



ReSPA

Regional School
of Public Administration

Third meeting of Secretary Generals Network

13-14 December 2012

Riga, Latvia

Discussion paper and provisional programme

Background

ReSPA is creating and maintaining Networks of practitioners in the region by organizing regular network meetings for senior level civil servants working in the same policy area with the aim to exchange experience amongst them but also with their counterparts from the last EU entrants. Having in mind the level of advancement in Public Administration Reform or EU integration process of the ReSPA Member States Kosovo*, benefits of providing them with forum-umbrella for practice and experience and values sharing are very obvious. On average such Network events are organized twice per year as a two days event and are focused on practical – problem solving issues. Participation of the last EU entrants and other EU experts proved to be an asset.

Secretary General's network seeks to support and strengthen the communication of the Western Balkan Governments upon the common issues in relation to national and regional policies, programmes and politics, having in focus also the aspect of EU integration process. The main aim of this network is to provide further support to regional network of Secretary Generals and their deputies with regular meetings. It offers a forum for exchange of experience and discussion to boost cooperation and to learn from each other as well as to exchange views and experience with colleagues from EU member States. The network holds regular meetings under the Auspices of ReSPA. In 2012 ReSPA is organizing the third meeting of the Secretary Generals network.

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



Objectives

Policy coordination in different countries can mean different things but essentially it is about achieving intended policy and reform outcomes in an efficient way. Governments set up structures – ministries – and systems – roles and responsibilities – to coordinate their work in many spheres. However, formal structures and systems cannot on their own ensure an integrative approach. While ministries have a specialized expertise to develop policies in their fields, the centre of government usually maintains the general competencies that may not be wise to develop in each and every ministry – legal and budgetary compliance, EU matters, government priorities, just to mention a few. Generally the centre of government has the following main tasks¹:

- organizing government sessions;
- ensuring legal conformity;
- drafting government priorities and action plans;
- ensuring quality control of policies and settling divergences;
- ensuring communication with mass media;
- planning legislative agenda;
- monitoring government performance;
- liaising with other public bodies including Presidency and the Parliament;
- coordinating horizontal priorities (eg. European integration, public administration reform, civil service reform, etc.).

The developments of the day make the countries in Europe solve the same problems and challenges. They can learn from each other hands-on approaches in the fields of economy, social welfare, health, education and many more, including policy coordination. Good policy coordination does not occur in isolation, it exists to have better sectoral policies, hence policy results. In the long run, thus, effective and well performing policy coordination system can sustain the results of different developmental reforms. In the last two decades many Central and Eastern European countries as well as the Balkan countries have reformed and continuously adjusted their policy coordination systems. Many of these countries have created unique solutions and success stories despite very similar constraints:

- State building process
- EU integration;
- International financial and economic constraints.

The objective of the meeting is thus to explore past and ongoing trends in roles, institutional set-up and practices of centers of government (Secretariat General like structures) in promoting and coordinating major developmental reforms and carrying out day-to-day policy coordination function. To do so, it will look on the cases of two Baltic States – Latvia and Lithuania:

¹ Michal Ben-Gera (2009). Conference Paper *Coordination at the Centre of Government for Better Policy Making*. Budva, Montenegro.

- ✓ To get an overview of Latvia's and Lithuania's approach towards ensuring effective delivery of policy coordination function at the Centre of Government, given its high evaluation by various international organizations.
- ✓ To provide opportunity for participants to compare their policy coordination systems and Centre of Government functions with those of Latvia and Lithuania and identify possible improvements needed taken the European integration process.
- ✓ To learn about different ways of reforming policy coordination system and discuss the most suitable reform pathway for the administrations of the Balkan region countries.

The choice of the topic is justified by ongoing further Europeanization of national policies as in the New Member States of the EU, such as Latvia and Lithuania, as in the Western Balkans. Despite different contexts, countries in both regions have to design and deliver policies that promote national economic and social development and ensure access to external funds while at the same time continuously adjusting their political, administrative and regulatory systems to those defined by the EU acquis. Centers' of government play critically important role in these processes.

Experience of the Baltic States can be relevant for the countries of Western Balkans in several ways:

- ✓ Both countries have been widely regarded as effective centers of government who have pioneered central policy coordination in the CEE. Their experience presents with wealth of lessons learned for other countries;
- ✓ Both work under coalition government set-up, which makes the role of the central coordination to change depending on political constellation in a ruling coalition and prime ministerial influence. Both countries have experienced various situations and adjusted their centre of government set-ups depending on those conditions. Similar conditions exist in most Western Balkan countries, and there could be lessons learned from the Baltics;
- ✓ Equally, policy and reform agenda in both countries for the last two decades has been dominated by the EU integration. The two selected case studies not only present the countries of Western Balkans with an abundance of past experience of EU accession and role of the government's centre in it. They also have the benefit of hindsight on coordination of EU integration prior to accession and its impact on post accession;
- ✓ Working with the EU financial assistance instruments and linking those with national development and budget planning present another sub-set of issues that are common to Baltic States and Western Balkan countries. Both Baltic States have the experience in managing pre-accession instruments focused on EU accession. But they also have 2 rounds of experience of elaborating National Development Plans and working with post-accession Structural Funds;
- ✓ Last but not least, Baltic States have managed many of public administration reforms from the centre of government. This experience can be useful learning point for centers of government in Western Balkans.

Content

The public administration system in Latvia and Lithuania is very similar due to common history and cultural similarities. Both countries have restored their independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, both joined the NATO and the EU in 2004. Both countries have implemented results based management practices in their public sector. The centre of government structure in both countries has been similar for the most time. However, Latvia and Lithuania are interesting to learn in terms of different success stories, implementation solutions and the causes they have grounded their policy coordination systems.

The agenda of the meeting foresees to provide participants with practical details with regard to policy coordination in Latvia and Lithuania – two EU member countries with a rather detailed legislative and institutional approach toward policy development, coordination, impact assessment and reporting.

During the visit Secretary Generals and their Deputies will meet the top responsible officials from Latvian and Lithuanian administrations that deal with all the indicated issues on a daily basis and had worked within their respective. The topics that would be covered during the visit include:

- Centre of Government functions in Latvia and Lithuania;
- Policy planning systems, strategic planning and performance management;
- Policy coordination mechanisms in Latvia and Lithuania;
- Role of the Parliament in policy development and implementation oversight;
- President's Strategic Development Commission and its role in policy planning.

Latvia

Latvia started the development and implementation of a uniform policy planning and coordination system in 2000. "Policy Planning Guidelines", which prescribe the basic principles for the policy development, types of policy planning documents and their hierarchy, was a basis for adoption "Rules of Procedure of the Cabinet of Ministers" of 12 March 2002.

When forming the system, a special focus was put on development and implementation of policy impact assessment procedures. An integral part of the process was introduction of the annotation mechanism prescribing that an annotation has to be attached to every draft legal act in order to provide a summary on necessity of the draft legal act, its impact on the current situation and on the state budget, conformity with regulatory document of the EU and opinion of the non-governmental sector.

Currently, the Cross-sectoral Coordination Centre, in cooperation with other ministries, is working on scenarios for development of the policy planning and coordination system in view of the fact that that the second generation of the system (Guidelines on the Development of Policy Planning System adopted in the end of 2006) is expiring. An independent ex-post study on the success and failures of the approach has also been commissioned and is expected to be out early next year.

Implementation of the strategic planning system was started in 2004, which is a substantial step towards linkage of the policy planning process and drafting of the state budget. According to the results obtained in a pilot project in the Ministry of Agriculture, "Methodology Guidelines for Development of Institution Strategic Plan" was developed.

State and municipal agencies also develop their strategic plans in line with the Law on Public Agencies. Critical importance in implementing the strategic planning system has transition to the medium-term planning system of the state budget which is drafted by the Ministry of Finance.

When developing the basic principles for policy planning, one the most important requirements was compliance with the feasibility principle by linking policy and budget planning. Primary elements of the linking process are:

- Procedure for consideration and acceptance of new policy initiatives,
- Institution strategic planning,
- Medium-term budget planning.

Latvia is distinctively known for its thorough approach towards legislation and therefore all of the systems are legally embedded in laws and government regulations.

Lithuania

Lithuania has been implementing major policy coordination reforms since 1998. The first systematic reforms were related to the EU integration process and creation of related EU coordination structures and systems. The second wave of policy coordination reforms was related to the introduction of strategic planning in the public sector in 2000 to face the consequences of the financial crisis and bring the national and EU planning processes together. In 2003 policy analysis was introduced. The period between 2003 and 2008 was marked by institutionalization of strategic planning and policy analysis across civil service. During this time the solid foundation for career civil service was established and the ministerial leadership was depoliticized. The Strategic Planning Committee was strengthened and marked the rise of policy analysis. However, with the economic boom the strategic planning process bureaucratized and lost its primary goal – to plan financial resources according to policy priorities.

In 2009 the strategic management undergone a few major changes. First, the ministerial leadership was politicized to design and implement reforms in different sectors. Second, two major changes – introduction of “top – down” government priority setting process and budget negotiations - have been introduced in policy and budget planning.

Therefore, the Lithuanian policy coordination system can be characterized by the following (emerging) key features:

- **System of Government priorities** with “top-down” strategic planning approach. Government establishes a set of strategic priorities to focus attention on critical

policy challenges and cascade them down to ministry priorities connecting political agenda and policy-budget planning process.

- **Budget negotiations.** Budget negotiations between Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and the line minister have been introduced. Early in the planning cycle all three parties have to agree on the results to be achieved and appropriations to be allocated.
- **Programme budgeting.** The overall State budget is planned and executed on the basis of programmes. The programmes are developed in accordance with strategic planning processes by the managers of budget appropriations, seeking to implement Government priorities and strategic goals in line with long-term and medium term strategies.
- **Evidence based performance management.** The planning cycle is informed by evidence achieved through regular monitoring, evaluation of policies, review of functions and impact assessment.

Target Group

The target audience of the networks is: Secretary Generals of the Governments and their Deputies. This target group has a crucial role in ensuring delivery of the Government's decisions and reforms – monitoring, evaluation and reporting, as well as direct and hands-on implementation.

Workshop experts

Mr. Martins Krievins is one of the leading international professionals in area of policy management reform. He has been at the forefront of designing and implementing one of the most effective and internationally recognized centres of Government and policy management systems in CEE countries - Latvia. Since then, he has extensively worked internationally on policy management reform initiatives including in Western Balkan countries. He has also assisted the Governments of Romania, Moldova and Ukraine to establish policy management systems. He has been actively working also with OECD Sigma in this field.

Martins was recently invited by the prime Minister of Latvia to lead a high level task force to develop Latvia's National Development Strategy for 2013 - 2020, which will be the main policy coordination framework for the country as well prioritization tool for EU Structural Funds in Latvia of total value exceeding €4 billion EUR. Prior to that Martins held several high-ranking posts in the Latvian Government including in the State Chancellery.

Mr. Krievins is also a member of the President's Strategic Development Commission that analyses different aspects of state development and provides President with strategic level advice. He has an MA in political science with specialization in European public administration from the University of Latvia and Executive MBA from Stockholm School of Economics. In the past he has been the Head of the Policy Coordination in the State

Chancellery and also the Deputy Director of the Budget Department in the Ministry of Finance for more than five years.

During 2008 - 2009, when Martins was heading the Policy Coordination Department of the State Chancellery, he was in charge of coordinating preparation of Latvia's response to global financial crisis. This task included both preparation and implementation of the Public Administration Optimization Plan. Latvia at that time was among the hardest hit countries at the time with its national output shrinking by more than a quarter. Following successful policy response at home, Latvia is now among the fastest growing EU economies.

Ms. Egle Rimkute is a policy management expert with 12 years of experience in centre of government reforms. She has been working in the Centre of government in Lithuania - Head of Planning and Monitoring Unit from 2010 and advisor in the Strategic Planning Unit in the period 2000 - 2010. She has gained knowledge and hands-on experience in designing, managing and implementing reforms in the areas of strategic planning and budgeting, government priority setting, policy making, impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation of public policies, legislation process. She has also gained solid experience in inter-ministerial coordination by bringing different government institutions for the implementation and evaluation of reforms.

Rimkute has led public administration reform project and results based management project in Lithuania. She has practical experience in drafting policy strategies, including public management strategy and national development plan. Working in the centre of government for more than 10 years she has gained thorough knowledge and understanding of decision-making system and practice at central Government level.

Rimkute was the key expert in Romania, Ukraine and Croatia and short term expert in Moldova, Kosovo^{*2}, Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia and BiH providing technical assistance and advice on centre of government reforms, including strategic planning, policy making and impact assessment. She is also an experienced lecturer and trainer to the civil service with nearly 10 years of training practice in public sector career development institutions, university and international projects.

Mr. Ugis Sics has almost 15 years of experience in coaching Governments on public administration reform and policy management system building in particular. He focuses on building the whole of government strategic planning, policy coordination, and policy-led budgeting systems in the context of European integration. His countries of professional experience include Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo*, Latvia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine.

Some of Ugis' high profile consulting assignments include Moldova where he has advised several Governments on public administration and civil service reforms and on the national

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development strategies and related strategic planning, budgeting and coordination systems. In Ukraine, Ugis has worked with the Ministry of Finance on creating effective sector coordination and with the Secretariat of Cabinet of Ministers on policy management reforms. His experience in Serbia includes assistance to the Government to launch a pilot programme budgeting exercise in five line ministries. Ugis has worked in Romania with the centre of government and several ministries to implement effective strategic planning and policy coordination system. He has worked on numerous other assignments in the Western Balkan region including for a large DFID funded functional review programme in Kosovo*³, where he was the Team Leader.

Before his career at CPM, Ugis held several high level managerial posts in the Latvian Civil Service. He joined Latvian public sector in 1997 and soon became the Head of Planning at the European Integration Bureau working under direct supervision of the Prime Minister. Ugis was in charge of developing Latvia's EU integration programme and coordinating its implementation. In late 2000 Ugis joined the State Chancellery of Latvia (Prime Minister's support body) where he became the Deputy Head of Policy Coordination Department. During 2000 – 2005 period Latvia introduced a series of centre of government and policy coordination reform much praised by the OECD, EC and World Bank subsequently. Ugis was part of the team leading on those reforms.

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DRAFT T PROGRAMME

Day 1- 12/12/2012

09.00	-	00.00	Arrival in Riga and transfer to the hotel
			Free time in Riga

Day 2- 13/12/2012

09.00	-	11.00	<p>Welcome and introductory remarks</p> <p>Mrs. Elita Dreimane, Director of the State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia (tbc)</p> <p>Mr. Mārtiņš Krieviņš, Head of Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre of the Republic of Latvia</p> <p>Mr. Suad Music, ReSPA Director, Montenegro</p> <p>Mr. Goran Pastrovic, ReSPA Training Manager, Montenegro</p> <p>Structure of public administration in Latvia and functions of the State Chancellery</p> <p>Ms. Solveiga Līce, Deputy Head of the Legal Department of the State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia</p>
11.00	-	11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15	-	12.45	<p>Policy Coordination and Planning in Latvia</p> <p>Mr. Mārtiņš Krieviņš, Head of Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre of the Republic of Latvia</p>
12.45	-	13.45	<i>Lunch</i>
14.45	-	15.00	<p>Introduction to the Government of Lithuania</p> <p>Ms. Jurgita Šiugzdiniene, First Deputy Prime minister's Chancellor, acting Prime Minister's Chancellor</p> <p>Mr Olegas Romancikas, Deputy Prime Minister's Chancellor, Office of the Prime Minister</p> <p>Managing policy, results and reforms in Lithuania</p> <p>Ms. Egle Rimkute, Head of Planning and Monitoring Unit, Office of the Prime Minister</p>

15.00	-	15.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
15.15	-	16.15	Good practice examples in policy coordination and the changing role of the Centre of Government during crisis Mr. Mārtiņš Krieviņš, Head of Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre of the Republic of Latvia Ms. Egle Rimkute, Head of Planning and Monitoring Unit, Office of the Prime Minister
16.15			End of Day 1
18.00			Welcome dinner hosted by the Cross-sectoral Coordination Centre of the Republic of Latvia

Day 3- 14/12/2012

09.30	-	11.00	Parliamentary oversight and cooperation with executive in the field of policy development and monitoring Mrs. Inga Bite, MP, Former Deputy Chair-woman of the Parliament
11.00	-	11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15	-	12.00	Guided tour of the Parliament
12.00	-	13.30	<i>Lunch</i>
13.30	-	15.00	Role of the President's Office in Decision Making Process Mr. Edgars Pastars, Advisor of the President on Legislative and Legal Matters President's Strategic Development Commission and its interaction with the executive Mr. Valērijs Stūris, Coordinator of the Strategic Development Commission
15.00	-	15.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
15.15	-	16.00	Guided tour on the current residence of the President of the Republic of Latvia
16.00			End of Day 2
18.00			Farewell dinner and wrap-up of the study tour hosted by the Cross-sectoral Coordination Centre of the Republic of Latvia

Day 4- 15/12/2012

00.00	-	00.00	Transfer to airport and departure from Riga according to the flight schedule of participants
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