

Senior Officials from the Centres of Government Network

High level meeting
1-2 December 2021

AGENDA



THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
Ministry of State

**40th Annual Meeting of Senior Officials from Centres of
Government
Luxembourg, 1-2 December 2021**

**Leading National to “Go Global”: the role of centres of government
in managing the climate transition**

Wednesday, 1 December 2021

19:00 **Reception hosted by His Royal Highness the Hereditary Grand Duke of Luxembourg**

*Dress code: “tenue de ville” or business attire,
Personal identification needs to be presented at the entrance*

20:30 **Gala dinner hosted by the General Secretariat of the Government of Luxembourg**

Thursday, 2 December 2021

9:00-9:50 Registration and breakfast

European Convention Centre Luxembourg ECCL

9:50-10:10 *Kick-off*

10:10-10:20 **Opening Remarks**

- Mr. Jacques Flies, Chair of the CoG Network, Secretary General of the Government Council, Luxembourg

10:20-10:45 **Keynote Addresses**

- Mr. Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxembourg
- Mr. Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General of the OECD

The Prime Minister and the Secretary-General will engage in discussion with delegates, who are encouraged to ask questions, react to speeches and share their experience.

Many of the policy challenges faced by OECD countries at the domestic level are increasingly global in nature and will only be effectively addressed through collective responses grounded in international co-operation. These global challenges include, for example, addressing the climate and biodiversity crisis, harnessing the benefits while managing the risks of the digital transformation, tackling pandemics, managing global value chains of essential goods, fighting criminal transboundary networks, and a growing number of other issues, which, left unaddressed, will further undermine citizens' trust in government.

In the present system of global governance, meeting global challenges starts at the national level. National governments have the mandate, resources and primary responsibility to initiate global action, build coalitions of like-minded countries, engage with stakeholders, negotiate international agreements, and finance and implement practical action. International engagement and co-operation has increased significantly in recent decades, with each ministry, agency and even structural units collaborating with their peers in other countries. The role of foreign services has evolved more incrementally, and we are seeing some new approaches, for example in the establishment of Tech Ambassadors. Nonetheless, it is questionable whether governments have yet developed the capacity necessary to successfully develop and implement public policies in the current regional or global context.

A transformation of government capacities to identify and tackle issues that transcend borders and to act together with other countries is required for governments to "go global" and achieve greater progress and impact. Centres of government, who serve the government as a whole, have a critical role to play in steering progress on the most significant global issues affecting countries and reporting on those issues to citizens. Governments have a need to invest in a range of capabilities, including building international influence, developing the rights skills and networks to collaborate internationally, enabling the access to and sharing of data across governments, adopting new collaborative decision-making models, and establishing the institutional mechanisms to connect the domestic and international policy agendas.

The Covid crisis has both prompted progress on those capacities and exposed significant weaknesses. The climate and digital transitions provide another ongoing case in point, where the complexity of the issues at stake and the uncertainties and the confluence of interests to grapple with underline the need for governments to develop the right capabilities.

Key questions for discussion:

- How can centres of government add value for meaningful international co-operation in national policy making?
- What new capacities and practices have emerged during the Covid crisis in the roles of centres of government to handle the global aspects of the pandemic (co-operation across centres of government in various countries,

sharing of data across governments, new units and services in charge of collaboration with other countries...)?

- What good approaches exist to better integrate the resources of foreign services and other public institutions to address global issues in policy making?
- How have countries co-operated with the private sector and civil society to achieve global outcomes?

12:00-14:00 **Luncheon**

Standing lunch and networking

MUDAM – Musée d'Art moderne Grand-Duc Jean

14:00-15:30 **Session 2: Navigating the climate transition from the centre**

Fighting climate change is a top policy priority in OECD governments. A growing number of countries and other actors have set net-zero targets. Additional commitments have been made on phasing out fossil fuels, deforestation and clean technologies. The path forward is clear. And yet, the real question is how to successfully navigate it? Everyone has a role to play – private sector actors, international organisations, civil society groups and individual citizens. However, there are a number of responsibilities that rest largely on governments and the state – not just through the design and delivery of the policies to steer the transition at national level, but also by demonstrating leadership, influencing and co-ordinating at the global level, and perhaps most importantly, building public support. The success of climate policies is inextricably linked to the trust the public has in their governments to deliver, particularly where it requires some collectively or individually borne costs in the shorter-term.

Every country has a different institutional set up for tackling climate change. Nonetheless, all centres of government will be touched by the challenges of managing the climate transition, whether it be a leading co-ordination or strategic planning role, an advisory function to the head of government or cabinet, or leadership on greening the government itself.

While it is essential that public policies and public sector operations are transparent, well planned and co-ordinated governments face a multitude of hidden and interrelated difficulties in managing substantive reforms, which risk undermining effective decision making and trust in government. Climate policies affect a multitude of private interests, which means that different groups use various means to safeguard their immediate interests. Interactions between stakeholder interests and consultations, undue influence by different lobbying practices, spread of biased information, corruption, encouraging protest movements and other means of influence to public action make it difficult to keep a balanced and transparent focus on the needed reforms and outcomes.

This session will provide an opportunity for senior officials from the centres of government to share some of the challenges faced in navigating the climate transition from the centre of government, including in the context of ensuring trust in government. This could cover issues such as: managing trade-offs between short- and long-term policy objectives and risks; gathering and communicating the evidence to support bold climate action which will involve some costs in the shorter-term; managing the range of private and public interests and providing transparency on lobbying for climate policies; and effectively engaging citizens in the climate effort.

Key questions for discussion:

- What are the most difficult issues the centres of government face in steering the climate transition?
- How can we help key decision makers to overcome opposition from vocal minority interests?
- Which policy making instruments can be used for reducing a short-term focus on decisions?
- What has worked in terms of public communication and engagement on climate?

15:30-16:00 **Session 3: Moving forward to 2022**

This session will start with a summary of the **key takeaways from the day by Mr. Jeffrey Schlagenhauf, Deputy Secretary General of the OECD**, and will provide an opportunity to discuss the next steps in co-operation between the centres of governments of OECD countries. Luxembourg will propose to **hand over the hosting of the OECD Senior Officials from Centres of Government Network to Austria**, and participants will be invited to share their priorities for the Network going forward.

16:00-17:00 **Wrap-up discussions and networking**

With coffee and tea

20:00 **Informal gathering and dinner**

*Ministry of State
2, place de Clairefontaine (meeting point)*

