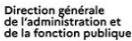


# EUROPEAN UNION LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE PROGRAMME



## FIRST PHASE PILOT PROJECT REPORT Executive Summary

31/01/2022



## Executive Summary

Leadership plays a key role in the development of Public Administrations. It encourages and supports innovative strategies and the development of people, teams and public organizations to cope with the rapidly changing environment and the challenges of the future, in order to provide a better public service to citizens and societies. Therefore, we need to create conditions that foster accelerated development and value creation capacity of public leaders.

The **General Framework for an Exchange Programme (EU-LEP)** dedicated to civil servants working on topics related to public administrations, with a focus on leadership skills and destined to middle managers, was presented as a proposal of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union with the contributions from partners from the EU Member States and the European Commission, in the context of the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) and the Network of Directors of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration (DISPA).

A pilot-project for EU-LEP was initiated in October 2021 and will run until June 2022, involving 6 partners, namely, Belgium, France, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and the European Commission. The methodology followed got EU middle managers in interaction, during a period of three months, in contexts of collaborative work and sharing of knowledge, public policies and good management practices that allow the modernization and transformation of public administrations.

The evaluation of the first that ended on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 phase shows that:

**The concept is valuable and feasible** -The original idea could be translated organizationally and in a bilateral/multilateral way. It's safe to say that a programme can be placed in action in a satisfying way, even if some adjustments should be taken into consideration to enhance the reach and efficiency towards the goal of having a European network of middle managers, sharing common challenges for the transformation of public administration and the civil service and working complementary to solve issues.

**Middle managers profit effectively** - It was considered of great worth to interact with many professional profiles, from different administrations, contributing to improve the insights on own professional practices by the contact with new ways of working, innovative initiatives and projects. The visiting middle managers improved technical knowledge, working skills and competences and envisioned future transfer of best practices (organizational/technological) between host and home institutions.

**Stakeholder Institutions recover investment** - This process was not a heavy burden on the stakeholder institutions. The evaluation was quite positive as the partners could see the balance between investment and the return. While not creating a common public administration ethos, it certainly fostered a common vision for public service, culture and principles aligned with the values of the European Union.

**Financial Support must be enlarged** – The costs (direct and indirect) were deemed efficient and reasonable at the pilot level. In average the displacement of a middle manager for a week will cost around 2.000 € to the home institution and 1.000€ to the host institution. Expanding the programme will involve a robust financing source that guarantees equal chances for all member states of the European Union to participate and benefit of such an exchange.

**Some adjustment will greatly increase value** - Notwithstanding the positive outcome and accomplishment of the pilot, some improvements can turn the programme into a more powerful and efficient tool:

- The preparation process must be structured and organic with the deep involvement of the visiting participants, allowing a better preview on what the needs are. Like so, a better roadmap can be built and previous engagement with peers will optimize the exchange of knowledge during visits.
- To optimize the time spent in the organization and implementation, in the future and whenever possible, it is desirable to have larger groups benefiting from the same exchange experience so they can continue working around the common interests. It will favour the solidification of the network created by this programme.
- It will be important in the future to guarantee a support online platform (a specific one or through the website of the future overall coordinator) where information can be shared in advance for participants to save time and create efficiency.
- Having as primary objective to foster the creation of a European network of middle managers it makes sense to use the programme to facilitate addressing common challenges, by prioritizing some themes that are most pressing at the European Level as a whole and felt by all public administrations within the European Union. The approach must be flexible though.
- The programme must be clear in its form and purposes. First and foremost, must be clear that it is a programme to enhance the competences of people that, through their position, have the possibility and/or the mandate to implement change and transformation in public administration. These people will be eligible to receive skills on how to lead change and/or projects, initiatives and practices that induce change.
- The programme must find a balance in its structure. To solidify as an 'easy to implement' programme without administrative burdens must be an objective. It should be taken in consideration to maintain a relatively flexible framework to accommodate the distinctive realities of the public administration in the European Union and create bridges to really unify around the principles of the programme.
- Being a European programme, it is of great importance to be inclusive, which means that conditions must be created so that all member states have equal chances to participate. To have this programme financed centrally by the European Commission, seems like the most suitable way to guarantee the financial viability of the programme and the principles of fairness and justice amongst all the states. This would require inclusion in one of the policy initiatives funded under the Multi Annual Financial Framework 2021-2027 (to be explored with the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament).