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Directorate General for Structural Reform Support
Support to Member States Reforms
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**THE EXPERT GROUP
ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE
3rd TECHNICAL MEETING**

Executive summary

The third technical meeting of the Expert Group on Public Administration and Governance of the European Commission (“Expert Group”) took place online on 16 November 2022, from 11:00-13:00 CET. The meeting was organised by DG REFORM and brought together representatives of relevant Commission services, including the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the Directorate General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) and the General Secretariat (SG), as well as Member States’ authorities. The meeting marked the conclusion of this year’s round of meetings organised by the Expert Group.

The objective of the meeting was to present the Commission Staff Working Document (SWD) on “Supporting and connecting policymaking in the Member States with scientific research” and discuss opportunities and challenges of evidence-informed policymaking in governance and public administration, including case studies across the EU Member States.

Representatives from the Member States included officials from national authorities responsible for horizontal issues, policy coordination and modernisation in the area of public administration with a background in scientific research and policymaking. On average 80 participants attended the online meeting.

In her introductory remarks Ms **Nathalie BERGER**, Director of Directorate B of DG REFORM, warmly welcomed the participants of the 3rd technical Expert Group meeting and stressed the need to strengthen the interconnection between science and policymaking and reinforce Member States’ analytical capacity to overcome the multifaceted challenges that public administrations encounter nowadays. Mr **Daniele DOTTO**, Deputy Director of Directorate B of DG REFORM, underlined that scientific evidence represents a cornerstone of policy and decision-making. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 crisis, Mr DOTTO added that political accountability is key in policymaking as well as the development of structures and competences within public administrations to produce and make use of data.

The core session of the meeting, titled “Better informed public policy and administration in the Member States – a Commission Staff Working Document and case studies from the Member States and the Commission”, featured insightful presentations on the topic of science for policy both from the Commission services and the Member States. The discussion was moderated by Ms **Agnieszka GADZINA**, Deputy Head of Unit of DG JRC, and touched upon the following topics.

1. Presentation of the Commission SWD on “Supporting and connecting policymaking in the Member States with scientific research”

JRC and DG RTD opened the panel discussion presenting the Commission SWD on “Supporting and connecting policymaking in the Member States with scientific research”, a comprehensive document highlighting the need to build more resilient and robust democracies with the support of scientific knowledge, to strengthen the EU policy environment and build bridges between the scientific and policymaking community (Mr **Kristian KRIEGER, JRC**). This initiative, which takes stock of the lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic, aims at addressing the challenges encountered to science for policy and illustrating the type of support provided by the EU to overcome these challenges (Mr **Alessandro ALLEGRA, DG RTD**). Among the EU initiatives are activities intended to foster institutional capacity and professional network building, design professional competence and inter-sectoral schemes for knowledge exchange as well as raise awareness on ecosystems, practices, capacity and limits of science for policy (Mr **Kristian KRIEGER, JRC**).

2. Scientific evidence as “cornerstone” of Better Regulation

To further elaborate on the discussion on the integration of evidence-based and transparent policymaking into the Commission’s legislative work, a presentation from the SG on Better Regulation outlined the main features of the EU’s framework currently in place to make better laws. In this respect, the centrality of stakeholders’ engagement, in particular the involvement of the scientific community, was underlined as key to providing evidence and data, both quantitative and qualitative, throughout the whole policymaking cycle. The Commission’s external channels, such as “Have Your Say” and “Call for Evidence”, targeting the public at large and scientific communities, were also presented as important tools to provide feedback and fill in the Commission’s gaps in terms of scientific knowledge (Ms **Ioana CONDURAT**).

3. “Building capacity for evidence-informed policymaking in governance and public administration in a post-pandemic Europe” – an example of multi-country project supported by DG REFORM’s Technical Support Instrument (TSI)

The third intervention put the spotlight on the ambitious 2-year multi-country project supported by DG REFORM’s Technical Support Instrument and jointly implemented by the JRC and the OECD. The beneficiaries of the project brings together the demand side including policy-makers (centres of government, relevant ministries, strategic decision-making centres) and the supply side (academia, research centres) from seven EU Member States (Ms **Athina MANTA, DG REFORM**). Building on a strong coordination framework, the project combines country-specific outputs, capacity building workshops addressed to scientists and policy makers, and mutual learning exercises to achieve better institutional integration of the use of evidence, science, and evaluation in policymaking as well as improving capacity and awareness on these topics (Mr **Kristian KRIEGER, JRC**).

4. Science for policy: selected examples of networks and institutes from the Member States

During the second part of the panel, the focus shifted from the EU to the national perspective, bringing to the table case studies from four Member States: **the Netherlands, Estonia, Portugal and France**. The Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment represented by Mr **Michel VAN DUIJNEN**, Advisor to Chief Science Officer (CSO), explained the work of the inter-ministerial CSO-network, an informal and relatively young network involving the majority of the ministries, in charge of strengthening ties and identifying research gaps among different departments as well as collecting and providing inputs on one another’s research agendas and common challenges. Ms **Liina**

EEK from the Estonian Research Council had the opportunity to share with the audience information about the Ministerial Science Advisors formal network. The network gathers scientific advisers with a solid research background tasked with, among others, advising ministers on research and development issues. The Portuguese Competence Centre for Planning, Policy and Foresight in Public Administration (PlanApp) represented by Ms **Filipa VALA**, Strategy Adviser, focused on the different configurations of networks that the organisation envisages, mobilising decision and policy makers, citizens, scientists and relevant stakeholders to promote a culture of science for policy. Mr **Patrick FLAMMARION**, Director General for Scientific Expertise and Public Policy Support at the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE) described the strong scientific and innovative orientation of the Directorate and the types of activities aimed at supporting the public policy cycle from the agenda prioritisation to the evaluation.

5. Conclusions and next steps

Before opening the Q&A session, Mr DOTTO gave the floor to Mr **Stephane JACOBZONE**, Senior Advisor to the OECD, who highlighted the excellent ongoing cooperation with DG REFORM, the JRC and PlanAPP and reminded that there is not a single model for the application of evidence-based policymaking; instead, Member States are invited to consider which solutions work best according to their systems.

Mr DOTTO concluded the works of the 3rd technical meeting of the Expert Group, inviting the participants to reflect on topical questions such as:

- What challenges do Member States face when trying to connect scientific research with policymaking?
- What types of science for policy mechanisms could be useful for other Member States?
- How do the services that are at the heart of the functioning of the state help other bodies to benefit from the knowledge of scientific communities?

Mr DOTTO thanked the participants and praised the added value of the speakers' presentations and noted that the examples described during the session demonstrate that evidence-informed policymaking is inbuilt in the systems. He also reminded that anticipating challenges is a fundamental element when it comes to decision-making and invited Member States to reflect and share inputs to continue working together on the support in terms of linking policy making and scientific advice better.

Finally, Mr DOTTO announced that the next meeting of the Expert Group will take place in the beginning of the next year in Brussels and will aim at co-creating and co-designing the work programme for 2023.