

Policy note on the improvement of Human Resource Management and Development in European Public Administrations

The European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) is an informal network of the Directors General responsible for public administration in the Member States of the European Union, the European Commission (EC) and observer countries. The uniqueness of EUPAN lies in its role to facilitate its members in their exchange and sharing of views, experiences, tools and best practice on relevant topics and areas of interest. EUPAN fosters the development of common tools, activities and/or visions that are utilised among all its members.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a unique common management tool for self-assessment and performance for public sector organisations. Following the decision of the DG in charge of public service, the European CAF Resource Centre, hosted by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht, together with the European CAF-Correspondents Network is responsible for its further development. Created through cooperation within the EUPAN network, it is considered to be the European quality tool for public administration and excellence in the public sector. First presented in 2000 as a model for achieving quality in the public sector, it has been revised five times, with the latest being the CAF 2020, which focuses on digitalisation, agility, sustainability, diversity, and innovation. CAF 2020 was developed by the European CAF Correspondents Network and EIPA in an interactive two-year process.

The Ministry of Public Administration in Slovenia carried out two important studies for the purpose of leading the Presidency of The Council of the European Union in 2021. The first study covers the ageing and talent management in European public administrations. The purpose of the study was to better understand how European public administrations frame the challenges of talent management and an ageing workforce, and how they perceive and use a variety of tools to achieve different objectives in this area. The second study examined the impact that the CAF model has on human resource management and people. The study which has been supported by the European CAF-Correspondents network confirms the link between the use of CAF and significant changes in human resource management.

The key findings of the studies are the following:

[Study on ageing and talent management in European public administrations](#)

- **Talents can be found across all age groups, therefore employee management should be looked through a multigenerational perspective**

Talent management is a tool that has great potential for managing multigenerational workforces. Therefore, it must take into account all generations of the workforce working together and not only new talent entering the workforce or older workers specifically.

- **The ageing of the workforce places a premium on effective knowledge transfer strategies**

The issue of knowledge transfer and retention is particularly challenging because it requires a long-term perspective and commitment from an organisation, and it is also dependent on the motivation of older workers. The first step is to ensure that older workers be made actively aware of the value of their knowledge to the organisation, and be motivated to share that knowledge and expertise with colleagues and successors.

- **One of fundamental steps toward an effective execution of any talent management strategy is investment in the capability of those who carry it out**

Talent management is a continuous, cyclical process involving multiple actors across public administration – not solely human resource departments. Managers now have a greater role in hiring and developing talent than in the past, and need to be able to draw on a range of tools to attract, recruit and develop talent effectively in order to engage the employees.

[Study on the impact of CAF on HRM and people](#)

- **Most CAF-Improvement Plans cover measures for the improvement of human resource management, reflecting the importance of this issue for organisations.**

Human resource management is a highly prioritised area for organisations. 58 percent of organisations' CAF-Improvement Plans include measures for the improvement of human resource management. Human resource development was included in 36 percent of plans, while the involvement and empowerment of employees was included in 40 percent of plans.

- **CAF implementation significantly improves internal communication, organizational culture, learning, information flow, teamwork, employee focus and performance**

More than 55 percent of European public sector organisations which received the certificate "Effective CAF User" have realised the following actions by field after CAF-implementation: improving internal communication (69 percent), conducting employee surveys (66 percent), improving the competencies of employees (63 percent), enhancing the teamwork (61 percent), increasing employee well-being (61 percent), better informing of employees (56 percent), improving the customer satisfaction level (56 percent), increasing feedback culture and quality discourses (54 percent), better targeting of internal training programmes (54 percent), developing mission statements (53 percent), further developing website appearance, usability and information (53 percent), improving working conditions (53 percent), increasing employee motivation (53 percent).

- **CAF continues to rely on more traditional HRM methods, and there is scope for the adoption of more innovative approaches when tackling the future challenges of HR management and development in public administrations**

The CAF framework and organisations' Implementation Plans could better reflect the evolving nature of work and the development of new career paths (i.e. digital). Increased attention is required for human resource strategy, planning and controlling in the CAF implementations. The necessary change initiatives in the public sector need strong leadership and a new leadership culture focussing on purpose, innovation, learning and continuous feedback. The definition of job requirements and the prospective planning of retirements are often discussed in CAF Improvement Plans, but barely find their way into daily business. The survey reveals that sensitivity to diversity and inclusion issues is slowly finding its way into public sector organisations. Diversity and inclusion require a clear strategy and concrete measures on how human resource management can contribute and unlock its full potential. Working towards more timely, fair and flexible recruitment, mobility across organisations, and leadership development would increase the flexibility and resilience of organisations.

The study has shown that the CAF model works and that its use leads to improvements in human resource management and development in public administrations. It should be recommended to other countries that are not currently partners in the CAF-network.

These reports together show that traditional HRM methods provide bases and a good, though insufficient, starting point for modern and innovative approaches. The practice of talent management emerges as a strong candidate to help public sector managers plan for a range of uncertain futures. A greater use of talent management practices has significant scope to improve how public sector organisations across Europe build long-term capability. Talent management carried out with a long-term vision of the skills and competencies required in the future will help ensure that a pipeline of these skills is available so that workers departing does not result in a gap in productivity or service delivery. Creating an attractive workplace and attractive work culture for current and potential employees is an important driver for implementing talent management policies. The report on ageing and talent management in European public administrations already contains many useful insights, case studies and recommendations that can provide guidance in how to do this.

While certainly COVID-19 has affected countries differently, the overwhelming trend is that governments and public sector organisations have been critical to keeping their economies and societies afloat. The use of innovative tools to prepare for the future can help identify the gaps or blind spots in organisations and can play an important role in building organisations' resilience to future crises. The OECD, with financing from the EC, is carrying out a research project on strengthening the resilience of Public Administrations with CAF, in cooperation with the EC, twelve MS and the European CAF RC at EIPA. The aim is to collect CAF users' experience of the crisis and their views on how the CAF model contributed to their resilience. It is expected that the results of the project will also contribute to the identification of the development path for the next version of the CAF model.

The Directors General will further support the improvement of human resource management and development in their public administrations in the ways they find appropriate with use of traditional tools, quality tools such as CAF model, as well as new innovative approaches for people management to ensure and upgrade the capabilities of public administrations for current and future challenges.

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