



Council of the
European Union

**Brussels, 19 November 2021
(OR. en)**

14110/21

**DEVGEN 207
ACP 117
RELEX 993
SUSTDEV 160**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 19 November 2021
To: Delegations

No. prev. doc.: 13445/21

Subject: European public sector expertise in the EU's external action
- Council conclusions (19 November 2021)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on European public sector expertise in the EU's external action, as adopted by the Council at its 3828th meeting held on 19 November 2021.

**Council conclusions on
European Public Sector Expertise
in the EU's External Action**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. RECALLS that the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI - Global Europe), for 2021-2027, foresees that cooperation between the Union and its partners may take the form of administrative and technical cooperation measures, as well as building capacity. This includes actions to share transitional or reform implementation experiences of Member States, such as decentralised cooperation through partnerships or twinning, between public institutions, including local authorities, public law bodies or private law entities entrusted with public service tasks of a Member State and those of a partner country or region. It also includes cooperation measures involving public sector experts dispatched from the Member States and their regional and local authorities.
2. RECOGNISES public sector expertise as 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 Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 16 and SDG 17, as well as the Paris Agreement.
3. HIGHLIGHTS that the provision of European public sector expertise is an area where the EU has a distinctive added-value, rooted in strong European public policy models. The Council recalls the importance of inclusiveness for ensuring that all interested Member States are involved in the planning and implementation of public sector expertise interventions in the EU's external action.

4. EMPHASISES that European public sector expertise creates mutual trust between institutions, helps promote European values, including good governance, rule of law, and democracy, and interests as well as European standards and policy approaches that are necessary for enhancing strategic partnerships. It is well suited to the Team Europe approach and initiatives. Mobilisation of European public sector expertise has proved to be a demand-driven, tailored, flexible, efficient and a cost effective way to build capacity in the public sector and promote public policy reform processes in partner countries, based on their needs, priorities and inclusive ownership.
5. TAKES NOTE of the *Joint European Commission – Practitioners’ Network Action Plan on mobilisation of European public sector expertise in international development cooperation* calling for the EU and its Member States to scale up their regular technical assistance through, inter alia, the mobilisation of European public sector expertise.
6. NOTES that institution-building tools, such as Twinning and TAIEX, are very important instruments for providing targeted support to the public administrations in partner countries. European public sector expertise is an important component of technical assistance. It should be responsive to the context and designed in support of EU and Member States activities in partner countries ensuring a coherent and coordinated approach to specific development challenges. It can be combined with other implementing modalities, for example with triangular and trilateral cooperation, budget support programmes, to help improve the investment climate and to apply the policy-first principle by nurturing policy dialogues that guide financial cooperation and investment towards development results.
7. UNDERLINES the need for the Commission, the High Representative and the Member States to overcome operational, administrative, financial constraints and challenges to mobilising European public sector expertise. The Council encourages Member States to incentivise at institutional level the involvement of their public experts in assignments in partner countries and remove disincentives in this regard. Furthermore, the Council welcomes efforts to compile an overview of practices that address these challenges in mobilising experts for short- and long-term public sector expertise assignments. The Council calls on the Commission to present a proposal on a possible way forward to overcome these challenges.

8. CALLS on the Commission to strengthen coordination, synergies and learning between the EU and its Member States, both on political and expert level, to raise awareness of the strategic importance of public sector expertise as a form of joint implementation and to facilitate learning from public sector expertise programmes supported by the EU and its Member States. The Council highlights the importance of an early involvement of Member States in programming processes to increase their participation in providing public sector expertise. Moreover, the Council emphasises the need to enhance joint learning and sharing of good practices with partner countries to further advance public sector expertise.
9. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of existing networks such as Twinning and TAIEX National Contact Points, while acknowledging the collaboration within the Practitioners' Network, as fora for further synergies and inclusive discussions and learning exchange on public sector expertise. The Council calls on the Commission and the Member States to further promote and exchange good practices on how European public sector expertise can be mobilised in support of policy dialogue and the implementation of Team Europe Initiatives.
10. CALLS on the Commission to further facilitate discussions and consultations on how to exploit the full potential of European public sector expertise in a Team Europe and whole-of-the-government approach, considering the specific areas of expertise of the EU and its Member States, as well as the experience from intra-EU public sector expertise exchanges, and to provide simple and user-friendly guidance to Member States as appropriate.

