

Regional School of Public Administration

# ReSPA NeWSLETTER

March 2017

*“Regional cooperation has no alternative since it significantly contributes to overcoming respective national challenges”*

(ReSPA Director)

*Dear reader,*

It is my pleasure to share with you the first edition of the Newsletter of ReSPA for this year. It is hoped that this newsletter will be a valuable information tool and reference point for various stakeholders involved in ReSPA's activities.



ReSPA continues in its efforts to contribute to the Public Administration Reform under the EU integration process in the Western Balkans.

After successful implementation of activities in the last quarter of 2016, which coincides with the beginning of implementation of the current EC grant, ReSPA Secretariat prepared comprehensive and detailed Plan of Activities (PoA) for 2017 and started with its implementation. The PoA was developed in accordance with the PoW 2016-2017, the Ex-post Evaluation of the ReSPA's previous EC grant and Needs Assessment, as well as a number of strategic documents and recommendations received from the ReSPA Governing Board, the European Commission (DG NEAR), and previously developed ReSPA regional comparative studies and analytical papers.

During the reporting period, ReSPA organised (eighteen) activities funded by the EC grant. The implementation of both training and networking activities included 292 participants and thirty-nine experts/trainers and one company.

This newsletter will bring additional information on the ReSPA's completed and planned activities for 2017 and impressions of different stakeholders who participated in ReSPA events.

We will continue publishing regular editions of ReSPA newsletter in the coming period and, in this direction, your feedback and suggestions on its content and layout improving would be highly appreciated.

Most sincerely,

Ratka Sekulovic  
Director of ReSPA

## EU integration process and support provided

The European Union has envisaged the use of Budget Support through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA-II) 2014-2020. The introduction of this instrument represents the move from project approach in the pre-accession assistance towards the sector approach, which is one of basic principles of IPA II. This aid modality is implemented through the Sector Reform Contract which is concluded with the beneficiary country. The conclusion of a Sector Reform Contract is subject to fulfillment of certain eligibility criteria by the beneficiary and the proof that the beneficiary country has adopted credible and relevant sector reform strategic and programming documents.

The effective Budget Support requires credible partnership and mutual accountability of both the European Union, as donor, and public institutions of the beneficiary. Since this instrument represents a new aid modality, there is a need for continuous capacity building regarding the design and implementation of Sector Reform Contracts. Therefore, in the past quarter, ReSPA organized two country workshops on Budget Support for administrations of Montenegro and Serbia.

### *Workshop on EU Budget Support for the Civil Servants of Montenegro*

The Workshop on EU Budget Support for the civil servants of Montenegro, held in Danilovgrad from 23 to 25 January 2017 ensured the development of a practical understanding of sector approach in the context of IPA funding and designing and implementing the budget support in an effective way, by combining the theory with the case study. The participants were given the opportunity to understand and apply the Budget Support guidelines through simulation (lectures, readings, examples) and illustrated examples. The workshop gathered the participants from the National IPA Coordinator Offices (NIPAC), the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice.



### *Workshop on EU Budget Support for the Civil Servants of Serbia*

The Workshop on EU Budget Support for the civil servants of Serbia, held in Belgrade from 22 to 24 March 2017, specifically tackled the implementation (eligibility and performance), coordination and communication aspects of the Sector Budget Support. The workshop was tailored to support civil servants to use their knowledge of the EU Budget Support as a basis for a Sector Reform Contract implementation.



The discussion was focused on using sector monitoring for demonstrating eligibility and performance indicators for calculating variable tranches and coordinating incentives to perform. It put the onus on the participants' learning how sector monitoring of Public Administration Reform fed the Sector Reform Contract monitoring, coordination and communication. It also helped them appraise the gains that Sector Budget Support could bring to a sector, focusing on the results that had to be achieved and their measuring.

The workshop gathered the participants from the National IPA Coordinator's Office, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Republican Secretariat for Public Policy, the Customs Administration of the Republic of Serbia, the General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the EU Delegation staff and the representative of the European Movement in Serbia, on behalf of Non-governmental organisations (NGO) sector.

### Furthering of PAR reform with ReSPA support

#### *Meeting of the Public Administration Network*



The Public Administration Reform (PAR) Network is recognized as a particular forum for exchange of knowledge and experience among the ReSPA Members in the area of PAR. The 6th Meeting of the PAR Network held from 27-28 February 2017 in Belgrade, Serbia, was attended by 30 participants, top managers and decision makers responsible for overall aspects of PAR, from coordination of public policies and development of PAR strategies, to their implementation.

The meeting supported the initiative for development of the Methodology for Costing of PAR Strategies, the initiative for conducting the needs assessment in developing IT solutions for costing and monitoring of implementation of PAR strategies (to be supported through ReSPA mechanism of in-country support), as well as the initiative for analysing standards for establishment of public institutions.

#### *Administrative Legal Framework in Western Balkans*



The Regional Conference on "Administrative Legal Framework in Western Balkans" was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 21 - 22 February 2017. Over the past two years, all countries in the Western Balkans, except for Bosnia and Herzegovina, have enacted new General Administrative Procedure Acts (GAPAs). These laws are essential for public administration reform, and thus for improving the services that the public administration provides

to citizens and businesses. The experiences of countries in the region that have carried out reforms in general administrative procedures can greatly help and facilitate Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession to such reforms. For this reason, the Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina and ReSPA organized a two-day Conference on New General Administrative Procedure Acts in the Western Balkans.

The participants at the Conference were experts in domain of administrative law and administrative justice from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Western Balkans region and EU countries. The topics covered during the Conference included: principles of administrative law in the EU; experiences of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia in preparations for

implementation of the new regulations on the general administrative procedure; new institutes in domain of the general administrative procedure, as well as situation analysis regarding the administrative law in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the Conference, the experts presented the ReSPA's regional comparative study on Legal Remedies in Administrative Procedures in Western Balkans, focusing on the recommendations for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Conference had a significant media coverage (including a brief presentation on national TV, and publication of a press release and over ten on-line portals), mainly because the event was opened by the Minister of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and ReSPA GB member at Ministerial level, Mr. Josip Grubesa. Among the recommendations from the Conference is the initiative to prepare an analysis that will facilitate policy decisions related to the area of general administrative procedure, and provide feasible options for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its entities.

*"I have met great people from Macedonia and, in that way, we have opened possibility for cooperation and acquisition of new knowledge. Also, all experiences that I have heard from the speakers will be of the great benefit for my work, and in particular practice about the need for "double" consultations, i.e. public consultations before enacting not only General Administrative Procedure Acts, but also other regulations. Your organization was excellent, and for me, since I am for the first time participating, there was not enough time to raise questions and express some of my thoughts.*

*I am coming from the cantonal level of government, and I have experience in working in property-related and legal affairs' departments of municipalities, in the military court, as a senior manager etc. Considerations related to a need for drafting new General Administrative Procedure Act(s) in Bosnia and Herzegovina based on new principles are quite justified. There is a real need, and I would dare to say, it is a necessity. However, there is no "recipe" how this can be resolved through political compromise, but if we do not give it a try, we would not be able to know. I am committed to contribute to this process and to participate in this endeavor, of course, if this is needed." (Ms. Ružica Jukić-Ezgeta, participant of the event)*

### *E-Procurement Perspectives in the Western Balkans*



The joint meeting of the Public Procurement and eGovernment Working Groups on "e-Procurement Perspectives in the Western Balkans", was held in Ljubljana (Slovenia) on 30-31 March 2017. The event was opened by an inspiring speech of Boris Koprivnikar, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia. The participants were given the opportunity to get familiar with the four best case e-Procurement examples deriving from Slovenia, Macedonia,

Croatia and Estonia, highlighting the main similarities and differences in the related field. The gained knowledge was taken into consideration in particular by those Western Balkans countries that plan to introduce or further upgrade their e-procurement systems.

Based on the exchanged experiences and presented different e-Procurement systems, the participants identified the topics of common interest to be covered by the follow-up ReSPA activities with a regional component. The common interest was identified during the presentation of open contracting and open data realized by Open Contracting Partnership organization,



with a special focus on the use of “red-flags” standards, management of data and correlation of those mechanisms with the overall activities in setting up the national e-procurement systems in line with the EU requirements. The e-catalogues (basic information, existing practices, etc.) were also identified as a topic of common interest. It was supplemented by the examples of innovative practices presented by the UNDP, RCC and eSEE. The participants expressed their satisfaction with provided opportunity for exchange of experience on the existing practices (national and international) related to e-procurement and for further networking.

*The “RESPA’s workshop in Ljubljana was an excellent opportunity to share our experiences in the field of e-procurement. These events are always valuable, not only to hear the presenters, but also to network with colleagues from around the region. Macedonia has invested a lot of time and resources in developing its e-procurement system and we are glad RESPA organized this forum to present what we have learned to the participants. We encourage RESPA to continue its support to the activities related to e-procurement given the fact that the new EU Procurement Directives envisage 2018 as a milestone year for introducing fully fledged use of e-procurement in all EU Member States. We should use our comparative advantage to show that the Western Balkan countries are capable of following innovative and progressive solutions in procurement just like the Member States”. (Mr. Aleksandar Argirovski, Acting Director of Public Procurement Bureau, Macedonia)*



*Leadership Development System - Estonian Practice*



The Working Group on the Human Resources Management and Development had opportunity to attend a two day programme on “Leadership Development System – Estonian Practice” which was organised by the Top Civil Service Excellence Centre of the Government Office of Estonia from 9 - 10 February 2017. This study visit offered an opportunity for exchange of

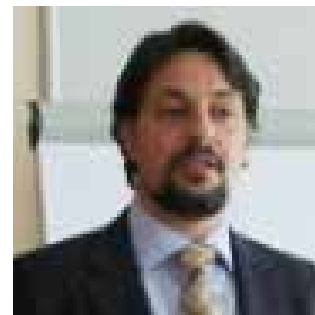
experience on the competency framework, competency based recruitment and selection process, coaching and talent management programmes.

The Estonian experience shows that for successful building of the coaching culture it is instrumental to train and engage members of the top management who, thereafter, become the sponsors of coaching development in their organisations. The senior managers in public administration, particularly those dealing with PAR, need individualised support (e.g. coaching) in order to efficiently implement highly demanding reforms.

It seemed that the workshop made a significant impact and the majority of the participants expressed their intention to learn about coaching in more detail and seek the ways for possible implementation. During the final feedback the participants suggested ReSPA to organize the follow-up events for learning more about coaching implementation, organise training of trainers on coaching and distribute coaching skill in the Western Balkans.

*“The study visit to Estonia was of the utmost importance for all participants. The exchange of experience with the highly professional colleagues from the region, as well as the examples of good practices presented by the colleagues from Estonia, provided us with the ability to avoid certain difficulties in applying the tools that are used in human resource management.*

*The Estonian experience in the field of competencies is of great importance, since the amendments of the law in the public administration system in Serbia are in preparation and they will include introduction of the competency framework. I, personally, had the opportunity to expand my knowledge about coaching and I am sure it will be useful for my future work. All compliments to colleagues from ReSPA for a very well organized study visit and to the lecturers from Estonia who were willing to share with us their valuable experiences”. (Mr. Danilo Roncevic, Director of the Human Resource Management Service, Serbia)*



#### *Mobility Scheme Programme for Albanian Delegation*

The Albanian delegation led by Ms. Milena Harito, the State Minister for Innovation and Public Administration, paid visit to Pristina (Kosovo\*) from 02-03 February 2017, Podgorica (Montenegro) from 23-24 February 2017, and to Belgrade (Serbia), on 06 March 2017. A number of meetings were organised with their counterparts. The respective visits contributed to enhancing the regional cooperation in the field of public service and public administration reform.

The Albanian delegation had the opportunity to share good practices and discuss about possible cooperation with their counterparts in the Western Balkans and possible implementation of the concrete cooperation activities. The meetings also contributed to the discussion on the role of the civil society and non-governmental organisations in the implementation of the public administration reform and to bringing concrete examples of good practices from the Western Balkans that could be applied to the Albanian context.

#### *ReSPA Open Day in Belgrade*



The ReSPA Open Day held in Belgrade, Serbia, on 25 January 2017 was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government of Serbia. This event supported presentation of the findings and recommendations of the three ReSPA comparative studies and one analytical paper (1) Improving the Implementation of Merit Recruitment Procedures in the Western Balkans; 2) Better Regulation in the Western Balkans, 3)

Optimization of Public Administration in the Western Balkans; 4) Analytical Paper on Managing Process of Implementation of Public Administration Reform Strategies in ReSPA Members.

The findings of the studies provided information to the civil servants in Serbia on the state of art in regard to each of the topics, as well as the directions/recommendations for both the countries and ReSPA in making further progress in regard to the topics of the respective studies. ReSPA also presented its instruments of support to implementation of recommendations i.e. Mechanism of In-country Support for Urgent Needs and Peer to Peer Mechanism.

\* 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, in accordance with “Arrangements Regarding Regional Representation and Cooperation - Rev10 RC 23/02/2012”.

*“The Regional School of Public Administration (RESPA) contributes to dissemination of knowledge, good practice and European values, which will enable faster EU accession process, building good governance and improvement of the business climate”, said Mr. Ozegovic, the State Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government of Serbia and the ReSPA Governing Board substitute member at the Ministerial level.*

*Mr. Zeljko Ozegovic said that in the reform process each ReSPA member inevitably faced many challenges, which sometimes could be similar, but sometimes different from those in other countries.*

*“In addition, not all countries are at the same level of solving certain issues during the reform process, so the great contribution of ReSPA as a regional institution reflects in networking and connecting, enabling us to share our knowledge and experience and to mutually compare and learn from each other, based on good practice, as well as avoiding repetition of errors”, said Mr. Ozegovic.*



*ReSPA Open Day in Sarajevo*

During the ReSPA Open Day held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 22 February 2017, the ReSPA Secretariat presented the plan of activities for 2017, and the mechanisms for in-country support for ReSPA members. In addition, the comparative studies were presented by the invited experts: 1) regional comparative study and analysis: a) Optimisation of Public Administration in the Western Balkans b) Managing Process of Implementation of Public Administration Reform Strategies in Western Balkans; 2) regional comparative study on novelties in general administrative procedures in the Western Balkans, with special focus on the legal remedies in the administrative procedures and the recommendations for Bosnia and Herzegovina; and 3) regional comparative study on human resources management: Improving the implementation of merit recruitment procedures in the Western Balkans, with recommendations for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The objective of this event was to present the main findings from the above mentioned regional comparative studies and the recommendations that were relevant for Bosnia and Herzegovina.



**ReSPA cooperation and partnership building**



ReSPA and the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) signed the Memorandum of Understanding on 24 February 2017. The main purpose of the Memorandum is to strengthen the existing partnership and create a framework for mutual cooperation between ReSPA and RAI. It is also aimed at building a strong partnership that will generate synergies and enhance sharing of knowledge and expertise between the parties, as well as avoiding potential duplication and overlapping of activities.

The ReSPA Director attended 31st Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Board on 15th March 2017. The Director presented the activities implemented in 2016 and the Programme of Work for 2017. She pointed out the cooperation between ReSPA and RCC in the implementation of SEE 2020 Strategy in the field of Effective public services and the role of ReSPA as a regional coordinator for the Governance for Growth pillar. In addition, within the second panel of 3rd Donor coordination meeting “Public Administration Reform, Rule of Law and Security Issues”, organized by RCC on 16 March 2017, the ReSPA Director presented the needs and priorities in PAR in the Western Balkan countries and support that ReSPA provides to its beneficiaries.

ReSPA continued its cooperation with the Centre for Integrity in Defence (CID). The representative of CID visited ReSPA on 14 February 2017. CID is conducting a research on integrity in the Western Balkans which will result in production of the study on Building Integrity in the Western Balkans. The results of the study will serve as a base for the Training of Trainers on Integrity which is planned for September 2017.

## Upcoming ReSPA activities April – June 2017

### Comparative Studies, Analysis, Guidelines

- Comparative Study on Better Regulation and Competitiveness
- Study on Case-law of the ECtHR on Administrative Dispute
- Feasibility Study on RESPA Quality Management Regional Center
- Baseline Analysis on Quality Management in Public Administration and Services
- Guidelines for Methodology for Costing of PAR Strategies

### Conferences, ReSPA Open Day

- Regional Conference on Enhancing the Development of Managerial Accountability in Civil Service in Budva, Montenegro
- Conference on Open Data in Brussels, Belgium
- EU Quality Management Conference in Valletta, Malta
- NISPAcee Conference in Kazan, Russia
- Service Delivery Conference in Tirana, Durres
- 3rd Regional Conference on EU Budget Support in Tirana, Albania
- ReSPA Open Day in Brussels, Belgium

### Training, Workshops

- Training on Legal alignment
- Training on Better Regulation in Administrative Law
- Workshop on EU Budget Support for Kosovo\*
- Role and Functioning of Centres of Government in Western Balkans, Danilovgrad, Montenegro

### Working Group Meetings, Study Visits

- HRMD Working Group Meeting, Tirana, Albania
- PIFC Working Group Meeting, Danilovgrad, Montenegro
- PPP Working Group Meeting with NICs, Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- Procurement of Translation Services, Belgrade, Serbia
- Study Visit to the European Investment Bank, Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- Study Visit for Judges of Administrative Courts to CoE and ECtHR, Strasbourg, France