days, though less common, received a 100% recommendation rate.
- Practices such as team-building activities were found to significantly improve employee well-being and efficiency of employees.
- Almost a quarter of all solutions are in line with the concept of Green Administration, especially those related to commuting and remote work.
- Cost-effective practices like flexible work arrangements are highly rated, while some expensive infrastructure-related solutions (e.g., sports facilities) are less recommended.
- Most countries assess employee needs mainly through surveys, consulting trade unions representatives and HR data.

The report concludes that well-designed WB and WLB policies contribute to improved employee satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, and enhanced public sector performance.

The full survey report is available on the EUPAN website.

8. Pannels on Al

Panel "Al and Public Service Leadership: Preparing for the Future" was held at the EUPAN DG Meeting. It was moderated by **Daniel Gerson** (OECD), and featured speakers from France (**Hélène Martin**) and the Netherlands (**André Weimar**), discussing how Al is being used in HR and leadership roles.

France presented three AI use cases:

- predicting resignations in the Defence Ministry,
- an AI tool answering over 25,000 teacher queries in Lyon,
- Al-supported online training at DGAFP.





These pilots are part of a national AI strategy launched in 2024, focused on ethical, humancentred AI. Key points: involve all staff, ensure transparency, and support ongoing human-tech dialogue.

The Netherlands takes a cautious, values-driven approach. To avoid "pilotitis" (too many disconnected pilots), it promotes coordination through national guidelines, mandatory training, and a public algorithm register. The Defence Ministry is also building a custom GPT model, supported by a leadership decision-making compass.

Common themes: leadership is essential in balancing efficiency with ethics and human judgement. Success depends on AI literacy for leaders, collaboration, early engagement of stakeholders, and resisting "solutionism" by aligning AI with real public needs.

At the EUPAN Working Level Meeting, a similar panel was held included speakers from France (Faustine Bentaberry), the Netherlands (Marilette van As), and Poland (Pamela Krzypkowska). The Netherlands pointed out a need for common definition, learning and experimenting with AI, safe application and harmonising many pilots. France brought to the discussion national strategy on AI. The representative of Poland introduced PLLuM – Poland's national large language model developed to support public administration, education, and digital innovation. It aims to assist in the digitization of public services and make access to government information easier for citizens. PLLuM is a strategic step toward a national AI infrastructure, aiming to strengthen digital sovereignty and public sector efficiency in Poland.

9. Workshops at the WL meeting and the DG meeting

9.1 Work-life balance and well-being in public administration

The workshops were held in Warsaw on 13th March and 27th May. It gathered practitioners and senior officials from EU-associated countries and the European Commission to exchange experiences on implementing Work-Life Balance (WLB) and Well-Being (WB) solutions.

The sessions were moderated by **Anna Dyjas-Pokorska** from the Institute of Market and Social Research (IBRiS) (Poland), which had conducted prior research on WLB and WB best practices across EU countries.

Workshop 1: The future of public administration - how can we balance efficiency and employee well-being? (WL)

During the workshop participants discussed good and bad experiences on work-life balance (WLB) and well-being (WB), good practices in EUPAN member and observer countries and preliminary results of a survey on WLB and WB practices.

The key conclusions of the discussion were:

• WLB and WB practices are not just benefits for employees, but a key element in building an effective public administration,





- in a competitive market, an ambitious approach to WLB and WB allows to compete for employees with the private sector, which often offers higher salaries than public administration,
- generation Z prioritises work-life balance, so public administration should be an attractive place to work,
- in public administration, flexible working hours, additional health and convalescence leave are solutions that foster efficiency, creativity and well-being (Malta is such an example),
- some solutions, such as reduced working hours, have proved problematic (e.g. Portugal).

Participants in the meeting agreed that:

- WLB and WB have a positive impact on the quality of officials' work,
- we can combine the demands of public administration with concern for the well-being of employees.

Workshop 2: The future of public administration – efficiency and employee wellbeing in the context of employers' needs (DG)

The key themes of the discussion and its findings were as follows:

- Attracting and retaining talents in public administration.
 - Strategies and challenges regarding public sector employment attractiveness:
 - Centralized Application Systems and interministerial staff mobility streamline recruitment and offer internal flexibility.
 - Flexible work arrangements (hybrid/remote options) are valued by younger professionals and caregivers.
 - Mission-oriented work enhances the appeal of civil service jobs, particularly for individuals seeking purpose.
 - A sense of security and stability in the workplace is a highly valued aspect of Civil Service.
 - Barriers include: prolonged and complex recruitment processes, relatively low wages, the private sector is the biggest competitor.
 - Supportive measures include: simplified, digital recruitment platforms to attract younger generations and training and lifelong learning opportunities, as an investment in lifelong development.
- Work-Life Balance and Well-Being solutions driving effectiveness. Participants identified policies that foster employee engagement and improve performance:
 - Remote and hybrid work models :
 - Widely adopted, with varying degrees of flexibility (e.g., 1–3 remote days per week).
 - Positive impact observed on employee productivity and retention, especially among parents.





- Some countries offer personalized work arrangements, such as non-standard or flexible work hours within broad time frames, like 6:00–22:00.
- However, some countries prioritize keeping offices open (no more than 1 day of remote work) in order to establish a consistent office community and good cooperation.
- Bonuses linked to goal achievement, and other non-financial benefits
 (e.g., discounts on public transportation, nursery subsidies, etc., mostly unavailable in the private sector).
- Training and managerial development:
- Upskilling managers to effectively implement WB and WLB strategies.
- Focus on adapting leadership to evolving staff needs and new hybrid realities.
- Emphasis on offering clear career development paths necessary for long-term engagement.
- Most effective and transferable practices identified by public administration leaders. When asked to name the single most impactful WB/WLB solution, participants highlighted:
 - Remote work cited by multiple countries as a crucial enabler of flexibility and retention.
 - Manager training emphasized for embedding a sustainable WB/WLB culture.
 - Flexible and personalized work models praised for aligning work with diverse employee life stages.
 - Sense of mission and team belonging recognized as a motivating factor across employment forms (advantage over the private sector).
 - Supportive leadership deemed essential for cohesive work environments.

9.2 Effectiveness of innovative ethics

The workshops were held in Warsaw on 13th March and 27th May 2025. They brought together senior public officials and ethics practitioners from EU-associated countries and the European Commission to exchange insights on innovations and effectiveness of ethics policies as well as practical approaches to promoting ethics and integrity in public administration. The sessions were led by Professor **Christoph Demmke** from the University of Vaasa (Finland), a renowned expert in public sector ethics, the author of the survey on "Innovation and effectiveness of ethics policies in central public administrations in Europe".

Workshop 1: Costs and Benefits of Ethics Policies (WL)

The first workshop highlighted the fragmented understanding of the costs and benefits associated with ethics policies across countries. Approximately 63.6% of countries lack a comprehensive overview due to the dispersed nature of these costs. Ethics policies are often regarded as intrinsically valuable, making it difficult to quantify their material impact. Nonetheless, growing evidence supports the utilitarian benefits of ethics management, particularly in reducing misconduct, discrimination, and poor organizational performance.





Despite these benefits, the implementation of ethics policies is becoming increasingly bureaucratic and costly. The rise in transaction costs stems from the need to coordinate among multiple ethics bodies and stakeholders. While ethical organizations tend to foster high-performance and high-trust environments, the administrative burden of implementing such policies remains a significant challenge.

Ethics policies also contribute positively to public trust, accountability, and institutional legitimacy. However, their intrinsic value is frequently overshadowed by political and economic interests. In some cases, ethics policies are instrumentalized for political gain, particularly during election campaigns, undermining their foundational principles.

A key issue is the lack of measurement and recognition of the real costs associated with unethical behaviour, such as discrimination, harassment, and corruption. These costs are often substantial but remain unaccounted for due to their fragmented nature. Despite these challenges, the workshop concluded that the benefits of ethical behaviour and the high costs of unethical conduct are increasingly supported by empirical evidence.

Workshop 2: The Effectiveness of Ethical Leadership – what countries (leaders) say? (DG)

The second workshop focused on ethical leadership, defined as the demonstration and promotion of normatively appropriate conduct through personal behaviour and interpersonal relationships. Effective ethical leadership requires individuals to be both moral persons and moral managers.

Survey results indicate that nearly 80% of countries view ethical leadership as highly or moderately effective in combating unethical behaviour in public service. However, a lack of active leadership and commitment is cited as a major barrier to effective ethics policies. The complexity of leadership roles – marked by value conflicts, ambiguity, and workoverload – complicates the realization of ethical leadership ideals.

In practice, leadership often deviates from ethical standards, with instances of destructive, dark, or amoral leadership. The concept of ethical leadership, while normatively appealing, is frequently perceived as a myth that does not align with administrative realities. Leaders face challenges in maintaining consistent, trustworthy behaviour due to the multifaceted nature of their roles and the pressures of rapid change.

Countries also emphasized the distinction between political and administrative leadership, the influence of organizational culture, and the contextual nature of leadership effectiveness. While ethical leadership remains a critical component of public service ethics, its practical implementation is fraught with challenges that must be addressed through contextual understanding and realistic expectations.





9.3 Responsible AI in the public administration

Workshops were organised during two meetings of the European Public Administration Network, on 13th March (WL) and 27th May (DG). They were facilitated by experts from the Civil Service Department in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister **Katarzyna Caba** and **Katarzyna Zdanowicz**.

Participants discussed the Warsaw GenAl Code¹ and the following questions related to the responsible Al use.

• What elements/procedures do you consider when implementing new technologies in your administration?

Risk analysis and assessment, interoperability and compliance, guidelines for users, internal regulations, testing period, coordinated try-out and permission to fail, security, change management, data protection, training competencies, evaluation, transparency, costs, flexibility for tailoring, stakeholder involvement, communication of end-vision and goals.

• How do you ensure the safe use of AI and other modern technologies in your administration?

Involvement of all stakeholders, humans in the loop, evaluation methodology (to assess impact etc.), evaluation using for example random control trials, open + ongoing discussion of risks, ethical implications, etc., leadership @ all levels, training, manuals how to use it in a safe manner, rules of conduct, policy/guidelines/framework, raise awareness of security risk, audits, risk analysis before use, sharing experience with others.

• How do you protect IT systems against digital attacks and data leaks?

Procedures and standards, permanent training, approved IT system, authorisation of roles, use professional/general guiding principles iso 27001, attract + retain cybersecurity experts (and other digital skills), partnerships/other actors (universities, private, ngo, agencies), invest in infrastructure and means, build safe back-ups, international cooperation.

9.4 Accessibility of public services for people with disabilities

The workshops took place as part of two European Public Administration Network meetings, held on 13 March (WL) and 27 May (DG). They were facilitated by experts from the Civil Service Department in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister **Anna Grzechnik – Wołosiuk** and **Małgorzata Perkowska** we shared information about implementing accessibility in Poland and exchanged valuable experiences of other countries.

Following the theoretical session, participants took part in an exercise, where they could feel and experience what a client with a hearing disability goes through when handling matters at office by attempting to communicate without using their hearing. They also experienced what a person with a disabled hand feels when signing a document. These activities provided valuable insights into the barriers that people with disabilities face in everyday situations.

¹ <u>https://um.warszawa.pl/kierunki-ai</u>





The workshop enabled also participants to exchange experiences and inspirations for implementing accessibility.

Here are some key takeaways from the meeting:

- A. Importance of Accessibility: Understanding the significance of making public administration accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities.
- B. Practical Insights: Gaining firsthand experience of the challenges faced by people with hearing disabilities and those with physical impairments.

Measures taken to improve accessibility in public administrations in participants' countries are i.e.: architectural (ramps, accessible entrances, fast lanes, Braille's maps, rooms on ground floor), communicational and organizational (sign interpreter, quotas for employment, internships for disabled people), digital (accessible websites, adapted software), recruitment campaigns.

Challenges that stills exist in public administrations in participants' countries include: access to the highest positions, difficulties in implementation of the law, mentoring programme, implementing of disability passport, digital accessibility, awareness training for civil servants and disability liaison officers and adjustment to neurodivergent needs.

10. EUPAN matters

10.1 Development of the new EUPAN Strategy Paper 2025 – 2028

One of the main responsibilities and priorities of the Polish Presidency in EUPAN was development of the new Strategy Paper 2025-2028. The previous strategic document, developed by the French Presidency in 2022 has been finalised by Poland in June 2025.

The development process has been implemented in accordance with the rules determined in EUPAN Handbook. It has started yet during the Hungarian Presidency in the second half of 2024 with the evaluation of the Strategy Paper 2022-2025. Results of this review served as a solid base and start for the whole process of preparing the new strategy of the network. The main ideas for the process were: inclusive approach with engagement of all members, core principles and characteristics of the network – informality, flexibility and consensus, keeping consistency with the two previous SPs – 2019-22 & 2022-25, leaving future Presidencies enough space to adjust specific priorities to meet changing needs, capabilities and most current trends in the future.

Reference and analysed documents:

- Ministerial Declarations from Strasbourg (2022) and Ghent (2024),
- EUPAN Strategy Papers 2019-22 & 2022-25,
- Evaluation of the previous SP by the HU Presidency,
- Exchange of views an exercises during EUPAN meetings,
- European and international documents on public administration, its key challenges and directions for change.





SP 2025-2028 has been consulted several times with the network by the Polish Presidency:

- January written consultations with the 6 members states covered by the new SP and EUPAN Secretariat Members,
- January / February written consultations with the whole EUPAN community,
- 20th February discussion at the WL Secretariat online Meeting,
- 13th March draft SP presentation, discussion at the EUPAN WL Meeting,
- March / April written consultations with the whole EUPAN community,
- 6th May discussion and adoption at the DG Secretariat,
- 27th May adoption of the SP by EUPAN Directors General during their Meeting in Warsaw.

Adopted SP 2025-2028 was shared among EUPAN colleagues and published at the EUPAN website.

10.2 Observer status of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Anita Noskowska-Piątkowska, the Head of Civil Service in Poland received a letter of 15th April 2025 from Anita Markić, Director of Civil Service Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this letter Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed its interest in cooperation with the EUPAN and in granting an observer status in the network.

Polish Presidency discussed this issue at the EUPAN Directors General Secretariat online Meeting (6th May), and according to the EUPAN Handbook – submitted the request for the discussion and adoption by EUPAN Directors General during their meeting in Warsaw (27th – 28th May). DGs unanimously adopted granting EUPAN observer status for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Polish Head of Civil Service shared this decision expressing her belief that involvement of the new EUPAN observer country will enrich the exchange of knowledge and best practices and contribute to further development of effective public administration across Europe. This also may support the process of modernising the public administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina in line with European standards and values, so important on the road to EU membership.

10.3 EUPAN eNews

The Polish Presidency in EUPAN decided to develop in close cooperation with all members and observers of the network two eNews – short information on specific issues, which were selected with accordance to the Strategy Paper 2022-2025 and Presidencie's priorities.

eNews on accessibility

Members and observers of the EUPAN were requested to submit short information on the accessibility of public service. Supporting questions addressed:

- What is the experience of your administration in implementing accessibility in the civil service, especially for older people and people with disabilities?
- What measures have been taken to improve the accessibility in the civil service (e.g. legal or organizational)?





- In what area (e.g. digital, architectural, communication accessibility)?
- What is the main result?

We received 30 answers, which were published in one e-News document at the EUPAN website and shared with EUPAN colleagues.

> eNews on digital competences

Members and observers of the EUPAN were requested to submit short information on the development of the digital competences among employees. Supporting questions addressed:

- What digital competences and future skills of central public administration employees are you developing in your country?
- Which methods/tools have proven to be the most effective in this regard?

We received 25 answers, which were published in one e-News document at the EUPAN website and shared with EUPAN colleagues.

Dziękujemy za doskonałą współpracę!

Sincere thanks for your outstanding cooperation!







EUPAN Directors General Meeting under the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU, 27th – 28th May 2025, Warsaw. POLAND25.EU



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