

22nd session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Written statement by Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA)

Agenda item 7: Reinventing public sector workforce training and institutional learning towards changing mindsets in the public sector

Learning organizations

In view of ReSPA's focus on deepening regional cooperation in the area of public administration reforms (PAR) in the Western Balkans (WB), it is important to add and highlight that acquisition of knowledge and skills can also be obtained through *regional networking, peer learning, bench learning, regional mobility of public servants, the establishment of platforms for knowledge exchange*, etc.– tools used by ReSPA in delivering its support to the WBs administrations. The *common PAR challenges* faced by the administrations in WB and the *shared vision* for integration in the EU and attaining the standards of the European administrative space can be more efficiently addressed through peer learning and sharing of good practices, which contribute to the development of effective and efficient administrations. In addition, the peer bench-learning approach can support public institutions to improve their performance by comparing themselves with peer institutions, sharing knowledge, and learning from them. ReSPA ensures the provision of a **unique framework for networking and peer-to-peer learning**, and therefore the mutual exchange of experiences and practices in the area of PAR is an important segment of all our actions.

ReSPA also contributes to knowledge management through the development of the **PAR Knowledge Management Platform**. The platform can support the respective administrations in learning how modern administrations work, screen trends in public administration nowadays, pool a repository of relevant knowledge resources and identify and promote good practices. Mapping experiences and lessons learned is an important part of knowledge management. Understanding the underlying contexts and reasons behind “what works or what does not” supports administrative improvement and building on other PAs' successes, promotes mutual learning, better networking, breaking silos, and transfers related experience and inspiring cases.

Surveys of public servants as management diagnostic tools that can catalyse reforms

The quality of human resources management in public administration is essential for socio-economic development, the delivery of public services and public trust in government. Governments often lack adequate evidence as to the quality of human resources management in public administration in practice. Despite well-intentioned reform efforts, it remains challenging for national governments to effectively and reliably monitor the quality of implementation by individual institutions, to identify compliance gaps, and differences in management practices across institutions and groups of civil servants. To this end, *employee surveys provide management diagnostics to each government institution* about key staff management challenges (such as politicisation) and key attitudes and behaviours of civil servants in such contexts – from work motivation, work-life balance, to staff retention and integrity, among many. ReSPA *supports the implementation of staff satisfaction surveys in WB* as they enable countries, institutions and units within those institutions to monitor the actual practice of human resources management and to benchmark themselves against others to understand their strengths and areas for development. They also showcase implementation gaps and thus provide tailored advice on how to improve.

Training on policymaking for young professionals in public administration

Through the organization of a longer-term and comprehensive *Regional Academy on evidence-based policymaking process*, ReSPA has trained young public servants from Western Balkans in policymaking and equipped them with the modern methods of work and capacities to deal with emerging and demanding challenges that confront governments.

Quality Management

ReSPA works on the institutionalisation of quality management models/instruments, aimed at simultaneously enhancing the level of institutional performance and provision of better services. Providing capacity-building trainings on CAF, we support the roll-out of CAF in public institutions and support the definition of **comprehensive, structured, and time-bound institutional improvement plans** (including digitalisation of processes, agility and innovation). In parallel, **we build the quantum of knowledge among civil servants** in WB to be able to facilitate and monitor CAF implementation, and to evaluate the effectiveness of using CAF, which can lead to obtaining the CAF Effective User Label. Peer-to-peer learning with EU counterparts on CAF is likewise ensured. Our systematic work in this area resulted in the establishment of a Regional Quality Management Center for Western Balkans, through which ReSPA provides the capacity-building services to a number of institutions and civil servants.

Digitalisation

ReSPA provides a variety of regionally based capacity-building actions aimed at increasing the quality and usability of digital services and harnessing the potential for the use of data for a knowledge-based economy.

ReSPA builds public servants' capacities **on new trends in digitalisation without forgetting to address the fundamentals** (interoperability, safe use of data, improving the design and delivery) so that they bring back upgraded knowledge back to their institutions. All learning activities are used to showcase the best EU practices on the chosen topic and for on-the-spot knowledge sharing and connecting.

In view of the importance of exemplary public services, ReSPA **recognises and awards innovative initiatives in the provision of digitised services through a bi-annual PA Award**. Such initiatives are further supported to learn from EU's relevant practices and act as a resource of inspiration and models for other institutions in the WB.