



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO MONTENEGRO

PRESS RELEASE

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A regional School of Public Administration promoting cooperation in Western Balkans

PODGORICA 21 November 2008 - Western Balkans moved a step closer to a Regional School of Public Administration in Danilovgrad (RESPA). In the presence of the European Commission, the signature process of the International Agreement which provides for the establishment of the School in Montenegro has been initiated today.

The reform of public administrations is essential for both candidate and potential candidate countries in their path towards the EU. The future activities of the School will strengthen the administrative capacities of the signatory Parties while promoting regional co-operation.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, acting on behalf of Kosovo pursuant to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, shall, after signature, engage to ratification, acceptance or approval in accordance with their respective legal requirements.

It shall enter into force when five of the seven signatories have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval with the Depository, in this case, the government of Montenegro.

The Commission representative, Ambassador Maurer, welcomed the signing ceremony: "Today's signature represents a further step for the development of a fully fledged Regional School of Public Administration, in line with the Council Conclusions on the Western Balkans of the June 2008 and with the Thessaloniki agenda".

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Background

The Regional School for Public Administration (ReSPA) was created in May 2006 to promote regional cooperation in the field of public administration. It followed the Thessaloniki conclusions of June 2003 which, inter alia, emphasized the need to support necessary reforms in the field of public administration, strengthening administrative capacity and developing human resources in the field.

A phased approach was adopted for the establishment of ReSPA: Phase 1 started as of 1 November 2006 and will last about two years. ReSPA's work programme will consist of not only organising seminars for public administration professionals from across the Western Balkans region, but also to develop its own institutional and management set up with the

objective of establishing the School in the Western Balkans Region in preparation for its next phase.

The Phase 2, about to start, is planned to last at least three years, during which time ReSPA will evolve into a professional School, focusing on in-service training. During this Phase ReSPA will have its own legal personality, following ratification of the International Agreement, and will operate in the region.

As part of its deliberations, in January 2008, the ReSPA Steering Committee selected Danilovgrad, Montenegro, as the future seat of the school. It is planned that the school will initiate its activities in its own facilities during the course of 2009.

Finally, in Phase 3, from 2012 onwards, and upon decision of the signatories, ReSPA may develop into a more comprehensive model combining both academic education and professional training dimensions.

Additional information can be obtained from www.respaweb.eu