

Dear Mr Governor,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A warm welcome to you all on behalf of the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA).

Thank you all for being here with us in order to celebrate the results of the European Public Sector Award 2011! My colleagues and I are happy that you honour us with your presence.

I know some of you are a bit nervous today. I am talking about the nominees who are waiting for the final decisions on who will win the EPSA award 2011!!

The last two days we had a unique opportunity: to talk about innovation in the public sector with colleagues from all over Europe. We listened to their experience, got inspiration, we could ask questions and got good answers. This is EPSA: it provides a unique platform of knowledge about innovative solutions in the public sector in Europe. It is the only public sector award of this kind. And it covers all levels of public administration from the pan-European level, the national level, the regional and local level.

It is now the third time that EPSA will be awarded. The first time, EPSA trophies were handed over in 2007 in Lucerne, Switzerland, organised by the Bertelsmann Foundation, Germany, Switzerland and Austria. In 2009, the EPSA was organised by EIPA in Maastricht with the support of several MS, the EU Commission, the City of Maastricht and the Province of Limburg.

The result of this year's EPSA is again a proof for the need for such an award. 274 applications were received. This gave us the basis for this fine book that contains short descriptions and contact details regarding all the applications. A real source of information for all the public administrations throughout Europe and fun to go through it.

Another result of our work is the research report that contains some lessons learned in the three themes. All documents will also be available on the internet.

Let me say a very warm and direct thank you to all the applicants of EPSA 2011. Without the enthusiasm and courage of the public administrations to contribute to EPSA no exchange of know-how and information would take place today!!

I would also like to use the opportunity to thank the Steering Committee members of the participating governments for their continuous support, their confidence and the good cooperation. Many thanks for all you did to make EPSA a success!

Again, the cooperation with the Province of Limburg and with the City of Maastricht was very important success factor and a real pleasure. I am very grateful for the generous support.

Tuesday night I thanked already Mayor Hoes and his team for the fantastic help EIPA received. Today I would like to say a big “thank you” also to you and to your team, Mr Governor. Without your support we would not be here today in this beautiful environment with the historic flavour, due to the Maastricht Treaty that has been signed here.

Today, European public administrations are again present here. With the innovative power of the representatives of all EU MS. Probably the result of our deliberations will not result in another Maastricht Treaty. However, it might also change the world of Europe, at least a bit:

- it might help the public administrations present here to exchange know-how in the interest of the citizens and the business world; as we all know good and reliable administration is necessary for a strong economy and competitiveness,
- to further improve administration's efficiency, processes and effectiveness, particularly regarding the services they deliver to the citizens.

We do not know yet who will actually win the trophy. That will be communicated later today during the award ceremony. But my opinion is that we are all winners already – for different reasons. All EPSA participants are already winners. Not just because of the certificates they got Tuesday night from Mayor Hoes, no, because they have joined with their innovative practice the group of European reformers in PA. By sharing one always wins, new insights, valuable feedback and new ideas.

And all the others present here today are also winners, because we learn from the experience of the EPSA participants.

Thank you for your attention!!