

Welcome by Marco Ongaro, Director-General of EIPA, at the EPSA 2019 Celebratory Ceremony at the Provincial Government House, 6 November 2019

Dear Governor, Mr Bovens,
Dear Secretary of State, Mr Aaltonen, representing the Finnish presidency,
Dear Director General, Mr Vervev, representing the EC,
Dear EPSA Steering Committee Members,
Dear EPSA Participants,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen

A warm welcome to you all on behalf of the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in this wonderful building where the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1992.

As I said last night, it is the first time for me – as the new Director-General of EIPA who took office only last Friday – to be involved in EPSA. I am very much impressed by the high quality of the projects presented and about the enthusiasm of the EPSA Team and of the participants.

In particular, I have seen many digital transformation projects in areas where I have been active for more than 15 years now. This really shows how public administrations are definitely moving into the 21st century with fantastic, innovative capabilities.

This event would however not be possible without all the faithful support EIPA has received from its partners over the years.

Let me first of all say a big “thank you” to you, Governor Bovens, and to your team. Without your generous support we would not be here today in this beautiful environment with its connections to the birth of the European Union.

I would also like to thank sincerely the European Commission for having supported all EPSA editions, financially as well as content-wise. Your support is really crucial for the success of EPSA.

Many thanks also to the EPSA Steering Committee members of the participating governments and the City of Maastricht for their support, their confidence and their very positive contribution to the shaping of the EPSA awards.

The results of the deliberations of yesterday at the workshops will certainly not lead to another Maastricht Treaty. However, it might also change the world of public administrations in Europe, at least a bit:

- it might help the public administrations present here to exchange know-how in the interest of the citizens and business; as we all know, effective governance is essential for a strong economy and competitiveness,
- by further improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public administrations, particularly in respect of the services they deliver to citizens and businesses.

Thank you all for being here with us in order to celebrate the results of the European Public Sector Award 2019!

In less than two hours, we will know who will actually win the trophies. And we all benefit from this award event: new insights, valuable feedback and new ideas from the experience of the EPSA participants.

Before I close, I would also like to say a special thank you to my predecessor Marga Pröhl who brought the EPSA award scheme to EIPA ten years ago - it has become a huge success, for EIPA, for the participants, and for the public administrations in Europe.

Please allow me to say also a warm thank you to the EPSA team and to other staff members of EIPA who were involved in the preparation of EPSA and the award ceremony.

So, let me now hand over the floor to Mr Valteri Aaltonen, Secretary of State for Local Government and Ownership Steering, Ministry of Finance, Helsinki, Finland, on behalf of the Finnish Presidency of Council of the EU.

Thank you for your attention!!