

## Executive Education

# Strategic Communication for EU Integration

30 September – 1 October 2025

Tirana, Albania

The current **EU enlargement momentum** is matched by renewed engagement, particularly through the progressive integration of enlargement countries into the EU single market. This approach serves as a catalyst (not a substitute) for accession, delivering tangible socio-economic benefits even before full membership to those ready in specific areas. The Western Balkans continues to advance on its European integration path, with ReSPA's member administrations taking determined steps to align with EU governance principles and reform standards. Demonstrating its commitment to this process, the EU has significantly increased financial support. This momentum is further reinforced by the European Commission's 2024 Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, which couples a €6 billion financial package with targeted measures to boost investment, foster institutional innovation, and drive sustainable reforms. The Plan also offers a unique opportunity to enhance the visibility of reforms, strengthen public trust, and reinforce government accountability.

In this evolving context, **strategic communication has become a critical instrument** for public institutions. Effective communication enables governments to articulate the benefits of reforms, engage citizens in meaningful dialogue, and counter misinformation that can undermine progress. Citizens increasingly expect transparent explanations, demonstrable results, and consistent messaging across government bodies, placing a premium on coordinated, evidence-based communication. As specified in the 2024 Enlargement package, *enlargement should be accompanied by targeted communication actions aimed at informing the public opinion about the process, both in the EU and in the candidate countries*. ReSPA has already responded to this need by introducing communication-focused content in its 2024 and 2025 Summer Schools. Building on this momentum, the Executive Education Programme on "Strategic Communication for EU Integration" shall be designed to provide advanced, practice-oriented learning. Participants shall gain access to expert-led sessions, practical tools, and tailored strategies, while also sharing concrete institutional experiences with peers from across the region.

The training draws on recent experiences from other candidate countries and combines expert inputs with interactive workshops and peer exchange formats. It supports participants in their day-to-day responsibilities and institutional reform goals by enhancing their capacity to communicate reforms credibly, manage public expectations, and promote broad understanding of the benefits and challenges of EU integration.

### Programme Objectives

- Equip participants with modern tools and techniques for effective strategic communication around EU reforms and integration;
- Strengthen participants' capacity to develop clear messages and reform narratives that resonate with diverse audiences;

- Enhance institutional coordination and communication planning across ministries and public agencies;
- Address key challenges such as disinformation, public skepticism, and political polarization;
- Facilitate peer learning, networking, and exchange of good practices in public communication and strategic messaging.

### Tentative Programme

#### Day 1: Framing and fundamentals of EU Accession communication

08:30 – 08:45	<b>Welcome coffee and registration</b>
08:45 – 09:00	<b>Opening remarks</b>
09:00 – 09:15	<b>Introduction &amp; expectations</b>
09:15 – 10:30	<b>Building trust through communication: What works in times of reform</b>
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:00 – 12:15	<b>Communicating complexity – Framing EU topics for citizens</b>
12:15 – 13:30	<i>Lunch Break</i>
13:30 – 15:00	<b>Group exercise – Narrative development for reform milestones</b>
15:00 – 15:15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
15:15 – 16:30	<b>Institutional communication: Who says what, and when?</b>

#### Day 2: Politics, practice, and participation

08:45 – 09:00	<b>Welcome Coffee and Registration</b>
09:00 – 10:15	<b>Political messaging in EU accession – What works, what fails?</b>
10:15 – 10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:45 – 12:15	<b>Scenario-based Group Work – Communication strategies in action</b>
12:15 – 13:15	<i>Lunch Break</i>
13:15 – 14:15	<b>Group Presentations</b>
14:15 – 14:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
14:30 – 16:00	<b>Dealing with disinformation: tactics for resilience</b>
16:00 – 16:30	<b>Certification, Evaluation and Closing Remarks</b>