

"Cultivating Excellence towards a Shared European Administrative Space: Connecting the Western Balkans and Italian Administration through the Public Servants Capacity Building and Mobility Programme"

Capacity-building program in the area of European Integration

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), in partnership with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the National School of Administration (SNA), is pleased to launch the forthcoming Western Balkans Public Servants Capacity Building and Mobility Programme.

This initiative aims to provide a platform for over 55 dedicated public servants from the region to participate in a comprehensive series of intensive training modules. Additionally, participants will engage in study visits and exchanges with various Italian institutions. The primary objectives encompass fostering learning, sharing experiences, and cultivating familiarity with Italian and EU administrative practices, while also enhancing relationships with practitioners from an EU Member State, such as Italy. The Programme will concentrate on several pivotal areas, including policy development and coordination, regulatory improvement, European integration and accession, and digital transformation.

The initiative is funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

As mentioned above, one of the streams of the program will be focused on the area of European Integration, aiming to strengthen the capacities of public servants from the Western Balkans dealing with EU integration and accession negotiations (where applicable), addressing pivotal themes crucial for this area. **The specific objective** will be to equip participants with knowledge, skills and tools to enhance the capacity of their respective institutions to comply with EU requirements and fostering effective governance structures focusing on two pillars:

- *the EU enlargement policy and the accession negotiations* (the revised methodology and the dynamics of the accelerated integration and phasing-in approach)
- *the economic criteria of the accession*, targeting topics such as the internal market, competitiveness, inclusive growth and the public procurement.

Networking and collaboration conclude the narrative of the programme, underscoring the importance of building strong networks and promoting collaboration with the Italian administration at both national and international levels.

This capacity-building activity will have the following segments:

1. two days of training in Podgorica, Montenegro (4-5 April 2024)

2. two days of training in Italy, followed by one and a half days of mobility visits of public servants from the Western Balkans to Italian institutions (27 – 31 May 2024);
3. A joint online session with the participants of other streams of the programme (July 2024).

This capacity development activity will bring together approximately **18 public servants** of governmental institutions, mid to senior-level professionals with experience in coordination of the EU integration agenda, accession negotiations, management of structural funds, cohesion policies, etc.

The first segment will be organized in ReSPA premises in Podgorica. Below is the tentative programme:

Day 1: 4th of April

09.15- 09.25	Welcome and Introduction of the goals of the workshop
09:25 – 09:45	Keynote address: EU Enlargement Policy in the Western Balkans: The Fundamentals of Further Integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Oana-Cristina Popa, Ambassador of the European Union to Montenegro</i> <i>Followed by Q&A</i>
09.45- 10.00	Presentation of the Participants – Tour de table
10:00 – 11:00	The Revised Enlargement Methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An overview - The essentials <i>Jelena Dzankic, European University Institute</i>
11.00-11.30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11.30-13.00	The Revised Enlargement Methodology (cont.) EU Accession Negotiation, accelerated integration, and the phasing-in approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to make it work - Group discussion and exercise <i>Jelena Dzankic, European University Institute</i>
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch Break</i>
14.00- 15.00	Role of EU Integration in Accelerating Structural Reforms <i>Tijana Stankovic, Former Assistant Minister, Ministry of Finance of Montenegro</i>
15.00- 16.00	<i>Fireside chat:</i> <i>Networking and brainstorming with Predrag Zenović, Chief Negotiator for EU Accession Negotiation of Montenegro</i>

Day 2: 5th of April

09.00- 11.30	<p>Negotiations simulation exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General presentation on negotiations skills – setting the scene - Presentation of exercise - Task assignment - Break out session and working on groups <p><i>Robert Weibel, Centre for European Negotiation and Decision-Making</i></p> <p>Coffee, tea and water will be available during the duration of the session</p>
11.30 – 12.00	Coffee break
12.00 – 13.00	<p>Negotiations simulation exercise (cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Debriefing - Conclusions <p><i>Robert Weibel, Centre for European Negotiation and Decision-Making</i></p>
13.00- 14.30	Lunch break
14.30 – 15.30	<p>Negotiating with the EU in practical terms: dos and don'ts</p> <p><i>Vladimir Drobnyak, former Chief Negotiator of Croatia (online)</i></p>
15:30-16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 17:00	<p><i>Impulse talk</i> with Odeta Barbullushi, foreign policy expert, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Albania</p> <p>The dimension of Regional Cooperation, in light of the European integration process</p>
16:30	Wrap-up and evaluation