

SUMMARY REPORT



Executive summary

This was the second webinar organised by the BAFE Association under the umbrella of the “Reconnection” project, which aims at reconnecting Bellevue Alumni. The webinar was dedicated to the cross-border mobility of public sector workers.

After Ambassador Gröning, former special advisor for the Bellevue programme, welcomed the participants and shared his thoughts on the current state of the EU, M. Florian Blazy, Deputy Director-General of the General Directorate of the French Ministry responsible for public services, gave an introductory speech, in which he shared his views on cross-border mobility.

Then, three current initiatives, the EU Leadership Exchange Programme, the toolbox for EU mobility under preparation by the French presidency, and the EU Citizens’ Initiative on a Civil Servant Exchange Programme, were presented by guest speakers and discussed with the participants.

In the second part of the webinar, the participants were invited to discuss how the BAFE association could promote the cross-border mobility of public sector workers within the EU. Through the exchanges, various ideas were identified for future activities the BAFE association.

Finally, the BAFE association’s President and Secretary closed the seminar with a wrap-up. They were particularly pleased that the Webinar had enabled the association to strengthen links with the Ministries and Institutes of Public Administration from France, Portugal and Spain. They invited the participants to join the next Webinars to be organised by the BAFE association in 2021.

1. Welcome address

Jean-Baptiste Perrin welcomed the participants to this second Webinar of the [BAFE Association](#), and informed them that the podcast and report of the first webinar from 17 June 2021 on *“the COVID-19 recovery funds, a turning point for EU policies?”* will be soon available on the association’s website.

Inma Navarro, as Secretary of the BAFE Association, explained that this second webinar is, like the first one, part of a larger project financed by BAN, which aims is to reconnect the Bellevue community. The topic chose for this second webinar is very important because promoting cross-border mobility of public sector workers within the EU is one of the aims of the BAFE association. Indeed, the BAFE association believes that such mobility can foster the exchange of knowledge and best practices between Member States, help to harmonize the implementation of EU policies, contribute to innovation in public administration and to the attractiveness of the public sector, and ultimately contribute to the European integration.

She reminded that this issue currently receives a lot of attention, from EU and MS institutions, but also from the civil society, as shown by the citizen initiative to be presented during the Webinar. She stressed the importance for the BAFE association of not missing this “momentum”, and pleaded for the association to play its role, be involved and support the current initiatives and actions related to mobility, building on the experience of its members. Bellevue alumni have a very rare and important expertise on cross-border mobility, and it is their responsibility to share it and contribute in this way to improve the quality of Member States’ administrations.

Ambassador Gröning, former special advisor of the Bellevue programme, commented on the current state of the EU, which he considers in trouble. The recent speech of Poland Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, in the EU Parliament, has shown that a conflict has emerged on the competencies in the EU, which will be difficult to solve. This conflict concerns the roots of the EU project and basic questions of democratic rules, division of power, independence of justice and freedom of people. He warned that there is much at stake: values, respect, but also the achievement of the very ambitious EU recovery plan...

Ambassador Gröning also reminded the importance of the programme of Bellevue, which he saw as a very efficient cast balloon, fostering cross-border mobility, cooperation, understanding and friendship. In his view, the EU still needs initiatives to promote cross-border cooperation, because Member states and we, as citizens, still do not know very much about each other, especially not about public administration and civil government of the other Member States. He reminded that when the Bosch foundation decided to close the project, there was hope that participating countries would take the bait and continue the programme. Unfortunately, the discussion had another outcome and the project was discontinued. Various reasons were mentioned: differences in public administration, personal recruitment and management, civil service structures...

However, he concluded by saying that, as shown by the topic of webinar, the basic Bellevue idea is still alive. The BAFE association and the network is still alive. Therefore, there is hope.

2. Key note speech

M. Florian Blazy delivered his keynote speech in video. The full speech is available here ([link to be added](#)).

After greeting the Bellevue alumni, M Florian Blazy shared his conviction that cross-border mobility should be an asset in public servants' careers. Cross-border mobility is not only beneficial to civil servants, who can use it to diversify their competences, but also to administrations, which can build a relationship with their counterparts and learn from different practices and ways of work. This experience sharing can help administrations to find solutions to common challenges, such as the attractiveness of public administration or digital transformation.

The other Member States' public administrations share this interest for cross-border mobility, which is an issue regularly discussed within the EU Public administration network (EUPAN). M. Blazy hopes that the pilot EU leadership exchange programme ([EULEP](#)), launched under the Portuguese presidency and whose deployment is assisted by the DGAFP, will take over where the Bellevue programme left off, in encouraging public servant mobility and closer ties between administrations in the EU. Under the French presidency of EUPAN, France plans to complete this initiative by proposing a "toolbox" for EU mobility, by structuring mobility offers, identifying potential brakes to mobility, and thinking of the values of mobility.

Public employees and employers should make the most of EU mobility. Thus, a key question is how to assess skills gained from these experiences, in terms of knowledge, knowhow, and soft skills, and how to include mobility in a broader policy to build and steer skill pools.

Further, civil servant mobility should contribute to creating a common consciousness in the civil services in the EU. By managing to maintain their bond within the BAFE association, the Bellevue alumni are the best ambassadors to demonstrate that this can be successfully achieved. M Blazy wants to see this dynamic works in future exchanges, to contribute to establish a common ground shared by civil services in the EU. He stressed that the reflection on EU mobility should also concern civil servants working in EU institutions, who could serve during exchanges in national or local administrations. Such mobility would facilitate mutual understanding and reinforce trust in EU institutions.

Finally, M. Blazy confirmed his interest for BAFE association. He is looking forward to reading the report of the Webinar and the potential solutions discussed.

3. Current and upcoming initiatives on mobility

Ana Diogo presented the agenda and participants, and moderated the panel discussion.

Summary of the presentations

M. Abel Carreira, Director from the Portuguese Institute for Public Training, presented the EU Leadership Exchange Programme (EULEP) launched by the Portuguese Administration during its Presidency of the Council of the EU. The project is linked to the Portuguese strategy for innovation in public administration.

The objective of the programme is promoting knowledge transfer and leadership competences, fostering individual teams and organisations, maintaining a sustainable network and promoting cross-border cooperation.

The exchange will consist of a maximum of 3 months (preparation, face-to-face immersion experience of 1 to 2 weeks, and evaluation) agreed among the candidates and participating administrations. The

exchange can focus on a current or future project in a wide range of areas (capacity building, recruitment, equality, innovation, digital transformation, etc.). The target participants are middle managers from MS central and regional administrations, or from the European Commission, with at least 2 years of experience in the post. The participating individuals and administrations will have to release a final report. The pilot project will run from October 2021 to July 2022 divided in two phases (October - December and January - July) including a workshop in December with participants and organisers. The Portuguese and French Administrations participate to the pilot phase, and the Spanish, Belgium and Slovenian Public Administration as well as the European Commission will join very soon.

Ms. Pauline Martin, manager at the French Ministry for transformation and civil service and member of EUPAN Network, explained that the French Presidency, which begins in January 2022, has set the mobility in public sector as a priority. The French Presidency will notably continue to support the EULEP pilot phase, plans to launch a survey on mobility, and to propose a toolbox to promote mobility in the EU...

Ms. Martin described some key issues discussed during the pilot phase of the EULEP project. She mentioned notably the language to be used during the exchange, the duration of the exchange (that some may consider rather short), the need to increase communication towards potentially interested candidates, the importance to find flexible and innovative solutions, the use of digital solutions, and the importance of taking advantage of previous experiences on mobility.

She explained that Members of EUPAN discussed ways to promote the exchange of civil servants after the discontinuation of the Bellevue Programme. At the time, they concluded that long-term exchanges were very challenging to organise and therefore wanted to focus more on short-term exchanges on specific and clearly defined issues. She also highlighted that there are different kind of solutions available to promote mobility, as exchanges, summer courses, training etc.

M. Franceso Bordone, representative of the [citizens' initiative](#) of some students from the College of Europe presented their project focused on mobilising the talent of the MS public sector workers through an "Erasmus like experience" exchange project for workers at any hierarchy level in the Administration.

The initiative advocates for sharing best practices between participants during a length stay of 2 months to 1 year abroad and by occupying the same position in the host administrations as the occupied in the home administration. The ultimate goal will be to contribute to creating a Europe of the people and for people beyond national administrations. The initiative requires one million signatures to continue its process in the European Commission. All Webinar participants are encouraged to [sign it](#) in order to get the one million signatures required for activating the next step of the initiative, which would be its debate at the Parliament and European Commission, before a potential adoption!

Summary of the Q&A

- It is very important for INA and EUPAN **to collect the feedback of public officials with experience of cross-border mobility**. Often, this experience is not gathered and used in an effective manner. Therefore, both are very interested in keeping in touch with the BAFE association.
- The BAFE association confirmed that it would be very glad to keep in touch with INA and the EUPAN network, and to possibly organise another webinar on mobility with EUPAN Network, or contribute in other ways to EUPAN initiatives. The BAFE association could prepare **support documents** ("line to take") to alumni who plan to participate in events organised by national public administration on cross-border mobility, in order to better convey the key messages.
- The **flexible approach** taken to carry out the EULEP pilot project was praised by participants, and compared to the "living labs" approach (a research concept, which may be defined as a user-

centered, iterative, open-innovation ecosystem). Indeed, there is no “one size fits all” when it comes to cross-border mobility.

- It was stated that the **procedure to select the exchanges’ topics** should involve both the participants, the host and the home administrations. The topic should address challenges faced by the administrations, and fits the interest and competencies of the participants. This preparatory phase is important to ensure that the experience gained by the participant during the programme is useful to, and recognised by, the home administration when the participant returns. If the administrations are correctly involved in the projects, the promotion of the skills acquired will be less of an issue.
- The **promotion of the skills acquired** is a key and yet challenging issue. Many Bellevue participants had the impression that their experience and the skills they acquired were not recognised when they came back to their home administration. Feedback and evaluation are essential to such exchange programmes, and home administration should be fully engaged on these aspects. This is a very important question for INA and EUPAN.
- INA and EUPAN stressed that EULEP is a very symbolic tool for EU cross-border mobility, but **exchange programmes are not the only tool available for cross-border mobility**. It is important to find a way to organise and articulate these tools together, and to communicate on them. Today, it may be difficult for someone interested in cross-border mobility to find the specific solution fitting its need.
- The **profile of participants to be selected** for the exchange programmes was discussed. EULEP is a focused programme targeting middle managers. This decision was taken considering that selecting middle managers, who play a key role in bringing their team forward and challenging the top management, would be the solution bringing the most added-value. However, “middle managers” can actually be interpreted in various manners among participating countries (e.g. in France all “cadres” are considered middle management, even if they do not exercise proper management missions).
- Participants highlighted the importance that in the future, other profiles in the public administration can also participate in exchange programmes. This is important to break stereotypes at all levels of public administration. Other tools will be needed to give access to cross border mobility opportunities to **all levels and types of public administration**. The citizen initiative stressed in their project the importance of making mobility available for all levels of civil servants, including those working on the field.
- Regarding the **language** to be used during the exchange, there was a consensus that English should not be the sole language considered. Multilingualism is important for the EU civil servant exchanges; there should be space for smaller languages. INA and EUPAN are reflecting on this issue and do not want to limit EULEP to English. In certain national administration, learning foreign language is promoted, and language classes can be part of the working day. Home administration try to find people speaking the language of the host administration, but this will not be a requirement, as it is not always possible to meet this requirement.
- The EULEP pilot project will start with 20 to 30 participants but the goal is to test, enrich and broaden the programme. For certain countries, it is a struggle to **find candidates for exchange programmes**, as it is not easy to meet the requirements, and willing to face all the inconvenience (moving, changing environment). It was reminded that Spain, along with Belgium and Slovenia are also participating in the pilot project EULEP, therefore we can be optimistic on the number of possible candidates.

- The **BAFE association could be considered as a skill pool**, and maybe a pool of potential candidates for further cross-border mobility.
- The **BAFE Association fully supports the CSEP citizen initiative**, encourages its member to sign it, and will communicate as broadly as possible about it. Achieving the implementation of an “Erasmus for officials” will be difficult, as it is difficult to make an exchange civil servant occupy the same position in its host administration as in its home administration. However, at this stage, the purpose of the initiative is not to agree on the details of the implementation, but rather on the principle.
- Details on the scope and the implementation will be discussed if the initiative reaches one million signatures. At that time, the **BAFE association could play an important role in enriching the project** through the experience of its members. It was asked whether the EUPAN network or the FR presidency will discuss this citizen initiative at political level, e.g. put the item on the Council agenda. However, public administration is a competency of MS and therefore cannot be discussed by the Council. However, mobility will be further discussed within the EUPAN network, which wants to make the EULEP programme more concrete and wider in the future.

4. Interactive group discussion

The three speakers were first invited to describe if and how the BAFE association could support their own projects:

- **F. Bordone** explained the BAFE association could spread the word on the citizen initiative and share the link to anyone susceptible to sign it. Everyone who can share is encouraged to do so.
- **A. Carreira** confirmed that INA will be happy to keep in touch along the evolution of the EULEP project, and continue to exchange with the BAFE association, to profit from the knowledge and experience of its members.
- **P. Martin** also confirmed that the DGAFP would like to keep in touch and is really interested by the contributions of Bellevue alumni. It would be useful to collect information on the various existing or past exchange programmes that the Bellevue Alumni know of. Feedback from Bellevue alumni will also be welcome on the survey to be launched by EUPAN, on how to use best the mobility experience when returning in the home administration, what are the skills developed, and the challenges faced when coming back. This is really a key point.

The BAFE association confirmed that it would be happy to contribute in the described way for the three initiatives.

The discussion continued with the help of interactive presentations (see the slides here [link to be added](#)).

Participants ranked the five proposals of tasks that the BAFE association could achieve to promote mobility, as follow (from first to last):

1. Gather and publish information, resources and tips
2. Provide counselling to institutions
3. Raise awareness (podcast, articles, statements)
4. Provide counselling to individuals
5. Others

The others ideas mentioned by participants were the following:

- Organising regular seminars like this one ; Organising webinars on various topics ; Gathering Bellevue alumni from time to time
- Collect Alumni experience to create knowledge base for consultations : Draft a guide to support mobility based on Bellevue alumni experience ;
- Designate ambassadors holding meetings with administration ; Organise communication campaigns and testimonials
- Exercise lobby towards EU institutions and committees, e.g. EUPAN ; Connect the BAFE association with home exchange institutions ; Drafting non paper to use in our contact with institutions
- Connect with more and more entities like BAFE ; Join other similar initiatives ; Get in touch with other similar association, e.g. CLENAD
- Fundraising

Eight participants confirmed that they would be available to help on one or more tasks in the next 12 months and seven answered that they did not know whether this would be possible.

Finally, participants were asked what was the impact of the Bellevue year on 1) their career and 2) their personal development and life. While all responding participants considered that the programme had a very positive (15) or positive (2) impact on their personal development/life, some participants answered that the programme had no impact (3) or a negative impact (2) on their career.

Jean-Baptiste Perrin thanks the participants for their active contributions and feedbacks. This information will be used to prepare a draft action plan for the next months, which could be discussed during the next general assembly of the BAFE association. The BAFE association will consider preparing a more detailed survey to assess the impact that the Bellevue programme had on the career and personal development of participants.

The BAFE board will share with all associates the comments that the BAFE association provided on the draft guide for the EULEP programme. The way the BAFE association will address potential similar request in the future (e.g. if INA and/or EUPAN request our association to provide feedbacks on other documents), could be discussed during the next BAFE general assembly, so that any associate who would like to contribute could have the opportunity to do it.

5. Closing

In its closing statement, **Inma Navarro** thanked all the participants and all the speakers.

She notably thanked Ambassador Gröning for sharing information on the discussion that was held when the Bellevue programme was discontinued and the reasons for its discontinuation. It was important to hear these reasons, in relation to the upcoming EULEP programme, which is in a way a continuation of the Bellevue programme.

She recalled two important messages from M Florian Blazy: cross-border mobility essential for transformation of public administration, including digital transformation, and cross-border mobility can help to build a common EU administration.

The presentation of Abel Carreira on EULEP showed that an idea can quickly turn into a pilot project, and gave some clues on how to succeed. It was well complemented by the presentation of Pauline Martin, that showed we have to look for innovative solutions, e.g. with regard to language, financing, and

digitalisation. It is really good news that the administration demonstrates now some flexibility in the carrying out of these initiatives, it will play an important role in their success.

Finally, Inma thanked Francesco Bordone, and agreed with him that we have to mobilise talent. This is an important adjective, as there is much talent within the EU administrations, which need to be mobilised and put to good use. She ensured Francesco of the support of the BAFE association to the citizen initiative.

Finally, she stressed that the BAFE association should improve its connection and work with the home administrations of the Bellevue alumni.

Giuseppe De Simone, president of the BAFE association, thanked all the participants and informed that the association will probably organise a last webinar before the end of the year. Any associate willing to help is welcome to join the organisation time. He ended the meeting by wishing all the attendees a *buona notte* from Palermo.

Alumni (24)

- Inmaculada NAVARRO – Spain. Bellevue 2017
- Nikolaos ARCHONTAS - Greece. Bellevue 2017
- Mátyás SZABÓ – Hungary. Bellevue 2017
- Ana DIOGO – Portugal. Bellevue 2017
- Una DIXON – Ireland. Bellevue 2017
- Jean Baptiste PERRIN – France. Bellevue 2016
- Laura ENFEDAQUE DÍAZ – Spain. Bellevue 2016
- Zdenko GROBENSKI – Germany. Bellevue 2016
- Giuseppe DE SIMONE – Italy. Bellevue 2016
- Monica REDONDO - Spain. Bellevue 2016
- Britta BEHRENDT - Germany. Bellevue 2016
- Agata BADER – Poland. Bellevue 2015
- Małgorzata BŁASZCZAK - Poland. Bellevue 2015
- Patricia VIEIRA FERREIRA DE ALMEIDA – Portugal. Bellevue 2015
- Samira IRSANE – France. Bellevue 2014
- Rosalinda SCALIA – Italy. Bellevue 2013
- Telma BRANCO – Portugal. Bellevue 2013
- Viki VEGH - Hungary. Bellevue 2013
- Jesús SANCHEZ MARTINEZ - Spain. Bellevue 2013
- Harald SCHÖN – Germany. Bellevue 2012
- Fernando LÓPEZ-MENCHERO DÍEZ. Spain. Bellevue 2011
- Serena GALIZIA - Italy. Bellevue 2010
- Silvia GARCIA WOLFRUM – Spain. Bellevue 2009
- Valeria DISSEGNA – Italy. Bellevue 2008

Journalist (1)

- Erblin JAKU - Journalist covering the webinar for the BAFE association

Panel speakers from the Public Administration (2)

- Abel Carreira, Director, Organisational Models Development and Innovation Promotion at INA, I.P. (Portugal)
- Pauline Martin, European Project Manager in the Ministry for transformation and civil service, Directorate general for administration and the civil service (France), and member of the EUPAN network
- Francesco Bordone, Representative of the Civil Servant Exchange Program ECI Team

Invited guests (3)

- Ambassador Gröning - former special advisor for the Bellevue programme
- Iciar Perez-Baroja Verde, General Directorate for the Civil Service - Spanish Ministry of Public Administration and focal point of the Bellevue Programme
- Teresa Siles - Spanish Institute for Training in Public Administration. Participant in the EU Leadership Exchange Programme.