

ReSPA

Regional **S**chool of **P**ublic **A**dministration (Phase 2)

This project is financed by the EU



ReSPA/SC(2009)1/002

Progress Report 2008

The Steering Committee is invited to

- **Take note** of the implementation of the 2008 programme of work;
- **Take note** of the progress in ReSPA institutionalisation;

Overview of 2008 implementation of training and networking activities

Training. In its sixth session, held in Paris, in January 2008, the Steering Committee approved the work programme 2008. The programme was further developed following the Meeting with EU Schools of Public Administration and the decision of the 7th Steering Committee, held in Maastricht in April 2008.

The second Meeting of the ReSPA Schools and Institutes of Public Administration took place in Tirana in July 2008. The meeting decided about the process for development of the ReSPA Training Needs Assessment Methodology. The conclusions of the meeting were subsequently accepted by the Steering Committee leading to the development of the ReSPA Training Needs Assessment Methodology. The first results produced on the basis of this methodology were presented at the 9th session of the Steering Committee held in Sarajevo in November 2008. The Steering Committee decided that the Training Needs Assessment Methodology will be further developed in 2009. The meeting of the ReSPA Schools and Institutes of Public Administration was attended by the Option B resource persons to facilitate their further work on data provision for the ReSPA Training Needs Assessment. A meeting of the option B resource persons with the ReSPA team at the OECD was also organised back-to-back with the second Meeting of the ReSPA Schools and Institutes of Public Administration.

The second Meeting of the ReSPA Steering Committee with the representatives of the Schools of Public Administration of the EU Member states took place in Maastricht back-to-back with the 7th session of the Steering Committee. The general objective of the meetings was to promote cooperation between the EU and Western Balkans Schools and Institutes of Public Administration, as stipulated in the ReSPA Protocol of Cooperation, which calls for "*cooperation between public administration institutions from the region and similar institutions in the European Union*". In particular, and as demonstrated by the first meeting in Brussels (April 2007), the second meeting has provided a forum for exchange of information and experience. The representatives from the Western Balkan region had an opportunity to voice their needs for cooperation with their counterparts in the EU, and confront them with the proposals coming from their EU counterparts. This exchange did facilitate further tailoring of the cooperation proposals to the needs of the region and their subsequent implementation, to the extent possible, under the auspices of ReSPA. In particular, presentations were delivered from the German Baköv, the UK National School of Government, and the Slovene Centre for European Perspective. The meeting generated additional proposals from the Netherlands and France.

The Third Annual Conference of ReSPA was organised in cooperation with the Government of Serbia in Belgrade, on 24-25 September 2008. Following the first conference on Regulatory Management held in Skopje in November 2006, and the second annual conference on Making Strategies Work, held in Durres in 2007, it explored the issues of management of the Stock of Legislation.

In cooperation with NISPAcee, a training course on how to be a Better Policy Advisor took place in Zagreb in February 2008.

In cooperation with the Italian School of Public Administration, a module on the European Civil Servant profile was organised in March 2008 in Caserta. (The training was composed of two equal elements: a first part was delivered as e-learning (distance learning) and the second part took place in Caserta).

In cooperation with the Greek School of Public Administration, a training course on Management of Training Programmes was delivered in June 2008 in Athens.

In cooperation with the College of Europe, a 3-week summer school on European Integration took place in Bruges in July 2008.

In cooperation with the Slovene Centre of Excellence in Finance, a course on Public expenditure management for non budget specialists was organised in Ljubljana, in October 2008

Additional training developed in cooperation with partners in the EU (following the second annual meeting with EU Schools of Public Administration held in Maastricht, April 2008) included a 2-week training on law-drafting skills, organised in cooperation with the German Federal Academy of Public Administration in October and November 2008.

A representative of ReSPA also participated in the EGPA Annual Conference (Rotterdam, September 2008).

Option B resource persons. The activities, contributions and tasks described under the ReSPA Protocol of Cooperation, the Rules of Procedure, as well as developed in course of the ReSPA Steering Committee proceedings, are the responsibility of the country/entity Steering Committee members. Having considered though, the needs to further the ReSPA institutionalisation, training delivery and networking agendas, the SC decided to deploy additional in-country/entity resources. In 2007 contractual arrangements were made in course of the year in all 7 ReSPA jurisdictions. Two of them were not extended in 2008 and the new contracts, initially with 5 ReSPA Members were concluded in February 2008. The contract with the new Option B resource in BiH was then signed in March 2008. No contract was concluded for Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244/99).

The current status of the Option B arrangements is as follows:

- Albania, as of February 2008 – Ms. Emira Mitrush, Head of the General Training Centre, TIPA; this contract has been replaced by a direct contract to TIPA in June 2008 and the new contact person was appointed in the Department of Public Administration – Ms. Denada Kakeli;
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, as of March 2008 – Ms. Sandra Malesic, Head of Department for European Integration, Ministry of Justice;
- Croatia, as of February 2008 – Ms. Adela Golub, Expert Assistant, Programme Development Unit, Central State Office for Administration; this contract was amended by a letter from the Head of the Croatian State Office for Administration, in accordance with which part of the contractual tasks will be delivered by the Croatian Institute of Public Administration, under the responsibility of the principal contractor – the CSOA;
- the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as of February 2008 – Ms. Irena Stameska was engaged by the Civil Servants Agency as the Project Administrator for ReSPA in April and replaced the previous contact person, Ms. Anamarija Andreska, Junior Associate on analytical issues;
- Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) – no contractual arrangements in place at the time of writing of this report; In December 2008, the ReSPA team at the OECD received the suggestion to contract Ms. Mimoza Gojani;
- Montenegro, as of February 2008 – Ms. Dina Dobardzic was engaged by the Human Resources Management Authority as the Project Administrator for ReSPA

in July and replaced the previous contact person Ms. Zorica Skoflek, who succeeded Ms. Mina Vojinovic the last year contractor;

- Serbia, as of February 2008 – Ms. Milena Lazarevic, Adviser in the Sector for EU Legal Harmonisation, International Cooperation and Project Management, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government

In Albania, Croatia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia contracts are with the institutions, whereas others have opted for contracts with individual experts.

Support and contributions by Option B resources have been mobilised with good results this year. Based on earlier experiences, cooperation this year has been more efficient and the quality of deliverables, as a rule, comparable across the region. Timeliness of contributions remains a problem though, which may be a result of insufficient time allowed for completion of Option B tasks in the contractor institutions. Where direct contracts with individuals are concluded timeliness of contributions is entirely a responsibility of an individual contractor. It will be an important challenge for ReSPA in the years to come to organise domestic support for the regional activities. The current arrangements, imperfect as they are, provided important assistance to the ReSPA team at the OECD and individual SC Members in servicing different needs for information from domestic sources, selection of participants for the ReSPA events, logistical tasks, etc. These needs will possibly grow as ReSPA develops and it will remain a responsibility of the ReSPA Members to respond to them.

The current ReSPA contacts (Option B resources) in the ReSPA administrations were further coached by the ReSPA team at the OECD in course of 2008 in the performance of their tasks and most of them are now efficient, independent and professional contributors to ReSPA. Further arrangements with respect to their deployment in 2009 remain subject to individual decisions by ReSPA Members and possible arrangements with the future EC contractor.

Two meetings of the Option B resources were organised in course of 2008. The first took place in February to discuss and plan the implementation of the upcoming tasks. It was also for the Option B resources to get to know each other and the ReSPA team at the OECD, as well as to get familiarised with the OECD and Sigma, and the working methods. The second meeting took place back to back with the Meeting of the Heads of Schools of Public Administration from the region in Tirana in July. The meeting took stock of the mid-year developments and status of implementation of the tasks and focused in particular on the tasks related to the implementation of the ReSPA Training Needs Assessment methodology.

Implementation of the 2008 tasks so far is as follows:

- *2 x 10-20 pages contribution to the Attractiveness of Civil Service publication*
- *contributions to 4 issues of ReSPA Electronic Newsletter*
- *6 bimonthly contributions to the ReSPA website*
- *contributions to the ReSPA Training Needs Assessment*
- *Coordination tasks*
 - *Research and synthesis to the ReSPA publication on the Civil Service training systems.* This task has been allocated to Croatia
 - *Research and synthesis to the ReSPA publication on the Attractiveness of Civil Service.* This task is being implemented by Serbia
 - *Production of four ReSPA Electronic Newsletters.* This task was originally coordinated by Montenegro only, but due to replacements of Option B contacts

- in Montenegro and simultaneous contractual changes in Albania, the Albanian contact stepped in for the June issue and the subsequent September issue was coordinated jointly by Albania and Montenegro;
- *6 bimonthly regional updates of the ReSPA website.* This task has been coordinated by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia starting with the second round of the website updates, while the first round was coordinated directly by the ReSPA team at the OECD awaiting finalisation of the Option B contractual arrangements
 - *Option B resources have also supported the logistical preparations to the meetings:*
 - in Zagreb, the NISPAcee training in February 2008,
 - in Podgorica, the SC Meeting in May and the Legal and Finance Delegates Meeting in September 2008,
 - in Tirana, the Meeting of the Heads of Schools of Public Administration in July 2008,
 - in Belgrade, the Annual Conference of ReSPA in September 2008,
 - in Sarajevo, the 9th Session of the SC, in November 2008.

ReSPA institutionalisation

The Schedule of 2008 Steering Committee meetings provided for four sessions: The 6th SC meeting in Paris in January 2008, the 7th in Maastricht in April 2008, the 8th session in Podgorica in May 2008 and the 9th in November 2008 in Sarajevo.

At the 6th session held in January 2008 in Paris, the Steering Committee decided to locate ReSPA in Danilovgrad, Montenegro. Based on the successful bid of the Montenegrin government, the ReSPA team at the OECD worked on the draft International Agreement and Budget for the future ReSPA secretariat. Preliminary budget and International Agreement were subsequently discussed at the 7th and 8th sessions of the Steering committee.

A letter of intent was signed under the auspice of the Slovene Presidency of the EU at the Jable Castle in June 2008.

Two specialised delegates meetings were organised (in Paris, July 2008 on legal matters, and Podgorica, September 2008 on financial issues). A dedicated round of missions in the Western Balkans was organised by the EC at Senior Level and the ReSPA secretary to address the ReSPA budget with senior officials from Ministries of Foreign Affairs/European Integration, Finance, and Civil Service Management / Public Administration Reform in the Region.

An agreement on the final text of the International Agreement and budget was reached after the Podgorica budget meeting in September 2008. (Except for the delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia who agreed the text, but not the amount of its contribution). An agreement on the amount of the Macedonian contribution to the ReSPA budget was reached at a high-level meeting between the EC and the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Brussels on 3 October 2008.

After due coordination with the EU Presidency for the signature ceremony of the ReSPA International Agreement, the Steering Committee accepted the invitation of the Government of Montenegro to launch the signature process at a signing ceremony in Podgorica on 21 November 2008. The text of the International Agreement was signed by 5 of the 7 parties, Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNMIK (on behalf of Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99) encountering delays in signing the International Agreement.

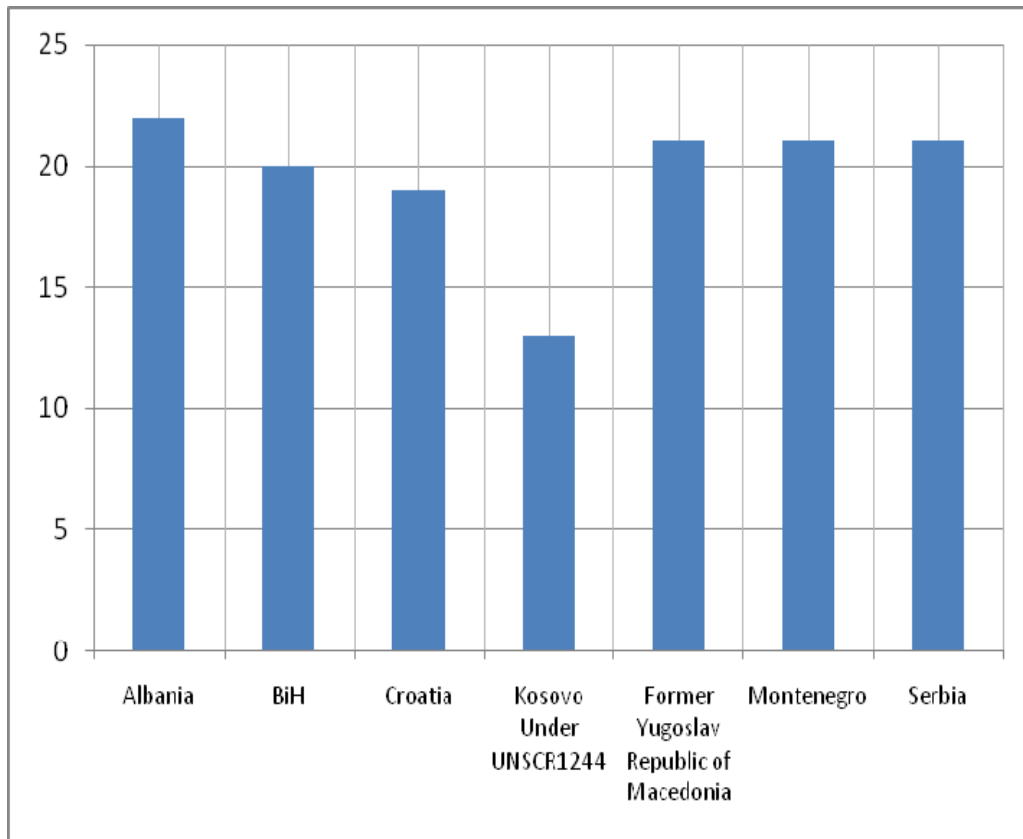
Following the agreement on the text of the International Agreement, the ReSPA team at the OECD prepared a concept paper on the ReSPA by-laws (Financial regulation, Rules of Procedures and Staff rules). The concept paper was sent for consultation prior to the 9th session of the Steering Committee. At its 9th session held in November 2008, the Steering Committee agreed in principle the Staff rules and the Rules of Procedure of the Board and asked the ReSPA team at the OECD to incorporate changes. The last technical meeting took place in Podgorica in November 2008. The Draft Financial regulation was discussed and, following the proposal of Sigma, the respective powers of the Board, of the Budget Committee and of the Director was balanced. The 3 ReSPA by-laws should be ready for adoption by the ReSPA board at its 1st session.

At its 9th session held in November 2008, the ReSPA Steering Committee appointed the Montenegrin Representative to chair the Selection Committee for the Recruitment of the ReSPA director. The call for applications was posted on 10 November 2008. The Selection Committee composed by the Chair met in Podgorica in December 2008. It agreed a standard interview grid and standard written test. It then evaluated the 11 applications received within deadline and unanimously concluded that only 1 (one) candidate *stricto sensus* met all the formal requirements listed in the call for application. Since the terms of Reference of the Selection Committee was to submit a short-list of 3 candidates, the Selection Committee recommended the Steering Committee to declare the current selection procedure inconclusive. The Selection Committee also recommended the Steering Committee to re-publish the call for application with enhanced publicity, and reformulation and clarification of the key requirements.

ReSPA statistics

In 2008 ReSPA (co)-organised 10 modules of training. 57 training days were delivered in total (37 in 2007). While ReSPA has delivered 722 Man/days of training in 2007, **in 2008, 763 Man/days of training have been organised** (and 690 delivered) in total, under 10 different training programmes and ReSPA events. They included this year 2 Option B meetings, one 3-week summer school and the two ReSPA expert fora: the Annual Conference and the Meeting of the Heads of Schools of Public Administration from the Western Balkans.

Looking at the geographical repartition of trainees, the ReSPA steering Committee members, responsible for the selection of trainees, have almost managed to keep a perfect geographical balance, as indicated in the following graph.

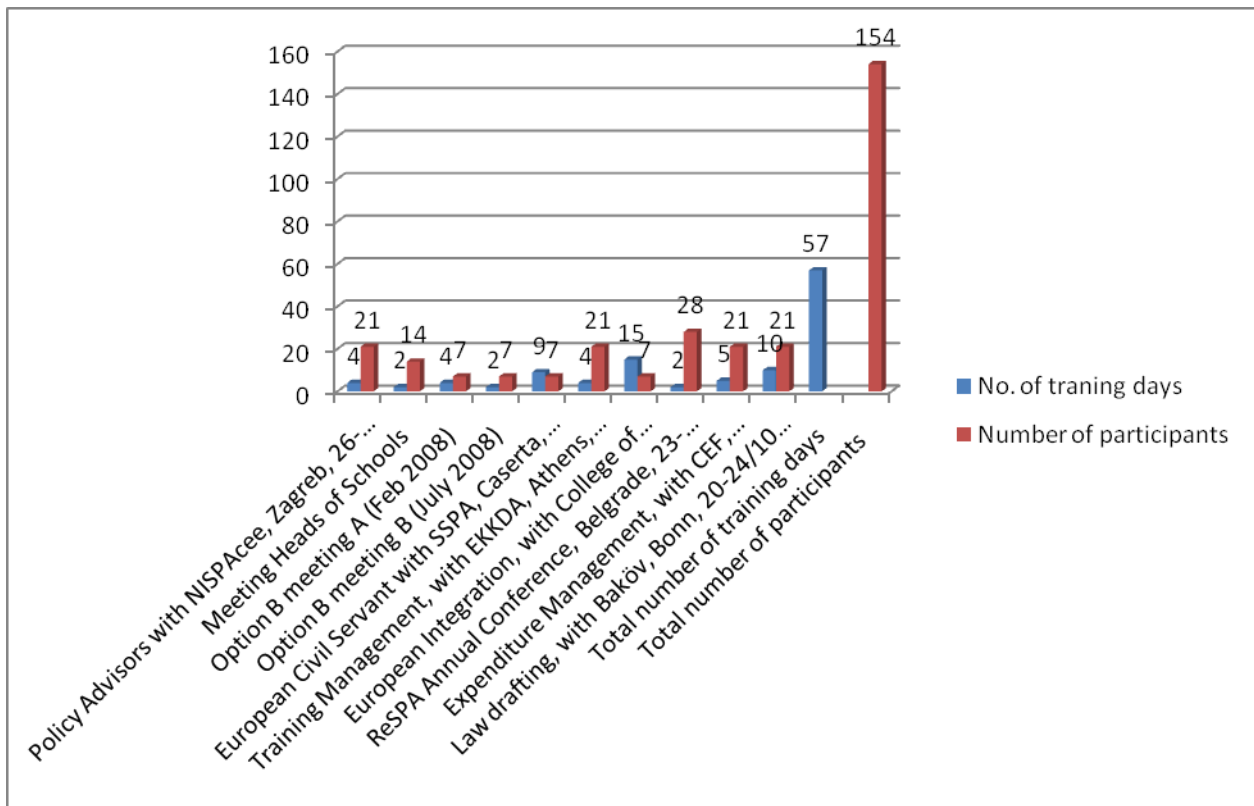


Number of participants per signatories, 2008

Most of the ReSPA training was designed to accommodate 3 trainees per session and per signatory. In most cases, the Steering committee members could secure the recruitment of the agreed number of participants. There have been some cases when the travelling of potential participants from their location to the training location could not be organised, mostly due to exogenous political factors. The table below gives a snapshot of the actual participation per signatory and per module.

	Policy Advisors with NISPAcee, Zagreb, 26-29/02	Meeting Heads of Schools	Option B meeting A (Jan 2008)	Option B meeting B (July 2008)	European Civil Servant with SSPA, Caserta, 25-28/02 and 3-7/03	Training Management, with EKKDA, Athens, 17-20/06	European Integration, with College of Europe, Bruges, 30/06-18/0	ReSPA Annual Conference, Belgrade, 23-24/09	Expenditure Management, with CEF, Ljubljana, 13-17/10	Law drafting, with Baköv, Bonn, 20-24/10 and 11-15/11
Albania	3	2	1	1	1	3	1	4	3	3
BiH	3	1	0	1	1	3	1	4	3	3
Croatia	3	2	1	1	0	3	0	4	2	3
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	3	3
Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)	0	2	1	1	0	3	1	0	2	3
Montenegro	3	2	1	1	0	3	1	4	3	3
Serbia	3	2	1	1	0	3	1	4	3	3

The average length of the ReSPA training modules organised in 2008 was 5.6 days (as indicated in the graph below) against an average duration of 3,36 days in 2007. The longest module was the Summer School organised in Bruges in Cooperation with the College of Europe (15 days).



Average duration of the ReSPA modules, 2008

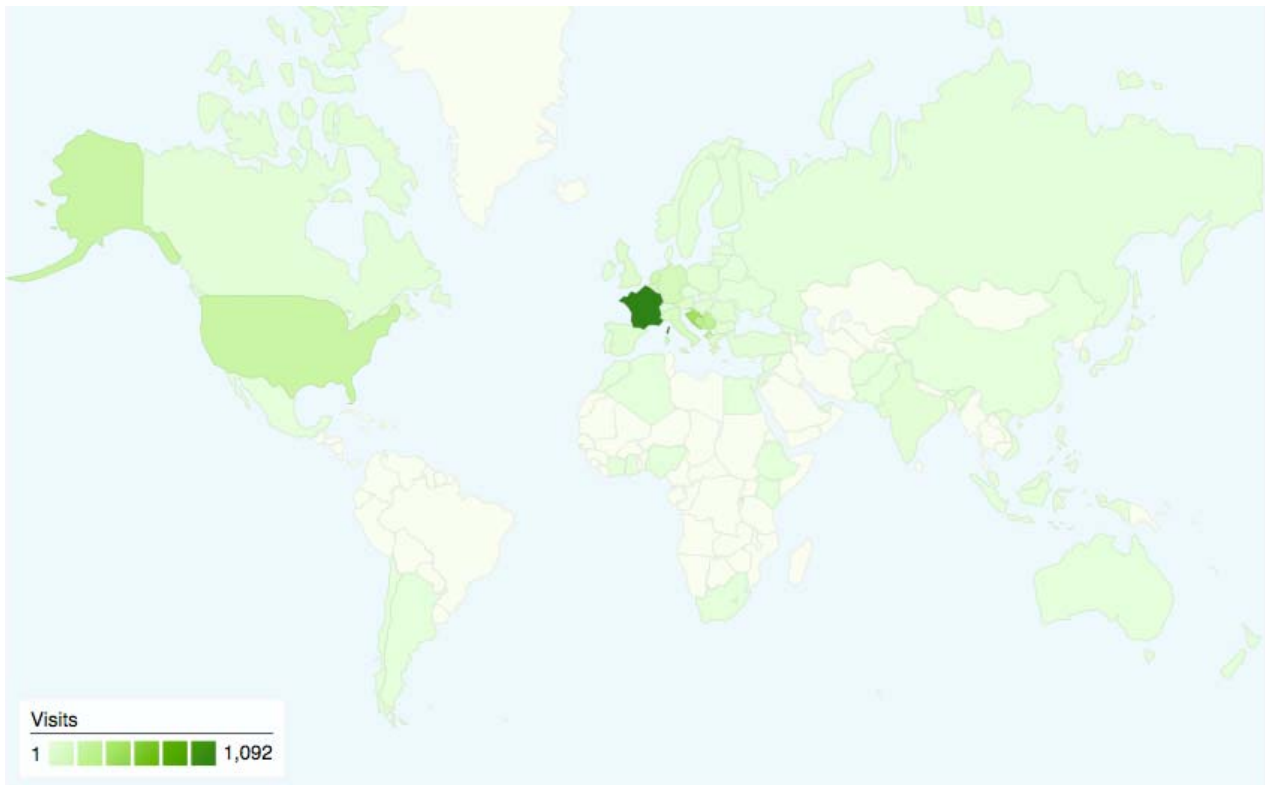
ReSPA Website

The website was established under a provisional arrangement with the OECD IT department in January 2007. It was migrated onto its own server in June 2007 when it got its own design and functionality.

Whereas in 2007 the total number of pages read amounted to 9.477, the total amount of pages read in 2008 was: 33.246 (X 3)

Whereas from 20 June until 31 December 2007, the Site has been visited 1144 times, from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008, the Site has been visited 5.292 times from 81 countries and territories. The average number of pages visited per person has been 6.28 pages (against 8.28 in 2007), and the average duration of surfing our website has been 4 minutes 31 seconds (7 minutes 15 seconds in 2007). The total number of pages read amounts to 33.246 (9477 pages read in 2007).

This accounts for 14 connections per day in 2008.



Looking at the geographical origin of the visitors on the website, we have the following account:

	2007	2008
France	432 Visits	1092 visits
Serbia	230 Visits ¹	1263 visits
Montenegro		
Kosovo (Under UNSCR 1244)		
Bosnia & Herzegovina	91 Visits	284 visits
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	85 Visits	367 visits
Albania	70 Visits	259 visits
Croatia	47 Visits	448 visits
United States of America	32 Visits	209 visits
Germany	31 Visits	n/a
Luxemburg	27 Visits	184 visits
Belgium	18 Visits	n/a

¹ The statistics received from the provider do not allow distinguishing connections from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo (Under UNSCR 1244).

2008 Implementation issues

Based on earlier experiences with the application of Visas in case of the training organised in the region or in the Schengen area, particular attention was paid to this issue in 2008 and problems were avoided. On one occasion (the Annual Conference in Belgrade) despite the efforts on both sides, the Kosovan delegation could not travel to Belgrade, due to a last minute misunderstanding at the Pristina airport. Applications for participation were timelier and less last minute changes occurred, which also facilitated the visa procedures. Option B resources were helpful in verifying the latest visa requirements and transmitting the information to the participants and the ReSPA team. The timeliness of applications and responses to requests for information from the participants is still an issue though and multiple reminders are often required.

With the development of the communication channels within the ReSPA Member administrations and with ReSPA being better known in the region, it seems that the identification of appropriate candidates for training was an easier task this year. At the same time further efforts should still be made to better match the supply and demand for ReSPA training. The 2008 Programme of Work was still based on a provisional Training Needs Assessment for the region and only later during the year the process of development of the appropriate ReSPA Training Needs Assessment methodology took place and resulted with the report to the Steering Committee. Due to time constraints the methodology was not applied though to its full extent, so the next year assessment should still bring about a further refinement of results. Special attention should also be paid to the adjustments of the training contents where delivery of training modules is subcontracted to different other training institutions. For the time being, ReSPA's activity relies heavily on subcontracting and has so far been largely successful, better results could though still be achieved if more training is tailored for the ReSPA-specific needs.

The knowledge of English was occasionally suboptimal for effective learning, but it has to be recognised that this is a bigger methodological problem for ReSPA. In the future, ReSPA should perhaps be able to organise more training in the local languages to facilitate access for the end users/trainees with appropriate profile but insufficient English. At this stage, a lot of training is provided in English by different donors and the group of eligible participants (with the sufficient knowledge of English) is limited. Only one training programme in 2008 – the law-drafting course co-organised with the German Federal Academy of Public Administration – was provided in local languages, which with the current organisational setting for ReSPA posed a significant additional financial and organisational burden.

Finally it has to be reiterated that it is the responsibility of the Steering Committee, once the agreement on the training programme is reached, to ensure timely and appropriate candidatures for training. Trainees will clearly be able to benefit better from the training if they form more balanced (in terms of professional and language skills) groups. The quality of trainees sent to the ReSPA training will contribute to the quality of training itself and further to building of the reputation of ReSPA as a high-quality professional and prestigious undertaking.

ReSPA contract and budget execution

The November 2006 contract between the EC and the OECD has been extended in October 2007 until 30 April 2009. The contract value for this extension is 1.5 Mio EUR, compared to the initial ReSPA budget of 1.0 Mio for the 2007 period. The ReSPA budget remains, *prorata temporis*, of the same magnitude.

ReSPA has a total budget of 2,551,000 EUR for a duration of 30 months. The reference expenditure rate for linear spending would therefore be 2,210,866 EUR at end December 2008, after 26 months of activity. The actual spending figure for ReSPA at end December was 2,288,253 EUR, it can be said that ReSPA is right on target on implementation.

Looking at the execution of the ReSPA budget, the direct costs of training in 2008 (fees paid to training centres) has been 121.106,- EUR. If one looks at the average cost of one man/day of training organised, excluding per-diem and transportation, the ReSPA average cost is 159 EUR (against 213 EUR in 2007). If one looks at the average cost of one man/day of training delivered, the cost is 176 EUR per day.

Preparing ReSPA Phase 2.

It is part of the contractual obligations of the OECD to engage the work necessary for ReSPA to develop into phase 2. The 2008 Institution Building activities (decision on the location, work on the ReSPA budget and structure, International Agreement, by-laws, recruitment process of the future Director) were geared at developing ReSPA in its Phase 2.

Handing-over. Finally, in view of the transition from ReSPA phase 1 to ReSPA Phase 2, a hand-over to EIPA has been organised and started on 29 September 2008 with the loan to the OECD of Mr. Harry List, EIPA expert who shall be the ReSPA task manager at EIPA.