



10th ReSPA Annual Conference

Innovation in Public Administration - Navigating in Times of Change

Key Issues and Conclusions

The 2017 ReSPA Annual Conference provided an opportunity for Western Balkan, EU countries and worldwide representatives to share their experiences and innovative practices. The conference gathered 157 participants coming from more than 50 different institutions and has engaged 37 credible speakers.

Main task of the conference was to identify the best-case examples of innovative processes in Public Administration and the challenges in integrating it in the Western Balkan countries.

During two days of the Conference, story-telling has been highlighted as one of the most practical and efficient ways to explore possibilities for setting organisational culture, no matter if we are focusing on developing countries or not. Nonetheless, the challenges and the goals are the same: opening to the public's needs and exploring even beyond. During ReSPA Open cafe many great ideas and inputs for the organisational change and transformation of governments were generated. Enthusiasm of individuals has been underlined as one of the success-factor for the non-existing formula and driving force for innovation in the public sector.

Innovation projects from the Western Balkan have been presented confirming that there are good case examples in the region even though there is a big space for improvement where ReSPA may provide further support.

The conference participants have happily voted for introduction of a public-sector award in the Western Balkans which will be long term objective of ReSPA, again requiring the efforts from all the stakeholders

from the region, the EU and all around the globe. The PA award is aimed to support continuous dialogue by exchanging the best practices and fostering organisational culture. It was also concluded that using information and communication technologies through Hackaton may be seen as an added value, which will give ReSPA a mandate to explore the possibilities to organise a Hackathon/ReSPAThon or something similar in the future.

ReSPA's direction to establish a regional QM Centre was also mentioned by Ms. Sekulovic, ReSPA Director. She emphasized that such centre may follow on all ideas reflected in this conference by using quality management tools which represent a holistic approach of addressing the above mentioned subjects on innovation – strategic planning, strong administrative and political engagement, increasing the cooperation with citizens, NGOs and social responsibility, client/citizen/stakeholder orientation and the needed strong political buy-in.

During the event it became clear that ReSPA would need to focus its work towards quality in public service delivery, enhancing managerial accountability by using quality management systems. This will be reflected in ReSPA events in the upcoming year, including the segments of the next ReSPA Annual conference.

Final discussions lead to the position that it is obvious that solutions of the past cannot be the same as for the future. Furthermore, the shifting focus should be on what is being done in Public Administration and how it can be done differently. As for the public servants, a safe environment with appreciation and motivation for the work must be a priority in changing the internal culture. This can only happen in a culture which allows experimentation, risk taking and potential failure with a clear role of the leadership which needs to put organization in focus with strategy, to serve as an example how to encourage different set-ups of teams, and fostering a new and safe culture in the organisation. Several definitions on innovation have been reflected on during the event, but one says: The new things that add a value!