

## Concept Note for Discussion Panel on the Occasion of the 32<sup>nd</sup> NISPAcee Annual Conference

**(23-25 May 2024)**

**The panel will be organized on 24 May 2024**

Tbilisi, Georgia

### ***Navigating the Change: Transformative Power of the EU Accession Process for Public Administrations***

The Discussion panel will focus on the following indicative topics:

1. the importance of cluster on fundamentals;
2. what is expected from the EU aspirants` public administrations in order to become “ready-for-Europe”;
3. how advancement in public administration reform processes can be measured;
4. sharing the success stories and lessons learned in the Public Administration Reform (PAR).

The complex and multifaceted demands inherent to the EU accession process cannot be discussed in isolation from public administration systems. On the contrary, as the requirements of the accession process become more intricate, expectations placed on public administrations and on civil servants – who are at their core - intensify. Respectively, alongside heightened expectations, there is a growing acknowledgment of the significance of PAR and of the power that the EU accession process has in the process of transforming public administrations along the way. Over time, this evolution has led to the integration of public administration reform as a vital component within the fundamental cluster of the EU accession, mandated by the New Methodology to be open first and closed last in the accession negotiations.

Building on previous (modest) exchanges between peers from the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership Trio, and after the EU Council December 2023 decisions to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova and to grant the candidate status to Georgia, there is now a broader scope for stronger cooperation and more dynamic exchanges between the colleagues from two regions.

Despite the different stages in the EU accession process across administrations in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership Trio, common areas for strengthening of knowledge and further improvements exist. For this reason, ReSPA proposes to engage an EU accession expert to provide the audience with an overview of the importance of the fundamentals cluster and expectations that each of public administration is faced with (as per 2023 Enlargement Package) and to invite remotely one representative from OECD/SIGMA Programme to present to participants revised Principles of Public Administration from 2023, “*designed to guide the European Union (EU) enlargement and neighborhood administrations in their reform efforts to address the shortcomings in their public administrations and meet the EU requirements on one of the “fundamentals” of the accession process*”<sup>1</sup>.

The session will commence by “setting the stage” through the above presentations, followed by a panel featuring Western Balkans public administration enthusiasts. Each panelist will present the most demanding task in the PAR process thus far and share a success story, as a “food for thoughts” for the audience who will be provided with the safe space to ask practical questions and seek peer suggestions about the ways in which to navigate demanding PAR process through a moderated discussion. A mix of panelists from WB and EaP will be explored.

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<sup>1</sup> [Principles of Public Administration - OECD \(sigmaweb.org\)](https://sigmaweb.org/)