

## EUPAN Informal Meeting of Directors General & TUNED, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2014

### Welcome and introduction

**Mr. Ioannis Spiliotopoulos**, Director General of Human Resources, Ministry of Administrative Reform and E-Government (MAREG), opened the meeting and welcomed the representatives of the Trade Unions as well as the participants in the 62<sup>nd</sup> DG Meeting that had been held the previous day. Furthermore, Mr. Spiliotopoulos pointed out the necessity to elaborate on public administration issues (i.e. restructuring public administration, human resources, reduction of available financial resources) in the era of crisis. Given the fact that selection of managers constitutes a fundamental pillar of the reforms, there was specific reference to the selection methods of managers used in the member states of EUPAN. European countries have adopted selection methods with common features, such as meritocracy and transparency, regardless of their cultural and administrative differences. Furthermore, **Mr. Spiliotopoulos** referred thoroughly to the selection system that would be shortly applied in Greece and pointed out that the search for the best system is an endless process. He concluded by laying emphasis on the fact that human being is at the centre of every aspect of the reform.

### Presentation and approval of the meeting agenda

**Mr. Spiliotopoulos** passed on to the presentation of the meeting's agenda.

### Approval of the minutes of the DG-TUNED Meeting in Vilnius 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013

**Mr. Spiliotopoulos** continued with the approval of the meetings. He asked whether there were any questions regarding the minutes. **Ms Salson** made a short clarification concerning the minutes on the part concerning TUNED. She mentioned that the Framework Agreement does not focus on services towards vulnerable social groups but it focuses on issues financed by government administration.

Then the floor was given to **the French delegate** who praised the flexibility of the Greek Presidency in terms of presenting various themes and formulated the following points concerning the documents of DG Resolution and Simplification of Administrative Procedures respectively:

- how cooperation between EUPAN DGs and TUNED would be enhanced as mentioned in point five of the DG Resolution<sup>1</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> **5. Informal meeting between EUPAN DGs and TUNED**

The Directors General appreciate the continued engagement between EUPAN Directors General and TUNED representatives on the basis of a dialogue on common areas of interest that are closely related to the current EUPAN Medium Term Priorities.

The Directors General welcome the opportunity to engage during their informal meeting with TUNED on 20th June 2014, on the basis of key areas of interest for both parties.

- French perspective on simplification not only entails reduction of administrative burdens but a project on quality public administration for vulnerable users as well.

**Mr. Passas** responded that the new Troika is to decide the deepening of the cooperation between EUPAN DGs and TUNED, given that it is a political decision. Also, he thanked the French delegation for the remarks concerning the document on simplification.

## **Joint EUPAN and TUNED Session**

**Mr. Dimitris Papadimitropoulos**, Director General of Administrative Support (MAREG), welcomed the participants and outlined the importance of social dialogue, social debate and social consultations in the era of economic crisis. Finally, there was a short discussion on the presentations that would be introduced on the first half of the meeting and the floor was passed on to the speakers of that session. Mr. Papadimitropoulos highlighted the role of trade unions association in shaping better policies for public administration and protecting human rights. He also referred to the book of professor Andreas Fischer-Lescano of Bremen University which elaborates on public administration issues on a comparative basis. Finally, Mr. Papadimitropoulos gave the floor to **Mr. Nacer-Eddine Djider** to present the role of HR in shaping public administration.

## **The role of HR in shaping public administration**

*Presentation by Nacer-Eddine Djider, head of unit international coordination (Directorate General for administration and the civil service), EUPAE Coordinator*

**Mr. Nacer-Eddine Djider** presented a strategy for strengthening human resources through better participation and management chance. The document had been elaborated within the European social dialogue committee for central government administrations. It was underlined that although that strategy had taken place in the context of financial crisis, it could be applied within a general framework. Furthermore, Mr. Djider referred to the forms of social dialogue at European level and the role social dialogue committee held, as stipulated by the EU Treaties and the diversity among member states. There was also an extensive reference to the goals, principles and guidelines of the committee. As Mr. Nacer-Eddine Djider stated, social dialogue must be considered a key for the implementation of the reforms. The general idea was to better fulfill public service missions and ensure their accessibility to all users. As a result, social dialogue was perceived as a very useful tool to achieve wide consensus for the upcoming changes.

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They also reassert the willingness of future Presidencies to host informal DGs meetings with TUNED representatives in order to discuss common issues, share experience on the topics of the meeting agenda and strengthen cooperation among EUPAN and TUNED.

**Mr. Papadimitropoulos** thanked Mr. Djider for his interesting presentation which offered a unique perspective on HR policies as a beneficial means for both employees and citizens and passed the floor to Ms. Nadja Salson to elaborate on simplification of administrative procedures with reference to the citizens.

### **Connecting to the citizens: simplification of administrative procedures**

*Presentation by Nadja Salson, TUNED Coordinator*

**Ms Salson** thanked the Greek delegation for inviting TUNED and referred to the previous efforts to bring something new concerning social dialogue. Within this framework, she anticipated for the novelty of the Italian Presidency. Although social dialogue issues had been raised for the first time ten years before, they were still considered extremely relevant given the current financial, economic and social situations. She also underlined the need for cooperation throughout Europe. Concerning simplification, Ms Salson approved the use of the term simplification because “burden” (either administrative or regulations) was not perceived in a common way and clarified the objectives of simplification (i.e. to serve a more general social purpose and to align with the public service values in terms of equal treatment, impartiality and accountability). Not all regulations are negative. Consequently, there should be a balance between simpler regulations and upholding these values. Judging from the REFIT agenda of the Commission, issues such as health and safety and protection at work are widely discussed and are better reflected in the framework agreement for a quality service in central government administrations. Within this context, a project has been submitted to the Commission to facilitate the implementation of the aforementioned agreement, with emphasis to state services towards the most vulnerable groups. Ms Salson went on by presenting the agreement in a nutshell and giving examples of the implementation project. It was deduced that there is little on the quality of administration concerning some groups of people. A survey was also conducted with the use of questionnaire. The survey concerned whether and how service users were involved in improving the quality of services-an issue related to democracy. Unemployment and pensions services were at the centre of the survey. Taking into consideration the limited literature concerning the quality of unemployment services, the added value of the survey was that it provided enriching feedback for further improvements. As far as pensions are concerned, the initial findings brought to light some deficiencies that should be tackled in order to facilitate access of certain age groups. Ms Salson also announced that the findings of the survey would be presented in the Italian presidency in July and thanked the Italian administration for their overall contribution both to the survey and to the organization of the events. Their aim is to do a final report in December 2014. Finally, she invited the colleagues who had attended the seminar at Bucharest to add their comments.

**Mr. Papadimitropoulos** thanked Ms Salson for the highly important presentation, which proved that the trade unions can indeed contribute

substantially to the improvement of public services in terms of quality and responsiveness and invited the next speaker to talk about social dialogue and the context of the financial assistance in Ireland as determined by the Troika.

### **Social dialogue in the context of the Troika-led financial assistance programme: the Irish case**

*Presented by Eoin Ronaoyne, General Secretary of CPSU, Ireland*

**Mr. Ronayne** thanked for the invitation to the conference which was an opportunity to present the Irish experiences from public service and the public service union point of view. The speaker started by briefly presenting the social dialogue process (social partnership as it is called in Ireland) prior to the involvement of the Troika. Social dialogue structure in Ireland was established in 1997 and ran up to 2009. It was considered part of the Irish success story at that time and an effective way to address the economic crisis in the late 70s and the early 1980s. The Prime Minister's department, the Irish trade unions (both of public and private sector), confederations and the Department of Finance were the key players. The outcome of the social dialogue process was seven centralized collective agreements for public and private sector regulating industrial relations, government pay and taxation policy in Ireland. The last agreement (called "Towards 2016") was drawn in 2010, before the involvement of the Troika. Mr. Ronayne also made a reference to the stable industrial relations machinery or bodies and the relevant legal framework that had been established during that period. According to the speaker, the basic characteristic of social partnership during that era was voluntarism, the fact that the parties came to the process without any compulsion. The whole system was driven by a high level of consensus between employers, government and the unions. The engagement was done in such a way which facilitated positive cooperation at workplace level with strong support from the work unions. In particular it was marked by an open door policy to the government. Concerning the recent economic crisis, Mr. Ronayne stated that its first casualty to social partnership had to do with a centralized wage bargaining system. However, there had already been established social consensus in bargaining the default position of the country's economy for 23 years. He referred to a survey for the ILO in 2012, according to which the Irish government had pursued a unilateral approach rather than a negotiation so far. In 2009, the harsh economic policy led the government to adopt unexpected measures (such as a pension levy on public sector employers). Finally, private sector employers withdrew from the dialogue process and the Irish government closed the door on social partnership. Consequently, social partnership was dead but a formal social dialogue survived in Ireland. There had been the extended period of highly structured social partnership. Although some measures were imposed without necessarily the consent of the workforce, the public sector union's management tried to enter a formal social dialogue concerning a new public sector agreement. The whole process resulted in the Growth Pack agreement in 2010.

Three years later, under the demand of Troika for stricter measures, a formal social dialogue was launched and a new agreement was negotiated. The most important features of the agreement were the fact that the new agreement was rejected by the unions for the first time in a balance and that labour relations commission intervened to promote an agreement that would be widely underpinned. Mr. Ronayne presented the context of the agreement in figures as well as the phases working relations in Ireland have been through from 2008 till today. There was a detailed reference to the recent improvement of the Irish economy and its impact on the social dialogue. Mr. Ronayne stated that there was a shift from a very structured, centralized collective bargaining with engagement at all levels to a significant loss of trust between the government and the public service trade unions. The Troika has either been a demotivating factor or it has been the excuse. Within this framework, the Irish government needs to deliver confidence building measures, to signal an end to unilaterism. Industrial relations legislation should also be amended. There will be legislative improvements in relations to private sector. In conclusion, Mr. Ronayne expressed the support of the union he represents to the intention of the government to embrace fully the social dialogue bargaining. Finally, he pointed out that the engagement at all levels between unions and management holds an important role to the recovery of the economy and will help rebuild the country and the mood which is a sense of enjoying life and having a reason to live.

**Mr. Papadimitropoulos** thanked Mr. Royane and pointed out that the situation in Ireland had many similarities with the Greek case. In fact and opened the floor for comments.

**The Italian delegate** thanked the speaker and referred to the activity taking place in Brussels concerning social dialogue and reminded that similar events would take place in Rome.

**Mr. Passas** congratulated all speakers and asked Mr. Royane to elaborate on the way demonstrations and strikes had been influenced during the Troika era.

**Mr. Ronayne** responded that there had been a social partnership process between unions and employers as well as a residual relationship between the actors, which facilitated the discussions outside the formal process. At the same time, street protests had been organized. In general, government accepted the fact that there was a power within the trade union movement, which would be better to engage than to ignore. During the Troika era, there was an engagement at a high level, which mitigated the need for street disturbances. Now, there is particular pressure within the Irish residual system for people to protest.

**The French delegate**, commenting on the question, reminded that action is on the way and that when there is not social dialogue, trade unions find other ways to be heard. He commented on the importance of the issues presented

and the improvement of services within the framework of crisis and stressed the significant work that has been carried out in the social dialogue committee for the past few years. Concerning the previous presentations, he said that they clearly presented the results or aims to be attained and they did not show the difficulties at the background. The final documents are binding for the participants in the social dialogue since they include guidelines which all parties intend to implement. Consequently, all this work in the social dialogue committee not only increases trust between the partners but also serves the ultimate aim of social dialogue; that is to encourage and facilitate social dialogue at national level. The French delegate concluded his presentation by thanking his colleagues from Belgium for their assistance.

**Ms Valatsou** took the floor and asked Mr. Ronayne to provide comparison information data about the labour market between the public and the private sector and to indicate which of the two parts of the labour market was more influenced by the crisis, the Troika and the final result to the society.

**Mr. Ronayne** said that, concerning pay cuts, some service industries in the private sector (e.g. construction, retail sector e.t.c.) were badly affected. The increase in unemployment rates, both the indicators of long term unemployment and unemployment in general, explicitly proves that. In terms of the public sector, pay cuts affect mostly people of lower level. In pay terms, the cut has been mostly in the public servants, because only certain private sector industries have suffered pay cuts. He added that high immigration affected mainly private sector workers since a significant number of young and well-educated people had left the country to go abroad. However, in the private sector, there was a raise in unemployment, because the savings and the austerity measures were accompanied with job cuts. In the public sector there was a voluntary redundancy and usually people at the end of their working life leave early. On the contrary, in the private sector, there was a significant rise in youth unemployment.

**Mr. Papadimitropoulos** thanked the speakers for their presentations and the participants for their attention and their interventions.

**Mr. Spiliotopoulos** thanked everyone for their comments and invited for the coffee break.

### **Coffee Break**

**Mr. Spiliotopoulos** together with **Ms Yola Valatsou**, Director General of Financial Services (MAREG), reconvened the meeting and thanked both the previous speakers for their fruitful presentations and the upcoming representatives of the ADEDY.

## **The impact of crisis in HR in the Greek public sector**

*Presentation by Grigoris Kalomoiris, representative of ADEDY (the Greek Civil Servants' Confederation), member of EPSU.*

**Mr. Kalomoiris** thanked for the invitation and introduced his colleague, Mr. Dolgyras. He went on presenting the bail-out programme policy that has been followed in Greece and its negative impact on the number of public entities and civil servants, functional cost, employees and welfare state. To underpin his arguments, Mr. Kalomoiris presented the findings of recent surveys (e.g. a European Commission survey on competitiveness prepared by an Austrian Institute and Universities of Edinburgh and Strasbourg and the Labour Institute of the Greek confederation of workers of the private sector-GESEE). Great emphasis was also laid on the de-regulation of labour relations and services in public sector and tools of reducing civil servants which will lead to a “covered privatization” in public administration. Mr. Kalomoiris also stated that ADEDY will continue struggling to achieve a strong welfare state and preserve the vested rights of civil servants. The speaker concluded by calling upon members of trade unions throughout Europe to join ADEDY in its claims and expressing the belief that in the long-term things will be overturned.

**Mr. Spiliotopoulos** thanked the representative of ADEDY for the interesting, well-documented and social-oriented presentation and opened the floor for comments. There were no comments or questions. Mr. Spiliotopoulos handed over Ms. Valatsou.

**Ms Valatsou** noted that the presentation of ADEDY had been well-documented and gave an insight on how reforms affected Greek society. Although reforms in public administration are successful, what should be taken into consideration is the fact that they are on-going and their purpose is two-fold: to help public administration meet the challenges of crisis and adopt a post-crisis era profile. After having mentioned an example on how public sector used to deal with cost issues and contributed to the deepening of public dept, Ms. Valatsou posed the following questions to the representatives of ADEDY: firstly, given the fact that at present public administration cannot respond to the needs of the citizens and businesses, in what ways ADEDY considers there could be a shift from present situation to an era where there will be a balance between the needs of the society and the resources available. Secondly, concerning collective bargaining, Ms. Valatsou, who was involved in the drafting of the relevant legislation, referred to the unsuccessful efforts to develop the culture of public bargaining in Greek public administration and stated that ADEDY had not taken the necessary steps to create a network that would institutionally disseminate the need for collective bargaining.

**Mr. Dolgyras** responded that the Greek state had never had a tradition in collective bargaining. Consequently, not only has there been a lack of collective bargaining in Greece, but also the government tries to implement policies decided at supra-national level without involving social partners, trade unions



and employees in dialogue. Furthermore, Mr. Dolgiras highlighted that interventions on limiting bureaucracy had not been sufficient, since the state itself produces huge amounts of bureaucracy and mentioned overregulation, overlapping competences among Ministries and the lack of coordination in public administration. Being inspired by Degleris and Paul Krugman's proverbs about the state, Mr. Degleris presented the rationale of ADEDY. The union exists to reassure that the state is there to defend the poor citizens, those who cannot buy out state services, in order to avoid the entire privatization of the society. He also made an appeal to support the efforts of trade unions, because the dismissal of civil servants will have negative effects on state services. Mr. Dolgiras passed the floor to **Mr. Kalomoiris**.

**Mr. Kalomoiris** stressed out the difficulties to answer the question of what should be done to reconstruct public administration and the state so as to better serve the needs of the society. The main obstacle derives from the fact that laws are adopted without any type of dialogue. Mr. Kalomoiris expressed his disappointment for the fact that the competent Ministers neither had taken into consideration the proposals of ADEDY nor had met its representatives. Finally, Mr. Kalomoiris referred to the consequences of the dismissal of civil servants on the education system, archaeological sites and public works and stated that their aim is to defend social goods and services.

**Mr. Spiliotopoulos** thanked the representatives of ADEDY for their dynamic presentations and passed the floor to the Italian Presidency to present their part of the agenda.

**Mr. Pizzicanella** started by presenting the logo of the Italian Presidency for the following semester. He highlighted that their main theme is organizing the fiscal capacity and enduring an efficient public administration. Within this framework, Italy will focus both on administration reform and its implementation. The following horizontal activities were presented:

- a qualitative study on open government ,
- the evaluation of the role of EUPAN in the 2020 perspective,
- the enhancement of institutional capacity, which will be highlighted in the work of HRWG (research activity on competencies and on how management of competencies can reflect on more efficient use of the tool of mobility) and
- the organization of the 6<sup>th</sup> CAF event.

Another highlight of the Italian Presidency is the will to engage the political level in the discussion of administration reform at the meeting of Ministries that will be held in December the 3<sup>rd</sup>. All meetings (December 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> and the CAF event) will be held in Rome. Finally, Mr. Pizzicanella presented the contact persons for the Italian Presidency.



**Mr. Spiliotopoulos** thanked the Italian representative and passed the floor to Ms Salson to make a comment.

**Ms Salson** said that they totally agree with their colleagues of ADEDY. The key message she wanted to underline was that reforms which imply cutting down of revenues, job positions and social goods make the situation worse. Ms Salson thanked the Italian Presidency for the presentation of the agenda and mentioned that the Social Dialogue committees intend to use the European Commission's consultation on the MTP review of 2020 Strategy on Growth and Jobs. She noted that reconnecting the state sector in terms of job creation would be an important issue to be discussed on December the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Finally, she mentioned that democracy is at stake in Europe now, so there should be ways to foster it.

**Mr. Spiliotopoulos** thanked all the participants, the trade unions, the General Directors of MAREG, the European Commission and the organizers of the meeting for their presence and the successful and fruitful presidency and wished the best of success to the next Trio.

**Close of the meeting.**