



*'Assess Yourself and Learn from the Best – Showcasing and Rewarding European Public Excellence'*

## PRESS RELEASE

**The three EPSA 2017 winners found novel solutions to three major challenges for public administrations nowadays: digitisation, social inclusion and successful bottom-up approaches**

Today, the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) presented the European Public Sector Awards 2017 to the 3 winning projects in the administrative categories European and National, Regional, and Supra-local and Local. The EPSA 2017 trophies were awarded to the winners during an entertaining and enthralling ceremony, which took place at the Provincial Government House in Maastricht, where the famous Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1992.

This prestigious award recognises the best and most innovative performers in public administrations across Europe. Over 120 guests from 19 different European countries and the European institutions participated in the range of EPSA 2017 events held in Maastricht on 20-22 November 2017.

The 3 award winners are:

The award in the Supra-local and Local administrative category was presented to the project "[Nordwärts](#)", submitted by the City of Dortmund (DE). The City of Dortmund demonstrates with this initiative how it handles the developments within a part of the City that underwent substantial changes after the dissolving of the major industrial companies, in this case the Steel and Coal Industry. Based on the involvement and commitment of civil society, a development strategy is being devised to cultivate needs-oriented projects which are suitable for developing the northern districts of the city. It aims at increasing the quality of life of inhabitants, by identifying and implementing projects initiated bottom up. The project strengthens how people identify with their own neighbourhoods, develops available space to be future-proof and sustainable, safeguards jobs and creates new jobs by attracting companies to locate there.

In the Regional administrative category, the EPSA 2017 trophy was awarded to the "[Open.Heart Project](#)", submitted by the Ombudsoffice for Children and Youths Salzburg (AT). This project is a mentoring scheme for unaccompanied minor refugees and young refugees up to 21 years, including a 6-module preparatory programme for volunteers over 28 wanting to become mentors. Additionally, an alternative foster care scheme, which is closely linked to the Open.Heart project and in which young refugees can live together with a host family, was developed by the Ombudsoffice. From its beginnings the 'Open.Heart' project has been accompanied by an evaluation team based at the University of

Salzburg. The first results show that the project is making a vital contribution to processes of integration and social inclusion.

The prize of the European and National administrative category was presented to “[The Co-operation Fund](#)”, submitted by the European Union Intellectual Property Office. This initiative has digitised and standardised the registration of trade marks and designs at EU and national level across the EU, improving transparency and facilitating the enforcement of actions against infringements of trade marks and design intellectual property rights. The achievements of these objectives further contributed to the emergence of a coherent and streamlined pan-European IP landscape, enabling valuable savings. Consequently, trust and reliability between EU citizens, their national Intellectual Property administrations and the EUIPO was improved and strengthened. Powerful databases containing over 40 million global trade marks and 10 million global designs are at the reach of anyone who wants to use them.



Group picture of the three EPSA2017 Award Winners

With this outcome, three major and current challenges for public administrations were addressed across the award categories. At the European and national level, it is shown how digitisation is used effectively and efficiently by an EU agency for the benefit of SMEs and innovation, and thus economic growth. At the regional level, administrations’ role in successfully supporting social integration by involving the target group and civil society is demonstrated. Finally, the local level proves that flourishing development of cities needs an interactive, bottom-up approach.

The award ceremony was preceded by keynote speeches by Theo Bovens, Governor and King’s Commissioner for the Province of Limburg; Marlen Piskunov on behalf of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union; Florian Hauser representing the European Commission, and Michael Burnett, EPSA 2017 Category Leader and EIPA Expert.

The EPSA 2017 Final event started on Monday 20 November at the historic Town Hall of Maastricht, where the Best Practice Certificate recipients were honoured. On this occasion, Maastricht’s Deputy Mayor, Mr Willems, and EIPA’s Director-General, Mrs Pröhl, highlighted that 2017 also marked the

celebration of two very special anniversaries: The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht and establishing the City of Maastricht as the birthplace of the European Union, and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Public Sector Award.

The following day, the 12 nominated projects showcased their achievements during parallel category workshops at EIPA's premises. The day closed with an interactive EPSA Café and insightful concluding reflections by Mr 't Hart, Professor of Public Administration at the Utrecht School of Governance, Utrecht University.

The detailed programme is available online.

More information as well as pictures and all project presentations will be available online in the next few days. Keep checking our website [www.epsa2017.eu](http://www.epsa2017.eu) for new updates.

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## Note for the editors

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