



## ReSPA Summer School on Accession Negotiations with the EU – Chapters 23 and 24

ReSPA, 3–7 July 2017



With the intention of improving the knowledge and professional skills of public servants working on EU affairs, and in order to offer them a new opportunity to network with colleagues from the Western Balkans region, ReSPA organized the Summer School on Accession Negotiations with the EU. Special focus was given to the Negotiating Chapters 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights), and 24 (Justice, Freedom and Security).

Lecturers at the Summer School were high level professionals and ReSPA experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia

and the EU academic institutions: College of Europe and the European Centre for Judges and Lawyers of the European Institute of Public Administration. More than 30 participants of the Summer School came from all ReSPA Members and Kosovo\*. They were senior and middle level professionals actively taking part in the European integration processes, from institutions that are coordinating the European integration processes at the central level, ministries in charge of foreign affairs, justice, internal affairs, public administration, finance, Offices of Prime Ministers, and from the Offices of

Chiefs of Accession Negotiation Teams.

“When you are a civil servant, it is most important that you cultivate your critical mindset. The EU accession does not matter so much. What matters is the way towards accession. It is the effort that you are going to undertake and collective intelligence you are going to put in the process that will make you ready or not. The key for being ready is education, education, and education. It is not just acquiring new techniques, new technologies, new competencies; it is far more than that. It is about making sense of ethics for participating in a

\* 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.



collective effort, exchange with others, helping each other, living together despite racial, ethnic, religious and other differences in an open and competitive society” said *Pierre Defraigne, Executive Director of the Mada-riaga Centre, College of Europe*, in his keynote address to the Summer School participants.

Regional cooperation being fundamental to the accession bid of the regional EU membership aspirants, the objectives of the ReSPA Summer School on Accession Negotiations with the EU were to help participants deepen the understanding of the issues covered by Chapters 23 and 24 – background and finer points of the concepts, foreseeable challenges during the Chapters’ negotiations and possible ways to overcome them; to inform participants of the state of affairs in the region in particular thematic areas of Chapters 23 and 24, and to derive common lessons from the various experiences; to share good practices in terms of existing regional initiatives in the matters related to Chapters 23 and 24: police cooperation, fight against corruption, border control, migrations/asylum/visas, fight against organized crime and terrorism, judicial cooperation in criminal and civil matters, customs cooperation etc; to increase the understanding of participants (a) of the need to advocate for sustainable implementation of the reforms related to Chapters 23 and 24 – in order to secure the “substantial social change”, which is evaluated at the end of the process; (b) of the

need to strategically communicate achievements in the process of implementation of reforms – to counterparts domestically, regionally and in the EU (especially important in view of the political nature of the criteria), as a way to help the achievement of their reform objectives; to build connections among participants for future regional cooperation.

According to the participants, the Summer School helped in gaining a deeper insight into the processes of change in the EU, and implications for the enlargement policy, as well as a better understanding of the Chapters 23 and 24 based on the experience of Croatia.

“It has been a long time since I had an opportunity to advance my knowledge in this manner. Trainings are usually about completely different matters, referring mostly to one’s skills and abilities, while this Summer School gave us a wider range of knowledge and a determinant of fight for a cause and for taking further steps in the right direction”, said *Tatjana Sceповic of the Ministry of Economic Relations and Regional Cooperation in Banja Luka, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

The participants also learned about the current state of affairs regarding judiciary and fundamental rights, justice freedom and security, in each of the EU Aspirants across the Western Balkans. Through discussions on common problems, they broadened their outlook of similar situations and challenges faced by their peers.

*Vesna Jevtic from the Ministry of Finance of Republic of Serbia* stressed her fascination with lecturers engaged in the Summer School. “The knowledge of the lecturers and their familiarity with the themes really impressed me. They informed the participants in a very adequate manner, therefore their views and experiences related to Chapters 23 and 24 were precious. I would like to emphasize the importance of ReSPA’s role in relation to the topics presented to us during the Summer School. The second dimension I would like to point out about ReSPA is the contacts that we as participants are making among each other, that we continue to nourish by sharing the experiences and socializing even privately.”

“This Summer School was remarkable, because of the participation of civil servants from the region who do similar jobs and have similar problems and challenges. We socialized and shared experiences, and we got reminded of the values of the European Union, the EU accession process and related special recommendations. We talked about the techniques that will enable us to do our job better and make the process of EU accession easier. We learned about general theoretical perspective to the EU and its institutions, how they function and what is their expected future, as well as about the challenges that the EU faces and the specifics related to Chapters 23 and 24. I wish to thank ReSPA for the great organization”, *Mitar Sladoje from the Directorate for European Integration, Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. ■





## Interparliamentary Conference: Independent and Modern Public Administration in the EU and in Enlargement Countries

ReSPA, 28–29 September 2017

An interparliamentary conference on “Independent and Modern Public Administration in the EU and in Enlargement Countries” was held as part of the 2017 European Parliament’s Support Programme for the Enlargement Countries’ Parliaments. The conference was organised by the European Parliament in cooperation with the Parliament of Montenegro, and the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) that hosted the event.

Participants in the conference were more than 30 members of pre-accession countries’ parliaments of the Western Balkans and Turkey, coming from the parliamentary committees dealing with structural reforms and public administration, and members of the European Parliament, including the Vice-President of the European Parliament Ryszard Czarnecki and David Martin, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation to the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, representatives of the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro and the European Commission, as well as representatives of international organizations (OECD/SIGMA, Regional Anticorruption Initiative) and non-governmental organisations (Transparency International).



At the opening of the conference, the *Vice-President of the European Parliament Ryszard Czarnecki* said that “making promises to the voters that a particular country would enter the Union in some specified year may mean that the other side will postpone the negotiations on the most difficult chapters until the end of negotiations. Making decisions when the clock sets the days and hours to sign the association or pre-accession treaty and possible delay will be treated as a failure of politicians making such promises. That is also adverse for the state seeking to sign such an arrangement. I would advise to focus on negotiations, on the most important issues for specific country, and on establishing a list of priorities. Without this hierarchy of importance, negotiations are much more difficult.”

“The capacity of the state administration to assume the obligations of membership in the European Union is a key criterion in assessing the readiness of a candidate country. A more efficient organization of state administration, depoliticization of public services, increasing the level of reliability, predictability, responsibility and transparency are key segments that need to be paid more attention to in order for Montenegro to become part of the ‘European Administrative Space,” said *Ivan Brajović, President of the Parliament of Montenegro*.

“Public Administration Reform has proved to be a challenge for the EU and Enlargement countries. The achievement of objectives, like rationalisation of public administration, de-politicisation of work of civil servants, and better governance at local



nesses. The ultimate goal of our organisation is to help its Members to prepare for membership in the European Union. The reform and improvement in this area is a challenging task. Many efforts have to be undertaken at both technical and political level, but strong political commitment towards the improvement of administration remains the key prerequisite for any change,” ReSPA Director concluded. ■

**The European Parliament Support Programme for the Parliaments of the Enlargement countries entails Western Balkans and Turkey. The aim of the Programme is to support democracy in these countries by strengthening parliamentary capacity and fostering parliamentary dialogue, in line with the European Parliament political objectives and the decisions of its political authorities. It also facilitates the EU enlargement process by helping these countries to comply with the EU accession criteria through increased parliamentary participation and oversight.**

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level require not only strong political support, but also a strong belief that citizens deserve good administration and a better quality of life,” emphasized *H.E. Aivo Orav, Head of Delegation and Ambassador of the European Union to Montenegro*. “Frequently we forget that the competence and the efficiency of public administration have a strong horizontal dimension: they are reflected on the quality of the legislation in all sectors, on the accountability of all public institutions, and on the capacity of all civil servants to deliver results. Within this framework, Parliaments can contribute substantially to better regulation, to reduce fragmentation of the public administration, and to increase legal certainty for citizens and businesses,” *Ambassador Orav* pointed out.

Ever since its establishment in 2010, ReSPA has organized a great number of capacity building activities and produced a number of publications, research papers and comparative studies related to different segments of public administration reform.

Thousands of public servants from the region participated in its regional conferences, trainings, seminars, workshops and other events. “We are particularly glad that the conference which is dedicated to the topic of Independent and Modern Public Administration, takes place at ReSPA,” said *Ratka Sekulović, ReSPA Director*. “Our main goal is to enhance and foster regional cooperation and to support the governments in the region to develop better public administration, public services, and overall governance systems for the benefit of their citizens and busi-







## ReSPA at 24th INFOFEST: Future Path of Digitalization and Connectivity

Budva, Montenegro, 25–26 September 2017



of doing business “in the cloud” (Cloud Computing), Communication technologies and IoT (Internet of Things), security of information systems and technology.

Jointly with the Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro, ReSPA organised an open panel at the INFOFEST dedicated to the main trends in the world and in the Western Balkans in domains of Open Data and e-services. At the meeting of the ReSPA eGovernment Working Group it was concluded that the Western Balkan region is ready to work, in collaboration with ReSPA, on improving e-Participation and on developing more efficient and effective public services. ■

The ReSPA eGovernment Working Group has for the second time participated at the Festival of Information Technology Achievements (INFOFEST). This is one of the most important events of the kind in the South-East Europe. It gathers global and regional ICT leaders

and experts, business companies working in the IT sector, academia and representatives from public administration institutions. The 24th INFOFEST main themes were related to the Development of e-government and information society, technical and business aspects

## Regional Conference on the EU Budget Support

Tirana, Albania, 21 September 2017

In order to support the institutional capacities for the Sector Budget Support, ReSPA and the German International Cooperation (GIZ) jointly organized the 3rd Regional Conference on the EU Budget Support, hosted by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania.

The conference served as a discussion platform for national representatives and representatives of the European Commission and



EU Delegations to share experiences and lessons learned during various phases of budget support operations. A general conclusion was that ReSPA's and GIZ – Open

Regional Fund's promotion of the EU integration through regional cooperation will greatly reinforce Western Balkans in relation to the budget support. ■

## Seminar on Revised Internal Audit Standards

Skopje, Macedonia, 14–15 September 2017



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The quality of internal audit work is an important precondition for successful implementation of the principles of public financial management. Internal audit provides assurance and advice to public sector managers. In this regard, ReSPA organised the Seminar on Revised Internal Audit Standards that gathered 70 officials from Ministries of Finance – Central Harmonization Units (CHUs) and internal auditors from ReSPA Members and Kosovo\*. Representatives of the CHUs were present because one of their key activities is development of public sector internal audit methodology in line with the internal audit standards, as well as quality control of internal audit activities. Public sector internal auditors were present as they are obliged to apply internal audit methodology in practice. In fact, the role of internal audit in improving internal control

and governance systems is fundamental.

The focus of discussions at the Seminar was on the requirements of the revised internal audit (IA) standards in force as of 1 January 2017, in accordance with the International Professional Practice Framework (IPPF), impact of revised IA standards on IA methodology, and quality checking of IA activities performed by the CHUs with practical experiences.

*Dragan Tevdovski, Minister of Finance of Macedonia* opened the seminar, and keynote speaker *Raymond Hill, representative of the European Commission's DG Budget*, in his presentation underlined the fundamental role of Internal Audit in improving internal control and governance systems. *Representatives of SIGMA, Lech Marcinkowski and Mirosława Boryczka*, presented the results of the SIGMA

assessment focused on internal audit in the public sector of ReSPA Members and Kosovo\*. *Prof. Boris Tušek of the Faculty of Economics and Business in Zagreb*, provided a detailed overview of the revised IPPF. Representatives of the CHU of the Ministry of Finance of Croatia presented the Croatian experience regarding the quality checking of internal audit activities performed by the CHU. Also, the importance of comprehensive application of the audit methodology was presented as a necessary precondition for making the internal audit practically capable of meeting the requirements associated with the systematic approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes, as well as providing measurable impacts of the internal audit. ■





## Study Visit to Strasbourg: Council of Europe, European Court of Human Rights and European Parliament

Strasbourg, 12–14 September 2017

ReSPA's group of 30 senior public officers, experts and administrative judges from the Western Balkans paid a visit to the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Participants in the study visit to the CoE and the ECtHR were judges of administrative and supreme courts, senior public servants from ministries and offices in charge of European integration, and officials from the ministries of justice of the Western Balkans countries.

The main themes for learning and discussions during the Study Visit to the ECtHR were:

working methods and case management of the ECtHR, right to access to information of public



### Feedback from participants of the Study Visit

“I want to extend my thanks to ReSPA Secretariat for organising this Study Visit. It is always much more efficient when one directly uses all the senses for gaining or building upon experiences. After this visit, I continue to strongly believe that, when professionals who are contributing to the same goal face each other and interact, this helps a lot in reaching a goal easier, in a shorter time, and with much more efficiency and increased awareness in terms of overcoming obstacles and shortcomings.”

*Eralda Çani, Deputy Minister,  
Ministry of European Integration of Albania*

“This Study Visit really did meet my expectations, and the information we received was precious. Of course, I will be able to use the acquired knowledge when discussing issues related to the application of the European Convention on Human Rights and the ECtHR judgements. I think the possibility of contacting and getting acquainted with institutional experts and Council of Europe representatives was of particular importance. Networking of participants from ReSPA Members who do similar jobs is a special and perhaps the most significant quality of projects implemented by ReSPA. The way the same problems or dilemmas are solved paves the path that we all look for in order to adapt to the new legal framework.”

*Svetlana Budisavljevic, Judge,  
Administrative Court of Montenegro*

## Feedback from participants of the Study Visit

“Networking lies at the heart of study visits like this one, as the participants have the possibility to meet and share experiences with younger and older colleagues, and to establish contacts with peers from the region. Networking gives participants an opportunity to come up with new ideas for the future collaboration and projects of common interest. Such activity, especially when well organized as this one, enables participants to put their local institutional and legal situation in perspective and to benefit from it.”

*Migena Leskoviku, Professor, University of Tirana, Albania*

“In my opinion, the topics were well selected and very useful, in fact they represented a good synergy of theory and practice. It was very interesting to meet the ECtHR judges, to listen to the reflections of the experts, and to share with all of them our ideas and challenges in the process of achieving the ECtHR standards. This kind of professional event is very important for understanding that the ECtHR should be seen as a partner in improving our justice system, and to see that we are all together in the European system of safeguarding human rights.”

*Florjan Kalaja, Judge in Vlora District Administrative Court and Counsellor to Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Albania*

interest, right to free elections, children's rights, pension and labour law cases, and other cases of importance for the implementation of the European Convention of Human Rights in the field of administrative law.

At the CoE, topics discussed included activities of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), execution of judgements of the ECtHR, and the Program for Continuous Human Rights Education of Legal professionals (HELP).

At the European Parliament, participants of the Study Visit followed the debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and observed the voting session. ■

## Better Regulation in Western Balkans: Improving Public Participation

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 21–22 September 2017

The regional meeting on Better Regulation in the Western Balkans was convened in close cooperation between ReSPA and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). The meeting was focused on improving public participation in legislative and policy processes.

The participants had an opportunity to learn about the findings of the comparative research on Better Regulation in the Western Balkans with an emphasis on public consultations, as well as about Western Balkans' Recommendations on Public Participation. The meet-



ing gathered regional experts and public servants dealing with Better Regulation efforts. They contributed to a constructive discussion, particularly during the panel sessions on public-private dialogue and involvement of the private sector in poli-

cy making, and the session on participation of civil society in monitoring of public participation. Speakers from SIGMA and the Council of Europe presented on the topic of public participation, and contributed to the discussion and recommendations.





“My sincere gratitude to the ReSPA team for organisation of the regional meeting on Better Regulation in the Western Balkans, especially for the discussions on relevant topics and the recommendations developed by the RCC and ReSPA. This gathering was very successful and well needed to improve my knowledge on legislative and policy processes, Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and public consultations.”

*Enrriko Kapiti, Specialist,  
Monitoring Unit at Department  
of Legislation, Monitoring  
Programme and Anticorruption,  
Prime Minister's Office,  
Tirana, Albania ■*

## 8th meeting of the Programme Committee on European Integration

Tirana, Albania, 22 September 2017



8th meeting of the Programme Committee on European Integration (EI PC), a subsidiary body to the Governing Board of ReSPA, was chaired by the representative of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania. The main objective was to discuss the activities implemented during the current year and to provide recommendations for further programme activities in the area of European Integration.

At the meeting, representatives of the ReSPA Secretariat reported on the activities implemented within the European Integration Pillar since April 2017, and presented the plan of activities for the remaining EC grant implementation period. Members of the EI PC positively evaluated the implemented activities. They endorsed the activities planned for the remaining implementation period of the current EC Grant, and they gave propositions for future activities in the European Integration thematic area. ■

### Presentation of the Feasibility Study on ReSPA Quality Management Centre

European Commission DG NEAR, Brussels, Belgium, 7 September - The Feasibility Study on ReSPA Quality Management Centre, prepared in the period from April to September 2017, is of strategic importance for the continuation of ReSPA's activities in domain of quality in public administration and services. This was concluded at the presentation of the draft of this Feasibility Study to the representatives of the European Commission's Directorate General on Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and ReSPA. The presentation also included information on the needs and expectations from the identified target audiences in the Western Balkans, and the potential role of ReSPA in improving quality management in public administration.

The first step in developing of the Feasibility Study on ReSPA Quality Management Centre was a Focus Group conducted in June 2017 on the margins of the 9QC – Quality Management Conference in Malta. The Focus Group highlighted the needs and expectations of senior public servants working in this relatively new field. It also encompassed the state of the art of their capacities, the capacities that require further development, as well as the implementation of quality management instruments such as CAF, ISO, EFQM. Finally, institutional, managerial and financial aspects of the service provision were discussed. The inputs, ideas, concept proposals and opinions from participants, related to the mission and establishment, target audiences and functioning of the potential ReSPA Quality Management Centre were valuable for further design of the Feasibility Study. ■



## ReSPA Budget Committee meeting

Podgorica, Montenegro, 13–14 September 2017

ReSPA 21st Budget Committee meeting (the third meeting in 2017) gathered relevant representatives from each ReSPA Member. The first day of the meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Finance of Montenegro, while the second day of the meeting took place at ReSPA premises.

At the meeting, a draft proposal of the ReSPA Budget for

2018-2019 was presented, and the Budget Committee Members reviewed it prior to submission to the ReSPA Governing Board. Following the new ReSPA Financial Regulation adopted in 2017, ReSPA Secretariat submitted a two-year budget proposal. Among other issues, the Budget Committee also reviewed and considered the ReSPA Audit Report for

2016 and Expenditure Verification Report on the ReSPA Core Budget Implementation for 2016, EC Financial Audit of the previous EC Grant contract no. 2013/331-241, Interim Financial Report and Interim Financial Statements for the period January to June 2017, draft proposal of the ReSPA Budget 2018-2019 and ReSPA liquidity and cash management report. ■

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## ReSPA workshop on Strategic planning

Kolasin, Montenegro, 28–31 August 2017



During its internal workshop on strategic planning, ReSPA Secretariat prepared a detailed Plan of Activities for 2018 with related budgets and timetable.

This Plan of Activities covers the period until 10 December 2018, which is the period of implementation of the current EC grant. Also, during the work-

shop, preparatory activities for the new ReSPA Strategic Framework (2019–2024) were undertaken. ■





## Governing Board meeting at Senior Officials level

ReSPA, 21 July 2017



The formal meeting of the ReSPA Governing Board at Senior Officials level was devoted to programme and institutional issues, which the Secretariat presents to the Governing Board on a quarterly basis. The Governing Board approved the Interim report for the period 11 March 2016 – 11 July 2017, and the information on ReSPA Operations for the period from 1 April to 11 July 2017. The Governing

Board discussed, among others, the following issues: information on the ReSPA Audit Report for 2016, and ReSPA Core budget expenditure verification; information regarding ReSPA's liquidity and National contributions for 2017; information on the follow-up of the meeting related to the Resulted Oriented Monitoring (ROM), Financial Audit

of the EC Grant 2013-2015 and EC's Evaluation of Regional Organizations; information on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between ReSPA and the Ministry of Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, and the Memorandum of Understanding between ReSPA and the National School for Public Administration of the Republic of Croatia. ■



## ReSPA receives a letter of gratitude from Milena Harito, former Minister of State for Innovation and Public Administration of the Republic of Albania

**Tirana, September 8, 2017** – On completion of her mandate at the Ministry of State for Innovation and Public Administration of the Republic of Albania, ReSPA received a letter of gratitude for cooperation from Minister Milena Harito.

“Thanks to this support and the specific work we have been able to undertake together, Albania has made progress in the public administration reform (PAR). This has included the preparation of the legal and strategic framework on the organization of the state administration, the establishment of the PAR governance structures, and implementation of the civil service reform, as well as the building of an innovative model for the delivery of public services in Albania,” Minister Harito wrote in her letter to the ReSPA Director.

“I am also pleased that over the past four years regional cooperation has enhanced, especially through the Regional School of Public Administration and the Regional Cooperation Council, proving that we were able to build bridges between the EU institutions, regional structures and high-level decision makers. The inclusion of digital agenda as a priority in the Berlin process at the Trieste Summit is one such example,” Minister Harito highlighted. ■

## About ReSPA



**ReSPA**  
Regional School  
of Public Administration

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an inter-governmental organisation supporting regional cooperation of public administrations in the Western Balkans. Its activities are supported by the European Commission (EC) through directly managed funds, and co-funded through annual contributions of the ReSPA Members.

ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, while public servants from Kosovo\* participate in ReSPA activities funded by the European Commission.

**The Purpose of ReSPA** is to support governments in the Western Balkan region develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses, and prepare them for membership in the European Union.

ReSPA serves as an **innovative regional hub** for policy research, knowledge sharing and networking programmes in the field of public administration in Western Balkans.

**Thematic areas covered by ReSPA are:** Public Administration Reform; European Integration; Human Resources Management and Development; e-Government; Ethics and Integrity; Public Procurement; Public Private Partnership; General Administrative Procedures and Administrative Justice; Better Regulation; Quality in Public Administration and Public Services.

**ReSPA's main objectives in the period from 2016–2020 are:**

- Improve co-operation in the field of public administration amongst the ReSPA Members;
- Strengthen administrative capacity in the public administrations of the ReSPA Members as required by the European Integration process;
- Develop human resources in the public administrations of the ReSPA Members in line with the European Principles of Public Administration.

These objectives are being achieved through three pillars of the ReSPA **Programme of Work:**

- (1) **European Integration Pillar:** Increased capacity of public administration in the ReSPA Members necessary for successful conducting of the European Integration process;
- (2) **Public Administration Reform Pillar:** Facilitated and enhanced cooperation and exchange of experience in Public Administration Reform and European Integration activities in the ReSPA Members;
- (3) **Governance for Growth Pillar:** Ensured effective coordination of the implementation of the Dimension N – Effective Public Services of the Governance for Growth pillar of the South-East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy.

**ReSPA's main achievements in 2014–2017:** Over 150 networking and capacity building activities (seminars, workshops, conferences, study visits, seasonal schools, trainings, meetings) involving over 2,500 public servants from the Western Balkans, and more than 300 international and regional experts; 15 regional comparative research projects with policy recommendations for Public Administration Reform related solutions.