



# Open Data – Open Government Partnership Conference

## Conference Conclusions

14 June 2017, Brussels

- draft –

Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) has, with the support of Danube Strategy Point, organised a High-Level Open Data-Open Government Partnership Conference on 14 June in Brussels. Contributions from both experts and participants, discussions held and proposals launched during the conference, could be summarised in the following conclusions:

Participants welcomed the Conference's thematic link between the Open Data, Open Government and Open Government Partnership as digitalisation and connected social and development trends are having significant impact on the E-Government concept. In pursuing personalised government (E) services, M-government and successfully addressing demand side of the public towards governments Open Data play a key role. Successful transition to Digital Society depends on enhanced use of Open Data as more and more demands and expectations are put on services delivered, it is necessary that governments rethink their attitude towards digital society and reinforce their full-fledged ownership and active commitment of the governance reform process and institutional capacity building.

Transition to Digital Society has been recognised as a priority of the European Union. Digital Agenda for Europe is one of the European Union's flagship initiatives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It aims to deliver sustainable economic and social benefits from a digital single market, based on fast and ultra-fast internet and interoperable applications. In relation to this European Commission has been taking concrete steps in creating an inclusive



digital society with implementing concrete actions for the development of cross-border digital public services and ensures the use of digital tools and systems to provide better a modern eGovernment to citizens and businesses. Transition to digital society has a true transformation effect on the public administrations on national and local level. In the coming years joint actions to modernise public administrations in coordinated way (among partner countries), to connect and interlink public administrations on transnational level and to improve interactions between users and public administrations will demand permanent, decisive and coordinated efforts and support. It was widely acknowledged that European Commission plays a crucial role in the transformation to the inclusive digital society. Its continuous partnership and support role is especially crucial for the countries included in the Berlin process (and wider) and should be further strengthened.

Although different in many terms the countries of Western Balkan region, as well as countries and regions of the Danube Region, are strongly interlinked, with potential for further integration and growth. In regard to development related to the digital society, heterogeneity is de facto characteristic of the data infrastructures in predominantly all countries of the (wider) region. Therefore the transition to Digital Society using Open Government, Open Government Data and Open Data represents a challenge as well an opportunity for development, growth and cohesion. The vision of Western Balkans (with inclusion of other Danube Marco Region countries) as Open Data Region should be further elaborated, facilitated and supported. In this process competent regional institutions play a crucial role. In this view ReSPA should develop its role as a regional hub for supporting digital transformation of public administrations, supporting among others feedback and knowledge exchange.

New demands and expectations posed by processes of digitalisation demand also a thorough rethink in the strategic planning and cooperation mechanisms in the fields of Open Government, Open Government Data and Open Data between the countries. The traditional methods of strategic policy making and policy support need to become more flexible, innovative and used-based. Through this measures implemented by the public institutions will become more responsive and supportive to the needs of the digital society. Benefits of enhanced use of Open Data are mutual as well as multiple. Open Data are interrelated with Open Government, eGovernment and eParticipation. Here the continuous and high quality support and coordination in institutional capacity building provided by ReSPA is of crucial importance. Building on the successes and results already achieved, ReSPA should remain the main focal point for these initiatives in the Western Balkans Region. Among the proposed future actions awareness raising on availability, use and possibilities of already available and future government e-services and tools on local, national and regional level represents a priority task to be supported in the next years. In saying this it is equally important that synergies with complimenting regional actors and initiatives, like EU Strategy for the Danube Region and other macro-regional strategies, developing cross-border cooperation, mutual

learning and regional integration are further developed and strengthened. In planning future actions regional comparable studies and information from relevant international organisations, e.g. OECD OURdata Index (that assesses governments' efforts to implement open data in the three critical areas - Openness, Usefulness and Re-usability of government data), represent a valuable contributions and guidance. It should be further ensured that future planning of regional thematic priorities is closely linked to global priorities and events planned (e.g. OECD Global partnership event in autumn).

Countries should, under the leadership of ReSPA further examine the potential of Re-usable Open Data and possibilities (as well as implementation) of concrete projects of comprehensive integrated solutions on regional and municipal level and setting the ICT regional hub within RESPA.

Use of Open Government, Open Government Data and Open Data are an important driver that motivates good management, promotes and assists free flow of data triggering public sector modernization, market diversification and economic growth. In this perspective possibilities of development and implementation of Private-Public-Partnerships and Public Civil Partnership initiatives and projects in relation to enhanced use of Open Data represent a vital opportunity and high priority for countries of a broader Balkan Region and should be further explored, developed and supported. Concrete models and projects (proposals) should be elaborated, whereby special attention should be given to Open Contracting. Later could act as a significant motor for PPP and multistakeholder involvement and constructive engagement. On the other hand this would assist national administrations in overcoming trust issues, assist other measures in effectively addressing fight against corruption and bring true value for money. ReSPA should work on models, best practices and guidance for Open Contracting and support their regionalisation and implementation. In above mentioned processes and initiatives support from different EU institutions and EU financial opportunities plays a crucial role.

Conference organized represents an excellent opportunity for regional cooperation and strategic planning, definition of concrete actions, unique opportunity for peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as creation of future partnerships and possibilities for cooperation. ReSPA should ensure proper follow-up of conference's conclusions, provide support for implementation of concrete actions and to organise a similar events next year.