

## **Speech by the outgoing Director-General of EIPA, Prof. Dr Marga Pröhl, at the Handing Over of Best Practice Certificates at the Municipality of Maastricht, 4 November 2019**

Dear Vice-Mayor Ms Heijnen,  
Dear Representatives of Governments and of the EU Commission,  
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 wonderful to have you all here in the beautiful historic town hall of the City of Maastricht.
- Many thanks to you, Ms Vice-Mayor, for receiving us here once again in this hall that shows the historic dimension of this city.
- I said ‘once again’ because I am very pleased and also a bit proud that with the EPSA 2019 we are celebrating now the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this prestigious bi-annual award. When I started as the Director-General at EIPA 12 years ago, I took the opportunity to establish this award scheme at EIPA. I am personally very grateful that the City of Maastricht and the Province of Limburg have throughout the years supported EPSA to make it a truly “Maastricht Event”. Also in 2019, the teams of the City and Province were again extremely helpful. Many thanks for all your valuable support!
- As the outgoing DG of EIPA, I am thus very pleased that my successor Mr Ongaro who took office last Friday is with us here tonight to get to know EPSA.
- Maastricht is the place where EIPA’s HQ is located since 1981. We also have offices in Barcelona and Luxembourg, but the basis of EIPA has always been the City of Maastricht. As you probably know already, EIPA was established in order to help public administrations with their questions related to European Integration. During the 38 years of EIPA’s existence the questions have of course changed a lot and EIPA’s programme has thus changed accordingly over time. But it is still the place where civil servants come to find high quality answers to their questions.

- With its location close to Belgium, Germany and France as well as the international university and the European institutes, in combination with the beautiful old streets and facades – this is an attractive venue for the many guests that come to follow EIPA’s seminars. By the way, last year EIPA had all together more than 10.000 participants in the wide range of seminars that we offer to civil servants of the EU MS and to the EU institutions.
- Maastricht has become a meeting place for representatives of public administration in Europe. Just like today!!
- Dear EPSA participants, all of you have participated in the EPSA process. You followed our invitation to describe your practice, your project, your creative solution. You registered on our website and you got in touch with the EPSA team.
- And the good news is: your application was very successful!! All of you are already winners of the European Public Sector Award!!
- You are here, ready to share your experiences and ready to hear about the projects of the other applicants. Thanks to people like you, public administration is a place where innovation is taking place. Innovation is not an easy process, it requires a lot of thinking, inspiration, a good team, trial and error, and it needs in any case a good deal of persistence.
- You seem to have all these important characteristics. Our evaluation process gave us evidence that your projects are of top quality. Our evaluation process was very refined and every project was checked intensively by the evaluators and by the jury members. In case of doubt the project in question was intensively discussed during the evaluators’ meeting.
- Sometimes it was very difficult to take a decision. But in the end we selected 40 projects that represent the top group from the 158 eligible applications in total.
- Out of these, 9 nominees were selected, out of which the three trophy winners have been chosen.
- But, as I mentioned, all of you are already winners in this award. Because you participated and because you have succeeded in the evaluation to receive a high recognition through the Best Practice Certificate. And you will all have the opportunity during the next hour to briefly present the major achievements of your projects.
- Now, the Vice-Mayor Ms Heijnen and I would like to hand over to you a Best Practice Certificate that proves your success and which you can also use at home as evidence of the success of your application!