

ReSPA

Regional School of Public Administration (Phase 1)

A Joint Initiative of the European Union
and the OECD, principally financed by the EU



ReSPA/SC(2008)1/001

Progress Report 2007

The Steering Committee is invited to

- **Take note** of the implementation of the 2007 programme of work;
- **Take note** of the progress in ReSPA institutionalisation;
- **Commit** to meet deadlines for registering participants to ReSPA activities;
- **Take note** of the difficulties encountered by some participants in getting visa;
- **Take note** of the difficulties encountered by some countries and entities to implement option B;
- **Recall** the responsibilities of the Steering Committee members to ensure that the contracted resources are used effectively.

Overview of 2007 implementation of training and networking activities

In its third session, held in Podgorica, in January 2007, the Steering Committee approved the work programme 2007. The programme was further developed following the Meeting with EU Schools of PA and the decision of the 4th Steering Committee, held in Brussels in April 2007.

The first Meeting of the ReSPA Schools and Institutes of Public Administration took place in Ljubljana in June. The meeting introduced ReSPA to a wider audience and gathered feedback for further ReSPA activities.

The four modules of training of trainers on Negotiation Techniques in a European environment took place in Skopje (May 2007), Podgorica (July 2007), Pristina (24-25 October), and Belgrade (5-6 December) in cooperation with EIPA.

The 2007 Dubrovnik Diplomatic Summer School was co-organised by Croatia, Denmark and ReSPA in June. It addressed economic diplomacy and was attended by representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Economy.

In cooperation with NISPAcee, training on How to be a Better Policy Advisor took place in Sarajevo in September 2007.

The Second Annual Conference of ReSPA was organised in cooperation with the Albanian TIPA and the Ministry of Interior in Durres, on 3-4 October. Following the first conference on Regulatory Management held in Skopje in November 2006, it explored the ways of Making Strategies Work.

Additional training developed in cooperation with partners in the EU included:

- a week-long training on Management of Training Programmes delivered by the Greek School of PA in September 2007 in Athens;
- a training on Expenditure Management for high level public finance officials provided by the French ENA on 15-19 October in Paris;
- an invitation extended to ReSPA participants to attend the European Civil Servant training organised by the Italian School of PA on 26-30 November in Caserta; (The organisation of this module was postponed until March 2008 at the demand of the Italian co-organisers).
- a module on Public Procurement jointly developed with the ILO-ITC and Sigma, including a seminar for practitioners on 19-23 November in Turin.

Representatives of ReSPA also participated in meetings of prominent professional networks, including: NISPAcee Annual Conference (Kiev, May 2007), NSPSPA Conference on the Impact of Europeanisation on the Public Administration (Bucharest, May 2007), XIX International Conference on Training and Development of Senior Civil Servants (Tallinn, June 2007), International Congress of Administrative Sciences (Abu Dhabi, July 2007) and EGPA Annual Conference (Madrid, September 2007).

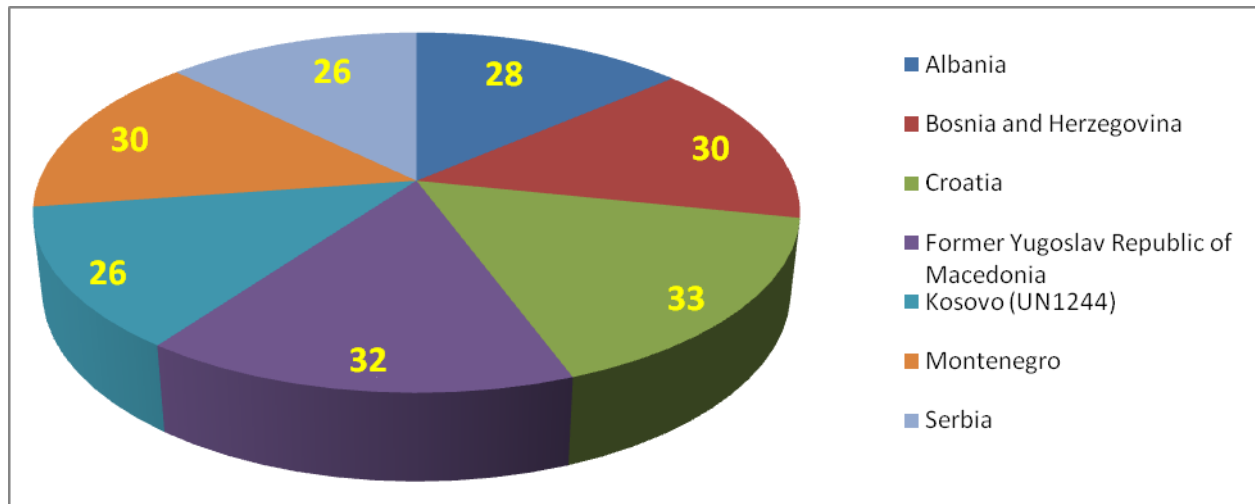
The Schedule of 2007 Steering Committee meetings provided for three sessions: The 3rd SC meeting in Podgorica in January, the 4th in Brussels in April and the 5th in November in Pristina.

The activities, contributions and tasks described under the ReSPA Protocol of Cooperation, the Rules of Procedure, as well as developed in course of the ReSPA Steering Committee proceedings, are the responsibility of the country/entity Steering Committee members.

The programmes of each training event listed above, likewise the lists of participants are annexed to the current report.

In 2007, the ReSPA team at the OECD has (co) organised 10 modules, for a total of 205 different trainees. 37 training days were delivered in total. Altogether, ReSPA has delivered 722 Man/days of training in 2007.

Looking at the geographical repartition of trainees, the ReSPA steering Committee members, responsible for the selection of trainees, have almost managed to keep a perfect geographical balance, as indicated in the following graph.



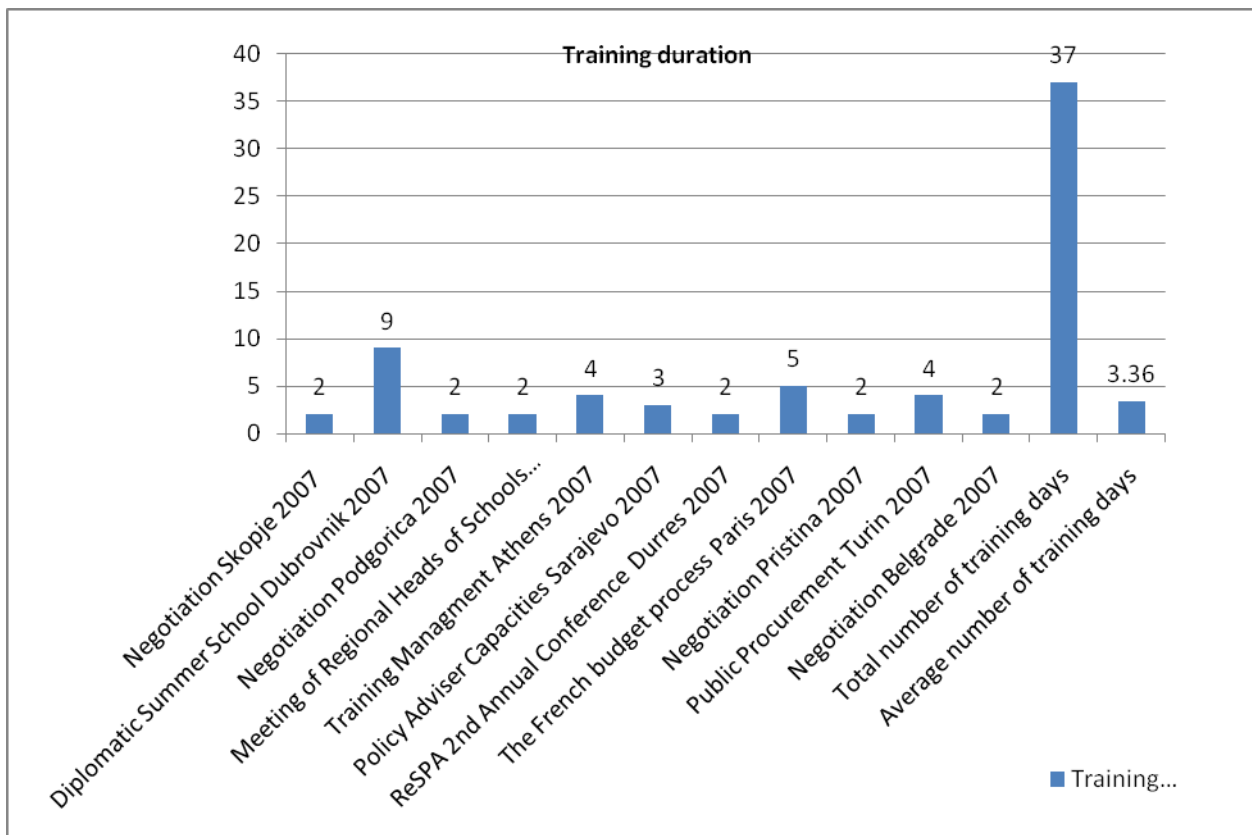
Number of participants per signatories, 2007

The marginal difference in participation to ReSPA activities can be explained, in most cases, by pre and post electoral uncertainties, creating difficulties for Steering Committee Members to select trainees on time.

Most of the ReSPA training was designed to accommodate 3 trainees per session and per signatory. In most cases, the Steering committee members could secure the recruitment of the agreed number of participants. There has been some cases, toward the end of the year, when the travelling of potential participants from their location to the training location could not be organised, mostly due to exogenous political factors. The table below gives a snapshot of the actual participation per signatory and per module.

	Negotiation Skopje 2007	Diplomatic Summer School Dubrovnik 2007	Negotiation Podgorica 2007	Meeting of Regional Heads of Schools Ljubljana 2007	Training Management Athens 2007	Policy Adviser Capacities Sarajevo 2007	ReSPA 2nd Annual Conference Durrës 2007	The French budget process Paris 2007	Negotiation Pristina 2007	Public Procurement Turin 2007	Negotiation Belgrade 2007
Albania	2	3	2	0	0	2	4	3	3	6	3
BiH	1	3	3	1	3	3	4	3	0	6	3
Croatia	3	3	3	1	3	2	4	3	3	6	2
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3	3	3	1	2	2	4	3	3	5	3
Kosovo	3	3	3	0	2	2	4	1	2	6	0
Montenegro	3	3	3	1	3	1	4	2	3	4	3
Serbia	0	1	3	1	3	3	3	3	0	6	3

The average length of the ReSPA training modules organised in 2007 was 3,36 days as indicated in the graph below. The longest module was the Dubrovnik Diplomatic Summer School (9 days), and the shortest modules have been the training on negotiation techniques co-organised with EIPA (2 days).



Average duration of the ReSPA modules, 2007

All things being equal, the logistical and administrative burden to organise a short or a longer module is the same. This gives - aside of the socialisation and professional development objectives of ReSPA - an additional reason to increase the average duration of the ReSPA modules in the future.

Recruitment of Trainees. As agreed in the initial sessions of the ReSPA Steering Committee, the recruitment and selection of the ReSPA trainees is left to the appreciation of the ReSPA signatories, and in particular to the Steering Committee members. While, in most cases (see below), there has been a match between the profile of the potential trainees indicated by the ReSPA team at the OECD in cooperation with the training providers, there has been occurrences, where the selection of the individual trainees could have followed better professional practices. It is important to recall here that the quality and prestige of any learning centre has not only to do with the quality of the Curriculum and the quality of the teaching staff, but also with the quality of the recruitment of its trainees. **ReSPA's lasting quality and reputation will also rely on the seriousness in the selection of the best possible trainees by the Steering Committee Members.** The ReSPA team at the OECD is available at any stage of the recruitment process of ReSPA trainees to help Steering Committee Members adjust the profile of the trainees to the actual situation in the different jurisdictions.

Visas for participants of the ReSPA regional events have proven an important formal obstacle to this regional initiative. As demonstrated in the table appended to this report, at this stage only Montenegro and Kosovo do not have visa regimes with any of the countries in the region, while others maintain different forms of entry restrictions vis-à-vis certain other jurisdictions of the region. In addition, embassies and consulates are not always present on location and

participants have to make an additional trip abroad only to obtain a visa for their participation in a regional training.

It should be noted that the information in the table below is only a snap-shot showing the status as of October 2007, as the arrangements tend to evolve, notably in the direction of facilitation. ReSPA is not in a position to change the current visa situation; the issue however should be noted by the participating countries/entities and the European Commission as an example of obstacles faced in implementation of a regional project for which important prerequisites are not in place.

Meanwhile, the following steps can be taken to minimise the risks stemming from this problem: (a) the SC Members to make sure they submit their applications for trainings as early as possible and respect the deadlines so that enough time is allowed for visa processing, (b) the host SC Member to contact the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Embassies to provide up-to-date information on visa requirements for all participants and to support their visa applications/facilitate/expedite visa delivery.

Visa regimes in the region

GOING TO:	COMING FROM:						
	Albania	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Croatia	Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Albania		Visa regime temporarily lifted	Not required	Not required	Visa at the border	Visa at the border	Visa regime temporarily lifted
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Visa required		Not required	Visa required	Not required	Not required	Not required
Croatia	Visa required	Not required		Visa required (except for Yugoslav p)	Not required	Not required	Visa regime temporarily lifted
Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)	Not required	Not required	Not required		Not required	Not required	Not required
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Visa required	Not required	Not required	Not required		Not required	Not required
Montenegro	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required		Not required
Serbia	Visa required	Not required	Not required	Only Yugoslav passports honoured	Not required	Not required	

Training Needs Assessment

Following the 4th session of the Steering Committee, the ReSPA team at the OECD compiled a regional training needs assessment (TNA) report based on the contributions received from the regional members of the Steering Committee. This TNA has been the basis upon which the 2008 programme of work has been developed.

Overview of 2007 institutionalisation activities

In 2007, following the provisions of the Rules of Procedure, three sessions of the Steering Committee took place: Podgorica, January 2007, Brussels, April 2007, and Pristina, November 2007. The 2007 programme of work was adopted at the January 2007 session. It was

supplemented after the April Session by incorporating the cooperation suggestions of ILO-ITC, NISPAcee, France, Italy, etc. In November 2007, the Steering Committee provided guidance to the ReSPA team at the OECD in the elaboration of the 2008 programme of work.

Over the period, the composition of the Steering Committee has been stable, enabling the Steering Committee to function smoothly. The following changes in composition of the SC can be recorded:

For Albania, a new Member and a new Substitute member have been nominated by the Government of Albania; for Serbia, a new Member has been nominated by the Government of Serbia. There has been no other change in the regional composition of the Steering Committee. The Chair and substitute of the Steering Committee have remained the same throughout the period. The ReSPA team at the OECD has evolved in 2007. This evolution was triggered by two factors:

- Aligning its capacities to the adoption in January 2007 of the **option B** (1 resource person contracted per signatory to work locally, plus 1 administrator recruited at the OECD) instead of the initially foreseen **option A** (3 persons from the Western Balkans region contracted to work at the ReSPA offices in Paris) ;
- Responding to the growing interest and demand for ReSPA training. While the contractual obligations of the OECD was to "*initiate training in phase 1*", the ReSPA team at the OECD organised an average of 1 module per month, totalling 6848 man/days of training.

In 2007, the ReSPA team at the OECD has been reinforced with the recruitment of one administrator (April 2007), and 1 assistant (September 2007).

Option B Resources

Following the decisions made by the steering committee in its 3rd session held in Podgorica, January 2007, and having considered the needs to further the ReSPA institutionalisation, training delivery and networking agendas, the deployment of additional in-country/entity resources was initiated.

To this end, arrangements have so far been made in (in the chronological order):

- Bosnia and Herzegovina, as of July 2007 – Mr. Toni Santic, Aid Coordination Associate, Ministry of Justice;
- Albania, as of August 2007 – Ms. Emira Mitrushi, Head of the General Training Centre, TIPa;
- Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), as of August 2007 – Mr. Berat Jashari, Head of the Division of General Coordination of International Cooperation Activities of the Government, Office of the Prime Minister of PISG Kosovo;
- Montenegro, as of mid August 2007 – Ms. Mina Vojinovic, Contractor, Civil Service Agency;
- the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as of mid September 2007 – Ms. Izabela Radevska-Kufalovska proposed as a resource person but not engaged, replaced by Ms. Anamarija Andreska, Junior Associate on analytical issues (professional development) Civil Servants Agency, as of November;
- Serbia, as of beginning of November 2007 – Ms. Milana Lazarovic, Special Adviser to the Minister, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government;
- Croatia, as of November 2007 – Ms. Adela Golub, Contractor, Central State Office for Administration.

In Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia contracts are with the respective Civil Service Agencies, whereas others have opted for contracts with individual experts.

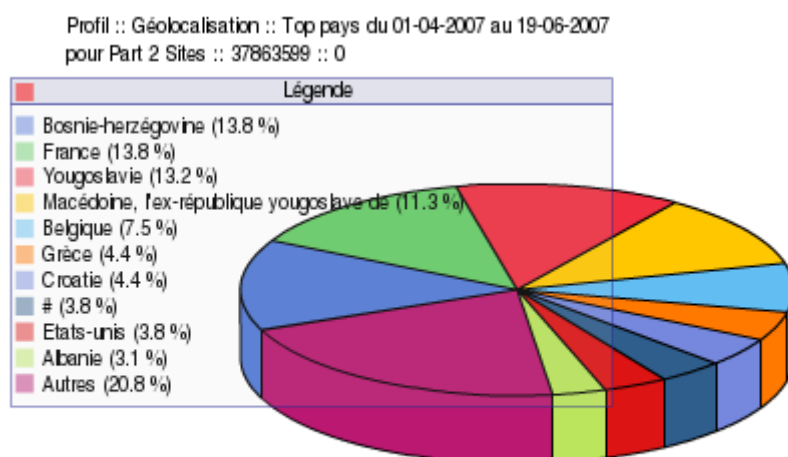
Two of the resources are outstanding, and two of them are below the expected standard. (see issues below).

Website, Newsletter and Publications

The website was established under a provisional arrangement with the OECD IT department in January 2007. It was migrated onto its own server in June 2007 when it got its own design and functionality.

From 1 April 2007 to 19 June 2007, 1 357 pages have been visited with an average of 163 connections per day. 87.42% of the connections were made from Europe (5.03% from North America, 4.40% from Africa and 3.14% from Asia).

Looking at the countries from which the Web site was accessed, 45.8% of the connections to the ReSPA website originated in the ReSPA region with the following repartition: 13.8% of the connections originated in Bosnia & Herzegovina, 13.2% in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)¹, 11.3% from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 4.4% from Croatia, and 3.1% from Albania.



From 20 June until 31 December 2007, the Site has been visited 1144 times from 159 different Internet providers. The average number of pages visited per person has been 8.28 pages, and the average duration of surfing our website has been 7 minutes 15 seconds. The total number of pages read amounts to 9477.

Internet Provider	Number of Visits	Pages seen per connection	Average duration of individual connection (minutes)
OECD	191	12.32	12.40
Paris CEDEX 16	169	9.53	09.09
vlada republike crne gore	93	6.58	05.08
uprava za zajednicke polsove republikih organa	71	7.1	05.56
telecom albania	51	7.49	04.09
ads ip subnet	44	8.30	06.55
sredisnji drzavni ured za upravu rh (sduu)	36	5.94	05.28

¹ The statistics received from the provider do not allow distinguishing connections from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo (Under UNSCR 1244).

europronet bosnia wireless network	31	2.84	02.05
ministra e sherbimeve publike internet access	21	8.57	10.02
commission européenne	20	9.75	07.40

This accounts for between 15 and 30 connections per day from June to December 2007.



Looking at the geographical origin of the visitors on the website, we have the following account:

France	432 Visits
Serbia	230 Visits ²
Montenegro	
Kosovo (Under UNSCR 1244)	
Bosnia & Herzegovina	91 Visits
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	85 Visits
Albania	70 Visits
Croatia	47 Visits
United States of America	32 Visits
Germany	31 Visits
Luxemburg	27 Visits
Belgium	18 Visits

In 2007, with the support of the Option B resources, the first issue of the ReSPA Newsletter was produced in September and posted on the ReSPA website on 15 October.

² The statistics received from the provider do not allow distinguishing connections from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo (Under UNSCR 1244).

(http://www.respaweb.eu/index.php?option=com_remository&Itemid=29&func=fileinfo&id=56)

The second issue (Winter 2007-2008) is due to go online in the course of January 2008.

A selection of the papers presented at the first regional symposium on PAR in the Western Balkans co-organised by ReSPA and the Faculty of Administration, University of Ljubljana are being edited and will also be published with the editing and financial support of ReSPA.

Preparing ReSPA Phase 2.

It is part of the contractual obligations of the OECD to engage the work necessary for ReSPA to develop into phase 2. In 2007, the ReSPA team at the OECD explored different options that could be envisaged for ReSPA in 2009 and beyond. The ReSPA team at the OECD advised the EC on different scenarios, and explored different institutional possibilities that would enable ReSPA to develop sustainably in the Western Balkans, and also link-up with the existing professional networks in the EU. In July, October and December 2007, the ReSPA team at the OECD and the EC had meetings with the management of EIPA. Those meetings led to the proposal that ReSPA phase 2 would be established in 2009 in the Western Balkans as a regional learning Platform of EIPA, that the ReSPA signatories could be granted an observer status in EIPA's Board of Governors and that a grant agreement between the European Commission and EIPA would enable EIPA to start working with ReSPA in continuity with the current contractual arrangements between the EC and the OECD.

ReSPA contract and budget execution

The November 2006 contract between the EC and the OECD has been extended in October 2007 until 30 April 2009. The contract value for this extension is 1.5 Mio EUR, compared to the initial ReSPA budget of 1.0 Mio for the 2007 period. The ReSPA budget remains, *prorata temporis*, of the same magnitude.

ReSPA has a total budget of 2,551,000 EUR for a duration of 30 months. The reference expenditure rate for linear spending would therefore be 1,190,466 EUR at end December 2007, after 14 months of activity. The actual spending figure for ReSPA at end December was 1,219,785 EUR, it can be said that ReSPA is right on target on implementation.

Looking at the execution of the ReSPA budget, the direct costs of training in 2007 (fees paid to training centres, per-diem and transport of trainees) has been 520.363,- EUR. Considering that ReSPA delivered training to 205 persons, this gives an average cost per trainee of 2538 EUR, i.e. an average cost per training day per person of 721 EUR.

If one looks at the average cost of one man/day of training, excluding per-diem and transportation, the ReSPA average cost is 213 EUR.

2007 Implementation issues

Timely and appropriate applications for participation in the training events deserve a separate point in the discussion. It has been the experience of the ReSPA team at the OECD throughout the project implementation so far, that the applications are submitted late and often require several reminders; the participants are not always carefully selected to benefit from the training in terms of their professional qualifications and the ability to effectively communicate in English; cases of last minute changes and cancellations are numerous and selected participants are not always responsive to requests for information.

The difficulties may partially stem from the ReSPA training programme itself or from specific training contents: Given the candidate profiles agreed with the training providers, on some occasions it proved difficult to identify appropriate trainees. It may happen that the number of

potential participants for certain modules may not be sufficient in all ReSPA countries/entities. The requirement for the participants to speak English is also an important constraint. It is to be noted that ReSPA may be contributing to the "competition" for these participants who can benefit by numerous training events supplied by different donors.

Interest in the ReSPA training agenda will then heavily depend on the selection of training modules/providers to make the selection of candidates to our events easier for the countries/entities. ReSPA will strive to further adjust the training proposals to the needs of the trainees from the region in terms of the contents and approach, also to target the population that is already there and in need of immediate support (given the reform/transformation/EU approximation processes that are ongoing and masses of civil servants are involved).

On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the SC Members, once the agreement on the training programme is reached, to ensure timely and appropriate candidatures for training. Trainees will clearly be able to benefit better from the training if they form more balanced (in terms of professional and language skills) groups. The quality of trainees sent to the ReSPA training will contribute to the quality of training itself and further to building of the reputation of ReSPA as a high-quality professional and prestigious undertaking.

Last minute organisational problems will be avoided also to the benefit of the participants themselves (visas, travel arrangements) if applications are timely and last minute changes are avoided. No show-ups create unjustified costs for the ReSPA project (hotel booking, lost plane tickets). It should also be made clear to the participants of the trainings that, except for special circumstances, they are expected to treat participation in all sessions of the training they enrolled for as obligatory and respect the time schedule.

Support and contributions by Option B resources have been mobilised though with significant delays and limited effectiveness and efficiency. The persons identified by the SC Members as ReSPA resources have all demonstrated interest in the cooperation; it seems however that their capacities and professional skills do not always match the requirements of the ReSPA/OECD contracts. Only one Option B resource has so far been meeting all contractual obligations at a satisfactory level. All other resources, to a different extent, are also experiencing difficulties in effectively communicating and contributing to the project in English. Responsiveness to requests for information also seems problematic.

The experts have been intensively coached by the ReSPA team at the OECD throughout the induction period during which the contractors could learn about the methods of work and expected quality of contributions. It was also noted that most of them were contracted during the summer and they have possibly encountered difficulties related to lack of interlocutors within their administrations due to the summer break. In a more forward looking perspective however, training the experts on the job should become more balanced with their increased support and productivity, especially in view of the expected phasing out of the OECD support to the project over the coming year.

It seems that most of the resources so far are finding it difficult to combine their obligations deriving from the ReSPA/OECD contracts with their other work obligations. It is to be recalled that the contracts signed with the resources or with their institutions provide ReSPA with assurance that the necessary time will be allocated to the resource to fulfil their contractual obligations vis-à-vis ReSPA.

In summary, further stock has been taken for the effectiveness of implementation of Option B early 2008. It is the basis for further decisions on the contract extensions, the modalities of operation of Option B and the choice of tasks.

The resulting progress in implementation of the intended ReSPA tasks has been patchy and none of them has been completed successfully by the end of October as originally planned (apart from launching one of the two issues of the ReSPA Newsletter foreseen for 2007). Taking note of different starting dates of the contracts, the summer break and a period of induction of the resources into ReSPA and its modalities of work, it was necessary to extend the deadlines for the deliverables until 31 December 2007. This also provided an opportunity for the resources in

Serbia and Croatia to catch up with some contributions, so that by the end of year the list of tasks for all countries/entities in the region has practically been completed (with some delayed activity reports for December and synthesis work on the CSTS material, carried over to January due to delayed individual contributions).

The following table is providing a synthesis of the delivered against expected status per contractor.

Implementation monitoring

	Web updates		CST systems		E Newsletter		Monthly reports		Events		Coordination		Contracted as of:
	done	expect	done	expect	done	expect	done	expect	done	expect	done	expect	
Albania	3	3	1	1	2	2	5	3+2	1	1	1	1	August
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4	4	1	1	1	2	5	3+2	1	1	3	4	July
Croatia	2	2	1	1	0		1	1	0		0		End November
Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)	1	3	1	1	-	2	5	3+2	2	1	1	1	August
fYR Macedonia	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	0		2	2	Sept (launched November)
Montenegro	3	3	1	1	2	2	5	3+2	0		2	2	August
Serbia	2	2	1	1	0		2	2	1	1	0		November

Highlighted in Yellow are the fully completed tasks

Highlighted in Blue are the tasks which have not been (fully) implemented.



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ReSPA/SC(2008)1/001

According to Article 4 c of the ReSPA rules of procedure, "each Member of the Steering Committee, except the member designated by the European Commission reports at least annually to her/his government's structure responsible for European Integration on the work done within the Steering Committee and achievements in terms of regional cooperation, strengthened administrative capacity, and human resources development as set on in article 1.1 of the Protocol".

Contributions by Steering Committee members

Serbia

The needs of public administration system and activities involving regional cooperation, country response, Serbia

The legislative phase of the PAR in Serbia has been finalised, with the adoption of a set of laws regulating public administration and civil service in 2005 and 2006. In addition, the set of laws regulating local self-government was adopted at the end of 2007. The Serbian civil service system has been reorganised in accordance with the new regulations and a Human Resources Management Office, established by the Civil Servants Act, is up and running.

In the framework of the project "Support to the Serbian Public Administration Reform Strategy (second phase)" run by the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Department for International Development (UK), the Strategy of Public Administration Reform and its Action Plan will be revised in 2008 in line with the actual needs and priorities. The same project also foresees conducting **organisational reviews** of several ministries, which is in line with the **rationalisation**-related objective of the Serbian PAR strategy, as well as **public promotion** of the PAR process through informing and education of main target groups.

The Republic of Serbia actively contributes to the development of **regional cooperation** in numerous areas, such as trade, transport, infrastructure development, energy, environment, tourism, fight against organized crime, all forms of cross-border cooperation, customs and enforcement services cooperation, education, science and research, sports and cultural cooperation, etc.

In the field of **public administration reform and strengthening of administrative capacities** in 2007 there has been several important achievements in the area of PAR, in which Serbia took part together with other countries in the region.

- The South Eastern Europe Ministerial Conference on Information Society Development and the 3rd Information Society Conference: e-Government and Public Administration Reform, took place in Sarajevo From 29 to 30 October under the umbrella of the Stability Pact for SEE. The next step of this initiative was the signature of MoU to create the Centre for E-Governance, at the beginning of this year. The main objectives of the Centre are promoting the development of eGovernance programmes within South Eastern Europe, on the basis of a public-private partnership, through dissemination of information and best practices, and facilitating training and

advising leaders and regional governments in the use of information and communication technologies to increase efficiency and citizen participation.

- In the framework of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, at the Meeting of the Working Group on Institutional Renewal and Good Governance (Istanbul, 5-6, October 2007) participants exchanged the views on PAR issues. One of the decisions was to establish interchange of civil servants in the region, especially those working in administrative inspectorates.

- Same as last three years, Serbia has participated in the creation of programme and defining of working groups of GTZ (German Organization for Technical Cooperation) regional conference that take place every year (in 2007 in Prznno, Montenegro) covering topics relevant for strengthening of administrative capacities.

- Recognising the need for recruiting and retaining the civil servants with significant skills and know-how in the field of European Integrations, the European Integration Office and the UN Development Programme hosted a roundtable on **Introducing a „Eurocrats“ Scheme in Serbia**, from 26-27 February 2007, within a UNDP-supported project "Capacity building for European Integrations".

The aim of this roundtable was to create a forum for informal representation and discussion of experiences of new EU member states (Romania, Bulgaria and Latvia), with an emphasis on incentives for improvement of public administration personnel capacities during the European Integration process. In addition, the ultimate goal of the roundtable was to provide main information for political options to be presented to the new Government. Participants in the seminar comprised of members of institutions and services of the Serbian Government in charge of public administration reform, as well as representatives from line ministries.

During this two-day roundtable, experts from Latvia, Bulgaria and Romania, as well as those from OECD/SIGMA, who gave lectures in this meeting, introduced the participants from Serbian ministries and other central-level institutions with models for stimulation of civil servants that were applied in the region. Subsequent discussion covered positive and negative sides of the applied systems and possibilities for establishment of a sustainable and balanced stimulation system once the EU integration process starts to impose the need for prompt reactions and solution design.

Less formal, but continuous regional cooperation exist through different technical help projects focused on institutional building-up, as well as engagement of experts from the region in the training programmes relating to European integration topics. In order to speed up process of European integration in Serbia we find very important to learn from best practises, but also less successful experiences in the region.