



Declaration on the importance of maximising European Public Sector Expertise potential of the Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation

16 December 2021

Whereas in 2017, in the framework of the new European Consensus for Development as response to the 2030 Agenda (notably SDG 16 & 17), the Practitioners' Network (PN), together with the European Commission (EC), launched discussions on the added value of mobilising European Public Sector Expertise (PSE) in the EU external action and international cooperation policies,

Whereas in 2019 the PN General Assembly, acknowledging the potential that PSE could have for the EU external action and development cooperation, agreed to extend further the analysis on the potential of mobilisation of European PSE in development cooperation, after which the European Commission (DG INTPA) jointly with the PN conducted a study "Study on the EU and its Member States mobilising Public Sector Expertise for Development". This study was carried out during 2020-2021 and consisted of 2 parts: a mapping ([Phase I](#)) of the existing operational structures, regulatory frameworks, delivery tools and bilateral initiatives to mobilise PSE; and an analysis paper ([Phase II](#)) on the strategic potential of European PSE as an innovative cooperation modality with partner countries. The study outlines a number of recommendations for the EU and its MS institutions,

In parallel, and as a complementary exercise, a "Survey on the Participation of EU MS Civil Servants in Twinning and TAIEX" was conducted by European Commission (DG NEAR) during 2020,

Whereas Public Sector Expertise in development cooperation is one of the key priorities identified for the 2021-2022 PN co-Presidency and clearly supported by CEOs of the Network's Members and the European Commission during the PN General Assembly held in Brussels May 2021,

Whereas in order to translate the recommendations of the study into action, a joint PN – DG INTPA Action Plan on mobilisation of European PSE in international development cooperation was drafted and validated by the PN Steering Committee in June 2021 and presented in CODEV in July 2021,

Whereas the [Council conclusions](#) on European Public Sector Expertise in the EU external action "EU public sector expertise: a key asset at the service of EU's partner countries" were endorsed at the Foreign Affairs Council (Development) on 19th November 2021,

Considering the actions mentioned above, as Members of the Practitioners' Network, we seek, through this Declaration, to acknowledge and express our continuous commitment to the importance of European Public Sector Expertise in development cooperation, to contribute to an informed (policy) debate on how to scale-up the mobilisation of European Public Sector Expertise, to contribute to the building of effective international partnerships; to nurture a structured debate on how to maximise PSE potential in the implementation of development cooperation.

PSE is a form of international technical cooperation that mobilises expertise from all EU Member States' public institutions to promote reform and sustainable and inclusive development policies through peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and institutional partnerships with partner countries to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), as well as the Paris Agreement.

PSE is well suited to the Team Europe spirit and its operationalisation. The Team Europe approach is an opportunity to use this expertise in a more strategic way. Involving our public institutions in the EU external action allows us to build partnerships that nurture policy dialogue with our partner countries.

PSE is crucial in promoting EU strategic priorities, nevertheless, the PN recognises that the potential of European PSE could be further used more in EU development cooperation. For the EU to effectively support partner countries and their institutions, there is a need for additional incentives for PSE to be included in the design of new European development programmes and for public experts and European and Member State public institutions to participate in development cooperation.

It is important to identify and prioritise specific public policy actions before identifying the most adequate implementation modality: technical cooperation, financial cooperation through public investment, blending and support for private investment, etc.

For all these reasons, as signatories of this Declaration we strive to advocate the importance of European PSE in the EU external action and contribute to its effective mobilisation according to the Joint EC-PN Action Plan on mobilisation of European PSE; this includes exchanging ideas and working closely together with the European Commission and the EU Member States' national decision makers and administrators, especially representatives of ministries, public institutions and Member State organisations that provide PSE and/or promote the mobilisation of the PSE.

Our network is a key driver for building further synergies and inclusive discussions and learning exchanges on PSE among ourselves and with the European Commission (EC). The Practitioners' Network is ready and committed to work together with EC to operationalise the recommendations provided by the above-mentioned studies. The PN commits to pursue discussions and consultations among Members and with the EC on how to strengthen and exploit the full potential of European PSE.

Logos of supporting and signing PN Members

