



The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged), or International and National Trends in Workplace Learning in Public Administration

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Abstract

Aim: In this paper we analyse the L&D related results of the 2024 international EUPAN research. We explore Gen Z's main characteristics and needs; furthermore present the means by which the different countries provide for the development of their central government officials. We also examine to which extent generational awareness is present. We place the results of the parallel Hungarian generational research into international context.

Methodology: We apply an international questionnaire survey (N= 26), a questionnaire survey of Hungarian government officials (N= 12.500), document and content analysis, statistical data analysis as well as interviews (N= 8).

Findings: When designing L&D systems the perception of generational differences is as important as the differences themselves. In addition to generational affiliation attention must be paid to various other factors. Generational characteristics can be translated into needs which in turn can be translated into strategy guidelines. The discourse is useful as it draws attention to trends that are relevant not only for gen Z but the entire workforce (e.g. exponentially increasing digitalisation, mental well-being challenges). We display a range of good practices.

Value: The paper offers insight for modernising L&D strategy in public administration. Based on extensive international and national questionnaire research, we identify trends and good practices related to, among others, mentoring, training,

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coaching, self-directed learning, personalised development, microlearning as well as digital platforms.

Keywords: EUPAN, learning and development, Gen Z, public administration

Prologue

‘The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)’, (also known as The Complete Wrks of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)) may be familiar to many of us. Three actors attempt the impossible: to perform Shakespeare’s works in two hours. The authors of this paper embark on a similarly ambitious mission: to concentrate the L&D- related result of 26 ‘plays’, i.e. the results of the *2024 EUPAN questionnaires* (Hazafi et al. 2024) in less than 40.000 characters. We attempt to highlight the good practices of 26 participants: EU Member States, the European Commission and the observer countries. The international EUPAN questionnaire was developed by the HRM Research Group of the Ludovika University of Public Service, which the authors of this paper are members of, in cooperation with experts from the Ministry of Interior. The questionnaire was completed by experts from the participating countries on the basis of questions related to generation management. In this paper in addition to the 26 ‘plays’ we also present some ‘sonnets’, i.e. the results of a detailed *national generational questionnaire* sent to 77,000 Hungarian government officials and leaders and completed by 12,500 respondents (hereafter referred to as the national questionnaire). The data was collected using electronic data capture (CAWI). As if this weren’t enough, in addition 8 *semi-structured interviews* were conducted. Five senior professional leaders (including two senior system leaders) and three political leaders shared their day-to-day experiences. Alas, the available space is limited, so just like the Reduced Shakespeare Company, we have to edit heavily.

Are there any differences in Gen Z’s L&D characteristics and needs compared to previous generations? If so, does practice respond to these differences? How can we focus increased attention on Gen Z members to develop an L&D package that benefits not only them, but all generations? What are the tools to ensure the development of civil servants in central and regional administrations at the end of the first quarter of the 21st century? What are the most widespread and popular development methods internationally, and what can be expected in the new decade? In our paper we seek to answer these research questions.

Four statements on the generational topic

No. 1: The need to address this issue exists at both professional and societal levels

The topic itself is not new, but partly because the intergenerational differences between the currently youngest working generation (i.e. Gen Z) and the other generations are more noticeable professional and social interest is heightened. A great deal has already been said and written about the values, attitudes and behaviours of the different generations at the workplace, expanding to their attitudes to development and learning. These works include international and national studies, books (Tari, 2023; Bereczki, 2022; Steigervald, 2023; Steigervald, 2024; Nemes, 2019; Csutorás, 2022) and PhD theses (Csutorás, 2020; Magasvári, 2022b) as well as podcasts and reports (see, for example, Deloitte, 2024; [Jugend-Trendmonitor, 2024](#)) rich in statistical data. A wide-ranging bibliometric analysis has also been produced ([Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022](#)). The impact of these works continue to spread beyond professional circles. To take a national example, Krisztián Steigervald's related writings have gone through several editions in a short time, his lectures and training courses are sold out.

No. 2: The generation issue is multi-factorial

The second statement, which we cannot fail to stress, is that the generational question is multifactorial. Over-emphasising individual generational categories can lead to a harmful oversimplification. How can this be avoided? Much of the literature mentioned above urges a more nuanced approach. While there are indeed a number of characteristics that we now identify with particular generations, *factors other* than year of birth, shared experiences and 'Zeitgeist' should be taken into account. Rather, it is worth thinking in terms of the milestones of adulthood, since depending on where one is, one is in different life situations and has different preferences (Seres-Busi & Hegedűs, 2023; Nemes, 2019). For example, raising a young child and caring for an elder relative appear as such milestones in the free-word responses to the national questionnaire. Naturally, we also have to take into account personality traits and preferences. Individual specificities can and do therefore nuance the picture.

No. 3: The perception of the generational differences is as important as the differences themselves

The scientific basis of generational theories is often disputed. Indeed, precisely because of the other factors mentioned above, it is difficult to state the absolute

truth. However, regardless of the scientific support for generational characteristics, we cannot ignore them because they are prominent in public thinking as perceptions and stereotypes. These sometimes oversimplified generalizations can facilitate hostile feelings at work and exacerbate already existing frictions between the different generations (Mills-Molnár, 2024). To give an example Gen Z job candidates are often looked upon as hard-to-motivate IT wizards who will quiet quit or job-hop at the first opportunity. This preconception/perception has a serious effect on the hiring and integration process, even if the concrete job candidates are planning for a long and hard earned professional journey at the same workplace and their digital competences are mostly limited to social media use. It is vital to assess what one generation thinks about the other because *knowledge* can only be *accumulated, retained and shared* if the generations work together. In the Hungarian questionnaire, intergenerational assistance, knowledge transfer and peer learning appear in several responses, with both positive and negative overtones. Examples of the former come from both age groups. The opinions quoted below show both sides of the ‘coin’:

‘The majority of people over 50 are not able to use Word, Excel and other basic programs properly. Or: ‘Young people expect their decades of work experience and professional knowledge to be shared as quickly as possible by older people, who receive no special status or pay supplements for the training, extra work, attention, responsibility, stress and correction of mistakes.’

Fortunately, there is another side to this:

‘Older, more experienced colleagues are happy to help if you ask.’ and ‘By the time I was 50, I had helped young people every cycle to settle in and supported them in passing on professional knowledge...praised them, positive feedback was frequent. All this took time and patience, but the current administration is overworked and there is less time to train young people’,

No. 4: The generational discourse highlights needs and trends that are important for all of us

For example, the importance of asking for the opinions of subordinates and giving feedback and appreciation is most often mentioned in the context of Gen Z. However in the Hungarian questionnaire these features heavily in the responses of several age groups. In fact it has a major influence on job choices. To give another example, creating value and serving the community is also a strong motivation for public sector workers, regardless of age. There is much talk about the exponential rise of digitalisation in the workplace, the associated loss of attention span and the psychosocial dangers (loneliness, stress, burnout) connected

with it. While these do indeed affect Gen Z more strongly (it is not by chance that they are called the digital generation), tracking the technological and socio-psychological changes of the last quarter of a decade is a common cause for us all. The research and impact analysis of public psychology (Ország-Novák et al., 2024) can assist us in this.

Gen Z characteristics and related workplace learning needs and expectations

Below we summarise the rich literature (amongst them the items cited earlier) on Gen Z. The most important general perceptions of those born between 1995 and 2009 are as follows (note: there is no general consensus on the time interval). *They:*

- are often called the ‘digital generation’;
- have a very strong visual orientation;
- carefully safeguard the equilibrium between their professional and private life;
- are articulating their needs, thoughts, ideas, criticisms (even through online publicity) more powerfully;
- have a greater need for rapid professional development opportunities;
- want to learn quickly and who consider acquired competences more important than ‘paper’;
- do not respect hierarchy (even in learning situations);
- also as a consequence of the acceleration of digitalisation, have shorter and shorter attention spans, but who prefer to multitask (it should be noted that multitasking is illusory and exhausts the brain in the long term);
- have an increased need for rapid feedback and reinforcement; finally
- feel the most intense need to make a tangible impact and create value through their work.

We believe that the above characteristics *can be translated into needs and expectations for learning and development* in the workplace that all generations can benefit from taking into account, whether they are Z, Y, X, Baby Boomers or even veterans returning from retirement as mentors and experts.

We recommend developing an L&D strategy that:

- 1) complements traditional methods with digital tools and platforms, aware of the opportunities and risks the later present. Examples of pros and cons include cost-effectiveness and better reach to younger people, but also the tendency to dodging and depersonalised solutions.

- 2) accessible, supported by clear communication (including written communication). It is essential to communicate the options (Balogh, 2024) and to map out the possible learning pathways and destinations.
- 3) builds on the power of visual representation. An example from the Hungarian questionnaire: ‘The Probono system is not bad, but it could be improved, for example with real-time interactive lectures and more video material’.
- 4) it does not come at the expense of private life, as work-life imbalance is a major psychosocial risk factor. On the other hand it does build on learning that takes place outside the workplace (for example, through listening to podcasts).
- 5) it also focuses on the well-being of employees. In this context, it is worth highlighting the importance of attendance trainings on stress management and burnout prevention, digital well-being and resilience. The possibility of a sabbatical is also noteworthy, because in addition to refreshing knowledge it also serves to prevent burnout.
- 6) is aware of the dangers of social isolation exacerbated by digitalisation, and therefore supports informal experience-sharing forums.
- 7) is flexible. While providing a framework, the method used are flexible along the dimensions of place, time and timing.
- 8) facilitates rapid professional development. Coaching and mentoring support, among others, can be used to this end.
- 9) multi-directional, as knowledge can be disseminated vertically and horizontally, and the influence of peers is particularly important.
- 10) takes place at multilevel. While planning happens on strategic (macro) level, the development itself can be broken down into modules and even smaller unites (meso and micro levels) using a variety of tools and methods.
- 11) is associated with frequent feedback. Examples include the use of gamification methodologies, micro-certification, mentoring and coaching based on the power of personal contact.
- 12) has a tangible positive impact and creates value.

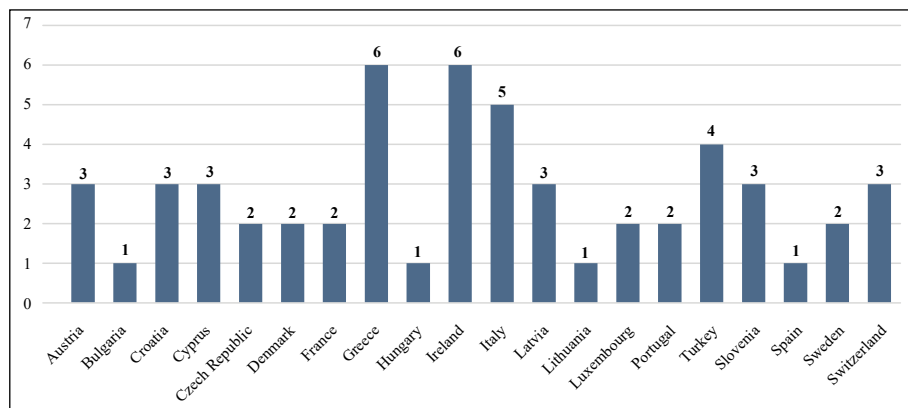
Given the fact that Gen Z is increasingly present in public administration (not only because of its age and the advancement of time), the workplace must recognise these characteristics and needs and expectations (Magasvári & Csaba, 2023; 2024) and respond to them - let us refer back to the four principles - for the sake of all generations working together.

How prevalent is generational awareness in workplace L&D practice?

Based on the results of the EUPAN questionnaires, we can conclude that international practice does not explicitly align workplace L&D systems *with the needs of different generations*.

Figure 1

Generational fine-tuning of development tools in EUPAN member states



Note. Data from the international EUPAN survey.

The average score on the 6-point Likert scale (where 1 = not at all, 6 = absolutely true) is 2.75, but we should note that there are three extreme numbers (two countries gave score 6 and one score 1). Hungary has marked the category 1, ‘not at all’. To quote from the Hungarian questionnaire survey: ‘the younger and older generations have very different educational needs. ... Unfortunately, due to a lack of time and capacity, the same lectures and curricula are offered to seasoned older colleagues and young entrants.’

It should be added that most EUPAN member countries, including Hungary, although not under the name of generational management, respond to the needs of different age groups. Examples of this include *mentoring for young people starting their careers, leadership programs, digital platforms, etc.*

We believe that generational awareness can be increased by *broadening the development toolbox* and providing choice. A system that offers a wide range of tools and methods and gives flexibility to those involved can respond to the different needs of officials (generational and otherwise).

A selection of tools

Below we present a selection of methods and forums currently used internationally and in our country, moving from the classic to the modern. As the Reduced Shakespeare Company we too present merely a selection of what is happening on the administrative scene. The learning contract, learning vouchers and individual learning accounts are not included for instance.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a golden bridge between generations and has a respected place in the central public administrations of many Member States. In addition to its classic function of attracting young people (mentored), mentoring also helps to retain older officials who can pass on their knowledge to the next generation as mentors or even become mentors themselves. The key role of *leaders* in the process is highlighted by several countries as a sign of a learning organisation. Good practices offered by EUPAN countries include programmes for *women, leaders and participants in innovation projects* (Kajtár, E. 2024). In Portugal, the mentoring programme is part of *PROJETO BEM-ME-QUER*, a wider programme in line with the concepts of organisational well-being and happiness, which aims to improve the quality of life and health of people in vulnerable situations. Mentoring can therefore benefit different target groups and can be adapted to different development programmes.

The typical duration of organised programmes is relatively short, 1-3 months in Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. In the Czech Republic, the European Commission and Hungary, programmes are generally longer, lasting 3-6 months). Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, the Republic of Turkey, the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia invest the longest time in the process, with programme duration in these countries exceeding half a year.

In Greece, officials and leaders jointly prepare the development plan, identify together the skills needed and define the development actions and tools. *Mandatory meetings* are held *three times* a year. The January meeting focuses on the annual work planning, clearly defining expectations and priorities. The May meeting reviews progress and allows for any necessary changes to the development plan. The December session assesses the year's performance and develops the development plan for the coming year.

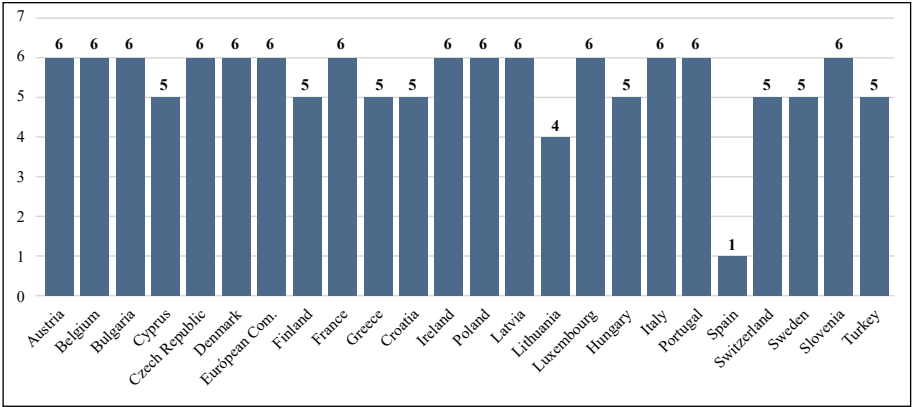
In Hungary, mentoring stands out in the Hungarian questionnaire survey. It is mentioned both among the suggestions for improvement and the shared good practices. Several respondents emphasise the significant role it plays in the socialisation process. However it is also pointed out that the process is time-consuming

and that there is a pressing need for recognition and training of mentors. These challenges keep appearing in the academic discussion as well (Csóka et al., 2021; Krauss et al., 2018; Magasvári, 2022a). On a more positive note: a special type of mentoring is provided through the *Hungarian Public Administration Scholarship Programme* for trainees. The mentors are selected from among the officials employed by the host institution and provide support for 10 months (including 3 months abroad). The mentors are responsible in particular for preparing the internship programme, supervising the work of the trainees and regularly evaluating them (Government Decree 52/2019 (III. 14.) on the Hungarian Public Administration Scholarship).

Training

Because of its participant- and process-centeredness, training is a particularly useful tool for workplace competence development (Berta & Kriskó 2023). A good training is Janus faced. It is a pre-planned, consciously structured process with a clear logical architecture. Nevertheless it also has a highly flexible aspect. It responds to the special needs and questions raised by participants in the ‘here and now’. The design of a coherent training package is part of a thoughtful building process and can be *the backbone of the OD* of any given public administration (Kajtár & Roberts 2021). The importance of training is markedly identified by the responding Member States (N=24) in the EUPAN survey.

Figure 2
The use of training as a form of development in the central administrations of EUPAN Member States



Note. Hazafi et al., 2024.

In the Hungarian questionnaire responses, the word training appears 137 times. Attendance training provides a space for ‘people from different workplaces, representing different generations’ to meet. In addition to enhancing competences, it is also important ‘for the exchange of information, professional preparation and updating, and for contacts (inter-county and with clients)’. The *Probono* system was mentioned by respondents in 100 times, mostly as a good practice, but there were also criticisms of the system, including the formality of online training and the relevance of the topics covered. ‘I work in the training field, we do attendance trainings. Our experience is that people are disillusioned with e-learning. Yet, the number of frontal presentations is low, the number of trainings even lower, even though it is a more effective genre. A large proportion of employees would like to have management, competence development or professional training. Attendance training can also be used to shape attitudes, which is of great importance in shaping organisational culture. The lack of leadership training is damaging to organisations in the long term. If it is important to the employer that its employees receive genuinely effective and valuable training, employees will feel more valued. That’s what we believe and experience in practice.’

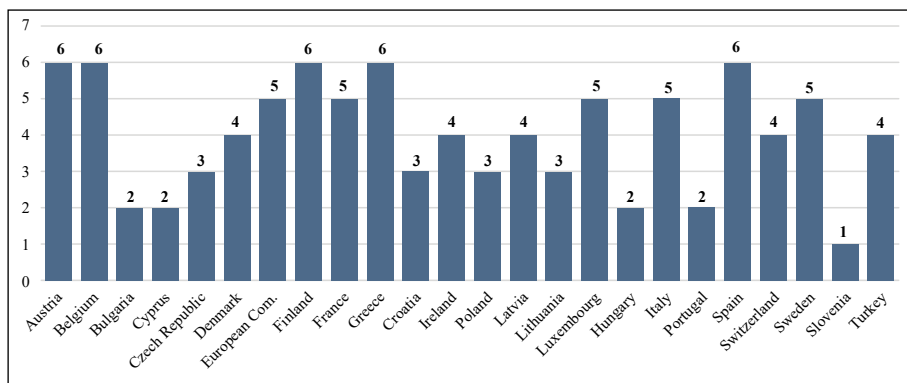
The danger of online training becoming a formal obligation, i.e. ‘someone *clicks and fills it in for everyone*’, was also raised in management interviews, and consequently there should be safeguards built in for this in the future.

Coaching

The flexibility of *coaching* makes it well adaptable to generational needs (Kajtár, 2023). In the EUPAN countries (N=24) that responded to this question in the survey, it is one of the development tools used very often or regularly.

Figure 3

Use of coaching as a form of development in the central administrations of EUPAN member states



Note. Hazafi et al., 2024.

The coaching method is regularly used in the vast majority of international public service training practices, but in the Hungarian public administration it is still in its infancy (Paksi-Petró & Stréhli, 2021).

Respondents to the national survey do not really experience the possibility of using *coaching* (46% say it is not provided at all). In the free-text responses, several respondents also identify *coaching* as a development need (16 mentions).

It would be useful to have ‘[coaching and] training for all employees, not only at management level, and more and more direct professional support.’

- ‘corporate and teamwork coaching training for employees, where they can raise issues individually and discuss them at team level if necessary’
- ‘coaching, soft skills development, team-builders [...] informal workshops, reduction of internal hierarchy, neglect of authoritarianism’.

Self-directed learning

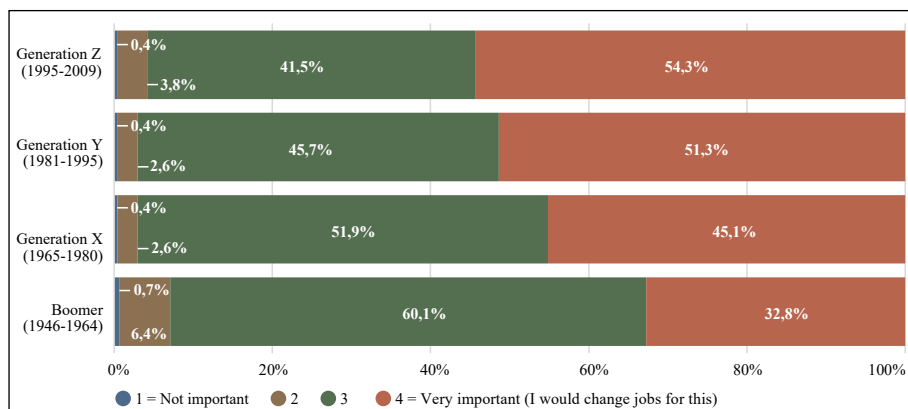
A global learning trend among Gen Z is that learning at work is increasingly *self-directed*. The easiest example is Google searches (databases), but one can also find information *on social networks*, *YouTube*, *podcasts* and other forums. There is a growing desire for autonomy and freedom in learning. With the spread of ICT, employees can acquire the necessary knowledge themselves (Kajtár, 2023).

How does this look in Hungary? According to the results of the national questionnaire, there is an increased *need for autonomy and work-life balance* among

all age groups currently employed in the public service. The generational distribution of the responses to the related question of the questionnaire (N = 11 770) is shown in the figure below.

Figure 4

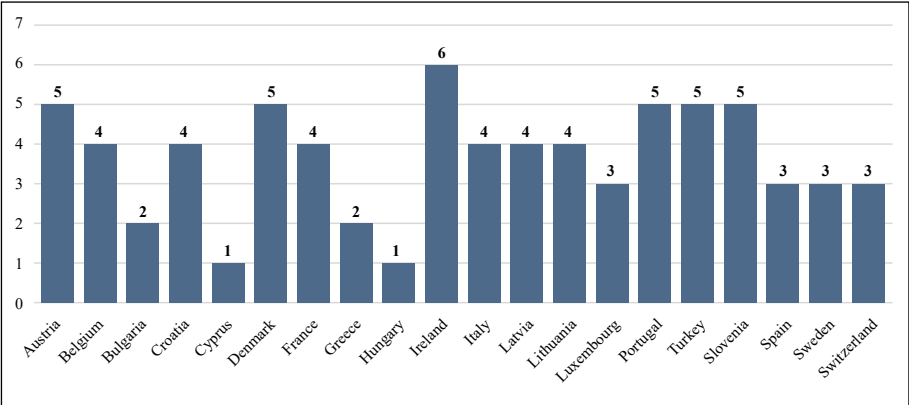
What criteria do you consider when choosing a job? Work-life balance



Note. Figure is made by the author.

According to the EUPAN international survey (N=20), this is not supported by the Hungarian public administration. Why? One of the reasons may be that the employer cannot check the source and credibility of the information gathered this way. Yet, in a well-designed environment (meaning within a learning organisation framework, where dialogue is ongoing, and critical thinking as well as reflection are imbedded in everyday work practice) individual learning is a useful form of development (Rupčić, 2024). For this reason it would be worthwhile to unlock its potential and create its guarantees and conditions.

Figure 5
 Application of self-directed learning in the central administrations of EUPAN member states



Note. Hazafi et al., 2024.

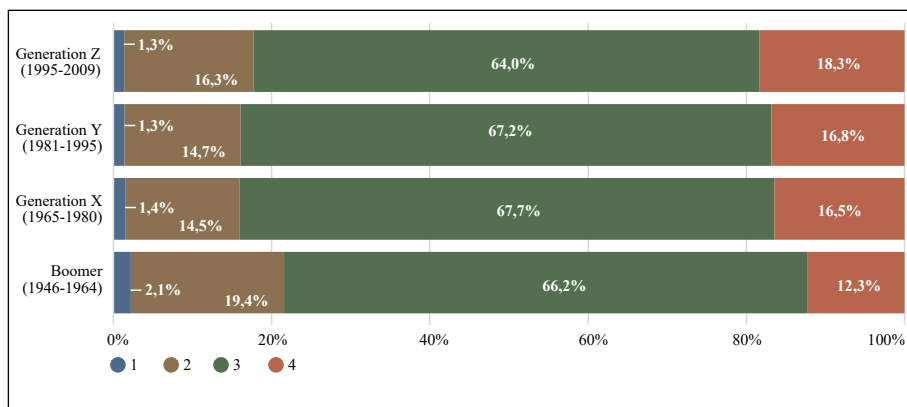
Personalised learning

Personalised learning means flexible learning pathways and assessment, as well as the integration of technology and the use of *varied learning methods and practices* (Fake-Dabbagh 2023). In the 2024 Global Sentiment Survey on Learning and Development personalization and adaptive delivery came fourth with 8.1% (Global Sentiment Survey, 2024).

Tailored development, in other words one, which takes into account individual knowledge level, learning pace, interest and need is more effective than one-size fits all Responses to the national questionnaire (N = 11770) reflect a high demand for this, most strongly for Gen Z, but also for the other three generations currently active at the workplace. As one respondent writes in the suggestions: it would be desirable to ‘support individual development needs (if there is already a list of optional courses in the PROBONO interface, do not disable the selected courses).’

Figure 6

What criteria do you consider when choosing a job? Personalised support, help with my work
Answers to sub-item by generation



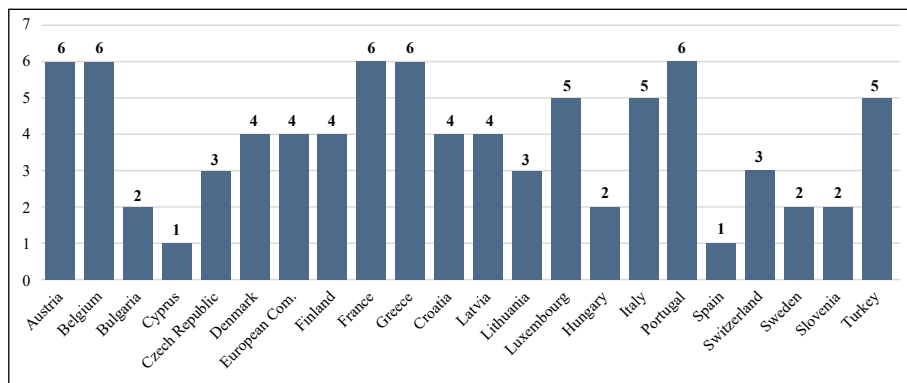
Note. National questionnaire data.

Digital platforms

The most relevant element of the generational divide is the attitude towards the use of digital tools (Botos, Botos & Barnucz) In this sense, a development system that allows for their wider and more autonomous use is also generation-conscious (responsive to Gen Z and Y). The results of the EUPAN Member States survey show that the use of knowledge sharing platforms is also gaining ground in the central administrations of the responding countries (N=22).

Figure 7

Use of knowledge sharing platforms in central administrations of EUPAN Member States



Note. Hazafi et al., 2024.

The use of digital platforms is also cited as good practice in Ireland, Poland, Latvia, Italy and Finland.

Finland made a strategic choice. It uses a digital learning platform as the main channel for competence development of central government officials. With the cutting-edge and continuously evolving *eOppiva*, the number of learning events has now increased twenty-fold. The majority of central government employees (around 82 000) have used it. 185 000 learners started their training journey in 2023. Nearly 80% of the courses started were completed. The service is founded and owned by the Ministry of Finance and operated by the HAUS Development Centre. Thanks to its internal operation, costs can be kept low at up to €4.1 per learning outcome completed (in 2023). The website includes online courses, podcasts, micro-videos and learning blogs. It offers government-specific learning content, but also provides content for the general public (130 out of 250 online courses are openly available), in line with the ‘learning for all’ slogan. There are already more than 250 online courses and all government departments can use them free of charge. Moodle currently contains around 1700 training content produced by nearly 70 agencies. According to the respondents to the questionnaire, the ingredients for outstanding success are: taking on the financial burden, working closely with central government and, last but not least, the pioneering spirit and enthusiastic people who trust the process.

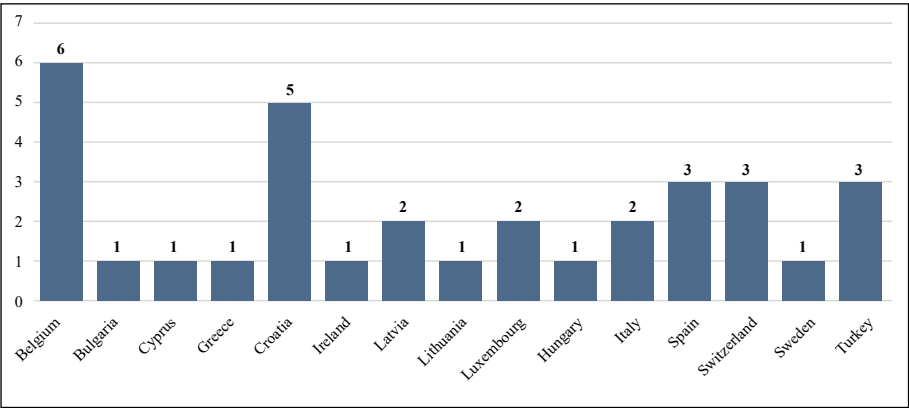
Of course, when thinking about digitalisation, we cannot ignore the role of *artificial intelligence*. According to a previous survey by McKinsey & Company (2023), the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in human resource management is

low worldwide. This is no different in the administrative practices of the EUPAN countries surveyed, where the responding Member States (N=18) overall rated the use of AI in learning and development below average (2.44). Yet, if organisations were to properly exploit the benefits of AI, they could collaborate more effectively with intelligent machines in many areas of HR (Papp & Kun, 2024). For example, from the perspective of our topic, AI can enable the development of personalized training (Máthé & Boros, 2025), a digital assistant can help with the learning process or answer questions about operational frameworks, rules or job tasks (Kumar et al., 2023). AI can support gamification in training, enhancing the learning experience of employees (Pandey et al., 2023).

Microlearning

The tool for individual learning is ‘learning in instalments’. Bite-sized *learning* is increasingly popular in the adult education literature (Berecz, 2019.). The aim is to refresh knowledge, to give a new impulse in the shortest possible time, efficiently and without the employee dropping out of work (Kapp & Defelice, 2019; Budai, 2022). The flexibility and autonomy as well as the quick and visible feedback offered makes microlearning particularly popular among adult learners, including Gen Z (Ho-Yeo-Wijaya 2022; Belényesi 2023). Micro-certificates (i.e. the documents certifying the successful participation in short training courses), are promoted at EU level (Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/C 243/02 of 16 June 2022).

Figure 8
The role of micro-training in the central administrations of EUPAN Member States



Note. Hazafi et al., 2024.

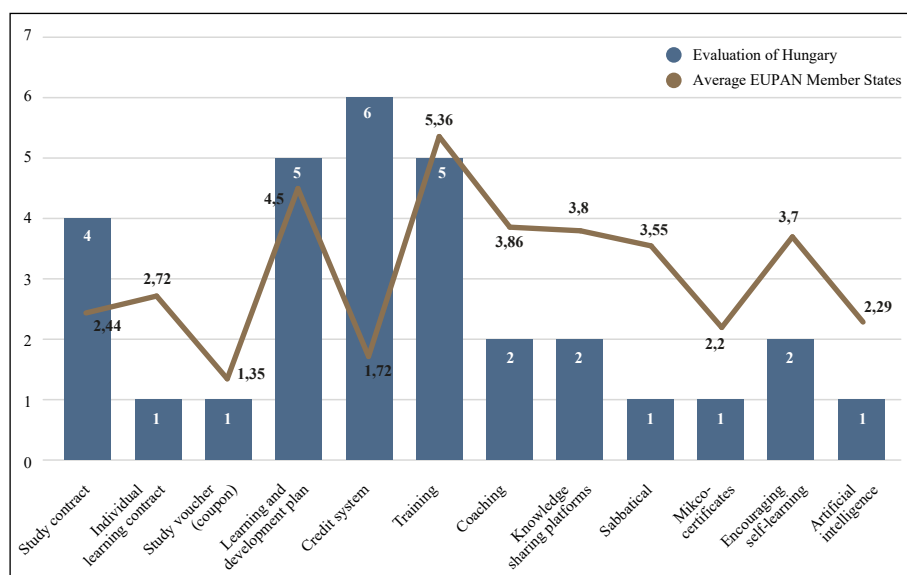
However, at present, microcertification in central administrations is far from reaching its full potential. Among the responding countries (N=15), Belgium and Croatia are the exceptions (the pioneers). In countries such as Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania and Sweden microcertification have not been implemented at all. This may be due to a lack of adequate quality control and recognition. The level of awareness, cultural acceptance and, if you like, trust in the institution is still low.

Hungarian practice in the light of international results

Let us take a look at the national practice in the light of international results:

Figure 9

The state of learning and development in the Hungarian public administration



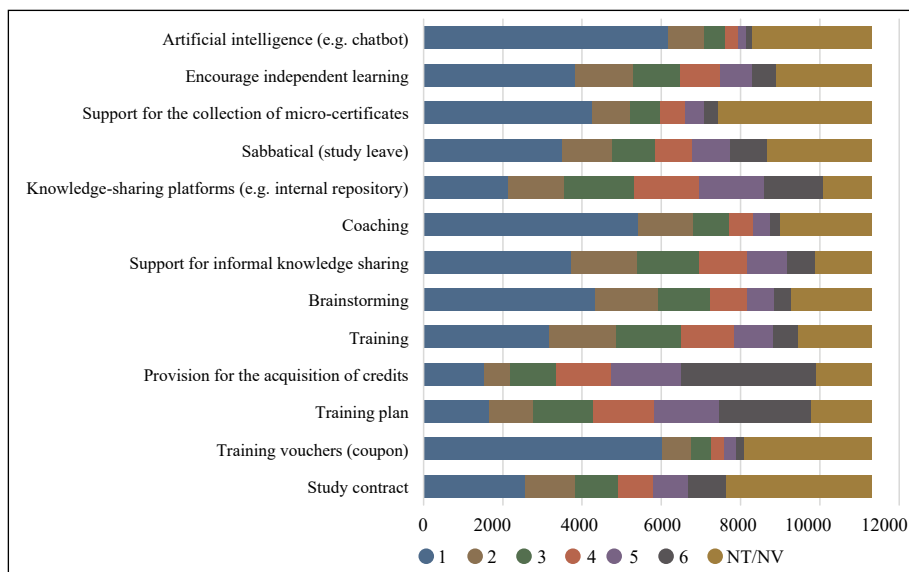
Note. EUPAN research.

As we can see from the figure above, the central public administrations of the EUPAN Member States pay particular attention to the development of their staff and leaders, usually with learning and development plans, training programmes and a variety of other methods. Of the tools available in the literature on the subject, training, coaching and knowledge-sharing platforms are the most favoured (scoring above average), but self-learning is also encouraged.

In Hungarian practice, classical, traditional development techniques are the most popular ones, such as study contracts, training courses and credit system. The promotion of self-learning, coaching or the use of knowledge-sharing platforms is less widespread. Taking advantage of these methods of personalised development would be effective, not to mention how much closer they are to the needs of Gen Z.

Figure 10

Distribution of development tools provided by the workplace among respondents



Note. National questionnaire data.

In the national central and regional administrations staff development mainly focuses on *requiring the acquisition of credits, training plans and internal knowledge-sharing platforms*. More than 50% of respondents consider that the use of AI or training vouchers is not provided at all by public administrations. In terms of learning and development opportunities provided by the workplace, respondents have little experience with the use of AI, support for the collection of micro-certificates, training vouchers and support for studies through study contracts, with 25-33% of respondents indicating the NT/NV category.

Summary

The interest in studying the different generations is both professional and social. The complexity of the subject requires caution, when designing a strategy we need to take into account factors other than generational affiliation, such as individual human characteristics. We have to bear in mind that the perception of generational differences is as important as the differences themselves. The discourse on Gen Z draws attention to important needs and trends (like exponentially increasing digitalisation and mental well-being challenges) that concerns us all. Generational characteristics can be translated into L&D needs and expectations and set the direction for development.

A much diversified portfolio can meet the different needs arising from generational and other factors. There is a need for a package which offers a range of options for the whole workforce, taking into account age, life situation and job (post) held, and which helps the workforce as a whole to make the most of its potential. Among the responses - suggestions, criticisms and good practices - training (specifically the Probono system in the national context), knowledge sharing, mentoring and coaching were highlighted.

The Hungarian public administration staff development mainly focuses on the provision of credits, training plans and internal knowledge-sharing platforms. It is clear that financial constraints also affect the area of learning development. Precisely for this reason is it important to focus on methods and tools that are actually in demand. Training is typically a long-term investment, and the resulting knowledge is retained for many years, becoming an integral part of the organisation as a whole. More attendance trainings, formal and informal group development forms would strengthen organisational cohesion and intergenerational dialogue. The need for flexible scheduling, online interaction, informal feedback and, in turn, self-directed learning is also becoming more important. There are many good examples of digital forums in international practice. These are challenges to which the national system is struggling to respond. The opportunities are limited and the role the employer plays is more of a development and learning manager than a facilitator.

This area is constantly evolving. Right now a mysterious debutant is looking for its place in the abridged version of Shakespeare's plays. Artificial intelligence, the latest character on the stage of workplace learning will be presented in a forthcoming paper.

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