

***“Cultivating Excellence towards a Shared European Administrative Space:
Connecting the Western Balkans and Italian Administration through the Public
Servants Capacity Building and Mobility Programme”***

**Closing Workshop and Certification Ceremony
19 December 2024**

***Premises of the Italian National School of Administration (SNA)
Rome, Italy***

The Western Balkans Public Servants Capacity Building and Mobility Programme, in collaboration with the Italian public administration, has been a transformative journey for public servants in the region. Launched in December 2023, the program continued with **a significant conference** organized by ReSPA, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the Italian National School of Administration (SNA), in April 2024, gathering **over 50 participants**. This marked the beginning of a multi-modular capacity building and mobility learning journey, with three core streams: European Integration, Policy Development & Better Regulation, and Digital Transformation.

The first cycle of the capacity-building sessions, held in April 2024, facilitated an in-depth exploration of key EU topics, including EU enlargement policy and digital policies. The program emphasized networking and collaboration, establishing strong ties between the Western Balkans and Italian administrations. Following this, in May, ReSPA organized **the second module** in Italy, which focused on evidence-based policy planning. It featured Italy's National Recovery and Resilience Plan and its strategic planning and coordination practices. Participants gained valuable insights into Italy's data management systems and recruitment strategies, showcasing the importance of evidence-based policymaking. In June, the EU Integration module further deepened participants' understanding of EU funding mechanisms, the Accession Process, and EU support for reforms. This module also included institutional visits, hands-on experience, peer-to-peer learning and discussions with key Italian institutions, strengthening participants' practical knowledge and fostering international collaboration.

As we gather for **the closing workshop**, we reflect on the collaborative efforts, the learning journey, and the deepened connections between the public servants of the Western Balkans and Italy, setting the stage for continued cooperation and knowledge-sharing.

The initiative is funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and is implemented by the Italian National School of Administration (SNA) and the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA).

Draft Programme (19 December 2024)

09.00- 09.30	Welcome coffee and networking
09:30 – 09:50	Opening remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Botzios, Director for the Adriatic and the Western Balkans, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (tbc) • Amb. Massimo Gaiani, Head of International and European Affairs Department, SNA • Maja Handjiska Trendafilova, ReSPA Director
09:50 – 10:15	Keynote address: The Europe of tomorrow – the geopolitical momentum and the challenges of the new European Commission and Parliament
10:15 – 11:00	Presentation: Safeguarding national interests in EU legislative negotiations: Strategies and practices
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Networking Coffee Break</i>
11.30-12.30	Panel discussion with selected participants from the programme <i>Moderated by ReSPA</i>
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Networking Lunch Break</i>
13.30-14.30	Presentation: Italy’s proactive approach to managing demographic transitions in its public service sector
14.30-15.00	Awarding of joint SNA-ReSPA Certificate
15:00 - 15.30	Way ahead: Community of Alumni Group photo Closing of the Workshop
19:30	Joint informal networking and socializing (<i>venue to be confirmed</i>)