



1st Meeting of the High-Level Reflection Group on the Future of the Commission's Civil Service

14 October 2025, Brussels (& online)

Meeting minutes

Main objectives of the meeting

The first meeting aimed to: 1) welcome members and facilitate introductions; 2) update the group on the Large-Scale review; and 3) discuss the group's terms of reference and collaboration during their mandate.

Welcome

The Chairperson of the High-Level Reflection Group, Catherine Day, opened the meeting by welcoming participants, emphasizing the group's role as an external sounding board role to the Commission throughout the large-scale review. She noted the significance of the exercise, stating that the main outcome of the review - as outlined by President von der Leyen in her mandate to Commissioner Serafin - is to ensure Europe can draw on a modern and efficient public administration. Members introduced themselves briefly, summarizing the area of expertise which they bring to the group.

Points discussed

Large-scale review context – European Commission

The Commission gave a short presentation on the large-scale review, explaining the need for the review and the political context, an update on the technical preparations to date, an overview of the key takeaways from the initial staff consultation and an update of the timeline.

Terms of reference of the high-level reflection group – European Commission

The Commission presented the terms of reference to the group, focusing on the main objectives of the group, its composition and practicalities such as dates and timeframe. Members asked the Commission to send the terms of reference to all members after the meeting with the aim to formally adopt them once agreed. The Commission also raised the importance of transparency, highlighting that key information on the large-scale review and the high-level group will be published on Europa.

Update on the workstreams – European Commission

The Commission provided members with an overview of the 15 workstreams, delivered an update on the review process and discussed members' preliminary observations.

Questions raised by the members covered a broad range of issues, mainly aimed at clarifying the process and their role. Members also provided a number of relevant observations for the Commission to consider at these early stages of the review including: the importance of a clear vision and outcome; using KPIs and metrics to measure success and aid communication; the potential of innovative and agile approaches such as regulatory sandboxes ; the essential role of AI and technology in the transformation and the importance of strategic foresight.

Discussion on how to work together

Key principles underlying the work of the group were provided by the Chair, followed by an update on administrative information by the Secretariat. All members consented to publishing relevant information concerning the group on Europa, including a list of all members and the terms of reference document once adopted. The group also consented to the creation of a TEAMS group for informal information sharing. Members were also informed that contact with the workstream leaders would be facilitated during the mandate, coordinated centrally through the large-scale review team.

Next steps

The Secretariat will send the terms of reference to all members in view of formal adoption once agreed. The Secretariat will also create a TEAMS group for all members before the next meeting to share relevant documents. The second meeting of the High-Level group will take place on 3 December in Brussels. An agenda and relevant documentation will be shared with all members in advance of the meeting.

List of participants

Chairperson

Catherine Day

Members

Mirosława Boryczka

Marco Daglio

Luukas Ilves

Darja Isaksson

Luis Romero Requena

Giorgios Pitsilis

Theresa Twachtmann

Absent : Maria Schack Vindum

European Commission

Stephen Quest

Paul McAleavey

Pascal Leardini

Lauren O'Hanlon