

eNews

Danish Presidency of the European Public Administration Network

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**Danish
Presidency**
Council of the
European Union

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eNews: Leadership Development Programs

Introduction

Strengthening public leadership

In 2025, OECD published the report *Workforce Insights from Central Government*¹, a survey study with 55.980 central administration employees across ten EU/OECD countries. The report offers a comprehensive overview of factors influencing workplace performance, and one of the factors that stand out is leadership: Of all the factors included, management from line managers is the most important driver for perceived team performance and the second most important driver for wellbeing. Leadership performed by the organizations' senior leaders is the second most important driver for perceived organizational performance and employee engagement.

The findings show that good leadership makes a significant difference and supports the notion that strengthening public leadership should be an enduring priority. This is consistent with the EUPAN Strategy Paper 2025–2028², in which one of the three main strategic objectives is to strengthen leadership and enhance the capacity to develop innovative and efficient public services and human resource policies.

During the Danish EUPAN Presidency in the autumn of 2025, two aspects of strengthening public leadership are explored: *leadership values and leadership development programs*. We have collected data on these topics in order to share experiences among EUPAN members and observers.

In the following, we will be reporting on the answers regarding leadership development programs. The aim of this E-news is to give specific, inspirational cases from each country, which can serve as a gateway to identifying relevant trends and countries and foster further cooperation and sharing of experiences between EUPAN countries.

We hope that this will be helpful in the further work to strengthening public leadership across EUPAN.

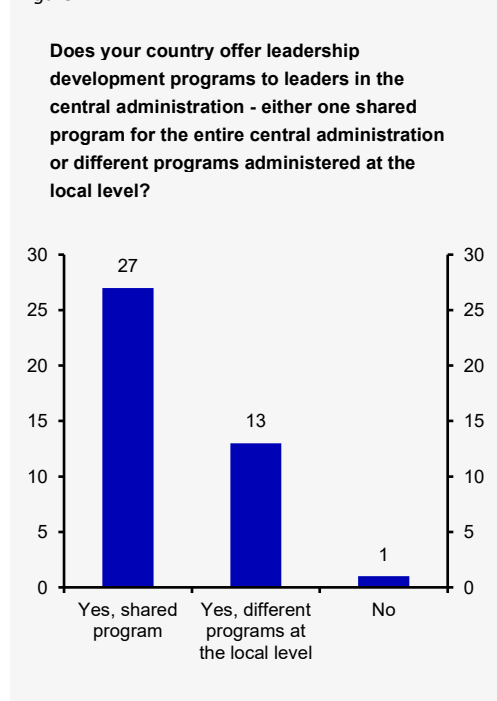
¹ [Workforce Insights from Central Governments | OECD](#)

² [European Public Administration Network \(EUPAN\) Strategy Paper – July 2025 - June 2028](#)

The statistics

Regarding leadership development programs, we received 32 answers to the questionnaire. They show that there is a general focus on leadership development across EUPAN, which is evident from *figure 1*.

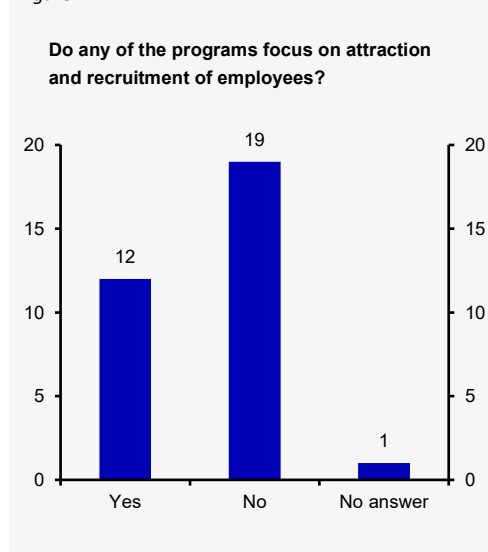
Figure 1



Anm.: N: 32
Kilde: EUPAN questionnaire

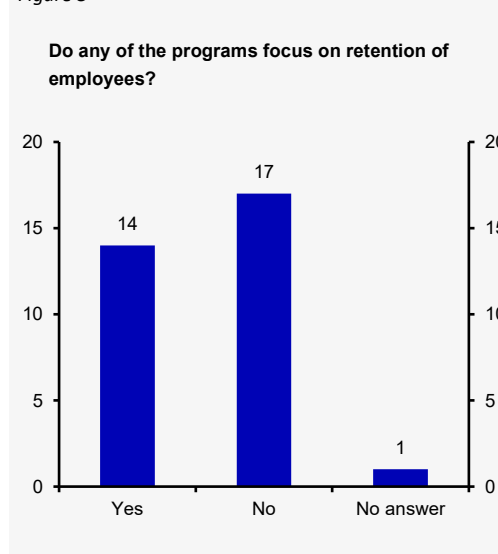
However, focus on recruitment, attraction, and retention is less comprehensive in relation to leadership development. A slight majority does not explicitly focus on recruitment or retention within their leadership development programs, which is evident from *figure 2* and *figure 3*. When the focus is there, it is often presented as training leaders in recruitment situations (for example job interviews).

Figure 2



Anm.: N: 32
Kilde: EUPAN questionnaire

Figure 3



Anm.: N: 32
Kilde: EUPAN questionnaire

While these topics have been prevalent across earlier EUPAN presidencies, it indicates that there is still room to increase the focus on this part, which is central to secure the continued strength and quality of public administration across EUPAN.

Leadership development in EUPAN

The following chapter provides examples of leadership development programs from the EUPAN countries and observers, as well as their focus on retention and recruitment. We have sought to keep to one example per respondent – as such these examples are not exhaustive of neither leadership development in each EUPAN member/observer or necessarily from the answers received to our questionnaire. Besides this example, we

will also highlight, where data is available, responses in regards to evaluation of leadership programs as well as the focus on retention and recruitment in leadership development programs. We hope that this can be used as inspiration, and to create an overview for further sharing of inspiration and good practice across EUPAN.

Albania

Albania has a shared program

The program is shared across the entire central administration, aiming to harmonize leadership skills nationwide.

The target group includes mid- to senior-level managers within the public sector.

The program is delivered by a combination of local trainers and external experts.

Participation is voluntary.

Main themes include ethical leadership, strategic management, communication skills, and public service innovation.

The format includes workshops and seminars.

The program lasts approximately 5 training days, with online modules covering both theory and practical case studies.

Evaluation is based on participant feedback and assessments conducted during and upon completion of the program.

Particularly recommended are the mentoring sessions, as they provide personalized guidance and help embed learning in real work situations.

Austria

In Austria, management training is mandatory for all positions subject to public advertisement. The deadline for completion is within five years of assuming the position.

The Federal Administrative Academy offers various management courses, with lectures given by both internal and external experts. Courses include both analogue and digital learning formats, using a mix of methods. Each course lasts 16 days, or 128 hours, with content prescribed by law.

Courses are delivered by various academies of the ministries: The Federal Ministry of Finance, The Federal Ministry of the Interior, and The Federal Ministry of Defense.

Recruitment, retention and evaluation

The main takeaway on recruitment is developing teamwork, employee potential, and good leadership.

The programs of all academies are continuously evaluated and modified as needed.

Skills and objectives

The management training programs are designed to enable participants to achieve the following skills and objectives:

- Design, management, and quality development of the organizational unit in terms of overall administration, organizational goals, and productivity
- Context-appropriate, socially communicative, and role-flexible behavior aimed at promoting teamwork, maximizing employee potential, and achieving organizational goals
- Ability to analyze the organizational framework (e.g., political, economic, social) and its further development, particularly considering conditions in the European Union
- Knowledge of budgetary regulations (in particular budget, impact orientation, procurement, contracts, subsidies) and the ability to apply and implement them
- Development and use of networking and cooperation opportunities, supporting associated processes
- Knowledge of compliance and corresponding personal conduct and actions
- Knowledge and practical skills relating to diversity management, human resources management, and human resources development
- Recognition of digital requirements and further developments for relevant work processes, implementation capabilities, and impact assessment

Belgium

Leadership Program for Managers

The *Leadership Program for Managers (all levels)* is a learning solution organized by the FPS Policy and Support and is common to all federal organizations (central administration). This 13-day program is open to all hierarchical and functional leaders (e.g., project managers) at all levels of the federal administration.

To participate, one must have the support of their hierarchical superior and HR department, commit to attending the entire program, and make time for individual and group exercises. There is one program per year, open to 150 participants, who are divided into 10 unilingual groups. The program is coordinated by the central administration but delivered by an external provider. Participation is voluntary, although approval from the hierarchical superior is still required.

The themes are not predetermined; the content is defined based on the needs of participants in each learning group. However, the guiding framework of the entire program is the federal vision of leadership. The program covers both management and leadership-related skills. Participants have the opportunity to present the problems and challenges they face in their workplace to the group and their trainer. They primarily learn through interaction with others—sharing knowledge and experiences, exchanging best and worst practices, and providing one another with feedback and input.

The program lasts 13 days and includes 1 collective discovery day; 1 intake interview; 11 group training days; 1 well-being day led by internal trainers, and 1 outtake interview.

Various formats and forms of learning are used: classroom teaching (models, theories), group coaching, individual coaching, intervention, individual and group exercises, personal cases, role-playing, organization visits, self-reflection, etc. Co-creation is the core format of this program.

The program is continuously evaluated with the trainers. At the end, a satisfaction survey is sent to participants, with questions covering all aspects of the program.

Recruitment, retention and evaluation

In regard to recruitment, the Belgian *Top Skills* program aims to attract new talent, including for top management positions. Its objective is to inform participants about these roles and encourage them to apply. The program provides information on selection procedures and eligibility criteria, raises awareness about inclusive and values-based leadership, and offers a concrete overview of available positions through testimonials from top managers. This program is open to everyone.

Bulgaria

A short-term practical training program for young civil servants under the age of 35 who demonstrate leadership potential. The training combines practical tasks and lectures focused on building skills in advocating for important policies and projects, lobbying, public speaking, as well as protocol and etiquette.

The aim of the initiative is to provide an alternative opportunity for experience exchange, innovative ideas, and learning for active young civil servants with leadership potential.

Over the course of six days, participants undergo intensive training to develop leadership skills necessary for defending positions on significant public projects and policies, managing teams, and introducing innovations that contribute to the modernization of public administration.

The training modules are delivered by civil servants, private sector professionals with extensive practical experience, diplomats, and experts from international companies and institutions.

The academy is conducted in a blended learning format (in-person and online). The online component usually starts two weeks before the in-person training begins. Training is conducted in both English and Bulgarian.

Recruitment, retention and evaluation

To some extent, there is a focus on retention, as the participation of young employees with leadership potential creates conditions for acquiring the competencies required for their career development in the administration.

Croatia

Civil Servants Management Training Program

The *Civil Servants Management Training Program* is aimed at boosting the leadership skills of top-level managers from central state bodies in the fields of HR management, strategic planning and management, project management, public policy design, financial management, EU topics, and personal development.

The program is provided by the National School for Public Administration (NSPA), the central government institution for the professional development of civil servants and state officials. Trainers are mainly employees of various ministries and other state bodies, as well as experts from the private sector with thematic expertise aligned with the program content.

The program is obligatory for civil service managers in the sub-categories of directors general, senior managers, and managers. It consists of 1- or 2-day modules, with a total duration of 19 days over three semesters, spanning approximately one year.

The main themes and learning objectives aim to strengthen knowledge, skills, and competencies considered important for performing management tasks, as well as to develop participants' leadership skills in areas such as understanding their leadership role and potential, applying leadership tools, guiding and motivating team members, successfully managing change and conflict, problem-solving and

decision-making, effective communication, and recognizing the value of coaching and mentoring.

Since the beginning of its implementation, the program has been continuously well-rated by participants, with an average satisfaction rating of over 4.6 on a scale from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied).

Czech Republic

Management Academy and Professional Development Program

The Czech Ministry of Health has introduced a *Management Academy and Professional Development Program* for senior staff, structured as a four-year training and development initiative aimed at strengthening the management capacity of the service.

The program consists of two-day training workshops on each topic, supplemented by short micro-learning sessions between workshops to maintain engagement and prepare participants for upcoming content. The target group includes heads of units, heads of departments, Directors General of Sections, and deputy ministers.

The Academy is delivered by an external contractor selected through a public procurement process, while organizational support is provided by internal staff. The first year of the Management Academy (MA) is compulsory for Heads of Department and Directors (HEO and MA level), focusing on basic management skills, while it is voluntary for more senior staff (HEO and NM level). The subsequent two years, under the Excellence Management Academy (EMA), are designed to deepen advanced management competencies and are voluntary for VO, MA, DG, and NM levels.

The main themes and objectives

- Managerial integrity
- Diversity
- Feedback
- Communication
- Negotiation
- Leadership
- Empowerment
- Stress management
- Work-life balance
- Self-reflection
- Strategic thinking
- Emotional competence
- Critical thinking
- Decision-making under uncertainty, with annual topic updates (e.g., 2023–2025)

The program combines interactive workshops (group and individual activities, role-playing, experience sharing), micro-learning (self-study), and individual coaching through supervision meetings. The first year includes compulsory activities and concludes with an online development center; the second and third years continue with workshops, micro-learning, exit sessions, and supervision; the fourth year ends with an in-person development center.

The program is evaluated each semester with the contractor. Participant feedback is collected after every session and used to shape future topics. Evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive, particularly highlighting the benefits of micro-learning for ongoing engagement and the popularity of supervision sessions. All elements of the program are recommended.

Denmark

Talent for Leadership

Denmark has the *Leadership Development Program in the Danish State (PLUS)*, which encompasses several different leadership development programs aimed at different target groups, from prospect leaders to director-generals. One of these programs is *Talent for Leadership*.

Talent for Leadership is designed for employees across the state sector who are considered as potential future leaders. Participation is voluntary. The program is administrated by The Danish Employee and Competence Agency, but the instructors are external providers.

The program consists of modules of 2-3 days, group activities, and individual coaching. It spans 12 days over a period of six months.

The learning objectives of the program

Personal Leadership:

- Can reflect on their own motivation for leadership
- Can use personal strengths and weaknesses in the leadership role
- Has tools to define and create a leadership space
- Is capable of acting as an informal leader.

Introduction to Personnel Management:

- Has knowledge of fundamental leadership tools and perspectives
- Understands the variety of leadership tasks in the public sector
- Understands group dynamics and conflict management
- Can provide direction and motivate employees in specific tasks.

Cross-Organizational Leadership:

- Has knowledge of the value chain and value creation for the end user
- Can understand the value of leading across professional and organizational boundaries.

The program receives consistently positive evaluations with 98% satisfaction from 180 participants in 2024.

Estonia

Crisis Management Masterclass

Estonia offers programs for senior and mid-level leaders. The *Crisis Management Masterclass* is a program that engages senior leaders from both the civil and private sectors. Depending on the program, providers may be internal or external.

Participation is voluntary, but participation rates are high. The programs focus on leadership skills and use a variety of methods, including self-study, mentoring, and study visits abroad. The duration varies from a few days to several months.

Evaluation is based on participation rates and participant satisfaction.

The European Commission

360° feedback

360° feedback is a shared central program provided by external suppliers. Participation is voluntary and covers competencies from the relevant frameworks. The program includes debriefing and individual follow-up with external coaches, as well as a yearly evaluation with participants and central services, conducted by the external supplier.

Management development program for future middle managers

Management development program for future middle managers is a shared central program provided by internal and external suppliers. Participation is voluntary and includes a mix of skills assessment, coaching, mentoring, networking events, and training courses. Its purpose is to support first-line managers in developing their people management skills for current and future managerial roles. Six editions of the program were exclusively for female colleagues; since 2025, it has been open to all genders.

Development program for aspiring senior managers and established senior managers

Development program for aspiring senior managers and established senior managers with a clear potential to go further in their career is a shared central program provided by external suppliers. Participation is voluntary or based on a recommendation from hierarchy who have identified potential candidates.

Different coaching programs are offered according to the candidate's level of self-awareness regarding their management skills and readiness to apply for senior management positions.

Finland

The Uudistuja Program (Renewal)

The Finnish Ministry of Finance has long supported the operational capacity of the administration by developing leadership and enhancing the capabilities of leaders to succeed in their tasks and careers. The Ministry has promoted networking among leaders from different sectors by organizing the annual Public Leadership Day and by implementing a leadership training program, the *Uudistuja (Renewal) Program*, in cooperation with the HAUS Development Center and FCG.

The *Uudistuja* program had approximately 500 participants from 2019 to 2024. Participants were selected by the Ministry of Finance and included senior or next-level managers from government administration and municipalities.

Participants are expected to commit to all 11 module days, complete assignments between the seven modules, and engage in their own personal experimentation to apply the learnings of the program in practice. Group sizes are typically 30 participants.

Lessons Learned include:

- Continuous monitoring and utilization of feedback to improve the program
- Alignment with government goals, e.g., through a steering group organized by the Ministry of Finance
- Ensuring participant commitment and paying attention to the course atmosphere.

Structure of the Programme

- Four two-day modules delivered in a boarding-school format and three one-day modules delivered remotely via Teams (total of 11 days)
- Pre-, intermediate, and post-assignments
- Experimentation (a small project initiated during the program)
- A broad material bank available on an e-learning platform

France

The Potential Development Program for Access to Senior Executive Positions in the State

The *Potential Development Program for Access to Senior Executive Positions in the State* aims to prepare senior officials to assume the highest strategic functions of the State (directors, prefects, ambassadors, rectors, etc.). It is a program common to the entire central administration. The target audience consists of volunteers who intend to take on a senior executive position within two years.

Each year, following a review of management staff, ministries propose candidates based on their skills, motivation, and potential. Applications are reviewed, and preselected candidates then undergo an assessment (self-evaluation, personality tests, and situational exercises). Approximately 80 executives join the program each year.

The program lasts four years and includes *The Public Service Senior Studies Cycle*: 20 days of training over 12 months, mainly delivered by external providers. Training covers modules on topics such as self-awareness, developing emotional intelligence, leveraging leadership skills, mastering collective intelligence methods, and opening up to external environments

and communities using innovative working and interaction techniques.

Executives who join the program are registered in the State Senior Executives Pool. This pool feeds nomination proposals for government decision-making positions. Hearing committees or aptitude commissions assess candidates' suitability before appointment. Retention in the pool is reevaluated at the end of the four-year program.

The program is evaluated through questionnaires sent to participants.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation

There is no dedicated recruitment program, but recruitment training courses and awareness-raising initiatives address the risks of discrimination.

In regards to retention, The *Talentueuses* program targets senior female executives in the civil service, local authorities, and public health institutions who may hesitate to consider management positions, even though they have the skills and experience to succeed. It focuses more on recruitment than on attractiveness, aiming to boost confidence and preparedness during interviews.

Germany

Führung Kompakt

“*Führung Kompakt*” is a three-part introductory seminar that covers basic leadership skills for both prospective and experienced managers over a total of ten days.

The structure of the course

Part A (four days): Motivational leadership – Focus on key management instruments and the role of managers

Part B (four days): Successfully managing oneself and others – Identifying one’s own standpoint; self-organization and stress management

Part C (two days): Enhancing practical leadership skills – Sharing experiences using practical examples from daily life

The program is offered as a face-to-face seminar and as an online seminar. It is delivered by external suppliers.

Course participants can register for each part separately, as long as they meet the relevant requirements. Participation in at least the first part of the program is mandatory for most managers at the federal level.

Evaluation is carried out through participant feedback and regular exchanges of information with the client authorities. The feedback is predominantly positive.

Greece

Common Competency Framework: Public Leadership 1st level

The *Common Competency Framework: Public Leadership 1st Level* is a seminar delivered by the National Centre of Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA), the national strategic agent for the development of human resources in public administration and local government.

The seminar lasts 21 hours, is mandatory, and is aimed at officials of all categories and branches. The need to improve leadership skills is highlighted during meetings between each official and their supervisor. The purpose of the training program is to improve the leadership skills of civil servants in order to:

- Create an appropriate climate of cooperation
- To achieve timely, effective, responsible and sound decision-making
- To develop the ability to manage, administer and guide the activity of the team

The evaluation of the training program is conducted through electronic questionnaires completed by trainers and trainees. Each trainer or trainee submits their evaluation at the end of the program, which is recorded in their individual electronic record.

The program is followed by a second part, aimed at 2nd-level leadership.

Skills employees will be able to demonstrate after attending the programme

- Define the concept of leadership and explain its importance
- Distinguish different leadership styles that can be applied case by case to achieve objectives or solve problems in the workplace
- Identify the characteristics of leadership that motivate, assist, and create the right climate of trust and synergy in their workplace
- Recognize behaviors that help develop a climate of trust and cooperation to achieve the goals set by their team

Recruitment, retention and evaluation

In regards to recruitment, there is no specific program. However, recruitment topics are covered by the certification program for Administrative Directors in Greek public administration, as well as by the certification program for Human Resources Consultants. Recruitment is conducted at the central level, with increasing emphasis on the personal skills of employees.

On evaluation, there is no statistical data on recruitment or retention, as no specialized program exists. However, statistics are available for all training programs, including those related to HR procedures.

Hungary

Secrets of Conflict-Free Cooperation

Secrets of Conflict-Free Cooperation is a shared and voluntary program organized by the Ludovika University of Public Service. The target group for this blended-learning training includes leaders in central public administration (heads of departments and heads of sections).

Through three interdependent modules, the continuing education program presents the theoretical knowledge and practical techniques by which managers can acquire a higher level of proficiency in the field of cooperation. The training begins with the transfer of theoretical knowledge that underpins the application of cooperation competencies. In the second stage of the training, participants can practice applying the acquired knowledge through experiential and interactive exercises.

During the training, management situations related to cooperation are presented, allowing participants to raise their knowledge and skill level while receiving complex and individualized feedback on their use of the learned methods. The training concludes with an e-simulation course, through which participants make decisions regarding team building and cooperation on behalf of the leaders of a fictitious organization.

In connection with recruitment and selection, one of the program's main goals is to help participants understand which methods are most suitable in various cases, learn how to conduct interviews, and explore the most effective questioning techniques and solutions adapted to their evaluation criteria.

Iceland

The Centre for Public Service Leaders Program

A centrally managed, shared program for the entire central administration, the service offering is multifaceted and includes individualized support tailored to specific leaders and institutions.

The program's primary target group is specific: the 154 top public service leaders of government agencies and public bodies, along with the 11 Secretaries General of the government ministries. The program is primarily delivered by the Centre itself, with the facilitation of external suppliers for specific training modules. Iceland encourages participation rather than mandating it.

The main themes are derived directly from the Iceland Public Service Leadership Competency Framework. The overarching objective is to "make good public service leaders' capabilities even better" by creating a clearer link between public funds, performance, and results for society.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation

In regards to recruitment, the Centre has developed standardized procedures for recruitment to ensure the process is based on objective, value-driven criteria (integrity, leadership, communication, performance management) rather than other factors, thereby improving the quality and consistency of leadership hires.

In regards to retention, it is closely linked to employee satisfaction with leadership, and leaders can directly influence this by focusing on specific, high-impact behaviors.

Parts of the support system

The format is comprehensive and not a single course. It is an ongoing support system that includes:

- Group Training: Workshops and an annual "Public Service Leaders' Day".
- Individual Support: One-on-one Executive Counselling and a structured Peer Mentoring Program.
- Digital Resources: A "Leaders' Toolbox" provides practical tools and information.
- Performance Dialogue: A formal "Dialogue on Results" process to discuss performance against KPIs.
- Length and content of the program: The program is continuous and ongoing. The content is built around the practical application of the leadership competency framework.
- Program evaluation: Evaluation is data-driven and integrated into the program through the systemic use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Latvia

The Senior Management Leadership Program

The *Senior Management Leadership Program* is a shared program for the entire central administration, run by the State Chancellery. The target group includes state secretaries and deputy state secretaries of the ministries, as well as heads and deputy heads of institutions – in total, around 100 institutions and 270 senior-level managers.

For the most part, the program is delivered by external experts. However, most activities include knowledge and experience sharing between managers themselves. The program offers ongoing training and development activities, including modular training, an onboarding program for new managers, individual coaching, peer mentoring, thematic exchanges, exchanges abroad, seminars on relevant topics, and annual conferences. Latvia highlights the peer mentoring program and the so-called “fuck-up” afternoons among managers.

Satisfaction surveys are conducted after each event, and participant feedback is taken into account when organizing subsequent events. The program is voluntary.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation

Many activities within the Senior Management Leadership Program are interwoven with human resource management topics, including aspects of

Learning objectives

- To develop the leadership capacity of current and potential senior public administration managers in line with contemporary requirements and future needs.
- To promote a working environment and culture in public administration that focuses on the development and effective use of competencies, encouraging senior managers to be positive role models and facilitators of development for all those working in public administration.

employee recruitment and retention. For example, one modular training cycle is devoted to the topic “*How to create the management team and lead it?*” which covers subtopics such as what motivates people and how to foster diversity and inclusion.

While the Leadership Program is not specifically designed to focus on retention, all program activities provide leaders with valuable insights that help improve their leadership competencies and, in general, strengthen retention through the quality and effectiveness of leadership. As with other events in the program, satisfaction surveys are conducted after each event, and participant feedback is taken into account when planning future activities.

Lithuania

Leadership Academy

Currently, Lithuania has the *Leadership Academy* project, aimed primarily at the civil service. The target group includes heads of institutions (mostly) and some heads of units, with a view to preparing them to become heads of institutions in the future. The program is delivered by an external supplier, ISM University, and participation is voluntary.

The main themes cover a wide range of subjects important to heads of institutions and leaders in their everyday work, including motivation, finances, team building, goal setting, strategic thinking, and communication. The format consists of seminars (including practical classes), offered either live or remotely.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation

The program does address employee retention, but it is too early to report on main takeaways, as the project is still ongoing.

In terms of evaluation, it is currently very basic: after each seminar, participants must fill out a form indicating their level of satisfaction. This is the only mechanism currently in place for evaluating the program.

Luxembourg

Digital Leadership Course

The *Digital Leadership Course* comprises five blended learning modules (see details below). The program is shared across the entire central administration, with four modules targeted at middle and senior management and a fifth module targeted at senior management. The program is not mandatory.

It is designed internally, with experts from the Luxembourg civil service, and favors internal trainers for the synchronous components. Each module lasts a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 12 hours, combining e-learning and face-to-face meetings. The program has received very positive feedback, with an excellent satisfaction rate of 93%.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation

Luxembourg emphasizes recruitment in leadership development programs through the structuring and qualification of job interviews.

In terms of retention, the main takeaway for managers is that they act as sponsors of the Management by Objectives (MbO) approach and the implementation of MbO tools, which themselves encourage employee retention. A staff member who knows what they have to do, understands their role in the organizational structure, and can see opportunities for progression is more likely to feel committed and less likely to leave.

The five modules of the program

1. **Context of Digital Transformation in the Civil Service in Luxembourg:** Participants learn about the fundamental differences between digital transformation and digitization, as well as key elements of a digital strategy and cybersecurity.
2. **Information Security and Data Protection Governance:** Participants learn to recognize the importance of information security and data protection, understand the role of risk assessment, and define the legal implications and risks associated with new technologies.
3. **Emerging Technologies for Management:** Participants learn to identify the characteristics of emerging technologies and explain the potential and challenges associated with adopting these technologies in the civil service.
4. **Leadership and Organizational Culture in a Digital Environment:** Participants learn to explain the concept of collective intelligence and facilitate collaboration within a hybrid team.
5. **Strategy Management in a Digital Environment:** Participants learn to apply Design Thinking tools and concepts in strategy implementation and to consider the impact of technology on decision-making.

A central part of the program is a leader assessment test taken at the beginning, which helps leaders understand whether their work environment is digitized and, if so, assess their ability to work in and with a digital environment.

Moldova

Management and Leadership in Public Administration

The *Management and Leadership in Public Administration* program is a centralized training initiative implemented across both central public authorities and first-level territorial administrative units in Moldova. It targets public officials with less than five years of managerial experience, aiming to strengthen their leadership and administrative competencies.

The program is coordinated by the public entity responsible for continuous professional development (the National Institute of Public Administration and Management) in collaboration with external trainers and the State Chancellery. Delivered over 40 hours, it combines seminars and practical workshops covering key themes such as modern management approaches, human resource and talent development, communication in public entities, leadership versus management, ethics, and institutional integrity. The goal is to enhance decision-making, communication, and ethical leadership within the Moldovan public administration.

In regard to retention, the main takeaways for leaders include understanding different employee types, adapting leadership styles, maintaining a fair psychological contract, creating a motivational work environment, and investing in professional development. Retention relies on trust, recognition, and opportunities for growth within the team.

Netherlands

Ethics and Integrity – Doing the Right Thing When the Pressure Is On

The Netherlands offers various leadership development programs under the coordination of the Directorate-General for the Senior Civil Service. An example is the learning line *“Ethics and Integrity – Doing the Right Thing When the Pressure Is On.”*

This is a central, voluntary program for senior civil servants. It supports leaders in strengthening their moral compass and integrating integrity into everyday practice and organizational culture. The program is delivered by external academic experts and moderators.

The program emphasizes moral leadership, ethical dialogue, and creating a culture of psychological safety. The program spans two months.

Participants also receive access to a digital learning environment with articles, videos, and reflection exercises.

Evaluation is conducted through baseline and end-line surveys measuring perceived changes in behavior, attitudes, and knowledge. The Netherlands recommends integrating ethical theory with practical conversation tools (e.g., Socratic dialogue, moral debate) as particularly impactful for fostering ethical leadership.

Elements of the programme

- An intake interview
- Three interactive expert lectures
- Practical assignments
- A closing workshop facilitated by specialists in ethical dialogue

Norway

Pilot Program for Strategic and Flexible Leadership Development across Entire Leadership Teams in Central Government

The program is a shared leadership development initiative designed for the entire central government administration. It is currently being piloted in two separate government entities to test the model in different organizational contexts.

The program targets entire leadership teams and is designed to include leaders across different levels of seniority, fostering collaboration and shared understanding across hierarchical boundaries. It is primarily developed and coordinated by the Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management. Participation in the program is voluntary.

The three modules in the program

1. **Leading** – Focuses on the role of the leader in the public sector, leadership identity, and the societal mission of government organizations.
2. **Leading Together** – Emphasizes collaboration, internal alignment, and team development across leadership levels.
3. **Leading Forward** – Addresses change leadership, innovation, and strategic capacity building.

The overarching learning objectives include:

- Strengthening leadership identity and role clarity
- Enhancing collaboration and internal cohesion
- Building strategic capacity to navigate complexity and change
- Reducing dependency on external development initiatives

The program employs a blended learning format, combining in-person gatherings, digital learning components, reflection tasks, learning groups, and digital nudges between modules to reinforce learning over time. This format supports both individual and collective learning and can be adapted for fully digital delivery if needed. The full program spans 8 to 10 months, with the three main modules delivered sequentially.

Several elements of the pilot program are worth recommending, including:

- **Cross-level leadership development:** By engaging leaders across hierarchical levels, the program fosters shared understanding, strengthens organizational cohesion, and promotes a unified leadership culture.
- **Modular flexibility:** The ability to offer individual modules separately enables customization and responsiveness to the specific needs of different government entities.

Poland

The Synergia Project

The aim of the *Synergia Project* was to develop a new educational and cooperation program based on a network of public administration managers from Central and Eastern European countries, and to implement the institutional management solutions developed during the program within the Polish administration.

The program was voluntary and targeted at senior management in central and government administration institutions in Poland and other Eastern European countries, as well as units subordinate to and supervised by them (e.g., secretaries of state, undersecretaries of state, voivodes, deputy voivodes, heads of central offices and their deputies, directors general, and directors of organizational units).

Workshop and training topics included, among others: team management (leadership, employee motivation, team

management, etc.), communication management, project management, strategic management, process management, change management, risk management, and IT in the public sector.

In working groups, participants developed management policy conclusions along with recommendations for implementing specific solutions. These developed solutions were subsequently implemented in selected public and government administration offices.

More about the project

The project was implemented from September 2019 to December 2023. A summary of the project is available here: [The Synergia Project](#)

Portugal

Advanced Training for Public Administration

The *FA-AP (Advanced Training for Public Administration)* is a specialized training program designed for leaders and managers in Portuguese public administration. It aims to strengthen strategic, ethical, and human-centered leadership in response to the increasing complexity of public sector challenges. The target audience is senior and middle managers in central, regional, and local public administration.

The course covers themes such as leadership and emotional intelligence, team and performance management, strategic communication, and behavioral sciences applied to public management.

Learning objectives

- Promote self-awareness and reflective leadership
- Foster the ability to motivate and retain talent through empathy, clarity, and purpose
- Equip leaders to manage complexity

The course uses blended learning, including in-person seminars, online modules, coaching sessions, and group work. Active learning methods such as case studies, real-world scenarios, and peer learning are also employed. The duration typically ranges from 30 to 60 hours, depending on the edition and selected modules.

The course is evaluated through participant feedback, self-assessment tools, and applied group projects. Evaluation focuses on both individual leadership growth and organizational impact.

Recruitment and Retention

Key takeaways for leaders on retention include:

- Leveraging AI to improve recruitment strategies, using data to predict future skills needs and identify talent gaps
- Promoting ethical and transparent use of AI tools in hiring processes, ensuring fairness and inclusivity
- Understanding how digital transformation and innovation make public sector organizations more attractive to new generations of talent
- Encouraging a data-driven and human-centered approach to recruitment, aligned with the values of public service
- Emphasizing the role of leadership in adopting AI not just as a technological tool, but as a strategic asset for modernizing human resources and improving the public sector's appeal as an employer.

Romania

In Romania, 2,500 civil servants in senior career categories participate in training courses on leadership and talent management in the context of new technologies and digital transformation. This program is open to the entire national administration at central, territorial, and local levels. By the end of July 2025, 2,540 civil servants had been trained and certified.

Training sessions last 40 hours and are delivered in a fully physical format (20%) and in a hybrid/online format (80%). Training consists of 40% theory and 60% practice. Groups consist of a maximum of 25 participants for physical/hybrid sessions and 50 participants for online sessions.

Participants who pass the final assessments are issued certificates attesting the number of hours completed and the competencies acquired (aligned with the OECD Framework for digital talent and skills in the public sector and DigComp). The program is evaluated using a training impact analysis based on multi-criteria analysis, as well as quantitative and qualitative methods.

The program covers the following topics:

- Human resources management
- Change management
- Decision making
- Conflict management, with a focus on digital transformation (cloud services, online tools, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity)
- The legislative framework for digital transformation and European guidelines on the use of ICT in all areas of life and the digitalization of public administration

Serbia

Training program for managers in central administration is mandatory for newly appointed senior civil servants and those transitioning to managerial roles. Its goal is to develop knowledge, skills, and competencies for effective leadership and policy implementation. The program includes mandatory and elective modules, covering topics such as leadership, digitalization, psychological safety, and HR management.

It is delivered through various formats: online courses, trainings, workshops, mentoring, and coaching. Programs focused on leading change, information security, and building organizational culture are especially recommended. The Leadership Training Program for local government has the same structure and target similar topics.

In regards to recruitment, there is no dedicated training program specifically focused on recruitment, but rather training programs that address human resource management (HRM) more broadly. It is possible to highlight some of the learning outcomes from these programs that are related to the topic:

Learning objectives of the program

- Applies the process of human resource planning based on competencies
- Collects information on key aspects of a job position
- Participates in the creation of job descriptions
- Ensures the selection of new employees based on their competencies and work experience
- Differentiates between competency-based candidate selection methods
- Oversees the implementation of onboarding plans for new employees
- Motivates employees to increase their efficiency and productivity

In regards to retention, human resources training is provided at the local government level within the Training Program for Newly Appointed Senior Civil Servants. This training covers all key HRM functions at a basic level.

Slovakia

The Education and Evaluation Centre of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic

The Education and Evaluation Centre of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic was established in April 2017. The center's mission is to support the professional development of civil servants through courses and educational activities.

The *Basic Management Skills Course* (14 hours), offered by the Education and Evaluation Centre, is mandatory for senior civil servants within six months of assuming a senior civil service position. It focuses on improving basic management skills and is based on the need to manage people more effectively. The course emphasizes the effective use of management tools and processes to improve work and achieve common goals.

Optional training

- Conducting an evaluation interview (7 hours)
- Communication skills for managers (14 hours)
- Modern approaches to managing people and teams – how to become a good leader (14 hours)
- Coaching interviews in the work of a manager (7 hours)
- Stress management for managers (7 hours)
- Time management for managers (7 hours)
- Psychology for managers (7 hours)
- Presentation skills (14 hours)
- Conflict resolution (7 hours)
- Problem solving (7 hours)
- Structured selection interview (intended for members of selection committees who conduct selection procedures (7 hours)
- Manager/leader in public service (4 hours)

Slovenia

Management training in public administration

Management training in public administration is a regular program intended for senior civil servants. The training is mandatory for directors-general, secretaries-general, heads of bodies within ministries, heads of administrative units, directors of municipal administrations, and municipal secretaries. The program is delivered centrally by experts from the public administration and external contractors.

It consists of ten modules covering topics such as challenges of modern management, communication and motivation, mental health at work, new technologies, legislative procedures, human rights, equal opportunities and integrity of leadership, project management and development planning, public finances, public speaking, and a final workshop.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation

In regard to recruitment, the program *Training of Leaders for the Use of the Competency Model* focuses on strengthening leaders' skills for conducting selection interviews, with an emphasis on identifying key competencies. Participants are introduced to questions designed to uncover competencies in job candidates, as well as other methods for assessing competencies during the selection process.

In connection with employee retention, Slovenia trains leaders in the use of the

competency model. Through this training, they acquire skills for conducting development-oriented conversations with employees and learn practical activities they can independently implement to support the development of specific competencies within their teams.

The result of the manager's assessment of competencies and the employee's self-assessment is a competency profile. High-quality feedback guides the employee toward competency development and supports ambitious and high-potential employees in achieving their career goals.

As part of the mandatory training for senior civil servants, a dedicated module raises awareness among senior leaders about the importance of mental well-being; the role of leaders in ensuring psychological working conditions; identifying and managing psychosocial risks; coping with stressful situations in leadership roles; and planning activities that foster a psychologically safe working environment.

Every training session is evaluated by participants using a standardized questionnaire. Participants appreciate the practicality of the content and the opportunity to exchange experiences. They recommend including even more content on motivation, mental health, and different aspects of leadership, with as many practical examples as possible.

Spain

Course for Women with Potential in the Civil Service

Spain has specific leadership programs to promote the involvement of women in public administration leadership positions, including the *Course for Women with Potential in the Civil Service*.

The course is hybrid (online with in-office sessions), totaling 200 hours. The maximum number of participants is 26. The target group is female civil servants serving in the General Administration of the State, particularly those in positions of team management or unit coordination.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation

In regards to recruitment, The General State Administration (AGE) develops the Talent Recruitment Plan, with a presence in universities and secondary education centers, to attract the best young professionals to public employment.

In regards to retention, The *Funciona* portal provides a dedicated space for professional public management staff, offering access to the new repertoire of public management positions and the directory of candidate individuals (Public Talent Directory), managed by INAP.

Sweden

In Sweden, there is no single national program covering all central government leaders. However, a centrally coordinated leadership development program is offered by the Government Offices to newly appointed Directors-General. The program is voluntary and aims to strengthen participants in their leadership role within the Swedish public administration. It is delivered by the Government Offices and begins with a personal introduction and a foundational seminar on the constitutional framework, financial governance, employer responsibilities, and more.

A core element of the program is a set of leadership groups facilitated by external consultants. The groups are designed around participants' own experiences and current issues in their role as agency heads. The aim is to further develop and continuously reinforce the competencies needed in the role of head of a government agency, while fostering deeper connections with peers in similar positions. Each group has about ten participants, meets three times in the start-up year (six days in total), and may choose to continue meeting twice yearly for the rest of their term.

The Swedish Agency for Government Employers is a member-based organization that supports leadership development through a range of targeted activities. These include shorter courses, thematic seminars, dialogue forums, and learning networks, where managers can exchange experiences and

explore leadership issues related to employment conditions, organizational development, and the specific responsibilities of public sector leaders. While not a formal program, these initiatives provide flexible and practical support tailored to agency needs.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation

The Swedish Agency for Government Employers addresses recruitment topics in various activities, including training, dialogue forums, and managerial guidance. These cover the manager's role in communicating the agency's mission, contributing to employer branding, and ensuring merit-based recruitment aligned with public sector values.

In regards to retention, the Agency addresses retention-related themes in similar activities, such as training, dialogue forums, and managerial guidance. Topics include sustainable leadership, active dialogue, and good working conditions, linked to the employer's responsibility for creating environments that support motivation, development, and long-term commitment.

While there is no centralized evaluation or formal training program on these topics, the Swedish Agency for Government Employers emphasizes these themes in its employer strategy and in its various activities.

Switzerland

Switzerland has a central management training program that is available to all departments and offices. In addition, departments and offices can also explore certain management topics in greater depth under their own responsibility. The program is provided by external suppliers and is targeted at managers with administrative responsibilities. The program is mandatory for individuals who are new to a management position and focuses on topics such as self-management, leadership and management, communication, and public management.

The format of the program includes seminars, self-study, web-based training, networking, and community activities (management circles and voluntary coaching). The program consists of six days of classroom-based seminars plus various tasks, e.g., preparatory work, transfer tasks between blocks ($\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 day), group work, keeping a learning diary or creating flashcards, and independent work through various online learning programs.

The program is evaluated through an online questionnaire at the end of the face-to-face seminar.

Recruitment is a focus area, as it is an important management task. The main takeaway is that managers need to know the job market and understand the advantages of working for the federal administration.

The main takeaways on retention include creating an onboarding plan for the first few weeks, ensuring that the workplace and infrastructure are ready and functioning on the first day, taking time to get to know the new team member on their first day, maintaining regular communication, and setting goals for the first few months.

Ukraine

School of Strategy Training

The general professional development program “*School of Strategy Training*” is implemented by the High School of Public Governance. The target group includes civil servants holding category “A” positions in the civil service, including those appointed to a civil service position for the first time. The program is conducted in cooperation with the international technical assistance project SURGe, “*Support to Ukraine's Reforms for Governance*”. Professional development under this program is mandatory for civil servants.

Objectives of the program include to:

- Deepen participants' understanding of the public administration system and their role within it
- Develop professional competencies for effectively fulfilling the mission of senior civil servants
- Build a modern managerial mindset and develop strategic planning skills in the context of globalization, European integration, and post-war recovery

The program consists of eight modules, which include interactive lectures, master classes, business games, case studies, thematic discussions, group projects, and practical tasks.

It covers 2 ECTS credits (60 hours):

- In-person: up to six days over two months
- Online: up to four days over two months

The program consistently receives positive reviews, with participants reporting a satisfaction rate of 99.1%.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation

The High School systematically monitors the quality of the educational process through anonymous surveys of professional training participants. Analysis of responses allows the institution to determine participant satisfaction with the organization and implementation of training, the relevance, novelty, and practical orientation of professional development programs, and the usefulness of provided information and practical tools. Feedback data contributes to a better understanding of participants' needs and expectations and supports management decisions to adjust professional development programs in order to achieve educational goals.



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