



ReSPA

Regional School
of Public Administration

BUILDING TOGETHER
GOVERNANCE FOR THE FUTURE

ANNUAL REPORT

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Empowering Public Servants: Building Strong Institutions with Commitment and Vision

ReSPA stands at the forefront of regional cooperation, catalysing public sector transformation and impactful collaborations among the Western Balkans, as well as with EU Member States, EU institutions and key regional and international partners. The mission is clear - to **empower public servants, foster growth, and spark reforms that strengthen governance and advance our shared European Administrative Space.**

Through regional policy dialogue, capacity building, peer learning, and tailored technical support, ReSPA brings together individuals, institutions, and entire administrations with one common goal: building excellence in public administration.

As a trusted partner of the European Commission and the governments of the Western Balkans, ReSPA plays a pivotal role in professionalising public administration, improving efficiency, and elevating the quality of services delivered to citizens and businesses, contributing directly to the region's EU accession journey.

This path is marked by an **ever-expanding network of enriching partnerships** – from the Italian and French Governments, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Ireland's Institute of Public Administration (IPA), to long-standing cooperation with the College of Europe, the National Center for Public Administration of Greece (EKDDA), European University Institute, Hertie School, Croatian National School of Public Administration, SIGMA, OECD, UNESCO, Oxford Business School, Belgian Federal Office for Public Service (BOSA), Romanian Institute for Public Administration, Polish School of Public Administration-KSAP, Ludovika University of Public Services UNDP, the regional intergovernmental organizations and many more. Together, we are shaping resilient, innovative, and citizen-focused administrations across the Western Balkans.

15 Years of Impact - Better Governance. Stronger Balkans.

In its 15 years of existence, ReSPA has implemented approximately **1,000 initiatives** with one guiding mission: excellence in public services. By enhancing the competences of more than **15,000 civil servants**, ReSPA has advanced the modernisation and digitalisation of public administration, strengthened management systems, and fostered knowledge exchange and mobility both within the region and with EU Member States.

Through more than **30 high-level policy dialogues**, the ReSPA team has brought together regional leaders around the Public Administration Reform Agenda, while over 100 peer exchanges with EU Member States and within the Western Balkans have been driven by a single goal – to enable learning as one. In parallel, **more than 100 on-demand**, tailor-made reform projects have responded directly to the diverse needs of Western Balkan governments, boosting good governance and institutional resilience.

With the continuously growing implementation and certification of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), ReSPA has become a leading **regional driver of quality management standards**, building expertise and embedding a culture of continuous improvement in public administrations across the Western Balkans.



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Chair of the ReSPA Governing Board's Welcome



Marash DUKAJ
Minister of Public Administration of Montenegro

Dear colleagues,
It is my great pleasure and honour, on the occasion of this reporting period, to reflect on the role of ReSPA in the substantial progress achieved by Montenegro's public administration.

A public administration that aims to meet citizens' needs must be efficient and transparent, and therefore open to continuous improvement. The quality of work and the competencies of employees are no longer a matter of choice, but a shared responsibility. For this reason, the Government of Montenegro adopted the **Quality Management Roadmap**, which foresees a systematic approach that includes, among other instruments, the **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**.

With ReSPA's support, we embarked on this demanding project, identifying key strengths and challenges — a valuable foundation for improving internal procedures within the **Ministry of Public Administration**. Today, after two years of joint work, the Ministry of Public Administration is the **only institution in Montenegro holding a CAF certificate**, which also enables us to transfer the acquired knowledge and experience to other institutions interested in implementing CAF. This is not merely an assessment tool, but a powerful driver for enhancing quality and efficiency in the public sector. Recognizing this, several Montenegrin institutions are currently in the process of implementing CAF.

Considering the accelerated negotiation process and the increasingly tangible prospect of Montenegro's accession to the European Union, in cooperation with key institutions, we have launched the **"Ready4EU"** programme, aimed at preparing civil servants for work within EU institutions. This programme is structured around **six modules** — four focused on the history and functioning of the EU, and two dedicated to **general administrative efficiency, communication, and the digital framework**. The programme offers Montenegrin civil servants the opportunity to gain insight into administrative practices, acquire relevant expertise and specific knowledge, and prepare for employment within EU institutions. Now in its second cohort, the programme is nurturing a generation of competent civil servants equipped to apply for positions in European institutions.

I would like to particularly highlight the importance of ReSPA's support in enhancing digitalization and digital skills among employees through the organization of various initiatives, including the **Data Quality (Open Data) workshop, training on eIDAS and eIDAS 2.0, a workshop with the EKDDA Greece on e-Government and digital transformation**, enrichment of the eAcademy of the Ministry of Public Administration through the webinar "Use, Processing and Protection of Data", and the **Seasonal Schools on Digital Transformation 2025**.

With ReSPA's support, the **implementation and development of Montenegro's National Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership** has been further strengthened and promoted. Our cooperation has also been invaluable in organising the **ceremony marking the United Nations Public Service Day**, during which ReSPA Director Ms. Handjiska-Trendafilova presented the CAF certificate to the Ministry.

The **ReSPA High-Level Policy Dialogue Platform** has, for many years, provided a valuable space for high-level discussions on achievements in public administration, the exchange of experiences and best practices, and has proven to be a practical tool for strategic planning.

We are also greatly honoured that, for the first time, the **DISPA Network (Directors of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration)** was hosted in Montenegro, even though we are not yet an EU member. This was made possible thanks to ReSPA's continuous support and close cooperation, for which we are sincerely grateful.

Just as the dedication of our civil servants shapes the future of our public administration, **ReSPA continues to support our efforts to reach European standards in public administration as swiftly as possible.**

Director's Welcome



Maja HANDJISKA-TRENDABILOVA

Dear ReSPA partners and friends,

It is my great pleasure to present ReSPA's Annual Report, capturing a year of progress, innovation, and shared commitment to building a professional, accountable, and citizen-centred public sector - a true catalyst for responsive governance and sustainable development across the Western Balkans.

This year carries special significance as **ReSPA marks its 15th anniversary** - a milestone in its remarkable evolution from a pioneering idea within the Thessaloniki Agenda to a recognised reform partner acknowledged in EU-Western Balkans Leaders Summit Declarations. Over these 15 years, ReSPA has implemented more than 1,000 activities, empowered over 15,000 civil servants, and strengthened cooperation, integrity, and innovation in public administrations throughout the region.

With the adoption of the **2024 Ministerial Declaration and the Strategic Orientation 2025-2030**, "From Public Administration Reform to Public Administration Excellence," ReSPA and its Members have renewed their collective vision: to shape transparent, resilient, and future-ready administrations firmly embedded in the European Administrative Space.

Guided by our Governing Board and the European Commission, the past 12 months have seen ReSPA deliver a **dynamic and impactful agenda** - blending high-level policy dialogues, capacity-building programmes, civil servants' mobility schemes, e-Government pilots, and tailor-made technical assistance for reforms. Initiatives such as Ready4EU, the Open Data Challenge, and long-term learning programmes like the Interoperability and Data Protection Academies, the Regional Academy on Evidence-Informed Policymaking, and the Seasonal Schools on EU Integration, Digital Transformation and Talent Management have all advanced the region's reform momentum. Meanwhile, demand for ReSPA's agile **on-demand technical support continued to grow**, driving digitalisation, strategic HR, AI readiness, quality management, and transparency across Member administrations: from e-Gov solutions to modernisation of core administrative tools - enabling ReSPA's contribution to be embedded in key public service reforms in the region.

Together with SIGMA, ReSPA proudly celebrated regional excellence through the **2024 Western Balkans Public Administration Awards**, showcasing outstanding achievements across the region. We also strengthened the **Western Balkans' engagement in EU and global networks** including DISPA, EUPAN, OGP, OECD, and the European CAF Resource Centre. Notably, the EU's Directors of Institutes Network - **DISPA was hosted for the first time outside the EU - in Montenegro - under ReSPA's auspices**, symbolising the growing collaboration and integration between EU and Western Balkans administrations.

ReSPA's **Knowledge Management Platform** continues to grow as a hub for continuous learning and collaboration, connecting and empowering civil servants across enlargement countries — accessible with just one click, anywhere, anytime.

The impactful and highly proliferated work, has been enabled by fostering **new strategic partnerships** with institutions from France, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Slovenia,

Poland, Romania, Croatia, as well as with the Eastern Partnership countries, opening fresh opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning. The Mobility Programme with Italian institutions and the Ireland for EU Enlargement initiative are already reinforcing EU integration capacities, while participation in EU-funded AI4Gov-X and RADAR projects underscores ReSPA's emerging role in the digital and democratic transformation of governance.

Internally, ReSPA continues to set an example of quality and operational excellence through the **Regional Quality Management Centre**, promoting CAF implementation and earning the CAF Effective User Label for the second time - a testament to our enduring commitment to continuous improvement.

As we navigate an era of geopolitical, economic, and technological transformation, ReSPA's work remains anchored in the values of collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity - empowering public administrations to move beyond reform toward public administration excellence.

Looking ahead, ReSPA is intensifying efforts to **forge new partnerships and identify additional project opportunities** to strengthen sustainability and amplify its value and lasting regional impact.



ReSPA's Regional Approach: Navigating Transformative Changes

The Western Balkans have been undergoing profound transformations, and public administrations are at the very heart of this journey. Administrations in the region have faced increasingly complex challenges - from steering the digital and green transitions to delivering more with limited budgets, all while striving to attract and retain skilled professionals. Despite these constraints, the imperative to provide better services to citizens and businesses, coupled with the momentum of the EU integration process, has consistently pushed public administration reform forward.

Today, the reform agenda is firmly anchored in the **Principles of Public Administration**, which serve as both a compass for good governance and a critical benchmark in the EU accession process. The EU's strong support - ranging from budgetary assistance to targeted technical aid, now complemented by the Growth Plan and gradual integration opportunities - has been essential in advancing these reforms. While Western Balkan administrations have progressed through several cycles of reform, readiness for accession still varies across the region. With many noteworthy achievements made in policy and legislative frameworks, the consistent implementation across government sectors and levels still remains a challenge.

Against this backdrop, **ReSPA has stood as a driver of change and a trusted partner for its Members and Beneficiaries.** For 15 years, it has connected administrations, inspired collaboration, and offered expertise to translate reforms into practice. Serving as a regional hub for knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and tailored technical assistance, ReSPA has enabled governments to align more closely with European standards and respond effectively to citizens' needs. Its targeted initiatives - from digital transformation and evidence-informed policymaking to human resource development and European integration - have built resilience in administrations and helped them navigate emerging challenges.

Today, with **new partnerships, expanded outreach to enlargement countries outside Western Balkans, and innovative EU projects**, ReSPA is entering an exciting new chapter. It remains firmly committed to empowering public administrations in the Western Balkans and beyond, fostering excellence, and ensuring that the region continues to move closer to the European Administrative Space - better prepared, more connected, and future-ready.

Empowering Civil Servants by the Numbers

While navigating complex reform processes in the Western Balkans, ReSPA remains firmly focused on **human capital as the cornerstone of public administration reform.** Skilled, motivated, and well-supported public officials are essential for turning policies into tangible results, ensuring EU-aligned standards are implemented effectively, and preventing bottlenecks that can slow reform. ReSPA continues to empower civil servants to acquire new skills, improve decision-making, enhance efficiency, promote accountability, and foster innovation - critical elements for citizen-centred and growth-oriented administrations.



In collaboration with Working Group members, **over the past 12 months ReSPA has addressed the region's most pressing challenges**, supporting administrations in **strategic, evidence-informed policy development, the effective design, transposition and enforcement of EU policies, professionalising merit-based recruitment, and advancing service delivery through digitalisation, innovation, and quality assurance.**

Under the strategic guidance of the Governing Board and with the strong backing of the European Commission, the ReSPA team delivered:

✧ **High-Level Policy Dialogues and Ministerial conferences:** 11 events convened ministers, senior officials, and EU representatives, reinforcing political commitment to public administration reform and supporting follow-up on regional declarations and statements.

✧ **Capacity-Building & Networking:** over 70 initiatives empowered approximately 1600 civil servants across over 100 institutions, strengthening collaboration and public service excellence in the region.

✧ **On-Demand Projects:** over 20 tailored projects addressed sector-specific needs, driving tangible improvements across governance, human resources, quality management, digitalisation, and service delivery.

✧ **Mobility & Exchange:** over 5 mobility schemes implemented, including the second cycle of the capacity building and mobility programme with Italian, Irish and French public administration institutions, connected Western Balkan teams with EU peers, advancing integration into a European public administration space.

✧ **Scholarships:** approximately 40 scholarships enabled public servants to participate in specialised training programs in EU Member States, boosting professional expertise and regional capacity.

✧ **Policy Briefs & Snapshots:** 3 publications provided analysis on human resources and EU enlargement issues

✧ **Partnerships & Collaboration:** ReSPA strengthened regional and international ties by signing a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement with 7 institutions/organizations and holding high-level bilateral meetings, expanding cooperation with EU partners and other regions, including new initiatives with Eastern Partnership countries.

✧ **New EU-funded Projects & Innovation:** ReSPA's participation in initiatives such as AI4Gov-X, RADAR, and other EU-funded programmes ensures that emerging technologies, democratic governance, and digital transformation continue to drive public administration reform in the region.

✧ **Sustainability & Social Responsibility:** ReSPA team continues to actively advance greener and more socially responsible initiatives, embedding sustainability in capacity-building, training, and knowledge-sharing projects.

These achievements underscore ReSPA's ongoing commitment to empowering human capital, fostering innovation, and strengthening public administration, ensuring that the Western Balkans remains on a path toward a modern, citizen-focused, and fully European public administration space.

97%

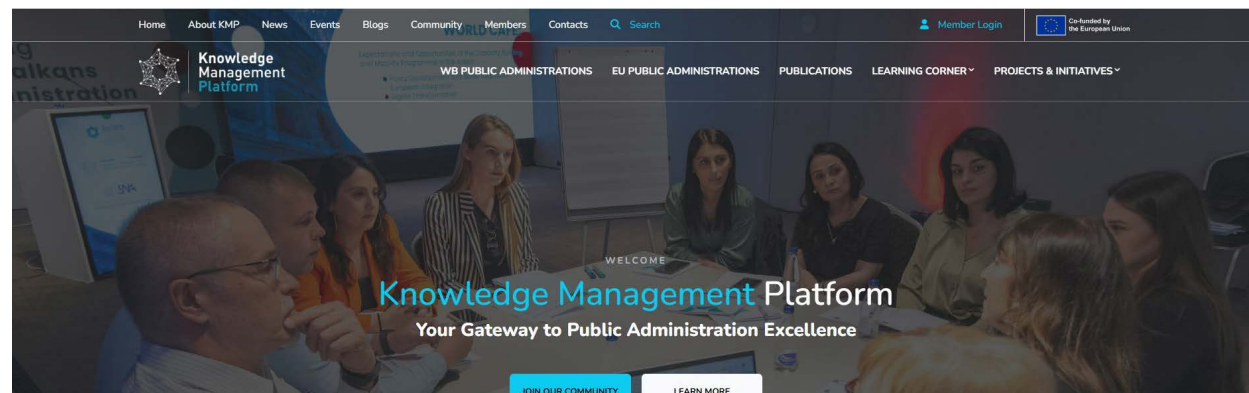
of participants evaluated the ReSPA's activities as excellent/very good

97%

of participants evaluated the relevance of ReSPA's activities as excellent/very good

98%

of participants evaluated the quality of ReSPA's activities as excellent/very good



Knowledge Management Platform - Gateway to Public Administration Excellence

Developed as a vital resource for public administration professionals in the Western Balkans, the KMP is envisaged as an efficient tool to foster the professional development of public administrators and enhance regional collaboration.

Featuring **learning resources, a vast volume of information on PAR relevant strategic, institutional and legal frameworks in the region, and community-driven discussions**, the KMP also promotes best practices and offers an overview of training opportunities on topics such as digital transformation, public policy, EU integration, and more.



ReSPA Hosted the First-Ever DISPA Meeting Outside the EU: Connecting Europe's Public Administration Leaders with the Western Balkans

For the first time ever, **the Directors of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration (DISPA)** met outside the European Union, as the ReSPA hosted the two-day meeting titled "Future-Proofing Public Servants: Leading Through Crises While Delivering Results".

This landmark event positioned ReSPA as a key bridge connecting the EU's leading public administration institutions with the Western Balkans, reinforcing its mission to integrate the region into the European Administrative Space through dialogue, learning, and innovation. For two days, around 60 participants from 23 countries, including EU Member States and enlargement countries, through blend of panel and World Caffe discussions, various exercises and numerous prominent speakers, elaborated on future-proof public administration.



Advancing Reforms & Empowering Civil Servants Per Thematic Area

Over the years, ReSPA has adapted itself to effectively meet the needs of its Members, aiding them in enhancing their public administration systems, efficiently adapting to societal changes, and addressing emerging issues like increased policy complexities, digital transformation, environmental concerns, and shifting demographics.

Jointly, with working group members, the ReSPA team has addressed critical challenges Western Balkan administrations face. These include improving strategic and well-coordinated evidence-informed policy development, ensuring the transposition, implementation, and enforcement of EU policies and standards during the accession phase, professionalization, merit-based recruitment and enhancing service delivery through digitalisation, innovation, and quality assurance, all focusing on creating citizens-centred public administration that delivers growth.





POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION



The Policy Development and Coordination thematic area aims to strengthen the role of public administration in advancing evidence-informed policymaking, enhancing regulatory processes, and improving policy coordination

In 2025, ReSPA intensified its efforts to strengthen policy coordination and Centre of Government (CoG) capacities across the Western Balkans, addressing persistent implementation gaps in PAR. While most administrations have established comprehensive reform frameworks aligned with the Principles of Public Administration, challenges remain in ensuring coherence between policy planning, budgeting, and delivery. Guided by its Strategic Orientation 2025-2030, ReSPA positioned itself as a regional catalyst for foresight, evidence-informed policymaking, and regulatory quality-helping administrations translate reform commitments into measurable outcomes.

Through regional CoG working group workshops, and the Academy on Evidence-Informed Policymaking, ReSPA fostered peer learning, exchange, and capacity development among key policy coordination institutions. New practical RIA trainings and peer exchanges on regulatory simplification - aligned with the EU's "Simpler and Faster Europe" agenda - strengthened analytical skills, promoted inclusive consultation, and advanced citizen-centred policymaking. By linking knowledge, dialogue, and innovation, ReSPA continues to empower governments to plan better, govern smarter, and deliver more effectively for their citizens.

Bridging justice and governance in the Western Balkans: Regional conference strengthens the rule of law and public administration

Crafted jointly with the SIGMA Programme and the Council of Europe, the Conference, held in September 2025, brought together public administration authorities, administrative judiciaries, and international experts to address key challenges at the intersection of public administration reform and the rule of law in the Western Balkans. It underscored the vital role of administrative justice as a cornerstone of both good governance and the protection of citizens' rights. Over two days, participants examined pressing issues such as the execution of court judgments, reducing costs of lost disputes, the role of mediation in administrative justice, and lessons from European Court of Human Rights case law. Judges, senior officials, and experts from across the region and the EU shared experiences and explored innovative solutions for building more resilient and accountable systems.



Regional conference on Public Finance Management

The Regional Conference on "Challenges and Good Practices in Coordinating and Implementing Public Finance Management (PFM) Reforms in the Western Balkans", organised by ReSPA in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance of Montenegro, SIGMA/OECD, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Center for Excellence in Finance (CEF), gathered policymakers, experts, and practitioners from across the region. The conference focused on addressing common regional challenges in the development and implementation of PFM strategies, drawing on findings from the 2024 SIGMA monitoring reports. Particular emphasis was placed on coordination mechanisms, alignment with annual work plans, reporting practices, indicator frameworks, and the role of digital tools.





The public sector integrity workshop highlighted the need for stronger integrity regulations

Held in June 2025, the workshop brought together a wide range of public administration stakeholders and integrity institutions from the Western Balkans and the EU to reflect on common challenges, showcase promising practices, and explore avenues for regional cooperation and mutual learning. Following the presentation of the regional analysis, participants engaged in interactive discussions and peer exchange panels. Representatives of anti-corruption agencies shared insights on practical obstacles and achievements, while training institutions presented innovative approaches to ethics education.



The regional thematic group meeting on policy development and coordination

In February 2025, thematic group members exchanged best practices and addressed critical challenges in policy implementation across the region. Discussions highlighted persistent issues such as low implementation rates of strategic plans, inconsistent monitoring mechanisms, and policy revisions driven more by legal obligations than national priorities. A major concern was the excessive number of strategies institutions adopt, often leading to inefficiencies and fragmented long-term planning.



Training on gender-informed policymaking

With the support of UNDP Montenegro and held back-to-back with the Regional Thematic Working Group meeting, the training equipped public administrators from across the region with practical tools for designing more inclusive and equitable policies. Emphasising the integration of gender perspectives in policymaking, it featured interactive exercises to enable participants explore effective strategies for embedding gender considerations into policy design.



ReSPA Programme Committee Meeting: Driving Regional Cooperation

The ReSPA Programme Committee Meeting gathered senior public administration officials and Governing Board members from ReSPA Members to reflect on strategic achievements and set the course for future cooperation in PAR and EU integration. The Meeting highlighted ReSPA's achievements while looking ahead to new priorities from the draft EC Action Grant Proposal 2026–2028, outlining new programmatic focus areas and direct support instruments for the region.





EUROPEAN INTEGRATION THEMATIC AREA AND HORIZONTAL INITIATIVES

The European Integration and Accession Negotiations thematic area seeks to boost the capacities of the Western Balkans administrations for an accelerated EU accession process and boost skills needed for navigating the challenging accession process.

Over the past year, EU enlargement gained new momentum in the Western Balkans with Montenegro advancing towards closing negotiation chapters within 2026, and Albania progressing rapidly in opening key clusters. The EU also launched the new Growth Plan and the €6 billion Reform and Growth Facility, designed to bring early membership benefits to the region while linking financial support to reform benchmarks. At the same time, challenges persist in the rule of law, political stability, and administrative capacity, which risk slowing down reforms and public trust in the process.

Against this backdrop, ReSPA focused its efforts on strengthening Members' and Beneficiaries' administrative and human capacities for accession negotiations, focusing on Clusters, understanding EU policy and *acquis* implementation, exploring the phasing-in approach, accelerated integration, the new Growth Plan, the current enlargement momentum, and more. The ReSPA team aims that civil servants are ready to translate these complex processes into tangible reforms at home:

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Training on Cluster 6 strengthened the Western Balkans' negotiation capacities in EU external relations and security policies

In September 2025 ReSPA gathered 20 civil servants from the Western Balkans for a two-day training module dedicated to Cluster 6 - External Relations of the EU accession negotiations, which includes Chapters 30 (External Relations) and 31 (Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy), which are considered among the most complex and politically sensitive areas of the EU *acquis*. As part of the agenda, during the Thematic Group on EU Integration Meeting, participants discussed strategic priorities for 2026–2030 and pinpointed areas where ReSPA's tailored support can make the biggest impact.



ReSPA and Hertie School delivered joint executive programme on Strategic Communication for EU Integration

In September 2025, public servants from across the Western Balkans gathered for the Executive Education programme "Strategic Communication for EU Integration", jointly delivered by ReSPA and the Hertie School. Over the course of two days, participants explored how to communicate EU reforms credibly, build trust among citizens, and enhance institutional resilience against disinformation. The event combined expert lectures, real-time and interactive simulations, as well as peer exchange. It came at a particularly relevant moment, since strategic communication is now a key element of the enlargement process: it helps governments explain reforms, manage expectations, and prevent the spread of misinformation and polarisation.



Western Balkans Leadership Academy

In March 2025, jointly with the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and Bulgarian Institute for Public Administration (IPA), ReSPA launched the first module of the Leadership Academy for Western Balkans civil servants - a high-level Executive Leadership Programme for young public administration executives with managerial experience. The programme aims to strengthen leadership potential across the region. The first module combined theoretical frameworks with practical training, focusing on EU policies, human and social capital development, while the remaining 2 modules were focused on practical exercises with regard to the application of project management and strategic foresight skills in addressing the contemporary public administration challenges.



ReSPA contributed to the high-level seminar on the reform and growth facility in Tirana

In September 2025, ReSPA contributed to the High-Level Seminar "Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Experience in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Reform and Growth Facility". ReSPA Programme Coordinator, Genti Xhaxhiu, joined the panel on Reform Delivery and Governance, emphasising the pivotal role of strong public administrations in driving accelerated EU integration and ensuring the successful implementation of performance-based instruments such as the reform Agenda and growth facility.



Cluster 5 Training Module strengthened administrative capacities in resources, agriculture and cohesion

The Training brought together public officials, experts, and regional stakeholders in June 2025 to advance skills and knowledge across Chapters 11, 12, 13, and 22. The module is part of an ongoing series of trainings on negotiation clusters, designed to support EU integration and the implementation of structural reforms in the Western Balkans. Participants engaged with EU and regional experts on agriculture and rural development, food safety, fisheries, and cohesion policy, exploring policy alignment, funding mechanisms, and practical negotiation strategies.



2025 Summer School on "EU Policy, Enlargement and Reform" delved deeply into Europe's shared future

In Budva, in June, the 2025 edition of the Summer School brought together over 35 public servants from across the Western Balkans to engage in in-depth exchange, critical reflection, and forward-looking dialogue on EU integration. Organised jointly by the European University Institute (EUI) and ReSPA, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the programme strengthened participants' strategic understanding of EU enlargement, reform pathways, and regional cooperation.



In May 2025, after 6 Months, the "Ready4EU Programme" was officially concluded

The programme brought together 22 participants, who successfully completed six tailored modules designed to prepare Montenegrin civil servants for future careers in EU institutions, agencies, and advisory bodies. At the request of the Government of Montenegro, ReSPA supported its design, providing training facilities and helping participants gain a clearer understanding of the complex EPSO testing procedures. This initiative marks an important step in equipping Montenegro's public servants

with the knowledge and skills to contribute effectively within the European Administrative Space.



Online session on EU Enlargement momentum, phasing-in, and geopolitics

In February 2025, over 50 Western Balkans civil servants participated in a session on EU enlargement, featuring a keynote by Serbian Minister Tanja Mišćević. She discussed the phasing-in process, current EU accession negotiations, and the impact of shifting geopolitics, especially the war in Ukraine. Key priorities included free movement, energy decarbonization, and digital integration. The Minister stressed the need for coordinated action to maintain enlargement momentum amid geopolitical challenges.





Two Executive Training Programmes: on the EU Single Market and European Affairs

In April 2025, within the 2nd Cycle of the Capacity Building and Mobility programme with Italian partners, public officials from the Western Balkans joined an executive training on EU Single Market integration, focusing on legislative alignment, quality infrastructure, and strategic challenges. The session highlighted key principles of the Single Market, mutual recognition, and harmonisation, with forward-looking insights from the Draghi Report on innovation and industrial competitiveness. In parallel with the executive training on the EU Single Market, the training on EU Affairs brought together public officials and EU integration professionals from the Western Balkans to explore the geopolitical context of EU enlargement and build negotiation capacities. Participants examined EU strategic priorities, the role of digital transformation, and national strategies, concluding with a hands-on simulation of EU negotiations.



Enriching the SEECP Junior Diplomats' Forum, ReSPA strengthened regional cooperation and diplomatic skills

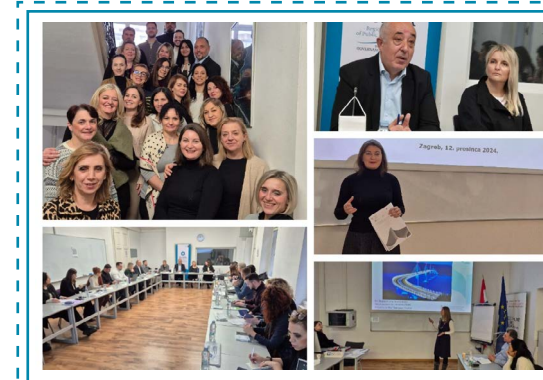
Held in March 2025, the SEECP Junior Diplomats' Forum offered an immersive experience focused on diplomacy,

negotiation, regional cooperation, and diplomatic skill-building in Southeast Europe. The event was co-organised by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Chairmanship-in-Office of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), and ReSPA, reinforcing the region's commitment to fostering the next generation of diplomats.



ReSPA's role in strengthening translation capacity showcased at DG TRAD Conference

In January 2025, Programme Coordinator Genti Xhaxhiu took part in a panel on *acquis* translation at the DG TRAD Conference, highlighting ReSPA's contributions to capacity building, the application of AI-driven solutions, and support for Translation Coordination Units (TCUs). The event addressed historical and practical challenges in translation, the role of multilingualism in the EU enlargement process, and the importance of terminology standardization. Since 2023, ReSPA has been at the forefront of translation reform efforts, co-organising specialised training and an annual conference in partnership with the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT).



Training Module on Cluster 4 tackled issues within the Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity

Held in December 2024, with support the Croatian National School of Public Administration, the Center for the Transfer of Knowledge of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the participation of representatives of the Energy Community and the Transport Community, the module focused on EU policies, accession requirements, and milestones in Chapters 14 (Transport), 15 (Energy), 21 (Trans-European Networks), and 27 (Environment). The training brought together 20 participants from the Western Balkans' line ministries responsible for transport, energy, and environment.



Workshop on developing and monitoring national programs and planning documents for EU accession

Held back-to-back with the European Integration Regional Thematic Group in December 2025, the workshop was developed based on the proposals formulated by the EU Integration Thematic Group and designed as a moderated, peer-learning activity. 23 participants from the region worked on the preparation and monitoring of EU accession/integration-related documents. The topics covered were the alignment with the EU *acquis*, the

structure of the NPAA's, financial aspects of EU accession, and the alignment of the NPAA's with other national strategic documents, etc



Translating Europe Forum and side workshop/meeting with DG Translation

In close cooperation with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation, ReSPA enabled the participation of Translation Coordination Units (TCUs) from the Western Balkans in the Translating Europe Forum 2024. The Forum spotlighted the transformative role of data, emerging technologies, and generative AI in modern translation workflows. ReSPA actively contributed to the panel 'Building Translation Capacity in Candidate Countries: New Opportunities for the Language Industry', highlighting the crucial skills needed for translating EU legislation and the importance of integrating advanced tools, including AI, into everyday practice.



Executive training on building the Common Regional Market (CRM)

In collaboration with RCC colleagues, the ReSPA team hosted a training in December 2024 on advancing regional economic integration in the Western Balkans. Public servants, policymakers, experts, and stakeholders participated in sessions delivered by high-level speakers, including the RCC Secretary General and Albania's Deputy Foreign Minister. ReSPA experts led specialised sessions on key CRM components, highlighting CRM's role in fostering resilience and supporting EU integration.



Webinar "Sustainability Transition and the Role of Green Public Procurement"

In September 2025, the ReSPA team engaged virtually over 60 public servants and practitioners from the Western Balkans in a webinar led by Prof. Matteo Mura from the University of Bologna. The session highlighted the role of public administrations in advancing sustainability through Green Public Procurement, promoting sustainable practices, and addressing environmental challenges such as resource scarcity and the circular economy.





HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Human Resources Management and Professional Development thematic area is pivotal in fostering a professional, motivated, and proactive civil service. Civil servants are essential for building transparent, accountable, and effective public administration institutions. Strategic human resources management is critical in attracting young professionals to the public sector and ensuring their growth and retention.

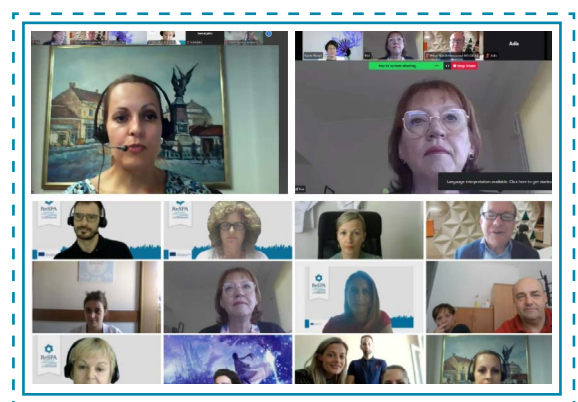
In 2025, ReSPA reinforced its commitment to professionalising the civil service and transforming HR management across the Western Balkans into a strategic, future-ready function. While the region has advanced in establishing merit-based recruitment, competency frameworks, and HRMIS systems, challenges persist in ensuring consistent implementation, depoliticisation, and effective leadership development. Frequent turnover, limited workforce planning, and uneven use of performance management continue to hinder progress, while new demands - ranging from digital transformation to demographic shifts - require more agile, inclusive, and sustainable HR strategies. Against this backdrop, ReSPA has worked to bridge policy and practice, empowering HR departments to act as strategic partners in reform and innovation.

Through its HRM and Professional Development Thematic Group, Seasonal Schools, and the launch of the second generation of the Leadership Academy, ReSPA has delivered targeted capacity-building on strategic HR management, workforce forecasting, and ethical leadership, equipping HR units with modern tools for evidence-based decision-making and responsible innovation. At the same time, new learning formats - combining in-person sessions, e-learning, and mentoring - have helped civil servants strengthen their competencies in recruitment, performance appraisal, and career development. By connecting regional administrations with EU networks such as EUPAN and DISPA, ReSPA continues to foster peer learning, inclusivity, and a shared commitment to excellence - empowering people as the true engine of public sector transformation.



Seasonal School on Talent Management: Building future-ready administrations

In June 2025, the Seasonal School on Talent Management gathered 20 senior and mid-level civil servants from across the Western Balkans. The programme centred on structured succession planning—a key element in ensuring leadership continuity and protecting institutional memory at a time when public administrations are navigating EU integration, demographic shifts, and growing demands for digital governance and accountability. Across two intensive days, participants combined theoretical insights with practical approaches, equipping themselves with concrete tools to shape resilient, future-ready administrations.



Webinar on HR units as strategic drivers of reform

In June 2025, an online session gathered HR leaders and policy experts from France, Belgium, Estonia, and Serbia. With over 50 participants, the webinar highlighted the strategic role of HR units in public administration reforms, underlining how HR professionals can evolve into proactive change agents - leading institutional transformation, supporting leadership development, and strengthening resilience in times of rapid change.



Training on effective learning & development

In March 2025, Belgian BOSA experts led the training focused on designing impactful, tailored public administration training programmes. Participants examined curriculum design, learning outcomes using SMART objectives, and innovative tools like flipped learning and digital platforms. The second day addressed storytelling and consulting skills, illustrating how engaging narratives can improve learning. A dedicated session introduced AI-powered tools for personalized learning experiences, while the training concluded with a focus on evaluation techniques and continuous improvement of training initiatives.



Workshop on public service salary systems

Held in March 2025, the workshop offered a comparative overview of civil service remuneration systems, including legislative frameworks, salary structures, and challenges across the Western Balkans. Presentations from Croatia and Slovenia illustrated recent pay reforms, sparking debate on the complexity of salary system reforms. Discussions emphasized principles such as fairness, transparency, and fiscal responsibility. SIGMA's updated 2023 Principles of Public Administration were presented, with a focus on Principle 11, helping participants explore best practices and strategies for building fair and sustainable compensation models.



Training on Human Resource Management & Performance Appraisal

Within the 2nd Cycle of the Capacity Building and Mobility programme with Italian Institutions, ReSPA brought together Western Balkan HR professionals and Italian counterparts to explore the modernisation of HRM and performance appraisal systems. Organised with Italy's Department for Public Administration and SNA, sessions covered the Italian training directive, HRM toolkits, competency frameworks, and youth recruitment policies. Participants examined Italy's practices in performance evaluation and discussed the use of AI in public administration training.

Exploring and Assessing Competency Models

Also, within the 2nd Cycle of the Capacity Building and Mobility programme with Italian Institutions, mid-to-senior-level public officials from civil service agencies, ministries of public administration, and public administration training institutions in the Western Balkans visited the Italian Department for Public Administration and the National School of Public Administration (SNA). The programme empowered participants to draft a basic competency model for senior public service roles in their administrations. They gained insights into behavioural indicators that distinguish top performers and learned to integrate these frameworks into recruitment, career development, and performance assessment. Participants were equipped to champion these practices within their institutions, fostering a culture of merit, accountability, and continuous learning under the guidance of prominent experts.



Workshop on enhancing Human Resource Management in the Western Balkans

Held alongside the HRMPD Working Group Meeting, the workshop promoted knowledge exchange and highlighted good practices in HR monitoring and professional development. The first day focused on HR monitoring as a key aspect of strategic HRM, with participants exploring methodologies and case studies from the Western Balkans and EU Member States. Discussions enhanced understanding of effective HRM, identified challenges, and encouraged innovative regional solutions. The second day featured presentations from participating administrations, key findings from SIGMA reports, and ReSPA's 2025 activity plans, including ideas for a new EU-funded project proposal.



Conference on innovative HRM for public administration of the future & HRMPD Working Group meeting

In October 2024, ReSPA brought together around 50 public servants, policymakers, human resources professionals from the Western Balkan administrations and Slovenia, and others interested in innovations in the HRM of public administration. The conference, hosted jointly with the Ministry of Public Administration of Slovenia, addressed the dynamic and evolving nature of public service leadership and explored the transformative role of HRM in shaping the future of public administration. The HRMPD regional thematic group meeting, held back-to-back with the Conference on Innovative HRM for public administration, convened to generate recommendations for future activities to foster collaboration among administrations and share best practices.



Meeting of the directors of training Institutions from the Western Balkans

Held in October 2024, alongside the DISPA meeting, the meeting reaffirmed ReSPA's dedication to enhancing networking and collaboration between Western Balkan institutions and their EU counterparts. Participants discussed progress since their last meeting in 2023, focusing on leadership, digital skills, knowledge management, training preparation, and the use of AI in developing training programs. The meeting also featured valuable insights from the National School of Public Administration of Croatia's State School of Public Administration.



Conference on Empowering Leaders: Advancing Leadership Excellence in the Western Balkans

In December 2024, in collaboration with Croatia's National School of Public Administration and France's INSP, ReSPA hosted a conference that brought together leaders and experts to address challenges in leadership training within public administration. Practical insights were drawn from the Leadership Project implemented by NSPA and INSP, with contributions from other institutions like EKKDA and the CEF. The discussions at the World Café underscored the critical need for a comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to leadership training in the Western Balkans.





SERVICE DELIVERY

The Service Delivery thematic area integrates efforts towards more digitised governments and enhanced quality management as a prerequisite for better work performance and public services. In the digitalisation sub-area, ReSPA focused on empowering civil servants to lead and adapt to the ongoing digital transformation. Activities emphasized upgrading technical knowledge, fostering peer learning, and exploring innovative policies for more effective implementation of laws and regulations. It also highlights cutting-edge practices in interoperability, cybersecurity, open data, and AI, alongside human-centric design and novel applications of open data. These initiatives aim to reduce administrative burdens, enhance quality management, and strengthen collaboration among stakeholders, enabling public administrations to harness the full potential of digital tools for better service delivery.



Over the past year, a series of regional initiatives has reinforced this momentum across the Western Balkans, working towards modernized governance and alignment with EU standards. Digital transformation and interoperability have been key priorities, with governments intensifying efforts to enhance digital public services and break down information silos. Initiatives such as the ReSPA Interoperability Academies in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the previous year, as well as Interoperability Academies

in North Macedonia and Serbia, along with thematic meetings related to cross-border interoperability, the joint workshop with the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government, have strengthened the capacity of public officials and facilitated knowledge exchange across the region.

From the Open Data Challenge Hackathon in Montenegro and the Interoperability Academies to the Digital Summit 2025 panel "From Connected Systems to Connected Citizens," the Western Balkans have made significant strides in strengthening cooperation, innovation, and institutional capacity. These efforts were complemented by initiatives

focused on cybersecurity, trust services (eID, eSignature, eSeal, eWallet), data governance, and artificial intelligence, highlighted through the 2025 Seasonal School in Skopje on AI and machine learning for public administration, and ReSPA's joint initiatives related to public servants' competencies in AI and digital skills.

At the OGP Global Summit, the Western Balkans reaffirmed their strong commitment to transparency, accountability, and participatory governance. Building on the OGP Western Balkans Regional Meeting held in Tirana in November 2024 and in Vitoria-Gasteiz in October 2025, co-organized by ReSPA and the OGP Support Unit, the region showcased tangible progress in advancing open government reforms, digital transformation, and data-driven governance.

Together, these actions demonstrate the region's growing maturity in integrating open government values with digital transformation, AI adoption, and trust service frameworks, thereby contributing to more transparent, secure, and citizen-centric public administrations that align with EU standards.

The region has also seen recognition of innovative public service practices since the Western Balkans Public Administration Awards 2024 highlighted exemplary initiatives which demonstrate a growing commitment to modern, citizen-focused service delivery.





Western Balkans at the OGP Global Summit

At the OGP Global Summit 2025 ReSPA actively supported the participation of OGP Points of Contact from the Western Balkans, ensuring the region's achievements and priorities were visible on the global stage. Through its dedicated high-level panel "Public Integrity, Transparency and Ethics", side event, participation in the panel session "From concept to practice: the global rise of open government training", regional and joint meetings with WBs and EaP, ReSPA fostered dialogue between Western Balkan and worldwide administrations on advancing open governance and digital transformation. The Minister of State for Standards and Services, Minister Adea Pirdeni, took part in the high-level panel "Public integrity, Transparency and Ethics" highlighting Albania's and the region's efforts to promote integrity, accountability, and trust in public institutions. The discussions highlighted progress in areas such as AI, interoperability, integrity, ethics, and data governance, underscoring their importance for transparent and citizen-centred public services.



2025 Seasonal School Sparks Digital Transformation in the EU Candidate Countries

This edition of the school was organised in the end of September 2025 in Skopje, jointly with the SIGMA Programme and the GIZ Regional Project 'Public Administration Reform in the Eastern Partnership Countries', tackling a timely theme: "Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning for Public Administration". It aimed to support the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership governments strengthen public administration reform, digital transformation, and good governance in line with EU standards. Over three days, the programme brought together 40+ senior public officials from 10 administrations, 30+ experts, and practitioners to build the knowledge, skills, and strategic foresight needed to navigate the fast-evolving AI landscape.



"From Connected Systems to Connected Citizens" - ReSPA's & GIZ panel on interoperability at the WB Digital Summit 2025

The Western Balkans Digital Summit 2025 gathered ministers, international partners, private sector leaders, and digital experts, reaffirming the region's shared commitment to a connected digital future. ReSPA enriched the Summit by hosting the panel on interoperability, bringing together over 40 participants from 10 public administrations across the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership. The session offered a unique opportunity to gain first-hand insights into the latest developments of the WB Digital Transformation agenda, while fostering connections, peer learning, and regional growth.



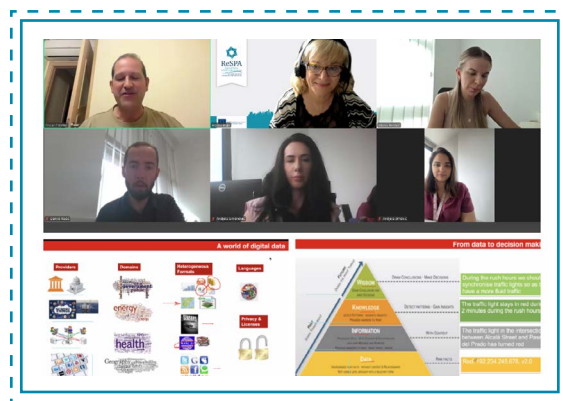
Open Data Challenge Hackathon – young innovators showcased the power of Open Data in Montenegro

In September 2025, the Open Data Challenge hackathon in Podgorica brought together young, creative, and skilled individuals who demonstrated, through innovative solutions, how open data can contribute to societal development and improve institutional operations. The event was organised in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro and the Ministry of Public Administration, with the support of ReSPA. It represents a significant step toward promoting digital transformation, fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, and empowering the community of innovators.



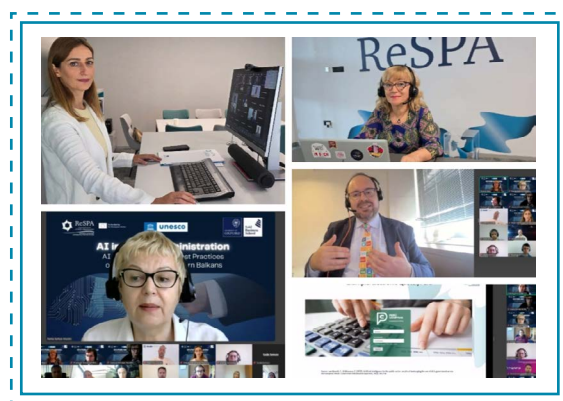
Regional training on cybersecurity standards in public institutions toward better protected citizens, data and democracy

In September 2025, ReSPA supported the regional training "Cybersecurity Standards in Public Institutions", under the Programme for Good Governance in Cybersecurity in the Western Balkans, crafted by the Geneva Centre for Security Governance (DCAF), Western Balkans Cyber Capacity Centre (WB3C) and UK Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF). The two-day training brought together high-level experts and practitioners who shared knowledge and practical tools to advance cybersecurity governance in public institutions.



Online training “Use, Processing and Protection of Data” toward improved institutional understanding and use of data in Montenegro

In July 2025, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro, ReSPA delivered a two-day online training to nearly 30 public sector professionals from the Ministry and other government institutions. Organised under the e-Academy programme, the training focused on improving institutional understanding and the effective use of data throughout its lifecycle - from collection and management to analysis and application - helping administrations harness data as a driver of better policy-making and service delivery.



ReSPA, UNESCO, and Oxford’s Saïd Business School joined forces to discuss the strategic value of AI for governments

In July 2025, a virtual webinar on “AI Competences and Best Practices of Using AI in the Western Balkans” gathered over 100 professionals from the region’s public administrations—including members of the Digital Transformation and Human Resources Thematic Working Groups—who explored global and European trends in AI adoption, the strategic value of AI for governments, and the institutional and human capacities needed for effective, ethical implementation.



Third-cycle ToT in Cyber Hygiene 2025 empowered the regional cybersecurity culture in public governance

Crafted with the Western Balkans Cyber Capacity Centre (WB3C), in May 2025, the initiative equipped senior-level public officials with essential knowledge and practical skills in cyber hygiene while also preparing them to act as multipliers of that knowledge within their respective institutions. The program was built on the success of previous cycles, offering a structured and practice-oriented approach that targets officials with a good background in IT and cybersecurity.



Workshop with EKDDA explored trends in digital governance and effective e-government strategies

In cooperation with the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA), in April 2025, ReSPA hosted a workshop that brought together 20 public sector professionals, policymakers, and technology experts. The event provided a valuable platform for exchanging knowledge, sharing best practices, and engaging in forward-looking discussions on the future of digital governance and the role of AI in public administration.



Interoperability Academy in Serbia toward strengthening connected public services

In March 2025, senior public officials and digital experts from the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications, the Public Policy Secretariat, the Office for IT and eGovernment, and UNDP Serbia came together to address critical challenges related to data exchange and interoperability. Discussions focused on legal frameworks, governance mechanisms, and interoperability maturity models, with a strong emphasis on the EU Interoperability Framework (EIF) and its relevance for Serbia.



The WB Public Administration Award Winners’ Community of Practice: Driving Innovation and Collaboration

In March 2025, ReSPA and the SIGMA Programme brought together leading public administration professionals from the Western Balkans to exchange best practices, foster regional collaboration, and explore ways to scale award-winning initiatives. This gathering provided an important opportunity to catalyze institutional innovation, knowledge sharing, and cross-border cooperation, reinforcing the region’s commitment to excellence in public service delivery.



Regional Thematic Group Meeting on digital transformation & training on eIDAS 2.0

In February 2025, senior officials responsible for digitalization, together with members of the ReSPA Working Group, convened to discuss the state of play in digitalizing public services across the region, with a particular focus on the implementation of eIDAS and the upcoming eIDAS 2.0 Regulation. The meeting served as a platform to assess regional progress in digital transformation, explore ReSPA's available support mechanisms, and identify new opportunities to enhance the efficiency, security, and accessibility of digital services.



Advanced Open Data Management Training

Over two days at the Science and Technology Park in Podgorica, more than 50 public sector professionals enhanced their expertise in open data management through an intensive training program. The programme combined practical exercises with the latest insights and trends in open data, equipping participants to lead future initiatives and apply data-driven approaches in their institutions. This initiative aims to strengthen institutional capacity, foster a culture of data-informed decision-making, and lay the groundwork for future open data advancements in Montenegro's public sector, marking another step in ReSPA's mission to drive digital transformation and innovation across the region.



OGP Western Balkans Regional Meeting

Co-organised with the OGP Support Unit in Tirana in November 2024, the Meeting brought together Ministers, key government officials, civil society leaders, and experts from the Western Balkan administrations, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania to discuss critical issues around open government reforms, digital governance, and political integrity as an annual gathering of the Western Balkans OGP Community.



The Interoperability Academy in North Macedonia, held in December 2024,

was the third in a series of ReSPA Interoperability Academies across the Western Balkans. It gathered public officials, policymakers, technologists, and lecturers to address pressing interoperability challenges. Representatives from various ministries and institutions participated in discussions and sessions on establishing effective data exchange and improving public administration capabilities. The academy highlighted practical solutions, policy alignment, and the importance of stakeholder collaboration in advancing interoperability and digital transformation in North Macedonia.



The 2024 Western Balkans Public Administration Awards celebrated innovation in public administration

Partnering with the SIGMA Programme, ReSPA announced the 2024 Western Balkans Public Administration Awards winners during the ReSPA High-Level Policy Dialogue in Skopje.

The awards recognised initiatives that build better public administrations for and with users: Office for IT and eGovernment, Serbia, with the **"I Protect You"** (a human-centric platform protecting children from violence, enabling abuse reporting and tracking by over 2,700 entities, including schools and social services);

Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Montenegro, with the **e-Social** (the Integrated Social Welfare Information System (ISWIS) streamlines social welfare services, improving transparency, accountability, and support for vulnerable populations) and the Public Policy Secretariat, Serbia, with the **Support the Renewable Energy Investments** (the project which introduced 32 digital services to simplify renewable energy investments, reduce costs, and align regulations with EU standards).

For the first time, the Office for IT and eGovernment, Serbia, received a Special Award for outstanding leadership in digital transformation and public service innovation.

Special Recognition Awards were also presented to City of Kragujevac, Serbia, for "Be Part of the Plan" (a platform for real-time citizen engagement in urban planning); Public Procurement Commission, Albania, for the simplified procurement processes with enhanced transparency; City of Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina for Open Data Portal (which promotes innovation through accessible datasets) and Central Register of North Macedonia for "Beneficial Ownership Register" (which advance transparency in anti-money laundering efforts).

During the reporting period, ReSPA actively contributed to several high-level international events, sharing expertise and strengthening regional perspectives on digital transformation, AI, and public service innovation:

✧ At the panel **“Meta-register and Interoperability – The Key to Digital Transformation of Public Administration”** (September 2025, Podgorica), representatives from government institutions, academia, the business sector, and international organisations discussed how interoperability and the meta-register can transform the way public services are delivered;

✧ At the **SIGMA Webinar on Digital Government in the Western Balkans**, Bojana Bajić addressed progress and challenges in digital service delivery, underlining the importance of regional collaboration, digital inclusion, and investment in skills and infrastructure;

✧ At the **UNESCO Global Conference on Capacity Building in AI and Digital Transformation**, ReSPA team stressed that digital transformation is not just about systems, but about people, their skills, motivation, and capacity to drive change, underlining the role of civil servants, global cooperation, and Schools of Government as key enablers of sustainable and people-centred digital transformation in the Western Balkans and beyond;

✧ The **16th Teaching Public Service in the Digital Age Masterclass** brought together educators from 17 countries to explore forward-looking themes such as user testing, design thinking, generative AI in evaluation, agile project management, and ethical data use;

✧ At the **World Economic Forum & WB3C Cybersecurity Conference** (May 2025), ReSPA team contributed to conversations on cyber resilience, cross-border cooperation, and investment in secure digital infrastructure to build trust in public services.

✧ In collaboration with Helvetas and several universities, ReSPA took part in discussions on **“Leveraging AI and Knowledge Management for Smarter Capacity Building in Local Government,”** focusing on AI-enabled real-time learning, data-driven decision-making, and responsive citizen services;

✧ **IT Spot Conference** in Podgorica: Bojana enriched the panel discussion on “Government Service Bus: The State and Awareness of the Need for a Fully Functional Data Exchange System”;

✧ **Conference on Open Data in Montenegro:** Bojana Bajić contributed to the panel discussion focusing on “Which Data Do We Need?”

✧ **Roundtable on the Formation of the Open Data Hub in Montenegro:** Bajić was a panellist and contributed to discussions and conclusions aimed at establishing a national Open Data Hub to enhance data accessibility and transparency;



The Regional Quality Management Centre (RQMC) within ReSPA offers regional expertise in Quality Management, assisting public administrations in enhancing their capacities to implement effective Quality Management tools and systems.

During the last 12 months, RQMC team finalised 9 PEF procedures, awarding 9 institutions with CAF Effective User Label: the Accreditation Body of Serbia, the City of Bihać in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Civil Service Agency of Republika Srpska, the Mine Action Centre of Serbia, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Municipality of Gjorche Petrov

in North Macedonia, the Office for Combatting Drugs of the Government of Serbia, the Public Administration Reform Coordinator's Office (PARCO) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption of the Republic of North Macedonia.

In parallel, RQMC team is working on CAF implementation in 8 institutions (out of which 4 are ongoing): in Municipality of Zeta, Montenegro, Bureau of Metrology of Montenegro (2nd cycle), Secretariat for Legislation of North Macedonia, Ministry of European Affairs of North Macedonia. Furthermore, Ministry of Public Administration of North Macedonia, Office for Combating Drugs of Serbia (2nd cycle), Agency for Data Protection and Free Access to Information of Montenegro, and Secretariat for Local Self-Government and Civil Society Cooperation within the City of Podgorica are ongoing with CAF implementation. In addition, intensive communication is ongoing with three additional institutions that have expressed very strong interest in implementing CAF in Montenegro.

In addition, ReSPA contributed to a comprehensive analysis of the Law on the Introduction of a Quality Management System (QMS) and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in North Macedonia's civil service. The evaluation recognised notable progress but identified fragmentation within the legal implementation.



PEF network meeting highlights CAF achievements and paves the way for digital QM in the region

Held in May 2025, PEF Network Meeting brought together certified EFACs from the region and numerous guests, including the representatives of the Human Resource Service of Serbia, who presented their project CAFFICIENCY (which allowed for the digitalisation of the CAF Action Plan implementation and was recognised as one of the 18 golden cases at the CAF Users Event in Warsaw in April 2025). In addition, the event was followed by the award of CAF labels to three institutions from Serbia: the Office for Combating Drugs of Serbia, the Demining Centre of Serbia and the Accreditation Body of Serbia.



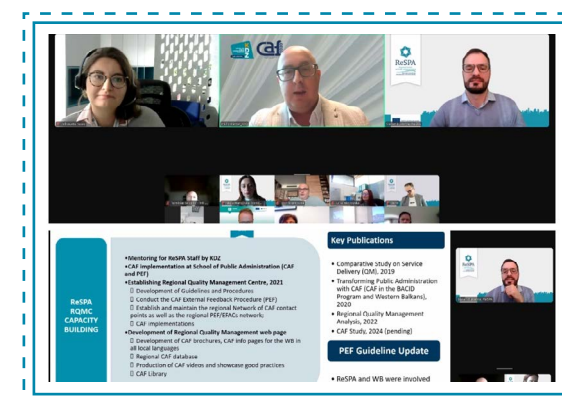
The high-level panel discussion showcased concrete benefits of QM tools, especially CAF

In July 2025, in Podgorica, a “Quality as the Key to an Efficient Public Administration: Benefits and Practical Examples” panel discussion organised by the Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro and ReSPA, underlined the benefits of QM tools - especially the CAF and ISO standards - for building efficient, transparent, and citizen-oriented public institutions.



CAF capacity building tailor-made in the Montenegrin Ministry of Public Administration and HRMA

In July 2025, the two-day CAF training brought together professionals from Montenegro’s Ministry of Public Administration’s Quality Management (QM) unit and the Human Resources Administration to refine their expertise in quality management and effectively implement the CAF model to drive continuous improvement and service excellence in Montenegro.



4th Annual Meeting of the Regional Quality Management Centre (RQMC)

Held in December 2024, the event allowed nominated ReSPA QM Working Sub-group members, including the CAF and PEF Network. The RQMC team presented program activities implemented in 2024 under BACIDIII, along with anticipated directions for 2025. A representative from each administration briefly updated on their respective administration’s state of play, followed by a discussion and formulation of proposals for future activities.



ReSPA's RQMC highlighted the regional quality management expertise at the EU level:



CAF Excellence Recognition Training

The CAF Excellence Recognition (CER) training - a comprehensive two-day program held in October 2025, in Brussels at BOSA. The training was designed for National CAF Correspondents and External Feedback Actors, with a primary focus on understanding and implementing the updated CAF External Feedback Procedure. Key topics included the CER process, recognition levels, evaluation criteria, and the roles and responsibilities of key actors involved. Participants engaged in practical exercises, discussions on compliance issues, and methods to effectively align CER requirements with organizational practices. ReSPA enriched the event by facilitating the participation of two representatives from each ReSPA Member.



At the CAF National Correspondents meeting in Copenhagen RQMC team reinforced ReSPA's role in driving WB toward excellence:

In October 2025, ReSPA participated in the CAF National Correspondents Meeting, which gathered national correspondents and key representatives from the European CAF Resource Centre and EIPA to discuss the latest developments in CAF implementation, the upcoming CAF External Feedback (CER) training, and preparations for the Quality Conference 2026. ReSPA contributed to the exchange of experiences during the country updates session and engaged in the working groups focused on updating CAF, refining CER guidelines, and shaping the future Quality Conference. The meeting provided an excellent opportunity to reinforce ReSPA's role as a regional driver of quality management in public administration and as a bridge between Western Balkans administrations and the European Administrative Space.



CAF National Correspondents meeting confirmed ReSPA as a vital partner in advancing QM across the WBs

In April 2025, under the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Meeting of the CAF National Correspondents brought together key stakeholders and quality management experts from Europe, with a strong representation from the Western Balkans. They highlighted ReSPA's dedication to capacity building, promotion, and advocacy for the CAF, especially in sectors like education and digital administration.



ReSPA at the 10th CAF users' event shared experiences from the WBs

In April 2025, the 10th European CAF Users' Event, held under the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU, gathered over 130 participants, including a strong delegation of 22 representatives from the Western Balkans, 12 of whom were brought by ReSPA. EIPA and the EUPAN partnered with the Chancellery of the Prime Minister for two days to spotlight shared experiences and drive public sector transformation through the CAF.



Effective CAF User Label Owners!

Accreditation Body of Serbia, City of Bihać in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Civil Service Agency of Republika Srpska, Mine Action Centre of Serbia, Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Municipality of Gyorche Petrov in North Macedonia, Office for Combatting Drugs of the Government of Serbia, Public Administration Reform Coordinator's Office (PARCO) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, State Commission for Prevention of Corruption of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Ongoing CAF implementation



The Ministry of Public Administration of North Macedonia Embarks on the CAF Journey, reaffirming its crucial role in advancing quality management across the country. Minister Minchev and members of the Self-Assessment Group actively participated in a one-day workshop, drawing on previous CAF experience to share valuable insights. This milestone highlights the Ministry's commitment to innovation, transparency, and continuous improvement - key drivers of modern, citizen-focused public services. The CAF training (July 2025), and the CAF Consensus Workshop (October 2025), enabled key stakeholders explore strengths, bottlenecks, and improvement strategies across all nine CAF criteria.



Serbia's Office for Combating Drugs Initiates Second CAF (2nd cycle)

The CAF self-assessment group is currently completing the online self-assessment tool. The next step is a CAF Consensus Workshop scheduled for October in Belgrade. There is no progress in organisational improvement without a strong support from leadership; in this case, Mr Milan Pekic, Director of the Office, is fully committed to advancing organisational performance.



Montenegro's Nationwide CAF Rollout – Five Institutions on the Path to Excellence

Montenegro is implementing five CAF processes by the end of 2025 through ReSPA's On-Demand Mechanism. The Ministry of Public Administration, in close collaboration with ReSPA RQMC and regional experts has started CAF implementation in the Agency for Data Protection and Free Access to Information and the Secretariat for Local Self-Government and Civil Society Cooperation within the City of Podgorica. In parallel, intensive communication is ongoing with three additional institutions that have expressed very strong interest in implementing CAF. These engagements aim to broaden the application of CAF across Montenegro, fostering wider organisational excellence and continuous improvement.



Projects with EU Partners

Over the past 12 months, ReSPA has built some of its strongest partnerships yet, linking public institutions from across the Western Balkans with peers in France, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Belgium, Estonia, Poland, and beyond. Through joint projects, mobility schemes, and technical cooperation, ReSPA has not only strengthened the capacities of civil servants but also fostered lasting institutional ties with EU counterparts. These partnerships accelerate the region's integration into the European Administrative Space, bringing world-class expertise in reform, digital transformation, and citizen-focused governance to the Western Balkans, while sending a clear signal of commitment to European values of trust, efficiency, and accountability.

Second Cycle of the capacity building and mobility supported by the Italian public institutions



In partnership with leading Italian institutions - SNA, the European University Institute (EUI), the Department of Public Administration - and with funding from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, ReSPA has designed a unique programme that equips public servants from the Western Balkans with the skills, networks, and vision needed for tomorrow's governance. Over 55 public servants have taken part in this transformative journey, combining intensive training modules, study visits, and peer exchanges with Italy's top public administration bodies. The first cycle was **Launched virtually in December 2023** and **kicked off in Podgorica in April 2024**, with the first cycle that delivered hands-on capacity building across three core streams: Policy Development & Coordination, European Integration & Accession and Digital Transformation. Each stream featured training **in Podgorica** and at the **SNA Campus in Caserta**, complemented by **study visits to Italian ministries and agencies**. Participants worked **side-by-side with Italian counterparts**, sharing practical insights and building a network of cooperation that goes beyond the classroom.

The Second Cycle **began in April 2025** in Bari, bringing together over 50 public servants from across the region. This year-long cycle focuses on European Governance & Affairs, the EU Single Market, and Human Resources Management & Performance Appraisal. Alongside the kick-off conference, participants joined an **learning exercise** and a **Summer School on EU Policy, Enlargement and Reform**, designed jointly by EUI and ReSPA. The journey continued in SNA, **exploring and Assessing Competency Models with Italian Partners**.

Ireland for EU Enlargement



'Ireland for EU Enlargement' is a three-year strategic initiative led by Ireland's Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in partnership with ReSPA and fully funded by Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

The programme leverages ReSPA's regional networks and IPA's expertise in public sector leadership to create a platform for learning, peer exchange, and training, aligned with the evolving demands of EU integration.

Rooted in the belief that EU accession is more than a legal process, but a significant leadership challenge, the Programme **empowers senior public leaders from the Western Balkans & Eastern Partnership Institutions as they progress towards EU membership**, fostering cross-border collaboration, and supporting participants in aligning national reforms with EU standards.

The implementation of the Programme started in September 2025 for Albania, Montenegro, Moldova, and Ukraine, continuing in 2026 with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, and Serbia, and focuses on three technical streams: 1) Economic Transition, Investment, and Competitiveness; 2) Digital Transformation of Public Administration and 3) Justice, Integrity, and Rule of Law, with the Leadership as a cross-cutting issue.

This programme drives lasting change - empowering people, transforming systems, and delivering measurable impact through: Stronger Leadership & Institutions (boosting capacity to lead EU reforms in competitiveness, digitalisation, and the rule of law), tangible policy results (advancing policies through peer learning and regional cooperation), greater inclusivity (expanding diversity in public administration) and enduring networks (uniting reform-minded civil servants across borders around EU values and good governance).

These outcomes will help build a more unified European administrative space, supporting the broader EU integration process and equipping civil servants to lead with confidence in the evolving landscape.

The first year serves as a pilot phase, focused on testing, feedback, and refining the model. Years two and three will scale the programme's reach, deepen its impact, and expand its community across institutions and candidates.



* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

France and ReSPA: Advancing Public Administration Reform in the Western Balkans



France's strong commitment to supporting the Western Balkans, as outlined in the French Strategy for the Western Balkans (2019, renewed in May 2025), took tangible form in November 2023, when the ReSPA Director signed a Declaration of Intent with Stanislas Guerini, the French Minister of Transformation and Public Service. This milestone opened a new chapter of fruitful collaboration dedicated to fostering deeper exchanges between France and the Western Balkans in the fields of mobility, best practice sharing, training, and skills development within the public service domain.

The partnership began with the inspiring workshop “Leading with Vision,” co-designed with the French Directorate General for Administration and the Civil Service (DGAFP) and the French Institute of Public Service (INSP). The workshop brought together senior public officials responsible for strategic planning across the Western Balkans, providing them with innovative tools and approaches to guide transformation in their institutions. The collaboration deepened with the regional dialogue “Navigating Transformation: Empowering Public Service for Today’s Trends and Challenges,” held in Tirana with the support of the French Ministry, where experts and practitioners explored new perspectives on leadership and public sector modernization.

Since then, the partnership has flourished through numerous initiatives that demonstrate the added value of French expertise in public administration. From the Policy Development and Coordination Working Group Meeting and the Human Resources Working Group Meeting in March 2025, to the HR Seasonal School on Succession Planning and the Regional Conference on Integrity in the Public Sector in June 2025, each activity has contributed to strengthening institutional capacities and professional networks across the region. The cooperation continued in September 2025 with the Seminar on Coordinating and Implementing Public Finance Management Reforms, followed by a Conference Investment in administrative servants is an investment in the future of the public sector in Skopje, dedicated to enhancing training systems for civil servants.

These efforts are complemented by joint regional initiatives that further connect and empower public servants. A mobility scheme has **opened opportunities for civil servants from the Western Balkans to attend prestigious INSP training courses**, enriching their leadership, negotiation, and crisis management skills in an international context. In parallel, a one-year capacity-building project on integrity in the public sector, to be launched in Belgrade in October 2025, will bring additional expertise and support to the region’s ongoing governance reforms.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of the French Government and the invaluable contribution of Caroline Socie, French Expert and Technical Adviser to ReSPA, whose dedication and hands-on engagement since November 2024 have been instrumental in transforming ideas into reality. Her work continues to strengthen the professional development of civil servants and to promote a culture of integrity, excellence, and collaboration across the Western Balkans.

AI4Gov-X



The AI4Gov-X project, a European Union-funded initiative to transform public administration through Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies, was officially launched in February 2025.

The Project is aimed at exploring the possibilities of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data technologies for developing evidence-based innovations, policies, and policy recommendations to harness the public sphere, political power, and economic power for democratic purposes. The project intends to contribute to the research landscape that addresses ethical, trust, discrimination, and bias issues, and provide solutions to the challenges faced by stakeholders in modern democracies. As an associated partner, **ReSPA joins 40 institutions from 20 EU countries in developing innovation platforms and knowledge-sharing networks.**

RADAR



Renewing Administration through Democratic Anchorage Reforms - RADAR project **aims to strengthen democratic governance in public administration** by focusing on democratic anchorage, new narratives, and education. The project unites seven top research institutes, two national government schools - including ReSPA, a public innovation ministry, and an international NGO, covering expertise across all EU countries and the Western Balkans. Implementation started in early 2025 and is expected to be finalised by 2028.

Its first goal is to deepen understanding of how public administration reforms relate to democratic legitimacy, using data analysis, innovation case studies, and discourse reviews. Second, RADAR will identify conditions that make reforms effective by studying promising approaches like participation, representative bureaucracy, and experimental governance through experiments, focus groups, and case studies. Third, it will develop practical methods to enhance the democratic legitimacy of reforms, ensuring they deliver results while upholding democratic institutions. Finally, RADAR will integrate these methods into the education and training of current and future civil servants and policymakers.

Mechanisms of Direct Support

“On-demand” Support Instruments

“On-demand” Support Instruments address the specific needs of ReSPA Members, helping them tackle various challenges in reforming and modernising public administrations and promoting effective governance in the Western Balkans. During the reporting period, 19 projects have been in different stages of implementation, covering Public Administration Reform (PAR), policy development, HR management and development (HRMD), digital transformation, and governance innovation. Each initiative is designed to empower institutions to become better equipped, more transparent, and highly efficient in serving citizens, and is at a different stage of implementation.

ALBANIA

ReSPA has provided targeted support to the Albanian administration to develop an actionable roadmap to implement the Public Administration High-Performance Programme. The overarching goal of this initiative was twofold: first, to establish a framework that enables institutions to identify and address shortcomings, fostering a culture of continuous improvement; and second, to promote the development of high-performing institutions by assessing and enhancing employee motivation, identifying barriers to engagement, and mitigating factors that lead to demotivation. In parallel, ReSPA is also supporting the Albanian authorities in designing a new executive training programme for senior civil servants in partnership with an EU Member State, aimed at strengthening leadership capacities and fostering a performance-oriented public sector culture.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

ReSPA has supported Bosnia and Herzegovina in modernising and digitalising its public administration through projects that simplify procedures, strengthen oversight, and advance EU integration. The development of a computer programme has streamlined the registration of associations, foundations, and foreign NGOs, while the establishment of a sustainable EaSI support system has ensured continued access to European programmes. Enhancements to the online recruitment platform eKonkurs and training on the use of artificial intelligence have contributed to more transparent and innovative practices. In parallel, projects in the final stage of review include risk management training, the update of internal audit methodology, and the engagement of an Expert for eIDAS and eIDAS 2.0 EU Regulations to build the capacities of IDDEEA employees in trust services and digital identity.

MONTENEGRO

In Montenegro, ReSPA has focused on raising the quality of governance and strengthening administrative capacity. The implementation of the CAF model across five institutions and the development of a manual for governance and internal controls have improved quality management and auditing practices. Support in drafting and promoting the National Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership has reinforced transparency and citizen engagement, while legislative work on health data collection and a new methodology for intern induction modernised both regulation and human resource practices. Complementing these efforts, ReSPA advanced capacities in quality management and delivered a Digital Academy training series on the management of open data and use, processing and protection of data, enabling civil servants to manage and protect data in line with EU standards.

NORTH MACEDONIA

ReSPA's support in North Macedonia has centred on strengthening integrity, modernising legislation, and advancing digitalisation. Expert support in upgrading the IT tool for monitoring and reporting on the realization of the PAR Strategy in North Macedonia is part of ReSPA's broader assistance to the country, which has centred on strengthening integrity, modernising legislation, and advancing digitalisation. Expert input into the new National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (2026–2030) will shape a stronger anti-corruption framework, while assistance in drafting the Law on Archival Material and developing the National e-Archival and Records Management System has modernised information and record-keeping. At the same time, an evaluation of the law introducing Quality Management and CAF has provided evidence for more effective application of quality standards in the civil service.

SERBIA

ReSPA will support Serbia in aligning with key EU legislation by delivering specialised training on the transposition and implementation of the updated eIDAS 2.0 Regulation on digital identity and trust services. This initiative strengthens Serbia's preparedness for the European digital single market and enhances trust in digital public services.



Empowered Institutions for EU Accession in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

At the beginning of May 2025, ReSPA supported the EU integration efforts of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by strengthening the institutional capacities of representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, federal ministries, and other institutions to analyse administrative structures and develop a concrete action plan for the upcoming accession negotiations.

As part of the **eGov Pilots projects**, 4 projects are ongoing: In Bosnia and Herzegovina, ReSPA supports the Development of Individual Software Modules – Portal Open Data, in Montenegro, the Ministry of Regional Investment Development and Cooperation is supported with Non-Governmental Organisations (MIRN) for the development of e-Public Calls for non-governmental organisations. In North Macedonia, ReSPA supports the Secretariat for Legislation with the development and implementation of software for an electronic database for laws and by-laws, subject to alignment with the European Union law, while in Serbia, ReSPA fosters Serbia's further digitalisation of training management services of the National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA).

Over the last 12 months, through **ReSPA Mobility Schemes**, public servants from one ReSPA Member (or more than one) have had the opportunity to visit and exchange with relevant homologue institutions in another ReSPA Member or an EU Member State and gain in-depth direct insights on particular success factors in public administration reform processes and various themes of interest:

Directorate for European Integration (DEI) of Bosnia and Herzegovina learned from their colleagues from the Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro about Montenegro's EU integration process

Connecting the team from the Directorate for European Integration (DEI) of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro (October 2025) to explore Montenegro's EU integration process and the implementation of its National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA), ReSPA enabled meaningful regional exchange and peer learning on Montenegro's negotiation structure, coordination mechanisms, and practical aspects of aligning national legislation with the EU acquis. Through interactive sessions and case studies, Montenegrin officials shared their experiences with DEI colleagues on translating European Commission feedback into actionable reforms, structuring the NPAA, and monitoring progress in accession negotiations.



IDDEEA team explored Sweden's digital wallet solutions to boost Bosnia and Herzegovina's digital transformation

In September 2025, IDDEEA team got an opportunity to gain firsthand insights into digital wallet solutions and their practical application, directly contributing to Bosnia and Herzegovina's ongoing digital ID initiatives. During the mission, the delegation engaged with Sweden's Bolagsverket (Swedish Companies Registration Office) and DIGG (Agency for Digital Government). Discussions revolved around governance models, inter-agency collaboration, digital standards, and the integration of AI in public administration. The delegation also observed complete digital service processes in action, transforming high-level strategies into clear, actionable takeaways for the institution back home.



Peer Exchange Between the General Secretariats of North Macedonia and Montenegro

In July 2025, a peer exchange between the General Secretariats of North Macedonia and Montenegro offered a valuable platform for dialogue, learning, and collaboration. The exchange focused on advancing strategic planning processes, allowing both administrations to share best practices and strengthen institutional capacities.



Montenegrin Ministry of Finance Team Exchanged with Estonia's RIA Unit

In March 2025, ReSPA connected the team from the Montenegrin Ministry of Finance with Estonia's RIA Unit (Estonia's Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, and Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture), to explore opportunities to strengthen Montenegro's regulatory framework.



The Horizontal Facility Instrument

One of ReSPA's key achievements was enabling public servants from the Western Balkans to gain knowledge on leadership, integrity and antigypsyism:



Civil Servants from the Western Balkans Attend the EU's Executive Education Course

In March 2025, ReSPA enabled the participation of 5 public servants from the region in the executive education course "High-Quality Regulation: Tools and Practice." This four-day course in Florence gave participants theoretical knowledge and practical skills to design and implement high-quality regulations.



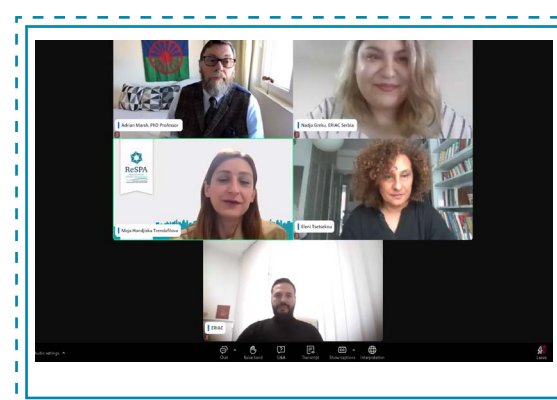
ReSPA at the EU Better Regulation International Summer School 2025

In August 2025, ReSPA facilitated and supported the participation of seven public officials from the Western Balkans in the EU Better Regulation International Summer School held in Tirana under the theme: "Get yourself going to 2029 – How to work with evidence-based decision-making in the EU?" During four intensive days, participants engaged in lectures, discussions, and practical exercises focusing on: The EU policy cycle and strategic planning; The role and process of Impact Assessments; Evidence-based policy-making in the European Commission, European Parliament, and Council; The challenge of balancing politics and evidence in fast-moving environments and Case studies addressing sustainability and finance. The School gathered renowned experts, including Erik Akse from the Impact Assessment Institute and Joost Mulder, who shared their knowledge and facilitated interactive sessions designed to strengthen participants' understanding and application of evidence-based policy-making.



ReSPA facilitated the participation of public servants from the Western Balkans at data.europa.eu workshop on Open Data

The two-day workshop features a comprehensive agenda to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange among 45 participants from 27 countries, including civil servants from the ReSPA Members. An ice-breaking activity provided an opportunity for attendees to get acquainted with Open Data. The workshop began with a presentation on the Danish data landscape and governance approach. Subsequently, experts from data.europa.eu delved into the future of the Open Data Maturity (ODM) assessment, discussing current challenges and proposing potential solutions: What is missing from ODM, what is the feedback from main user groups, and what do the representatives from 27 countries like / don't like about the process of ODM, its content and results, and post-publication activities.



Regional training united Western Balkans and Türkiye in the fight against antigypsyism

Bringing together 150 civil servants, academics, and human rights professionals from across the Western Balkans and Türkiye, a virtual Training, jointly organised by the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC Serbia), ReSPA, and the Council of Europe, aimed to strengthen awareness, foster dialogue, and build capacity to address and combat antigypsyism across the region.



ReSPA Hosted 20th Edition of RAI Summer School for Junior Anti-Corruption Practitioners

The 20th edition of the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) Summer School brought together 25 motivated junior anti-corruption professionals from across the region and beyond to ReSPA's premises in Podgorica. School was jointly supported by ReSPA, the Austrian Development Cooperation, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), reaffirming a joint long-standing commitment to integrity, cooperation, and capacity building.



ReSPA supported the participation of 7 staff members from the Directorate for European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the **executive training “Communicating in an EU-related environment”**, organized by the College of Europe in the period 25-27 November 2024.



The **2024 European Group for Public Administration (EGPA) Conference**, held in September, brought together more than 550 academics, researchers, and practitioners in public administration. ReSPA hosted a panel titled “Inclusive and Transparent Policy-Making in a Digital World,” featuring five senior public servants from Western Balkan administrations, focusing on how digital tools, such as open data portals, E-government platforms, and IT systems for policy monitoring, are being implemented to promote evidence-based policymaking and improve citizen engagement.



ReSPA Joins DSC Adria 2025 to Explore AI for Smarter Public Administration

ReSPA supported civil servants from the region to attend a flagship regional event that brings together over 200 high-level participants and more than 50 AI and data science experts. The summit was a part of the well-established Data Science Conference (DSC) ecosystem, known for bridging the gap between cutting-edge technology and real-world applications. The 2025 summit focused on “Unlocking the Business Value of AI”, with a strong emphasis on sectors including public administration, smart cities, healthcare, and education. Of particular interest to ReSPA is the session on “Transforming Public Sector & Public Administration with AI & Data”, which aligns with ReSPA’s mission to support digital transformation and innovation across the Western Balkans. Participation of the civil servants from the region ensures that the knowledge gained from the summit can be shared and applied across the region.



ReSPA facilitated the participation of 10 public officials from the Western Balkans at the DSC Europe 2024

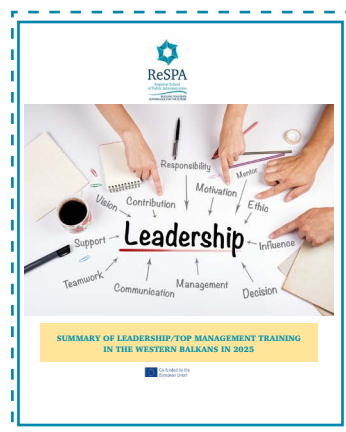
In November 2024 in Belgrade, they had an opportunity to meet, exchange and learn from 3000 professionals, featuring 300+ experts on numerous cutting-edge topics like AI in Public Administration, generative AI, computer vision, robotics, data engineering, and more. They acquired invaluable insights into how AI and data science transform governance and drive innovation. Beyond the sessions, the conference fostered meaningful #networking opportunities, empowering attendees to build collaborations and explore practical solutions to shared challenges.

Policy Briefs



The article “EU Enlargement and the Western Balkans” tackled current trends and future perspectives

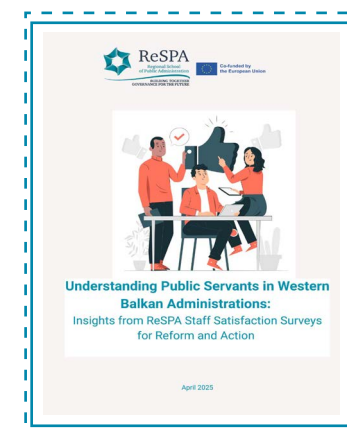
An article from ReSPA and the Istituto Pugliese di Ricerche Economiche e Sociali (IPRES), written by Roberta Garganese and Elisa Calò (IPRES) and ReSPA Programme Coordinator, Genti Xhaxhiu, dives into the EU accession process, zooming in on the Western Balkans. It looks at demographic, socio-economic, and governance trends, tracks progress on integration, and highlights what needs to happen next for the region's smooth and sustainable path toward EU membership.



Summary of the leadership/top management training in the Western Balkans in 2025

This research provides an overview of leadership and top management training programmes available for senior civil servants across ReSPA members and Kosovo*, based on desk research. Leadership training plays a pivotal role in strengthening governance, enhancing managerial competencies, and fostering innovation within the public sector. Although legal frameworks and institutional arrangements vary across the Western Balkans, leadership development is increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of civil service reform.

Understanding Public Servants in Western Balkan Administrations: Insights from ReSPA Staff Satisfaction Surveys from Reform and Action



This comprehensive report offers valuable, first-hand insights into how public institutions function and where reforms are most needed, based on ReSPA Staff satisfaction surveys conducted across Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as among officials in Montenegro – gathering over 20,000 responses from public servants. By capturing public servants' attitudes, behaviours, and experiences - particularly in relation to leadership and human resource management - these surveys provide evidence that helps governments, ReSPA, and international partners such as the European Commission monitor public administration performance, identify areas for improvement, and design targeted reform initiatives.

In addition to this comprehensive survey, ReSPA published Snapshots for each administration, available on the ReSPA website – [LINK](#)



Partnerships

Our strong partnerships are flourishing and expanding rapidly.

At the heart of ReSPA's mission is establishing and nurturing robust relationships with public administrations in the Western Balkans, EU Member States, Eastern Partnership countries and more

ReSPA has taken major strides in strengthening regional and international cooperation by **signing five Memorandums of Understanding** with the institutions across Europe and the Western Balkans: **National Institute of Administration of Romania** (October 2024), **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Montenegro** (November 2024), **National School of Public Administration of Poland** (April 2025), Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia - Service for Knowledge Transfer (April 2025), and **the College of Europe, Tirana Campus** (June 2025).

Each of these partnerships represents a powerful commitment to advancing public administration reform in the Western Balkans. The signed MoUs set the stage for deeper collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity development, laying a strong foundation for transforming public administrations into modern, efficient, and EU-ready systems. Ultimately, these alliances aim to equip the region's administrations with the tools and expertise needed to meet the demands of the EU accession process and to drive sustainable socio-economic growth across the Western Balkans.



Over the past months, ReSPA has continued to be a vibrant hub of regional and international exchange, welcoming numerous high-level delegations and distinguished guests. Among them were representatives of the **European Commission**, **Irish Minister Thomas Byrne**, **Serbian Minister Snežana Paunović**, **North Macedonian Minister Goran Minchev**, as well as representatives of the **Assembly of North Macedonia**.



Director Handjiska-Trendafilova led an impressive series of meetings aimed at deepening cooperation and fostering governance reforms across the Western Balkans. Highlights include a bilateral meeting with the newly appointed **CEFTA Director, Pranvera Kastrati**, focusing on future joint initiatives, a productive exchange with **North Macedonia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Timčo Mucunski**, who was briefed on ReSPA's achievements and explored opportunities for stronger collaboration in governance modernization, and discussions with **Montenegro's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ervin Ibrahimović**, on advancing public administration reform and enhancing regional cooperation.



ReSPA also played a key role in several national-level reform celebrations. During **Montenegro's Public Administration Day**, Director Handjiska-Trendafilova officially **awarded the CAF Certificate to the Ministry of Public Institutions** – marking it as the first Montenegrin institution to earn this prestigious recognition.

In Albania, ReSPA contributed to the **Public Administration Week**, reaffirming its long-term support for reform efforts while in close coordination with the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA). ReSPA is working on designing and delivering by autumn a training for over 80 senior managers in the administration, focusing on legal decision-making and management under conditions of uncertainty, with a particular emphasis on crisis situations and the European integration context.

Together, these activities underline ReSPA's growing role as a driving force of transformation, collaboration, and innovation in public administration across the Western Balkans.

ReSPA Continues to Elevate Western Balkans' Public Administration on the EU and Global Stage

Over the past year, **ReSPA has solidified its position as a leading regional hub of excellence**, championing innovation, collaboration, and reform in public administration across the Western Balkans and beyond. Through its active participation in **high-level European and global fora**, ReSPA and its **Director, Maja Handjiska-Trendafilova**, have brought the region's reform success stories and aspirations to the attention of top decision-makers.

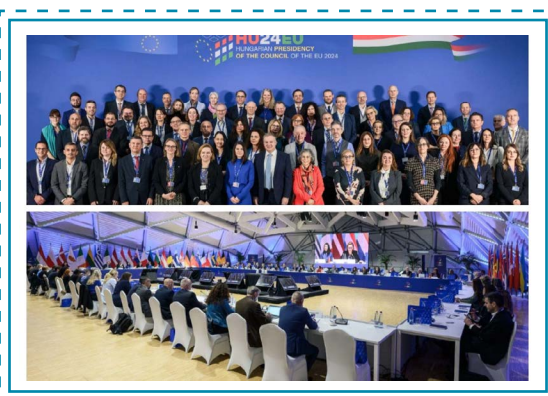
Through these numerous high-level engagements and collaborations, **ReSPA continues to elevate the Western Balkans' visibility and credibility on both the EU and global stage** - shaping the region's transformation into a **modern, innovative, and citizen-oriented public administration landscape**:

Strengthening Europe-Wide Cooperation

ReSPA's presence was strongly felt at the **EUPAN Directors General Meetings** - under the Hungarian Presidency (May 2025) and later at the **EUPAN Working Level Meeting** (October 2025) - where discussions focused on the future of governance, ethical leadership, AI integration, and sustainable administration. ReSPA's active engagement in both sessions underscored its commitment to aligning the Western Balkans with evolving EU administrative standards, fostering innovation, and promoting knowledge exchange among European peers.

Advancing Regional and Global Dialogue

At the **18th Coordination Meeting of Regional Organisations**, Director Handjiska-Trendafilova shared ReSPA's best practices in regional cooperation, highlighting its role in advancing public administration reform across the Western Balkans. She also took **the stage at the Empower.Integrate.Grow Conference**, where she underlined ReSPA's role as a catalyst for regional collaboration and EU integration. At the **OECD Annual Meeting of the Network of Schools of Government**, hosted by the European University Institute's School of Transnational Governance - Director Handjiska-Trendafilova noted: "Schools of government must lead the change. They must become agile platforms for experimentation, innovation, and co-creation - where outdated practices are unlearned, and real-world impact defines relevance."



ReSPA Director Contributed to the Western Balkans Leaders' Growth Summit

On 1st July 2025 in Skopje, addressing the summit, Director Handjiska Trendafilova stressed: "With the Growth plan entering full implementation mode, we must double down on professionalisation, civil service reforms and administrative strengthening. That includes developing the skillsets, mindsets, and networks needed for our civil servants—including at the local level—to deliver on reforms and implement and shape EU policies."



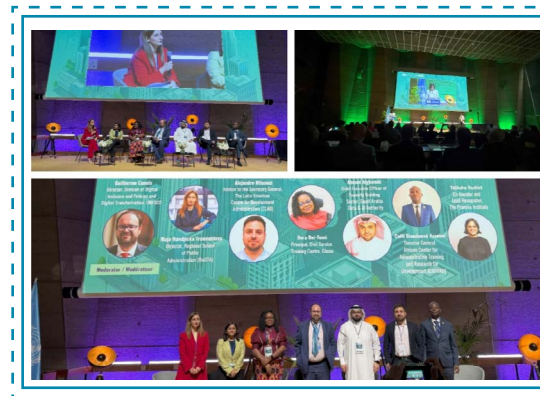
At the **DISPA Conference held under the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU** in May 2025—gathering 57 participants from 27 EU and candidate countries, Director Handjiska-Trendafilova proudly announced that ReSPA will host the next DISPA Meeting in October 2025.

This landmark event presented a key moment for Montenegro and the Western Balkans, showcasing the region's growing integration into the European Administrative Space.



Championing Digital Transformation

ReSPA's expertise was also spotlighted at the **UNESCO Conference on Capacity Building on AI and Digital Transformation in the Public Sector**, where Director Handjiska-Trendafilova showcased the Western Balkans' progress in digital governance and innovation. Speaking alongside global experts, she emphasized the urgent need to strengthen digital competencies and close skill gaps, positioning the region at the forefront of sustainable, tech-driven public service transformation.



ReSPA further enriched the **International Conference "Artificial Intelligence in the Public Administration Environment"** held in Athens, co-organized by EKDDA, with participation from Greece, Slovenia, Cyprus, Serbia, Albania, and Montenegro. The discussions focused on AI's potential to drive smarter policymaking and citizen-oriented services, reinforcing the region's collective commitment to digital and innovative governance.





Deepening Regional Synergies and EU Integration

At the **RCC Annual Meeting**, Director Handjiska-Trendafilova commended the RCC's new forward-looking strategy, underscoring the importance of citizen-centred governance and greater synergies in areas such as trade, mobility, green transition, and digital transformation. Her interventions at the **Prime Ministers' Sherpas' Meeting** and the **CoR Working Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina** further highlighted ReSPA's pivotal role in strengthening administrative capacities essential for the Common Regional Market and EU Single Market. She also shared ReSPA's contributions to local-level EU integration initiatives, including technical assistance, co-financing mechanisms, and practical guidance for municipalities.



Empowering Local Governance and Regional Networks

ReSPA co-organized the **"Synergy Among Local Governments in Regional Cooperation" Conference** (March 2025) with the Western Balkans Fund, Embassy of Japan in Albania, and NALAS, gathering ministers, diplomats, mayors, and experts to discuss inter-municipal cooperation and sustainable local development. Director Handjiska-Trendafilova joined high-level panels on regional cooperation and EU funding opportunities, while Programme Coordinator Genti Xhaxhiu moderated discussions on local government reform and regional development.



Engagement in the Eastern Partnership and WeBER Platform

At the **13th CORLEAP Annual Meeting** (January 2025, Poland), Director Handjiska-Trendafilova emphasized ReSPA's contribution to administrative capacity building, mobility exchanges, and knowledge transfer between the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. Similarly, at the **Regional WeBER PAR Platform Meeting** (November 2024, Skopje), she highlighted **ReSPA's evolution into a central hub for public administration reform**, driving regional learning and cooperation in the spirit of European integration.

Monitoring of ReSPA activities

Enhanced networking and collaboration in Public Administration Reform (PAR) at the regional level are acknowledged as one of the most substantial achievements of ReSPA. This annual monitoring report is the fifth of its kind and targeted the regional activities (working group meetings, workshops, training, conferences, and seasonal schools) implemented in 2024.

The results show that ReSPA is confirmed as a regional hub for capacity development exchange and a source of best practices and innovation in PAR.

Based on participant feedback across thematic areas, the average score for **ReSPA's contribution to institutional improvement**. ReSPA activities had a strong positive impact on institutional performance, with **92–95% of respondents confirming improvements in working methods, coordination, networking, and service delivery**.

Also, ReSPA's activities have contributed greatly or to a good extent to facilitating communication and exchange of know-how among colleagues and/or leadership, while almost 4 out of 5 **of respondents think that ReSPA's actions contributed to advancing the PAR Agenda in their respective administrations**, through institutional modernization, with common examples such as improved working environments, tool mastery, and adoption of new methods and rules.

It is important to note that across all areas, ReSPA is seen as a trusted regional platform that combines peer learning, practical tools, and networking to address reform priorities, by providing advanced, hands-on, and cross-cutting interventions, which contributed to the strengthening of administrations and advancement of the shared reform agenda of the Western Balkans, bringing the region closer to the EU and its standards.

Monitoring Results in a nutshell

Average rating on ReSPA outcomes

- ✦ The **overall average rating** for ReSPA's support and impact, as assessed by participants across all thematic areas, is **4.21** out of 5
- ✦ Participants rated ReSPA's contribution to their personal development and improvement with an average score of **4.18** out of 5 across all thematic areas
- ✦ The average score for ReSPA's **contribution to institutional improvement**, based on participant feedback across thematic areas, is **3.92** out of 5.

Average rating on ReSPA outputs

- ✦ The average rating from **all post-event questionnaires** completed by participants at the conclusion of each activity held in 2024 is **4.26** out of 5, scoring high on relevance (4.57) and lower on the methodology (3.75).



ReSPA Governance

ReSPA Governing Board

The decision-making body, consisting of representatives from the ministries responsible for public administration reform in ReSPA Member States, operates on the Ministerial and Senior Official levels. The European Commission participates in Governing Board sessions in an advisory capacity.

The chairmanship of the Governing Board rotates annually among the members, with each assuming the role for one year. During the current reporting period, North Macedonia holds the chairmanship of ReSPA.

During the reporting period, the Governing Board meetings took place at both the Ministerial and Senior Official levels, focusing on strategic, financial, and operational issues concerning the ReSPA.



The 16th Ministerial-level Governing Board meeting took place on 26 November 2024 in Skopje, when the Board endorsed ReSPA's Annual Report (Nov 2023 – Oct 2024), adopted the Ministerial Joint Statement, and approved key resolutions on the Strategic Orientation 2025–2030, the 2025–2026 Budget, and the 2025 Core Budget envelope. Chairmanship was formally handed over from North Macedonia to Montenegro.



Between December 2024 and October 2025, ReSPA held **four Senior Official meetings, focusing on reviewing operations, financial management, and organizational matters.** Governing Board Members discussed staff regulation amendments, recruitment, and restructuring, endorsed the indicative 2025 Programme of Work and operational progress, approved financial reports, including Independent Auditor's Report for 2024, and adopted the 2026–2027 Budget to support ongoing institutional and programmatic stability.



Comprised of representatives from the ministries of finance or the finance departments in ReSPA Members, the **Budget Committee** is body guides the Governing Board on financial and budget-related issues.

During the reporting period, the Budget Committee (BC) **held five meetings, reinforcing ReSPA's commitment to financial transparency, accountability, and sound management.** As in previous years, the Committee **ensured continuous budgetary guidance** through regular sessions that shaped the strategic outlook, defined financial envelopes, and addressed key financial matters. These included the approval of the ReSPA Audit Report and the Expenditure Verification Report for 2024, review of member contributions and ongoing projects, discussion of the draft 2026–2027 Budget, and examination of national contributions, liquidity, and donor engagement, including updates on EC grant implementation and the finalisation of the last instalment under CN 2022/437-350.



In April 2025, **ReSPA team exchanged with Liaison officers**, shared insights, and addressed challenges in implementing ReSPA's ongoing and future activities. The meeting emphasised the importance of the LOs in facilitating communication and coordination between ReSPA and their respective administrations. In the opening session, they were briefed on implementing the ReSPA Indicative Programme of Work for 2025 and updates on using direct support instruments, with the deadline for application submissions. LOs and ReSPA Programme Managers discussed improvements in coordination and upcoming proposals. The Secretariat also presented the current status of the Knowledge Management Platform (KMP), underlining the need to populate the platform further and increase its visibility among public servants.

ReSPA Secretariat: Teamwork matters!

Empowered With New Team Members: Boris Ristović, Amar Hrvat and Caroline Socie Joined Our Team



Before joining ReSPA as Programme Manager, **Boris Ristović** served as Monitoring and Evaluation Manager for flagship US and EU regional programmes promoting freedom of expression in the Western Balkans. He also collaborated with the Council of Europe and the EU on reforms in human rights, judiciary, and public administration in Montenegro, as well as with USAID and UNDP Montenegro, OECD/SIGMA, UNODC, UNCITRAL, and OSCE.



Operations and Finance Manager, **Amar Hrvat** spent eight years as Finance Manager at GIZ, where he was responsible for budgeting, financial planning, and reporting across a range of international development initiatives, including EU-funded projects implemented in cooperation with public administrations throughout the region. In this role, he worked closely with project teams, donors, and senior leadership to ensure financial transparency, compliance, and operational efficiency.



Building upon the successful cooperation established between ReSPA and the French Government, and as an expression of French support for ReSPA's efforts to assist the transformation of public administrations across the region, in November, French Technical Adviser **Ms. Caroline Socie** joined our team to provide her expert support to these important processes over the next two years.



Two of our colleagues, **Boris Orechovski** and **Ranka Bartula-Mušikić**, have moved on from ReSPA. We extend our sincere gratitude for their dedication and contributions, and wish them every success in their future endeavors. A special note of appreciation goes to Ranka, who has been with ReSPA since its very beginning, dedicating nearly 15 years of her professional journey to the growth and development of our institution.



In April 2025, ReSPA Earned the "CAF Effective User" Certificate for the Second Time

This achievement reflects much more than just compliance with a methodology. It results from a deep commitment to self-improvement, a clear strategic vision, and the desire to foster a quality culture within our institution. Throughout the process, we worked collaboratively to identify key areas for improvement and acted decisively to address them, guided by the belief that excellence is not a destination but a continuous process of learning and growth.



Strengthening Teamwork & Driving Innovation

At ReSPA, we continuously cultivate trust, collaboration, and innovation within our team. Through a [series of interactive activities](#) - including an Innovation Lab Hackathon, the ReSPA Quiz Game, and engaging team challenges—we enhanced our problem-solving skills, creative thinking, and teamwork. Strengthening our bonds reinforces our ability to work more effectively and drive impactful change in the Western Balkans.



ReSPA Team Celebrated Earth Day by working in the Community Garden and contributing to growing nutritious food, which will be shared with those in need. Earth Day serves as a powerful reminder of how crucial it is to not only protect nature but also to produce healthy food. Whether supporting local initiatives or advocating for global change, it's our collective responsibility to take action and safeguard nature for future generations. Every step counts.



ReSPA team Advocated for stronger, more inclusive societies

Continuing to affirm public administrations as leaders by example, ReSPA team reaffirmed its commitment to inclusion and empowerment. At the [Donor Evening for Children Without Parental Care in Podgorica](#), organized by the Association of Municipalities of Montenegro and the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, we joined efforts to support young people transitioning from institutional or foster care toward independent and dignified lives.



In December 2024, ReSPA team sought to symbolically support the wonderful team running the ["Rastimo zajedno"](#) (Growing Together) institution and bring joy to the beneficiaries of their institution. We donated equipment and spent time with them, drawing and playing, receiving a burst of love and positive energy in return, and being endlessly grateful for every smile.

The Way Forward: Navigating a Path to Excellence



Gentian XHAXHIU,
ReSPA Programme Coordinator

As ReSPA moves into its next strategic cycle, our focus is clear: **to shift from reform to excellence**, and to help anchor the Western Balkans and the Eastern partnership regions firmly within the European Administrative Space.

Building on fifteen years of regional cooperation, peer learning, and tangible results, we are entering a new phase focused on implementation, measurable impact, and institutional resilience.

The ReSPA Strategy 2025–2030 provides a concrete roadmap for administrations to become modern, accountable, citizen-oriented, and digitally enabled institutions; capable of navigating the digital, green, and geopolitical transitions ahead. This means shifting from planning reforms to delivering visible improvements in public service performance and trust.

In the years ahead, ReSPA will focus on five types of practical action:

✧ **Targeted support for reform implementation:** ReSPA will move closer to the administrations, providing tailor-made technical assistance, in-country training, on-demand expertise, and policy labs in key reform areas such as service delivery, European Integration, human resource management, and policy coordination.

✧ **Deepened partnerships and regional ownership:** ReSPA will continue to work hand in hand with the European Commission, SIGMA, EU Member States, and regional organizations to ensure that its work remains aligned with EU priorities and standards. We will further intensify cooperation with EU Schools and Institutes of Public Administration, as well as national administrations in EU Member States, to bring their practical expertise and reform experience.

✧ **Strengthened cross-regional cooperation:** ReSPA will expand its collaborative model beyond the Western Balkans by strengthening ties with Eastern Partnership countries, promoting peer-to-peer learning and institutional partnerships between both regions. Through joint activities, exchanges, and participation in the ReSPA Knowledge Management Platform, we aim to create a broader regional network of reform practitioners. ReSPA will seek to become as relevant and effective for the Eastern Partnership as it has been for the Western Balkans in recent years, serving as a trusted regional reference point for capacity building, innovation, and public administration excellence.

✧ **Smart programming and flexible delivery:** through an agile mix of high-level policy dialogues, capacity-building, peer exchanges, applied research, and mobility programmes, ReSPA will continue to serve as a bridge between policy and practice. Each activity will be designed to produce concrete outputs: new tools, toolkits, improved processes, or replicable models of good practice.

✧ **Knowledge and digital transformation:** the Western Balkans Knowledge Management Platform will evolve into a fully operational regional learning and collaboration hub, connecting practitioners through communities of practice, digital

training modules, and real-time exchange. Every civil servant in the Western Balkans and Eastern partnership region, will have access to quality knowledge, anytime, anywhere.

Internally, ReSPA will continue to invest in its own modernization – by upgrading its digital tools, improving workflow automation, and embedding Quality Management standards across all operations. The Regional Quality Management Centre will continue to support the implementation of the CAF model and creating a regional pool of certified quality experts.

During 2026, ReSPA aims to expand its pool of practical reform tools available to public administrations, train over 1,100 civil servants through blended learning and exchange programmes delivered via more than 70 capacity-building and learning initiatives, and enable all administrations to benefit from over 30 tailored technical assistance projects, mobility schemes, and in-country trainings designed to address concrete reform challenges and deliver measurable institutional improvements.

Looking further ahead, ReSPA is grateful for the **continuous support of the European Commission since its creation**, which has been instrumental in building the institution and the regional public administration community. However, ReSPA will actively diversify its financial base by engaging with new donors and EU instruments, leveraging project-based cooperation, and exploring innovative funding models to ensure the **long-term sustainability and scalability** of its work.

By 2030, we envision a connected, competent, and confident public administration community across the Western Balkans and Eastern partnership – one that speaks the same reform language, applies shared European standards, and operates as a trusted partner within the broader European governance family. By that time, we are confident that some of ReSPA's Members will have become EU Member States, marking a significant achievement and providing additional momentum for ReSPA to grow, expand its reach, and further strengthen regional cooperation and excellence.

Together with our Members, partners, and civil servants, ReSPA will continue to turn commitments into action, building governance that delivers, innovates, and earns citizens' trust.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BC	Budget Committee	PP	Policy Paper
BR	Better Regulation	PoW	Programme of Work
CAF	Common Assessment Framework	PoA	Plan of Activities
CEF	Centre of Excellency in Finance	QPAS	Quality of Public Administration and Services
CoE	College of Europe		
CoG	Centre of Government	QM	Quality Management
CSO	Civil Society Organization	RQMC	Regional Quality Management Centre
DG	Directorate General		
EC	European Commission	RAI	Regional Anti-corruption Initiative
EU	European Union	RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
EUI	European Union Integration	ReSPA	Regional School of Public Administration
EUI	European University Institute		
EPC	European Policy Centre	RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation	RTG	Regional Thematic Group
		RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office
GB	Governing Board	SBS	Sector Budget Support
HRMD	Human Resources Management and Development	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ICT	Information and Communication Technology		
INSP	French Institute for public services	SEE	South-East Europe
IPA	The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance	SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
IT	Information Technology		
KDZ	Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung	SL	Senior Official level
ML	Ministerial Level	SNA	Italian National School of Public Administration
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	SSEI	Seasonal School on European Integration
NALAS	Network of associations of local authorities of South East Europe	ToT	Training of Trainers
NEAR	Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG)	WBs	Western Balkans
NIPAC	National IPA Coordinator	WB3C	Cyber Capacity Centre
NISPAcee	Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe	WG	Working Group
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development		
OFM	Operations and Finance Manager		
OG	Open Government		
OGD	Open Government Data		
OGP	Open Government Partnership		
PA	Programme Assistant		
PAR	Public Administration Reform		
PC	Programme Committee		
PEF	CAF External Feedback Procedure		
PFM	Public Finance Management		
PIA	Policy Impact Assessment		
PM	Programme Manager		



ReSPA

Regional School
of Public Administration

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