



ReSPA Presents its Tangible Results in Brussels

ReSPA

15 June - For the first time, and in cooperation with the European Commission DG NEAR, the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) hosted its Open Day in Brussels. The event was an opportunity for ReSPA to present the results achieved since 2010, when this inter-governmental organisation was established with the support of the European Commission.

“ReSPA has been recognized as a unique organization in the Western Balkan region, established with the goal to enhance regional cooperation of public administrations in the Western Balkans on their path to the European Union. In the last 7 years ReSPA has grown to be an innovative regional hub giving an added value to the region,” Ratka Sekulovic, ReSPA Director said at the opening of ReSPA’s Open Day.

“Since its beginning ReSPA has been changing in order to promptly respond

to the needs of public administrations in the region. Public servants are more than ever under pressure, and our mission is to continue to give them valuable support,” added Sekulovic.

European Commission’s representative Bernard Brunet welcomed the initiative to organise the ReSPA Open Day in Brussels. “Today we’ve come to the point when ReSPA has achieved clear outcomes and results, and added value to strengthening public administrations in the region. The European Commission is very keen to support this centre of excellence in the Western Balkans,” said Brunet.

ReSPA Open Day was the opportunity for stakeholders, public servants from Western Balkans, representatives of civil society networks, and guests to attend the presentations of the results of ReSPA’s comparative studies and various other activities.

ReSPA’s Director commits to continue the mission

In her opening speech, Director of ReSPA Ratka Sekulovic vowed to stay on the course and to continue adding value to the Western Balkans region.

“For almost seven years of its existence, ReSPA has been recognized as a unique organization for strengthening Public Administrations in the Western Balkans. In a complex and demanding process of the European integration, public servants are more than ever facing so many challenges, which underlines the importance for ReSPA, being an innovative regional hub, to be stronger than ever.

Thousands of participants from the region passed various ReSPA trainings and gathered the required skills and knowledge. Significant number of regional comparative studies,

analyses and other relevant documents had been prepared; a number of the new mechanisms for urgent limited needs had been implemented.



Today is a good opportunity to be reminded of the outcomes and benefits achieved in the region so far. It is also a good opportunity to

extend special thanks to the European Commission for their continuous and valuable support, but also to the ReSPA governance structures for their contribution and commitment.

Deep reforms can change public administration. Consequently, our organization is changing in order to promptly respond to the growing needs. After almost seven years, I am convinced that ReSPA is achieving its mission, becoming the center of excellence in the field of public administration and adding value to the Western Balkan region.

We will continue to do so, and promote further our joint achievements by promoting our organization. Today's event is only one step forward in that direction."

Workshop on Managerial Accountability and Risk Management



Belgrade, 28-29 June - The workshop gathered representatives of Central Harmonization Units of Ministries of finances in ReSPA Members, with an aim to exchange experiences and to learn know-how from the experts of Croatia. They presented concrete Croatian examples of development of managerial accountability and risk management on the state and local level, as well as the ways how public institutions practically implement reforms in the area of Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC).

ReSPA took an active role in 2017 United Nations Public Service Forum and Awards ceremony

The Hague, 22-23 June 2017 - Brilliant 2017 United Nations Public Service Forum and Awards ceremony was organized in The Hague hosted by Dutch Government, with support of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. This year's Forum theme was „The Future is now: Accelerating Public Service Innovation for Agenda 2030". The UN Public Service Awards being the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service, numerous good case examples were presented, and the best ones in terms of innovative solutions were awarded.



As expected, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development was widely discussed, with a focus on its transformative role depending on well-functioning and innovative governments; and such governments require highly qualified, well-equipped and committed civil servants.

Goran Pastrovic, ReSPA Programme Manager, held a speech at the reflection panel devoted to Policy Coherence and Integration aiming to answer the question „What is driving Innovations in Public Service?“.

Regional Conference on Functioning of Centre of Government Institutions

ReSPA, Danilovgrad, 22 - 23 June - The Regional Conference on Functioning of Centre of Government Institutions, organised by SIGMA, ReSPA and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), gathered officials of the Centre of Government (CoG) institutions of the Western Balkans, to share good practices and initiatives, as well as to discuss key challenges and common ways of enhancement of the functioning of the CoG.



Beside senior officials of key CoG institutions of all Western Balkan governments, the Conference brought together representatives of the European Commission (EC), SIGMA, ReSPA, RCC, as well as OECD experts and international practitioners. The event provided an opportunity to learn from the EC representative about the Commission's focus on this important aspect of public administration, and to hear about the results of the work of the OECD with CoGs around the world. The SIGMA Comparative Analysis on Functioning of the Centres of Government in the Western Balkans was presented and discussed at the Conference. The participants also discussed the work initiated by ReSPA and RCC on the enhancement of public participation practices in policy and legislation development. Moreover, ReSPA provided a forum for discussion on possible further cooperation of Western Balkans CoG institutions.

ReSPA enhances co-operation between the European Investment Bank and the Western Balkans

Luxembourg, 20 – 21 June - The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) in co-operation with the European Investment Bank (EIB) organised a study visit to the EIB headquarters in Luxembourg. The study visit was attended by representatives of the secretariats of National Investment Committees of ReSPA Members and the Working Group on Public Private Partnership. The aim of the visit was to increase participants' understanding of the organization, procedures and instruments used by the EIB. Since the EIB is one of the main stakeholders within the Western Balkans Investment Framework, this activity was aimed to support the absorption of capacities of ReSPA Members to use the funds and lending opportunities existing within this framework.

The study visit included a number of presentations delivered by the EIB Staff and interactive discussions with the attendees. Among a number of topics that were explored, particular focus was given to the EIB lending operations, the recently introduced Economic Resilience Initiative, the project related aspects to investment sectors (transport, energy, environment, health and education), EIB financial and legal instruments, blending of resources, as well as to the role of the European PPP Expertise Centre.



High-level Open Data Conference opens possibility for Open Data Region

Brussels, 14 June - *High-level Open Data Conference* held in Brussels was the opportunity to envisage the innovative idea of an Open Data Region which would include the Western Balkans and countries from the Danube region.

The Conference was organized by the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) as an effort to explore options of bringing regional cooperation to a higher level by defining innovative, integrated regional solutions on the common topic of Open Data.

Ratka Sekulovic, ReSPA Director, underlined the importance of Open Data, Open Government Data and Open Government Partnerships in the governance reform process and said that “institutional capacity building seems needed and justified more than ever.”



“Public administrations are not only faced with financial constraints, but are equally challenged with growing demands and sometimes even public mistrust regarding their effectiveness and efficiency, especially on the issue of the fight against corruption,” Sekulovic said.

“This Conference is a testimony of the importance of ReSPA. It represents the manifestation of its relevance and shows how strong ReSPA has become in the Western Balkans”, Bernard Brunet of European Commission’s DG NEAR said.

Milena Harito, Minister of Innovation and Public Administration of the Republic of Albania and Chairperson of the ReSPA Board, pointed out that everyone who comes from the Western Balkans region knows that the region needs modernisation and more progress.

“The EU accession path is an excellent mean for that. Open Data and Open Government Data are the instruments for our modernisation, not as a technical part, but as the heart of all our efforts,” Minister Milena Harito said.

Jean-Francois Junger of the European Commission’s DG CONNECT explained that the EU Action Plan 2016-2020 recognized that the e-government should not be looked at the way of using ICT to transfer data, but take it further so that „the next level is to consider ICT as an instrument showing how the administration is working.“



High level participants from the respected fields put their effort together in order to identify, formulate and understand challenges and opportunities of and for Open Data, Open Government Data and Open Government Partnerships and agree on common plans and actions towards creating a true digital society.

eParticipation Roadmap thematic meeting

Brussels, 13 June - Under the leadership and coordination of ReSPA, representatives of ReSPA Members, relevant national and international experts, met in the framework of e-Participation Working Group. Building on Roadmaps developed for each ReSPA participating country over the past year, country specific recommendations were presented and discussed.



In addition, concrete actions - especially those focusing on joint activities that could be supported by ReSPA in 2018 - were defined and agreed upon. In this framework, the countries have reaffirmed their dedication to

continuous development of government e-services and tools. Awareness raising and users' capacity building will, along with other measures to be implemented on national levels, ensure further transparency of work of public administrations, build trust, promote e-participation and strengthen the measures of fight against corruption. With these, transformation of the Western Balkan region into an Open Data Region remains a realistic vision and objective.

Seminar on Better Regulation for PAR Legislators



Belgrade, 5-8 June - In cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), ReSPA organised Seminar on Better Regulation for Public Administration Reform (PAR) Legislators which gathered drafters of legislation in the area of Administrative Law from ministries responsible for public administration and justice from Western Balkans' governments. Topics discussed included better regulation efforts, with particular focus on public participation, costing of legislation, and regulatory impact assessment.

Workshop on Open Contracting for Practitioners – From Ideation to Prototype



Istanbul, 1-2 June - ReSPA Programme Manager Goran Pastrovic participated in the Workshop on Open Contracting for Practitioners – From Ideation to Prototype

organised by UNDP and Open Contracting Partnership. This was a follow up activity of ReSPA Public Procurement and eGovernment Working Groups meeting which was held in Ljubljana in March 2017.

The workshop gathered practitioners from procurement agencies in the Western Balkans and civic tech activists. It resulted in better understanding of open contracting and experiencing the prototype solution offered based on the data opening.

ReSPA participated at the Scientific Conference on Public Administration Reform (PAR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sarajevo, 7 June - The Faculty of Administration (Sarajevo University) held a Scientific and professional conference dedicated to the topic „Public Administration Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Priorities and Challenges“. The aim of the conference was to involve participants from academia, governmental bodies, international organizations and CSOs to explore the PAR process in the country in the light of EU accession requirements

The following themes that are at the core of PAR were particularly explored and discussed: Better Regulation, Civil Service Reform, Administrative Procedure Reform, Service Delivery and e-Government. ReSPA was represented by Dusko Glodic, Programme Manager (Legal), who made contribution on the topic: Improving Public Administration through Regional Co-operation.

Meeting of the Working Group on Human Resource Management and Development (HRMD) – challenges and follow up

Tirana, 30-31 May 2017 - A two-day meeting of the Working Group on HRMD – challenges and follow up, contributed to the exchange of information on the state of art in the region and planning of future activities in regard to the implementation of the merit based recruitment, implementation of Human Resource Management Information Systems (HRMIS), coaching, and development of a leadership programme.



The meeting gathered heads of national training institutions in ReSPA Members, senior officials responsible for HR policies and officers dealing with HRMIS policy, development, monitoring etc. After a fruitful discussion, participants identified ways to improve HRM Information Systems and specific training needs, particularly related to the introduction of blended learning methods and e-learning modules, as well as capacity building activities that should create interactive and engaging training modules with self-testing and evaluations through e-learning platforms. In addition, the working group members endorsed the idea of combining initiatives regarding leadership training with evaluation of leadership capacity. They also shared specific challenges and issues that are common for the Western Balkan region. The needs of each country were taken into account in the framework of future ReSPA activities in the area of HRMD.

ReSPA participated at the Open Government Partnership (OGP) meeting in Sarajevo

Sarajevo, 23-24th May - RESPA took active participation in the Southeast Europe Peer Exchange event organized by the Open Government Partnership (OGP).



Jack Mahoney, OGP Programme Officer from San Francisco (USA), opened the event, and participants were representatives of credible institutions working in the subject area coming not only from the Western Balkans but also from the entire Europe and worldwide.

Since the focus of the conference was peer exchange of good practices and common challenges in development and implementation of OGP national action plans, a number of recommendations were set to be possibly supported by RESPA i.e. eGovernment subgroup for the OGP. The most important aspects highlighted at the meeting were: setting and follow up of certain standards in domain of OGP, continuation of analysis and comparisons at the regional and wider level, and necessity to obtain endorsement for the recommendations by responsible EC institutions and decision makers in relevant countries (Western Balkans). ReSPA Open data - OGP conference (14 June 2017 in Brussels) provided the continuation of the discussion and led towards relevant follow up activities in 2018 and beyond.

ReSPA Representatives at the NISPAcee Annual Conference in Tatarstan

Kazan, 18 – 20 May - ReSPA delegation participated at 25th NISPAcee Annual Conference “Innovation Governance in the Public Sector” held at the Kazan Federal University in Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation.



The Conference included presentations and discussions on the most relevant issues related to public administration reform and public governance. ReSPA had its panel entitled “Supporting Public Administration Reform (PAR) through Regional Cooperation in Western Balkans”. At the panel, ReSPA representatives presented conclusions and

recommendations from the most recent ReSPA regional comparative studies, including studies on Managing Implementation of PAR Strategies, Better Regulation, Merit Based Recruitment and General Administrative Procedures. ReSPA representatives also participated in the Forum of Practitioners devoted to Innovations in Better Regulation Efforts.

Regional Conference on Public Service Delivery across the Western Balkans on “Initiatives and Innovations towards the EU”

Tirana and Durres, 18-19 May - The overall objective of ReSPA’s ministerial-level, two-day Conference on Public Service Delivery across the Western Balkans on „Initiatives and Innovations towards the EU” was to present the state of play in service delivery across the region - initiatives characterized by innovation and EU approximation, with particular emphasis on the Albanian model being currently implemented.



The event was organized in close cooperation between the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) and the Government of Albania. The chair of ReSPA Governing Board for 2017 is the Government of Albania, as a forerunner in this area of the PAR in the Western Balkan region.

The discussions in the conference enabled participants to comprehensively understand from a technical standpoint the implications that may arise during the implementation of such highly complex innovative solutions in a public context. Therefore, the event initiated a dialogue which led towards

identification of good case examples that may be further presented at 10th ReSPA Annual Conference “Innovation for improving quality of public services”.

The conference “Public Service delivery across the Western Balkans” gathered together four ministers from the Western Balkans Countries (WBC), high level participants from various countries, including 9 from EU member states, as well as countries from the region and representatives of international organisations and institutions.

In the opening speech, Milena Harito, Minister for Innovation and Public Administration of the Republic of Albania, pointed out that the Albanian model being currently implemented “sets new standards on public service delivery, such as increased transparency, increased satisfaction on service delivery, shorter waiting time, less corruptive practices and higher efficiency.”

“We simply could not copy another example, since, at the time we were starting the public service reform, no adequate model was applicable in the Western Balkan countries. So we developed our own system and adjusted it to the needs of our citizens and businesses” Minister Milena Harito said.

The question on why organize a conference on public service delivery was answered by Ratka Sekulovic, ReSPA Director:

“The answer is quite simple. Governments’ institutions are mandated by law to provide services to citizens and businesses. Through various activities and networking events, ReSPA strongly supports regional countries in order to achieve European standards and to have professional, transparent and citizen-oriented public administration,” Sekulovic said.



The goal of the first day of the conference was to address all necessary preconditions for improving performance and quality of services provided to citizens and businesses, which should lead to rationalized, transparent and accountable new systems. The implementation of Public Administration Reform remains a key priority for the accession agenda of the Western Balkans to the European Union.

Marta Arsovska Tomovska, Minister of Information Society and Administration of Macedonia, Ana Brnabic, then Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government of the Republic of Serbia and Suzana Pribilovic, Minister of Public Administration of Montenegro, presented the current status of service delivery reforms in their countries.

All participating ministers highlighted the importance of interoperable platforms, which enables sharing data and information across different levels of the government and ensures the integration of public agencies. There was a joint agreement that a complimentary part of implementing such complex reform initiatives is to develop and inspire civil servants. Therefore, a comprehensive HR and information system helps to manage talent and to further develop necessary skills.

On the second day of the conference, participants had the opportunity to visit the first One Stop Shop for public service delivery in Albania located in the town of Kavaje.

Meeting of Directors of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration (DISPA)/ Memorandum of Understanding between ReSPA and National School of Public Administration of the Republic of Croatia

Malta, 31 May- 02 June - ReSPA Director Ratka Sekulovic took part in the DISPA (Directors of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration) meeting in Sliema, Malta. This year, the DISPA meeting was devoted to the re-thinking of training in light of the innovation and change. The meeting was hosted by the Institute for the Public Services, Malta.

On the margins of DISPA meeting, ReSPA Director signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Dubravka Prelec, Director of the National School of Public Administration of the Republic of Croatia. The

aim of this MoU is to create a framework for mutual cooperation of the two institutions in the field of public administration.



ReSPA and the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia signed an MoU on cooperation in the areas of public administration reform and EU integration

18 May - Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia. The purpose of the MoU is to initiate a strong cooperation in the fields of common interest. The MoU was signed by Ratka Sekulovic, ReSPA Director and Nejc Brezovar, Slovenia State Secretary.



The MoU was signed in Tirana, during the regional Conference on Public Service Delivery across the Western Balkans organized by ReSPA.

Delegations of ReSPA and the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia used this opportunity to discuss in-depth implementation of the MoU and to agree on concrete future steps. The signing parties will cooperate in the area of public administration reform and EU integration.

Representatives of the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) visited the Ministry of Defence of the Government of Montenegro

Podgorica, 9 May - Representatives of ReSPA visited the Ministry of Defence of the Government of Montenegro (MoD), with an aim to explore possibilities for closer cooperation between these two institutions in the area of defense and security.



For the Ministry of Defence (MoD) as a public administration body, continuous development and improvement of human capacities are of utmost importance. Closer collaboration with ReSPA would contribute to the improvement of knowledge and skills of civil servants in the MoD. Defence and security being significant for the region, closer cooperation between ReSPA and MoD would contribute to the exchange of expertise, experience and practices among peers from the regional countries. Furthermore, it was agreed that there is room for establishing cooperation in the other areas of common interests, such as integrity.

ReSPA Director at 16th session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

New York, 24-28 April - The Committee of Experts on Public Administration held its sixteenth session at the United Nations Headquarters. The main theme was

“Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: leadership, action and means”. A key message of the session was that government and public institutions have the leading role to implement the SDGs and pursue policies to leave no one behind.



The main topics discussed were related to the institutional leadership, supporting and equipping local authorities and communities for the implementation of the SDGs, development of principles of effective governance. „It was noticed that almost all countries share the same challenges in the reform processes of public administration,“ was ReSPA Director Ratka Sekulovic's impression.

During 16th Session of CEPA, regular coordination meeting of UNPAN members was held, including ReSPA, to discuss potentials for further cooperation but also how to increase visibility, regular communication and coordination among members.

9th Quality Conference on Joining Forces and Breaking Silos towards a Better Performing, Transparent and Inclusive Public Administration

Malta, 15-16 May - 9th Quality Conference addressed policy makers, advisers and civil servants who are constantly looking for frontline information on the latest state of affairs in the field of improving public administrations.

Four Conference sub-themes were dominant: human resource management in the public sector; cooperation and inclusiveness in policy making and implementation; and innovative service delivery to citizens and businesses to satisfy customers' needs. Beside policy makers, advisers and civil servants, representatives of ReSPA Quality Management

Working Group and officials from institutions involved in the European Integration process took part. The main aim of their participation was to learn about cooperative policy making and implementation as preconditions for the impact of public sector on society, and about one of crucial Conference themes: open and transparent government as a solid foundation.



This high level event was opened by the Prime Minister of Malta and concluded by the Head of the Malta Civil Service - the Principal Permanent Secretary.

EUPAN (the European Public Administration Network), as a network of European countries dealing with public administration issues by means of sharing information and learning from each other, has been organising European Quality Conferences since 2000.

The officials from the Office of Prime Minister and Ministry of EU of the Republic of Malta organized a multilateral meeting with the representatives of ReSPA Quality Management Working Group, and the officials from institutions involved in the European Integration process in the framework of 9th European Quality Conference.



Main themes of the meeting were: the experience of Malta in the process of European integration and Public Administration Reform, and how Maltese EU presidency influences the enlargement policy i.e. integration of the Western Balkan countries in the EU.

During the meeting the participants initiated several potential follow up activities on bilateral and on multilateral level, with the main goal of improving the quality of cooperation between Malta and the Western Balkans, and exchanging experiences for the purpose of improving public administration in ReSPA Members and Kosovo*.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence

TEN Workshop: CSO Participation in Policymaking

Budva, 13 May - Think for Europe Network (TEN) is implementing the project *Raising Capacities and Advocacy Potential Towards More Substantive Involvement in Policymaking*, supported by the Visegrad Fund. Within this project, *Institut Alternativa*, a Montenegro based think-tank, organised a workshop on participation of civil society organisations (CSO) in policymaking, where practices and best practice examples from Poland and Hungary were presented. ReSPA's representation in this workshop contributed to further development of its cooperation with this regional network of think-tanks. ReSPA also cooperates with TEN in the implementation of the project *Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform (WeBER)*.

Procurement of Translation Services

Belgrade, 12 May - In order to support institutional capacities for translation activities related to the European integration process, the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) and German Development Cooperation (GIZ) jointly organised a meeting of representatives from translation coordination units of institutions in charge of coordination of the European integration process with members of the ReSPA Working group on Public Procurement.

The purpose of the meeting was twofold: presentation of the Regional benchmark study/analysis in the field of public procurement of translation services (prepared by an expert hired by GIZ) and discussion among participants representing different ReSPA Members on their respective experiences.



Workshop on EU Budget Support tailored for Kosovo*

Danilovgrad, 3-5 May - The Workshop on EU Budget Support was tailored for civil servants from Kosovo* based on their current knowledge of this matter, with an objective to ensure that the participants develop a practical understanding of Sector Budget Support: from designing a Sector Reform Contract in Public Administration Reform to implementing it to achieve results. Trainers in charge were Jérôme Dendura and Nathalie Gasnier, experts in capacity building programmes in the area of budget support, project management and programming.

ReSPA's study visit to the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)

Strasbourg, 25-28 April - ReSPA organised the first study visit to the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg. The study visit group consisted of 25 presidents and judges of administrative courts, senior public servants from ministries and offices in charge of European integration, prosecutors and senior public officers from the ministries of justice of Western Balkan countries, as well as two members of the ReSPA Secretariat.

The visitors had an opportunity to meet the officials of the Council of Europe and to learn about concrete activities in Western Balkan countries which are of importance for their work, such as execution of judgements of the European Court of Human Rights, or program for continuous education of judges (HELP). Moreover, the direct contact that participants established with judges of the ECtHR was very important for the future development of cooperation among relevant institutions in the Western Balkans (ministries of justice, administrative courts) and the ECtHR.

This study visit was co-organised with the CoE Human Rights National Implementation Division, Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Training on Protection of Human Rights and Jurisprudence of the ECtHR was also held for the study visit group. Training topics included Council of Europe's mission and role in relation to protection of human rights, as well as jurisprudence of the ECtHR with special focus on the case-law in the field of administrative disputes. During the study visit, 17 experts and speakers, including 5 judges of the ECtHR, addressed the audience and gave presentations. The participants provided positive feedback through anonymous evaluation questionnaires and a focus group discussion organised as a final session of the event in Strasbourg.

Training on Legal Alignment



Danilovgrad, 19-21 April - ReSPA organised a Training on Legal Alignment - Negotiating Chapters 11 and 12. Target audiences were civil servants/practitioners from European integration central coordinating institutions and other line ministries, and administrative bodies in charge of transposition of the related chapters: Chapter 11 – Agriculture and Rural Development and Chapter 12 – Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary. The training focused on the examples of legal transposition and preparation of a negotiating process for given chapters.

Visit of Students to ReSPA

ReSPA, Danilovgrad, 11 April - As part of an experiential learning programming to engage students in the many layers of the public administration reform, 20 graduates of the Faculty of Economics (University of Montenegro), led by Professor Gordana Djurovic, paid fifth traditional visit to the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA).



In her welcome address, ReSPA Director Ms. Sekulovic highlighted the importance of close cooperation among public administrations in the Western Balkans. Through a two-hour lecture, members of the ReSPA team presented the organisation's strategic framework and activities. According to students, the explanation of ReSPA's role in the European integration process and numerous models of its support towards Western Balkan countries in Public Administration Reform process left a big impression.

Regional Conference „Enhancing Managerial Competences in Civil Service“

Becici, Montenegro, 5-6 April - The Regional Conference „Enhancing Managerial Competences in Civil Service“ was organised jointly by the Human Resource Management Authority of Montenegro, ReSPA and the Hanns Seidel Foundation. The conference gathered more than 80 people from ReSPA Members and Kosovo* - participants in ReSPA working groups on Public Administration Reform, Human Resource Management and Development and Public Internal Financial Control, as well as experts from Slovenia, France and Estonia.



The conference was officially opened by Suzana Pribilovic, Minister of Public administration of Montenegro; Aivo Orav, Head of EU Delegation to Montenegro; Svetlana Vukovic, Director of Human Resource Management Authority of Montenegro; Ratka Sekulovic, Director of Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) and Lutz Kober, Director of Hans Seidel Stiftung.

Suzana Pribilovic, Minister of Public administration of Montenegro talked about the challenges in the implementation of managerial standards as key elements of professionalisation of public service; Gregor Virant, UNDP expert, explained the culture of interactions between politicians and senior civil servants in the government; Jacques Roudiere, expert on human resources from the French School of Public Administration (ENA) discussed transparent, effective merit-based recruitment and development of senior civil servants; and Merle Nurmoja, human resources expert from Estonia, emphasized the importance of performance management based on competencies.

Public servants who attended the conference discussed competency requirements of senior managers for Public Administration Reform and EU integration process; accountability as a driver for more competent and performance oriented managers in public sector; performance and its contribution to the process of optimisation of public administration, as well as coaching as a new tool for professional development of top managers. During the sessions, lots of good practices and recommendations for improvements were exchanged. The recommendations referred to further strengthening of the competencies of high managerial staff and regional cooperation, as well as to further exchange of experiences, depolitisation of public administration and culture change.

ReSPA COMPARATIVE STUDIES, ANALYSES, GUIDELINES

ReSPA

Feasibility Study on the Establishment of ReSPA Quality Management (QM) Regional Center

Malta, 17 June – Setting up of a focus group was the first step to developing of a feasibility study on the establishment of ReSPA Regional Quality Management Center. In the form of back to back event to 9QC – Quality Management Conference in Malta, the group focused on the needs and expectations of (senior) public professionals working in this relatively new field, their capacities, the capacities that need to be developed in future, implementation methods of CAF, ISO, EFQM and institutional, managerial and financial aspects of the service provision.



The outcome of the focus group included gathering of valuable inputs, ideas, concept proposals and opinions from participants, related to the establishment, role, target and functioning of a potential ReSPA Quality Management Center. Finally, the focus group, as one of keys for deepening the insights on the views, needs and expectations of the ReSPA Quality Management center, provided significant inputs for further design and implementation of the feasibility study.

Study on Case-law of the ECtHR on Administrative Dispute

The content of the Study has been consulted with presidents and judges of administrative courts and administrative law departments of higher courts from Western Balkan countries.

ReSPA has engaged three regional experts who are analyzing about 10 cases which are in the field of administrative disputes and are highly relevant for Western Balkan countries. The Study will be completed by the end of this year.

Baseline Analysis on Quality Management in Public Administration and Services

Preparations for the Baseline Analysis on Quality Management in Public Administration and Services (QM in PA and PS) in the Western Balkans started in December 2016. The overall aim of this Study is to contribute to the improvement of public administrations and public services in the region. More specifically, the Study encompasses a baseline analysis of the required institutional and legislative framework, as well as identification of strengths, weaknesses and possible impediments for different QM systems and instruments of their implementation. Currently, final results are in the process of verification with relevant stakeholders in the Western Balkans. The launch of the Study is expected once the verification process is finished.

Methodology for Costing of PAR strategies

Following recommendations from the comparative study Optimization of Public Administration in the Western Balkans Region and Analytical paper on managing the process of implementation of PAR strategies, ReSPA decided to develop Methodology for costing of PAR strategies to be used by the countries in the Western Balkans region. The Methodology document will encompass basic concepts of cost analysis, principles and methods, and methodological guidelines for costing of strategies in general, as well as costing of PAR strategies in particular.

Namely, practical experiences in the countries of the region show that the implementation of PAR and other government strategies has been severely hampered as a result of their inadequate costing, or its complete absence. Strategies are often not accompanied with well-developed and properly costed action plans identifying quantities and quality of resources and funding needed for the implementation of programs and activities. Furthermore, the sources of funding are not determined for all programs and activities, and there is a lack of adequate prioritization mechanisms in place to ensure that the limited funding available is used in the most effective and efficient way. In short, costing of strategies in individual countries in general, and costing of PAR strategies in particular is marked with many challenges. Inadequate costing results in subsequent implementation failures and negatively affects the overall fiscal discipline. This need for methodological guidelines for strategies' costing is recognized and approved at the PAR Network meeting held in February 2017 in Belgrade (Serbia).

The Methodology, which should be finalised by the end of the year, will contribute to a more efficient public administration reform process in the region by strengthening financial frameworks for the implementation of PAR strategies.



Public Procurement working group meeting

Helsinki, 27-28 June – Members of the Public Procurement working group gathered to familiarize themselves with electronic catalogues and their current and possible future use in the public procurement context. They also discussed digitizing of complaints system and open data in regard to public procurement. The meeting gathered the representatives of public procurement institutions and review bodies from the Western Balkan region, who are dealing with e-procurement, in particular e-catalog, as well as the representatives from the national institutions in charge of e-Government development and coordination.

“Challenges and Follow up” - 11th meeting of the Ethics and Integrity working group

Brussels, 16 June - Members of the Ethics and Integrity working group met to review the Checklist on IT-corruption applied in ReSPA Members, and to discuss its application throughout the region. They also deliberated on an integrity training opportunity and activities planned for 2018.

The meeting was attended by senior officials of relevant state institutions in the Western Balkans responsible for preventing and combating corruption issues, i.e. heads/deputy heads of anti-corruption agencies, conflict of interest commissions, ministries of justice, etc.

ReSPA Budget Committee (BC) meeting

Sarajevo, 6-7 June – Organised by ReSPA and hosted by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 20th Budget Committee meeting was held. The main topic introduced in the meeting was ReSPA Audit Report for the period 01/01 – 31/12/2016. In addition, Budget Committee members discussed other important financial issues relevant for the previous quarter period.

ReSPA representatives also used the opportunity to visit the Ministry of Finance and Treasury of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which among others, expressed the interest in a more intensive involvement in the Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) area.

Meetings of the Governing Board at Senior Official level and ReSPA Secretariat with the European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood & Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) representatives

Brussels, 16 June - In the recent period, the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) was subject to three important evaluations, commissioned by the European Commission (EC): Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM), Financial Audit of the EC grant IPA/2013/331-241 and Evaluation of regional organizations. Two meetings with EC representatives

were organised, devoted to the findings and recommendations from the mentioned evaluations: a meeting with the Director for Western Balkans and a working meeting with the Head of Unit A.3.

30th Governing Board meeting at Senior Official level

ReSPA, Danilovgrad, 21 April - Formal meeting of the Governing Board was devoted to programme and institutional issues, which ReSPA Secretariat presents to the Governing Board on a quarterly basis. Among others, the Governing Board took note on the Plan of the activities and budget by the end of 2017, and endorsed ReSPA's engagement on the project Building Administrative Capacities in the Danube Region. The Governing Board also approved the Quarterly report on programme implementation and operations for the previous period, and acknowledged the Annual financial report for 2016.

Meeting of the Programme Committee on European Integration

Tirana, 7 April - The Programme Committee (PC) considered the activities that ReSPA organized and implemented in the period September 2016 - April 2017 for the European Integration (EUI) Pillar. The meeting was opened by Minister for European Integration of Republic of Albania Klajda Gjoshaj and ReSPA Director Ratka Sekulovic.

ReSPA Secretariat presented activities in all three pillars of ReSPA, including general information on Public Administration Reform and Governance for Growth pillars, and presented the planned activities for the rest of the year.

Governing Board thematic session on ReSPA ex-post evaluation of ReSPA activities and the needs assessment

Budva, 4 April - The meeting was devoted to the presentation of the Report on ex-post evaluation of ReSPA activities (2013-2015) and needs assessment (2017-2018). Participants in the meeting were representatives of the Secretariat and Governing Board at the Senior Official level. With the support of an expert, they reviewed the findings and recommendations from the Report, and agreed on further steps related to its implementation.

Upcoming ReSPA activities July - September 2017

- *Better Regulation and SEE 2020 Working Group Meeting in Sarajevo*
- *E-Gov Working Group meeting on INFOFEST*
- *PIFC seminar on new standards in Internal Auditing*
- *Methodology on the patterns of hidden conflict and how to detect them*
- *Methodology for Costing of PAR Strategies*
- *Feasibility study on ReSPA Quality Management Regional center*
- *Study: Case-law of the ECtHR on Administrative Disputes*
- *3rd Regional Conference on EU Budget Support*
- *Inter-parliamentary Conference on PAR*
- *Study Visit to CoE and ECtHR*



ReSPA is an international organisation which has been entrusted with the mission of boosting regional cooperation in the field of public administration in the Western Balkans. As such, ReSPA is a unique historical endeavour, established to support the creation of accountable, effective and professional public administration systems for the Western Balkans on their way to EU accession.

ReSPA seeks to achieve this mission through the organisation and delivery of training activities, high level conferences, networking events and publications, the overall objectives of which are to transfer new knowledge and skills as well as to facilitate the exchange of experiences both within the region and between the region and the EU Member States.

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