



ReSPA
Regional School
of Public Administration



Direkcija za evropske/europske integracije
Дирекција за европске интеграције
Directorate for European Integration

MEETING OF THE EU INTEGRATION NETWORK

*Senior Managers of Central EU integration coordination institutions
and NIPAC offices*

“Internal EU Integration Functionality and
External Dialogue with the EU ”

27-28 May 2014
Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Discussion paper and provisional programme



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Background

ReSPA has created the EU Integration network at the regional level dedicated to the European Integration process of the Western Balkans. The network serves as a platform that brings together the most important and relevant stakeholders of the Western Balkan countries dealing with various aspects of the EU integration. It is an opportunity for the senior and mid-management level civil servants and practitioners working in the same policy area in the region to have regular network meetings with the aim to exchange experience amongst them and the counterparts from the last EU entrants.

Following the first regional meeting of the managers of EU Integration affairs in the Western Balkans, which was held in 2011 at the premises of Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), in Danilovgrad, Montenegro, two additional meetings took place in 2012 and 2013 in Croatia (Zagreb) and Montenegro (Podgorica and Danilovgrad) and were organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro, respectively. The majority of the participants were directly involved either in the EU integration policy co-ordination or Human Resource development in their daily work, and the meetings were focused on Development and co-ordination of Human Resources in the EU integration framework.

In their conclusion of the events, the participants have highlighted the significant value of bringing together people from the entire region who deal with similar issues. The leading principle, which evolved from the presentations and discussions at the meetings, was the exchange of experiences and ideas for structuring of the overall framework of the EU integration process, as well as identification of thematic areas as potential topics for the upcoming meetings and related activities.

The **overall objective** of ReSPA in 2014 is to strengthen regional co-operation in the field of EU integration policy co-ordination between the government institutions responsible for EU integration. The **specific objective** is to identify main trends in the field of EU integration co-ordination functionality in the Western Balkans and capacity building of network members using peer-to-peer and case study approach for further dissemination of acquired skills in their national administrations.

ReSPA foresees intervention in **two main priority areas**:

1. *Internal operational level of EU integration co-ordination and functionality and*
2. *External dialogue with the EU;*

Furthermore, ReSPA activities will be focused on two main target audiences:

1. **Senior/Mid-management of Central EU integration co-ordinating institutions, who are responsible for the implementation of EU integration policy and external dialogue with the EU, and/or various aspects of EU integration policy: implementation co-ordination, and monitoring, legal approximation, external relations with the EU, external assistance, HR resource development, public awareness on EU integration**
2. **Senior/Mid-management of the NIPAC office in charge of coordination of IPA funds**

Objectives

The purpose of this paper is to provide background for discussion among the EU integration network members on the selected topics for the meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 27-28 May 2014.

The event has **four main objectives**:

- To review and discuss core issues on EU integration internal co-ordination functionality (institutional and functional organization of the national EUI structure), the main issues related to the **implementation of IPA** in the Western Balkans thus far, as well as potential major challenges with respect to the implementation of the **IPA II Regulation**, which came into force on 1 January, 2014
- To review and discuss core issues relevant to negotiations and dialogue with the EU.
- To share ideas and considerations on proposed regional comparative study on the current trends of PAR in the Western Balkan region with respect to the impact of the EU integration process (issues of the EU integration institutional set-up and functionality).
- To discuss establishment of the ReSPA EUI Programming Board (composed of the senior managers – Heads/Deputy Heads of the central EU integration national institutions and/or NIPACs/Senior officials from NIPAC office) with the purpose to advise ReSPA and propose / identify the main priority areas where ReSPA can provide support in the domain of EU integration.

The network event should allow the participants to exchange their experience, discuss common challenging issues in the domain of EU integration process and strengthen mutual networking between the participants. This would give a substantial basis for a more focused EU Integration platform meetings on a mid-management level involving officials of similar profile from the ReSPA Members' administrations in their respective EU Integration functional areas (e.g. National Program for Adoption of Acquis Co-ordinators, co-ordinators of EU assistance, officials dealing with co-ordination of public awareness and dialogue with civil society issues, human resource strategy in respect to EU integration implementation co-ordination and running external relations with the EU) in the upcoming ReSPA events during June – December 2014. This could be followed by several ReSPA mainstream activities

devoted to the EU integration such as: conference for senior management level involved with EU integration co-ordination, to reflect conclusions from the functional workshops and comparative study and define follow-up in terms of special training modules and further RESPA support needed during the remaining part of 2014 and 2015.

Content

Progress towards EU membership depends on the steps taken by each country to meet the established criteria, based on the principle of own merits. The **rule of law** is now at the heart of the enlargement process. The new approach, endorsed by the Council in December 2011, means that countries need to tackle issues such as judicial reform and the fight against organised crime and corruption early in accession negotiations. The European Commission underlines key challenges for the Western Balkan countries also in the areas of economic governance and competitiveness; the functioning of institutions guaranteeing democracy; fundamental rights. These challenges are central to the Copenhagen criteria and the conditionalities of the Stabilisation and Association process.

One of the major challenges for the WB countries' administration in its EU accession efforts is to have **a systematic, sustainable and viable model for national mechanism of EU integration co-ordination**. EU integration and its implementation policy co-ordination is important for all types of policies as it allows building connections and ensuring synergies in the EU integration related national reforms. Past experience of recent EU enlargement in implementation of national EU policies allows summarizing major lessons and critical challenges for countries undertaking the EU integration path and willing to ensure good governance reform process, especially implementation of more complex public policies. The New Member States in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe which joined the European Union in 2004, 2007 and 2013 all took early measures to ensure that EU policy coordination was achieved, even though this involved sometimes difficult institutional questions.

At the same time some of the New Member States have experienced both success and failure when ignoring the role of EU integration co-ordination and its link to the wider national policy context. The successful transition from accession country to member-state in respect to managing European Affairs and European agenda is largely dependent on the EU integration coordination mechanism that was put in place. Especially it is relevant for the countries that are approaching the EU accession negotiations and later membership phase when they have to consider their new co-ordination model and elaborate their national EU policy.

The functions which the administrations in Western Balkans have to perform in the EU integration framework are not fundamentally different from those which were performed by institutions in the new Member States prior to their accession. These functions include classic coordination functions: *monitoring the implementation of the agreement and reporting on it to the Government and to the European Commission, ensuring that information relevant to national agents involved in EU policy is made freely available to all concerned, ensuring*

that education and training policies provide a flow of good staff to EU integration functions in the administration, coordinating policy initiatives and analyzing future policy requirements.

Efficient European integration policy co-ordination requires also set of knowledge and skills that civil servants must have when dealing with general and crosscutting co-ordination on a national level (strategy management and inter-institutional co-ordination, legal approximation and policy impact assessment, technical assistance co-ordination, human resource development policy); external dialogue with the EU (negotiations, lobbying, relations with the Member States); raising awareness with civil society and consulting with the civil society groups in the decision making process and institutional reorganization (preparing a co-ordination model for the accession mode and the establishment of national EU policy). One of the main challenges for the EU integration coordinating institutions is to ensure that the relevant civil servants are getting the right training to facilitate EU integration policy co-ordination and implementation.

Therefore *the first day of the networking event* would be devoted to the two main blocks of internal EU integration co-ordination functionality. In the first block, senior level officials will discuss core institutional and functional issues of EU integration co-ordination in the central co-ordination bodies (e.g. challenges for **organization of co-ordination on national level** and the institutional set-up, EU Integration policy coordination aspects on the Senior level, policy making challenges and Inter-institutional cooperation). This block would expose different national experiences and challenges in developing the overall institutional set up for EU integration coordination, as well as lessons learnt.

The second block would focus on reviewing the critical issues and lessons learnt in the **implementation of IPA I** (2007-2013) in the Western Balkan thus far, as well as outlining potential major administrative/institutional challenges which lie ahead for those countries with respect to the implementation of the **IPA II Regulation** (2014-2020). Specifically, this block is designed to share challenges and good practices in setting up mechanisms of coordination and communication between NIPAC offices, line ministries and other relevant stakeholders at local, regional and national level during the programming and implementation of IPA I funded projects. In addition, participants will have an opportunity to discuss the perceived major institutional/administrative challenges which beneficiary countries will need to address in the programming and implementation of IPA II, in order for IPA funds to be fully utilized. This may include issues such as: to what extent the current institutional structure of coordination and information sharing between NIPAC offices and other key stakeholders in beneficiary countries will need to evolve as the European Commission embarks on gradually transferring responsibilities for the programming of IPA II funds to national governments; what kind of administrative capacity building efforts are likely to be needed in this respect; and what kind of new institutional structures, if any, will be needed to meet those challenges.

Finally, discussion on **issues related to consulting with society and public awareness** might involve such topics as communication to the public on the EU affairs, organization of a dialogue with civil society with respect to specific chapters of membership negotiations, and setting up mechanisms for consultation with civil society within the framework of IPA II.

The second working day envisages focusing on three main discussion blocks. First, focus will be on **external dialogue with the EU**. This could indicatively involve topics related to the organization of a dialogue with the EU, the structures and components of the negotiation engine, lobbying national interests with the EU Member States, building the image of the country among the EU member states, etc. This block will provide a forum for identifying critical issues in that dialogue and exchange of best practices thus far.

The second block would be related to presentation of ReSPA-initiated idea on proposed regional comparative study on the current trends of PAR in Western Balkan region related to assessment of comparative perspective of impact of the EU integration process. The exchange of opinions would be welcomed on the issues related to the envisaged chapter on EU integration institutional set-up and functionality in the countries of the region.

The final block of the day would be devoted to the establishment of a ReSPA Programming Board. ReSPA's initiative is to create a Programming Board composed of the senior managers (Heads/Deputy Heads of the central EU integration national institutions and/or NIPACs/Senior officials from NIPAC office) with the aim to advise ReSPA and propose / identify the priorities in respective fields where ReSPA can support the efforts of its Members in the domain of EU integration. Specifically, the Programming Board is envisaged as a body whose primary purpose is to assist ReSPA in mapping out common issues for the countries in the region pertinent to EU integration processes, thus contributing to ReSPA ongoing development of its programming portfolio, and raising its profile as an institution which is uniquely suited to bring the regional perspective to those issues. The Programming Board is also envisaged to help ReSPA in strengthening its EU integration network, and facilitating peer to peer exchange of opinions and information on issues pertinent to EU integration. The Programming Board is expected to have a 'trickle effect' in that its composition would allow that information and experience sharing among members of the Board is also available to senior and mid management of domestic institutions playing a part in the EU integration, other than central EU integration national institutions.

The Day will be finalized with the wrap – up and agreement on the next main steps and the timing of the next EUI networking event for the senior level officials (Programming Board).

The Methodology of introductory presentations and ensuing discussions will be applied during the working sessions. The participants will be asked in the course of a particular session to prepare on the spot an outline of key issues and challenges they would like in particular to be discussed under the particular heading.

Moderator

Dragan Golubović – Dr. Golubovic holds a law degree and an LL.M from the School of Law in Novi Sad, as well as an S.J.D and an LL.M from the Central European University/New York State University. He has published extensively in the fields of EU Law, Corporate Law, Commercial Law, and NGO Law, in particular.

Since 1998 Dr. Golubovic has been working with government officials, Parliamentarians, judges, private lawyers, and NGO representatives to develop a sound legal and fiscal framework for citizen participation in the Eastern and Central European, the Caucus, and the Balkan countries, in particular. He has worked with major international organizations, including the European Union, Council of Europe, the World Bank, OSCE, and UNDP, Since 2008 Dr. Golubović has been a permanent member of the Expert Council on NGO Law of the Conference of International NGOs, which operates under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Day 1- Tuesday, 27 May 2014

9.00-9.15	Registrations
9.15-9.30	Introduction Welcome address by ReSPA representative and the representative of Directorate of European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina Introductory presentation on the EU Integration network and the event's Program , <i>Representative of RESPA [to be defined]</i>
9.30-11.00	Session I - Core issues with the central EU integration co-ordination functionality 1) Institutional and functional issues of central EU integration co-ordination bodies <i>(presentation by participants and moderated by [to be defined])</i> 2) Discussion by participants <i>(moderated by [to be defined])</i>
11.00-11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15-12.45	Continuation of Session I Discussion by participants <i>(moderated by [to be defined])</i>
12.45-14.15	<i>Lunch break</i>
14.15-15.45	Session II - Core issues with the EU integration co-ordination functionality 1) Coordination and Information Sharing with Respect to the Implementation of IPA I: What have we learnt? Implementation of IPA II.: Major institutional challenges <i>(presentation by participants and moderated by [to be defined])</i> 2) Discussion by participants <i>(moderated by [to be defined])</i>
15.45-16.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.00-17.00	Session III - Core issues with EU integration co-ordination functionality 1) Issues related to consulting with society and public awareness <i>(presentation by participants and moderated by [to be defined])</i> 2) Discussion by participants <i>(moderated by [to be defined])</i>
17.00	<i>End of Day 1</i>

Day 2 – Wednesday, 28 April 2014

09.00-09.15	Introduction to the Day
09.15-11.00	Session IV <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Management dialogue with the EU and Negotiations on EU accession <i>(presentation by participants and moderated by [to be defined])</i>2) Discussion by participants <i>(moderated by [to be defined])</i>
11.15 - 11.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.30.- 12.00	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Presentation on proposal for initiated regional comparative study on “the current trends of “centre of government” reforms in Western Balkan region countries and comparative perspective of impact of the EU integration process” (aspects of institutional set-up for EU integration co-ordination and functionality) <i>(presented and moderated by [to be defined])</i>2) Discussion
12.00 – 12.30	Establishment of Programming Board <i>(presented and moderated by [to be defined])</i>
12.30 -13.00	Wrap-up and next steps
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00	<i>End of Day 2</i>
	<i>Departure of participants</i>

