

**Welcome of the DG of EIPA  
at the Expert Symposium EPSA  
(05 November 2009)**

Dear Minister Odell,

Dear Mr Vice-Governor,

Dear Mr Mayor,

Dear Members of the Board of  
EIPA,

Dear EPSA Participants,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A warm welcome to you all on  
behalf of the European Institute of  
Public Administration (EIPA).

It is a bit of a strange feeling after  
almost two years of preparation for  
the European Public Sector Award,  
to finally welcome you here in this  
wonderful room where the famous  
Maastricht Treaty was signed on 7  
February 1992. My colleagues and I

have been looking forward to this moment with excitement and enthusiasm.

Thank you all for being here with us in order to celebrate the results of the European Public Sector Award! My colleagues and I are happy that you are here and we will try to do everything we can to make your stay as pleasant as possible.

Today and tomorrow we will have a unique opportunity: to talk about innovation in the public sector with colleagues from all over Europe. We will listen to their experiences, get inspiration, inspire others, pose questions and hopefully get some useful answers. EPSA is meant to provide a unique platform of knowledge about innovative solutions in the public sector in Europe. It is the only public sector

award of this kind, and it covers all levels of public administration from the pan-European level, the national level, the regional and local level.

Allow me to tell you a bit about the background of EPSA. Based on the Quality Award of the three German speaking countries Germany, Austria and Switzerland, which had been carried out by the University of Speyer for some ten years, it was decided in 2006 to open up the

award system and make it a European award.

At that time the three countries requested the Bertelsmann Foundation to be the project leader and the European Group of Public Administration (EGPA) to also step in. Therefore, the core team was composed of Oliver Haubner of the Bertelsmann Foundation, Geert Bouckaert (EGPA), Albert Hofmeister (CH), Elisabeth Dearing

(AT) and myself (DE). The first EPSA that was awarded in Lucerne in November 2007, was a big success, resulting in 300 applicants from all over Europe, high interest in such a competition and a very successful conference.

The question then came up as to which organisation could take over this interesting award scheme after the BF had decided to step back. At that time I had just been appointed

to EIPA and I saw the opportunities that would be created by the award for an institution like EIPA: first hand know-how on high-level innovation in PA in Europe, possibility to use this information for the further education of civil servants and by doing that distributing know-how on innovation,

possibility to use the good practice for comparative research on actual trends in PA

establishing a platform of learning among PA throughout Europe.

You must admit, it was a tempting idea and I am very grateful that the EIPA Board of Governors agreed in principle to this project – on the condition that the EU MS were also in agreement and ready to support

EPSA financially, morally and in terms of organisation.

To cut a long story short: so far 15 countries have joined the EPSA club. All the countries have appointed a representative who is present in the Steering Committee and helps EIPA in all important decisions regarding EPSA.

The result of this year's EPSA is again proof of the need for such an award. Again, more than 300

applications were received this year; however, not in three languages as it was done in 2007. No, this time the applicants had to send their applications in English. Although we know that this caused hardship for quite a number of public administrations, you still managed to do it and succeed. This gave us the basis for this fine book that contains short descriptions and contact details regarding all the

applications. It is a real source of information for all the PA throughout Europe, as well as being enjoyable to read through. Another result of our work is the research report containing some lessons learned in the four themes; it is also an interesting booklet for the public administrations all over Europe. Let me say a very warm and direct thank you to all the applicants of EPSA 2009. Without the

enthusiasm and courage of the public administrations to contribute to EPSA, no exchange of know-how and information could take place today!!

I would also like to use the opportunity to thank the Steering Committee members of the participating governments for their continuous support, their confidence and the very direct and positive cooperation. Many thanks for

everything you have done to make EPSA a success!

Their work was supported by the Scientific Advisory Board which also contributed many good ideas about current trends, challenges and concerns in public administration.

Many thanks to all participants of the Scientific Advisory Board!!

I would also like to thank particularly Oliver Haubner from the Bertelsmann Foundation and

Albert Hofmeister from Switzerland for their valuable support. They shared all their detailed know how on EPSA I with us, starting with the logo, the process, as well as many other aspects.

Last year I also made visits to the Mayor of the City of Maastricht and to the Governor of the Province of Limburg. I am very grateful to both for the immediate and generous support received from both partners.

Yesterday, I already thanked Mayor Leers and his team for their fantastic help to EIPA. Today I would like to say a big “thank you” also to you and to your team, Mr Hessels.

Without your support we would not be here today in this beautiful environment with a historic flavour, thanks to the Maastricht Treaty being signed here.

Today, European public administrations are again present

here; with the innovative power of the representatives of all EU MS. The result of our deliberations today and tomorrow will probably not result in another Maastricht Treaty. However, it might also change the world of Europe, at least a bit: it might help the public administrations present here to exchange know how in the interest of the citizens and the business world; as we all know good and

reliable administration is necessary for a strong economy and competitiveness, to further improve administrations' efficiency, processes and effectiveness, particularly regarding the services they deliver to the citizens. Today and tomorrow we have the opportunity to make use of the results of EPSA. We do not yet know who will actually win the

trophy. That will be announced later today during the award ceremony.

But my opinion is that we are all winners already – for different reasons. All EPSA participants are already winners. Not just because of the certificates they received last night from Mayor Leers; no, but because with their innovative practices, they have joined the group of European reformers in PA. By sharing one always wins, new

insights, valuable feedback and new ideas.

And all the others present here are also winners, because we will learn from the experience of the EPSA participants.

So let us make the most of these two days. I believe we have an attractive programme, even though some changes had to be made due to unforeseen circumstances. For example, I was asked by the

Chairman of EIPA's Board of Governors to send you his best regards. Unfortunately he had to cancel his trip to Maastricht because of very important private reasons. Instead Mr István Teplán, Director of and Member of EIPA's Board of Governors, will take over the chairmanship of the next panel session. Thank you, István, for your readiness to contribute to our symposium at such short notice.

Also Mr Altmaier, the former parliamentary state secretary of the Federal Ministry of the Interior in Berlin, had to cancel his visit to Maastricht. As you know, the German government is currently being established and new persons are taking over. However, Mr Günter Wurster, President of BAKÖV and Member of EIPA's Board of Governors, is here instead and will give a brief statement on

behalf of the German government.

In addition, we have asked some other representatives of European Governments to give us some short statements about the forthcoming challenges they foresee for their countries during 2010 and beyond.

All will be revealed soon!

So now let me hand over the floor to Mr István Teplán for the first panel session!

Thank you for your attention!!