

Procurement Notice and Terms of Reference

Assignment name: Institute, School, College or Higher Education institution to support ReSPA in designing and delivering the Executive Education Programme on “Strategic Communication for EU Integration”

Reference Number: 61/2025

Section 1. Introductory Information

1.1 Background information on the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA)

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an inter-governmental organization for enhancing regional cooperation, promoting shared learning, and supporting the development of public administration in the Western Balkans. ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, while Kosovo* is a beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to help regional governments develop better public administration, public services, and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses and prepare for membership in the European Union.

1.2 ReSPA now seeks an Institute, School, College or Higher Education institution to support ReSPA in designing and delivering the Executive Education Programme on “Strategic Communication for EU Integration”

1.3 Expected deliverables of the assignment are: as per Terms of Reference (see below).

1.4 Tentative timeframe: the assignment is expected to be performed during September-October 2025.

1.5 The applicants are kindly requested to fill out and submit the following document:

- **Identification Form (for private law body)** – attached to this Procurement Notice. There is no requirement for the document to be stamped by the bank.

Section 2. Preparation of CVs and supporting documentation

2.1 Language of application: English.

2.2 The submitted methodology and the CVs of the proposed lecturers/experts should provide information on the experience of the institution (as required in the ToR), the qualifications and competencies of the proposed lecturers, the general track record and previous specific

¹ * This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence

experience in similar assignments, as required by the Terms of Reference. The applicants should particularly state in their Methodologies/CVs:

- Length of general and specific professional experience, in line with ToR;
- Professional experience in the role of lecturer/presenter.

2.3 The required qualifications, experience, and skills: as per Terms of Reference.

Section 3. Submission of CVs and supporting documentation

3.1 The interested candidates are invited to submit a proposal consisting of the following documentation:

- Written methodology: explaining their experience related to the subject of the assignment, how they understand the ToR, and how they intend to respond to the assignment;
- Personal CV of the proposed experts;
- Financial offer (which shall specify a total sum amount in euros as well as the maximum number of working days proposed) in a separate document.
- Identification Form (for private law body) – see point 1.5 above
- Other documents required by the ToR;

3.2 The required documentation should be submitted in electronic format by e-mail to the following address: procurement@respaweb.eu by **26 August 2025, before midnight**. Late submissions will not be considered for evaluation.

The application should contain in the e-mail title the following reference: **61/2025 – Executive Education Programme on “Strategic Communication for EU Integration”**

Public servants from ReSPA Members and Kosovo are not eligible to apply as lecturers or experts under this assignment.

Selection 4. Evaluation of offers

4.1 The offer will be evaluated against the required qualifications, experience, skills, and competencies as defined in the Terms of Reference.

4.2 The applicant securing the highest final ranking will be invited to negotiate the contract and the fee proposed by ReSPA. If negotiations are successful, the selected candidate will be awarded the contract. Should the negotiations fail, the next-ranked candidate will be invited to negotiations.

Section 5. Final Considerations

5.1 The payment will be as stated in the ToR, following the submission and approval of the deliverables.

5.2 The following document is attached to this Procurement Notice: Terms of Reference.

5.3 ReSPA reserves the right to cancel this procurement procedure at any moment without any compensation to the applicants. The cost of preparing a proposal and of negotiating a contract, including any related travel, cannot be reimbursed by ReSPA under any circumstances nor can ReSPA be held liable for it, regardless the outcome of the procurement procedure.

5.4 Should you need any further clarifications with respect to this procurement notice, please contact: Mr. Genti Xhaxhiu, Programme Manager via e-mail: g.xhaxhiu@respaweb.eu, by **21 August 2025** (midnight), the latest. ReSPA will post the response, including an explanation of the query without identifying the source of inquiry, at its website (www.respaweb.eu) by **22 August 2025**. Any request for clarification must be sent by standard electronic communication to the above e-mail address.

Terms of Reference

Request for Services

Institute, School, College or Higher Education institution to support ReSPA in designing and delivering the Executive Education Programme on “Strategic Communication for EU Integration”

1. Background

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is a regional organization established in 2010 as a joint initiative supported by European Commission and Western Balkans (WB) administrations. It is managed and governed by five ReSPA Members: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, while Kosovo* is beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to assist governments in the region to develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses and prepare for the European Union membership.

Since its inception, ReSPA, as an international organization and a key regional endeavour in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking through regional training, workshops, conferences, seasonal schools, and on-demand support mechanisms, peering and the development of regional research materials. ReSPA establishes close cooperation with Ministers, senior public servants and heads of units in its Members. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, specifically Directorate General for

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Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST), other regional actors such as OECD/SIGMA and Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), as well as agencies and civil society organizations.

The European Commission (EC) provides directly managed funds to support ReSPA activities in line with the EU accession process. Currently, ReSPA is implementing the fifth EC Grant Contract "Support to the Regional School of Public Administration for implementing PAR Agenda and facilitating EU accession process in the WBs" which is active as of January 2023.

ReSPA works primarily through regional networks which operate at three levels: Ministerial, Senior Officials, and thematic groups of experts and senior practitioners. More specifically, the Programme Committee is composed of the senior civil servants representing ministries responsible for the Public Administration reform, and institutions in charge of the European Integration process, and four regional thematic groups: (1) Policy planning, better regulation and coordination of Centre of Government, (2) European integration and accession negotiations; (3) Human Resources Management and Professional Development; (4) Service Delivery (digitalization and quality management).

These Terms of Reference aim to identify a renowned Institute, School, College or Higher Education institution to support ReSPA in designing and delivering an **Executive Education Programme on “Strategic Communication for EU Integration”**. **The programme will take place at the end of September/early October 2025.**

2. Problem statement and description of the assignment

ReSPA's focus in the area of “EU integration and accession” is to further promote good governance and support administrative capacity of the administrations in the Western Balkans to **take on the obligations of the EU membership** in particular public administration reform (PAR) at all levels of government by reforming the administration and improving the knowledge and skills of public servants dealing with European Integration process (including accession negotiations). Reforming public sector remains fundamental for building resilient societies and economies in the region as well as for running successful countries but it is also an important priority reform for advancing in the EU accession process. The challenging accession negotiation process requires knowledgeable and skilled public service which shall bring the process forward with a satisfactory pace.

The **current 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 programme shall aim to equip participants with modern tools and techniques to design and deliver effective strategic communication in the context of EU reforms and integration. It shall strengthen their abilities to craft clear, compelling messages and reform narratives that resonate with diverse audiences, while fostering more coherent institutional coordination and integrated communication planning across ministries and public agencies. By addressing pressing challenges such as disinformation, public scepticism, and political polarisation, the programme will help participants develop communication strategies that build trust and demonstrate reform impact. At the same time, it will provide a platform for peer learning, networking, and the exchange of good practices, enabling public officials from across the Western Balkans to draw inspiration from each other's experiences and approaches in strategic messaging.

This programme shall strengthen the capacities of public officials to design and deliver impactful communication strategies that support the EU integration process, foster public trust, and amplify the visibility of reforms, ultimately contributing to the region's shared European future.

The main indicative parameters of the programme:

- The programme is expected to be held in the end of September/early October;
- The programme shall be entirely delivered in English language;
- The total number of attendees shall be up to 25, from the Western Balkans;
- The programme shall last for 2 working days and shall be delivered in Tirana, Albania;
- The sessions of the full days shall indicatively start at 09:00 and end at 16:30. The sessions shall be interactive, participatory, where critical thinking and debating shall be encouraged;

3. Tasks and responsibilities

The Institute, School, College or Higher Education institution (the applicant) shall, indicatively, perform the following tasks:

- Familiarize the team of lecturers/experts who will be engaged in this assignment with the latest developments as regards EU integration and accession negotiations in the Western Balkans;
- Develop and propose to ReSPA an indicative programme (agenda) for the Executive Education Programme on “Strategic Communication for EU Integration”;
- Ensure the participation of renowned lecturers (in-house and external) to deliver the sessions of the programme in-person;
- Deliver the learning programme in line with the agreed agenda;
- Issue joint attendance certificates with ReSPA to the attendees;
- Appoint a coordinator for liaising directly with ReSPA on the subject.

The abovementioned tasks and responsibilities represent the milestones of the assignment, but the applicant may propose slight changes/adaptations upon agreement with the ReSPA Programme Manager in charge.

4. Necessary qualifications and experience

The Institute, School, College or Higher Education institution (the applicant) needs to have a **diverse but compatible experience in delivering post-graduate capacity building programmes and/or Master Programmes**, preferably established in an EU Member state, on topics/themes related to EU affairs/studies, public administration, political/international studies, governance. More specifically, the applicant shall have the following profile:

General criteria:

- At least 15 (fifteen) years of experience in delivering post-graduate capacity building programmes and/or Master Programmes and/or executive education programmes.

Specific criteria:

- At least 10 (ten) years of experience in delivering post-graduate capacity building programmes and/or Master Programmes and/or executive education programmes on topics/themes related to EU affairs/studies, governance matters as well as political/international studies in English language;
- Have previous experience and interaction with the Western Balkans.
- Preferably be established in an EU member State

The applicant shall submit the following documents:

- Copy of the founding document or any similar document that proves the establishment year of the applicant;
- Organigramme of the applicant;

- A short methodology on how the programme will be delivered (not longer than 2 pages);
- A draft proposed programme of the Executive education, including topics and potential lecturers to deliver the sessions;
- Brief bios of the proposed lecturers;
- Financial offer.

5. Timing and Location

The assignment is expected to be performed tentatively in the end of September/early October 2025, in Tirana, Albania.

6. Remunerations

The assignment amounts **up to 16.000 EUR** for designing and delivering the academic programme as well as providing logistical support, such as Planning and organization of programme components, Administrative preparation and follow-up, financial accounting, contracts, identification and consultation with experts/lecturers, etc

The payment will be done in one instalment upon completion of the assignment. The final outputs will be subject to approval from ReSPA before the execution of the payment.

***Note:** costs related to logistic aspects, such as training room, learning materials, coffee breaks, lunch breaks, networking activities, etc., are not included in this financial offer. Those costs shall be taken over by ReSPA. In addition, ReSPA will cover the travel and accommodation costs (economy travel, bed & breakfast, and lunch during the training days) for the experts/lecturers involved in the delivery of the programme. ReSPA will also cover the same costs for one staff member of the Institute, School, College or Higher Education institution that will be selected under these Terms of Reference.*

7. Reporting and Final Documentation

Upon completion of the assignment, the selected applicant will be requested to deliver the following documents before the payment is conducted:

Outputs

- The final implemented programme of the Executive education and bios of the lecturers;
- Presentations held during the sessions of the Programme (after the programme is delivered);
- Attendance Certificates for all the participants to the Programme.

Documents required for payment

- Invoice (e-signed);

- Timesheets (e-signed);
- One final report to ReSPA on the implementation/performance of the assignment (please see section 3 above).