The 2018 annual meeting of the Working Party on Public Employment and Management (PEM) was held March 26-27 in Paris, OECD Headquarters. Delegates welcomed the first draft of the **OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Service Leadership and Capability (working title)**, which benefitted from valuable inputs and feedback from participants both at the meeting and at a previous workshop held in October, 2017. The Draft Recommendation presents 14 principles of a fit-for-purpose public service under three main pillars:

- A **values-driven public service** where commonly understood values guide a results-oriented and citizens-centred culture of leadership;
- A **trusted and capable public service** with the ability to identify the skills and competencies it needs, and which aligns its employment systems to bring those skills and competencies in, develop them, and motivate their use;
- An **agile and adaptive public service** which can respond to ongoing and emerging challenges bringing in new tools through effective planning and learning from experience.

PEM delegates discussed the importance of developing principles to guide civil service reform efforts, and suggested that the principles in the draft Recommendation reflect well the ongoing reform priorities being undertaken in leading OECD countries. Delegates were also given the opportunity to provide more detailed feedback in smaller Break-out Groups. Many member countries expressed support for a Recommendation that:

- is **forward-looking and ambitious**, to ensure the validity and relevance of the instrument over the longer term;
- considers the impacts of **growing digitalisation and disruptive technologies** such as artificial intelligence which promise to have important consequences on the work of civil servants and nature of the workforce;
- embeds **user-centricity** as a core value of the civil service and in HRM practices;
- promotes an **efficient, results-oriented** civil service.

The PEM also discussed means for **monitoring and reporting back on implementation**. Specifically, in this regard, it noted that the Recommendation would serve as a foundation for the PEM to: (i) conduct **Peer Reviews** on a voluntary basis; (ii) develop a **Toolkit** to support Adherents in their implementation efforts, and (iii) collect internationally-comparable **statistics and construct indicators**. Concerning the latter, it proposed that the PEM establish a **Working Group on PEM Indicators** in order to take advantage of existing data and methodologies, and reduce the reporting burden on countries.

Written comments from PEM delegates will be taken into account in the next iteration of the document which will be shared with the Public Governance Committee (PGC) in the spring for
further feedback and for approval to open the public consultation process. The Draft Recommendation will also be discussed at the fall meeting of the PGC before transmission to the OECD Council.

First joint sessions with the Working Party of Senior Public Integrity Officials (SPIO)

The 2018 PEM meeting featured a special joint afternoon session with the Working Party of Senior Public Integrity Officials (SPIO) to address the linkages between HRM and integrity policies and discuss how such policies could better align to uphold and reinforce core public values. This was the first joint meeting of the two groups which acknowledged the need to work in close partnership to build more ethical public sector organisations.

Specifically, the topics of merit-based HRM systems and ethical leadership were discussed. Instituting a merit-based civil service is central not only to a highly performing civil service, but also reducing risks for corruption by reinforcing the professionalism of public employees and the values that guide their behaviour. A maturity model at the end of the OECD discussion paper “Merit Civil Service: a Foundation for Public Integrity” provides an opportunity to self-assess efforts towards a 21st century merit-based recruitment system and identify areas for improvement for countries. Delegates also welcomed the paper on “Integrity Leadership: Promoting Ethical Leaders in the Public Sector” which explores the relationship between administrative leadership and public sector integrity, and offers an initial set of tools for leaders to embrace their crucial roles as role models and stewards of promoting a culture of integrity in public sector organisations.

PEM Thematic sessions

The PEM Working Party also shared good international practices to promote diversity and build a culture of inclusion in the public service. Several countries (Israel, United Kingdom, European Commission) shared their own D&I strategies and practices. A Concept Note was presented by the PEM Secretariat for an upcoming report on the topic (“Managing for Inclusiveness in the Public Service”). The paper will focus on the key levers for implementing effective D&I policies including: changing attitudes and behaviours, leveraging data and evidence to inform and implement policies, and creating inclusive leaders.

Delegates also discussed the trends shaping the future of work, such as growing digitisation and the adoption of artificial intelligence technologies. In particular, countries (United States, Ireland) shared their countries’ strategies for adapting skills and competency frameworks to adapt to these changing contexts and promote innovation. The first in a series of case studies on senior civil service leadership was presented by Finland (“Leadership for Systems Change in Finland”).

Upcoming Events

Key upcoming events for the Working Party include a workshop on measuring engagement through employee surveys on May 18, 2018 and the Meeting of the Network of Schools of Government in Helsinki, Finland on the 13-14 of September, 2018.

All meeting documents are available on the OECD’s O.N.E. Platform or can be provided by the PEM Secretariat upon request (PEM@oecd.org).