



Network of Parliamentary Committees  
for Economy and Finance of  
the Western Balkan countries

[www.balkanparliamentarynet.com](http://www.balkanparliamentarynet.com)



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**REPORT ON THE  
REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT OF IPA FUNDS  
12 -13 OCTOBER 2013  
OHRID, MACEDONIA**



## 1. Summary

***More than 40 MPs, parliamentary staff, experts, government and NGO representatives committee staff and regional researchers from Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Scotland and the UK participated at a regional conference Ohrid Macedonia, October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss parliamentary oversight of IPA funds in the Western Balkans.***

Hosted by the committee on European integration from the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and organised by the WFD( Westminster Foundation for Democracy) and NPC ( Network of Parliamentary Committees on Economy, Finance and European Integration in the Western Balkans) the regional conference examined key aspects of parliamentary oversight of IPA funds in the parliaments across the Western Balkans region.

During the two day conference MPs, parliamentary staff and experts were able to discuss how parliaments in the region conduct oversight of IPA funds, what tools and mechanisms can be used to conduct effective oversight on IPA funds and shared best practises and case studies from the region. Participants also had an opportunity to hear from Scottish parliament representatives on effective parliamentary oversight and share oversight practises and experiences from various committees from the Western Balkans.

In cooperation with the European Policy institute WFD developed a four lingual toolkit on parliamentary oversight of IPA funds which was delivered to all the parliamentarians. At the end of the conference participants passed a number of conclusions and recommendations for future consideration by the parliaments in the Western Balkans region.

WFD is supporting the Network through a three-year programme, from 2012-15, to strengthen the role of parliaments in the Western Balkans in promoting competitiveness and economic growth.

## 2. Conference conclusion and recommendations

The conclusions' and recommendations from the regional conference were grouped in 3 main areas.

- A. Role of parliament
- B. Capacity of Parliaments
- C. Preparation for IPA II

### **A. Parliaments role in the oversight of IPA funding:**

1. The Network members recognize the importance of IPA funding for preparing Western Balkans countries for future EU accession and the important role that Western Balkan Parliaments should play in oversight of these funds.
2. The Network encourages parliaments to create more awareness among their members on IPA funding and play a more prominent role in keeping their citizens informed about the objectives and benefits of IPA.
3. Parliaments should be encouraged to develop an oversight culture of regular annual oversight hearings around IPA and other EU funding.
4. Parliaments are encouraged to include civil society and other non-state actors in these oversight hearings.

### **B. Developing Parliaments oversight capabilities:**

1. The Network encourages parliaments to share and adopt best practice on financial oversight of EU and other structural funds.
2. The Network encourages governments to ensure that regular reports and access to information sources are made available to parliamentary committees especially as IPA implementation becomes more decentralized.
3. The Network and donors should support the development of parliamentary committees research and scrutiny capabilities. We also encourage parliaments to assign members and staff to be focal points for monitoring IPA funds.
4. The Network should undertake more training and development of parliamentary staff to equip them with the knowledge and tools necessary to support the oversight of IPA funds.

### **C. Preparation for IPA II**

1. The Network encourages parliaments to engage early in discussions with their Government and EU delegations on country strategy papers, sectorial strategies, priorities, framework agreement and long term programmes.
2. Parliaments should engage more with the relevant European Parliament Committees working on the monitoring of IPA funds. The Network should consider a visit by the IPA Working Group to the EU Parliament to see how best the Western Balkan parliaments can develop these links.
3. Parliaments should work closely with Government and State Audit Institutions to understand the challenges and lessons from implementing IPA I.
4. Parliaments should continue to positively support and encourage government administrations to improve absorption levels of IPA funding

## Conference Agenda

### October 12<sup>th</sup> 2013

- 10.00 – 10.15**      **Registration of participants**
- 10.15 – 10.30**      **Opening of the conference**  
**Vladanka Avirovikj** -Chairperson of the board of the Network- Assembly of RM  
**Hajrula Misini** – Chairperson of the committee on European integration - Assembly of RM  
**George Kunnath** – Director of Europe Programmes - Westminster Foundation for Democracy
- 10.30 – 11.30**      **IPA funds and the role of parliaments in effective oversight and case studies from the Balkans**  
**Malinka Ristevska Jordanova** – Director of the European Policy Institute (EPI)  
Presentation followed by a plenary discussion
- 11.30 – 11.45**      **Coffee break**
- 11.45 – 13.00**      **Parliamentary Oversight of IPA funds**  
Case study – Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia  
**Hajrula Misini** – Chairperson of the committee on European Integration- Assembly of RM  
Presentation followed by comments by **Robert Heaslet** Governance Program Director NDI Macedonia and **Emil Atanasovski** Western Balkans Manager WFD, with regards to the support provided to the Assembly of RM with regards to developing instruments of effective parliamentary oversight  
Plenary discussion and questions and answers session
- 13.00 – 14.00**      **Lunch**
- 14.00 – 15.00**      **Effective instruments for parliamentary oversight and monitoring government funded programmes**  
**Liam McArthur MSP** – Member of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, Scottish Parliament
- 15.00- 15.15**      **Coffee break**
- 15.15 – 15.45**      **Presentation of a toolkit members of parliament and parliamentary staff on effective IPA oversight**  
**Malinka Ristevska Jordanova** – Director of the European Policy Institute (EPI)  
Questions and plenary discussion regarding the effective use of the toolkit
- 19.15**              **Organised transport to Ohrid**
- 19.30**              **Official dinner (Momir Restaurant)**

### October 13<sup>th</sup> 2013

- 10.00 – 10:45**      **What are the challenges surrounding the use and the absorption of IPA funds? What is IPA 1 and what are the likely challenges around absorption and supervising IPA 2?**  
**Orhideja Kaljosevska** Head of Sector for coordination of EU funds and other foreign assistance, Secretariat for European Affairs, Government of RM
- 10:45-11:00**      **Coffee break**
- 11:00-12:30**      **The role of the committees on European Integration in monitoring and supervising IPA**

***Panel discussion – One MP from the Committee on European Integration from each participating parliament***

(5-10 minute presentation from each panellist on the experience in conducting oversight in the committees on European integration in their respective parliaments and the challenges regarding effective IPA oversight)

Question and Answers Session and comments from the participants

**12:30-13:30**

***Lunch***

**13:30 – 14:30**

The role of parliamentary staff in conducting effective parliamentary oversight

**Dr. Stephen Herbert – Senior parliamentary relations officer, Scottish Parliament**

Presentation and plenary discussion with the staff members from the parliament from the Western Balkans

(At the plenary hall – session only for the staff members from the Western Balkans parliaments)

**13:30-14:30**

***Individual MP group discussions*** – How to achieve better oversight of IPA funds in their parliaments

(Informal group discussions between MPs from each parliament)

**14:30 – 15:00**

***Short 3 minute presentation on each of the discussions in the informal groups***

Facilitated by WFD

Each group of MPs from each parliament to nominate one reporter for the 3 minute presentation

**15:00-15:15**

***Presenting the next programme activities of WFD in relation to the support of the Network of Parliamentary Committees on Economy Finance and European Integration of Western Balkans***

**George Kunnath** – Director of Europe Programmes Westminster Foundation for Democracy

**Emil Atanasovski** - Western Balkans Programme Manager Westminster Foundation for Democracy

**15:15-15:30**

***Summarizing and adopting conclusions from the conference***

Facilitated by WFD and the Committee on European Integration Assembly of RM

**15.40 – 15.45**

***Handing over the chairpersonship of the Network of parliamentary committee on economy finance and European integration of Western Balkans – Presentation of priorities of the new chairperson of the Board of the Network for the period of October 2013 – March 2014***

**Vladanka Avirovikj** – Chairperson of the board of the Network June 2013 – Oct 2013

**Vladimir Marinkovic** – Chairperson of the board of the Network Oct 2013 – March 2014

**15.45**

***Closing the conference***

## Conference participants

<b>LIST OF PARTICIPANTS</b>		
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
1	Hajrula Misini	Chairperson of the Committee on European Issues - Assembly of Republic of Macedonia
2	Vladanka Avirovic	Chairperson of the Committee on Economy - Assembly of Republic of Macedonia
3	Marjanco Nikolov	Chairperson of the Finances and Budget Committee - Assembly of Republic of Macedonia
4	Hristina Runceva	Deputy-Member in the Committee on European Issues - Assembly of Republic of Macedonia
5	Gordan Georgiev	Member of the Committee on European Issues - Assembly of Republic of Macedonia
6	Stanislava Chulikj	Advisor in the Committee on European Issues - Assembly of Republic of Macedonia
7	Risto Ilievski	Associate in the Foreign Policy Committee - Assembly of Republic of Macedonia
8	Dragan Pulevski	Associate in the Committee on Economy and Finance and Budget - Assembly of Republic of Macedonia
9	Vladimir Marinkovic	Deputy Member of the committee on Economy, Regional development, Trade, Tourism and Energy; Deputy Member Committee on Finance, State Budget and Control of Public Spending - National Assembly of Republic of Serbia
10	Ljubisa Stojmirovic	Member of the Committee on the Economy, Regional Development, Trade, Tourism and Energy - Parliament of Serbia
11	Zoran Pralica	Member of the European Integration Committee - National Assembly of Republic of Serbia
12	Aleksandra Jovanovic	Advisor in the European Integration Committee - National Assembly of Republic of Serbia
13	Aleksandar Damjanovic	Chairperson of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget - Parliament of Montenegro
14	Genci Nimanbegu	Member of the Committee on European Integration - Parliament of Montenegro
15	Sefkija Muric	Member of the Committee on European Integration - Parliament of Montenegro
16	Srdja Popovic	Member of the Committee on European Integration - Parliament of Montenegro
17	Rozalina Tuna	Advisor in the Committee on European Integration - Parliament of Montenegro
18	Danijela Martinovic	Chairperson of the Joint committee for economic reforms and development - Parliamentary assembly of BiH
19	Bosko Tomic	Deputy Chairperson Committee on Finance and Budget - Parliamentary assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina
20	Stjepan Kresic	Member of the Joint Committee on European Integration - Parliamentary assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina
21	Amar Beslija	Advisor in the Joint Committee on European Integration - Parliamentary assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina
22	Mira Grgic	Deputy Chairperson of the EU Integration Committee - Parliamentary Assembly of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - House of Representatives
23	Srecko Boras	Member of the Committee for economic and financial policy - Parliament of Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina - House of Representatives
24	Fehim Skaljic	Chairperson of the EU Integration Committee - Parliament of Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina; Speaker of the Parliament of Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina - House of Representatives
25	Amina Hasic	Advisor / Assistant to Fehim Shkaljic
26	Branislav Borenovic	Chairperson of the European Integration and Regional Cooperation Committee - Assembly of Republic of Srpska
27	Slobodan Popovic	Member of the Committee on European Integration and Regional cooperation - Assembly of Republic of Srpska
28	Uros Gostic	Chairperson of the Finance and Budget Committee - Assembly of Republic of Srpska
29	Denis Gila	Advisor of the European Integration Committee - Parliament of Albania
30	Liam McArthur MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, Scottish Parliament
31	Dr Stephen Herbert	Senior Parliamentary Relations Officer, Scottish Parliament

32	Aleksandar Jovanoski	Programme Coordinator - European Policy Institute - Skopje
33	Scott Heaslet	Programme Director, National Democratic Institute, Macedonia
34	Edip Bilal	Programme manager, National Democratic Institute, Macedonia
35	Zlatko Atanasov	Head of Parliamentary Institute, Assembly of Republic of Macedonia
36	Malinka Ristovska Jordanovska	Director of the European Policy Institute
37	Orhideja Kaljosevska	Head of Sector for coordination of EU funds and other foreign assistance, Secretariat for European Affairs, Government of The Republic of Macedonia
38	George Kunnath	Head of Programme Europe, Westminster Foundation for Democracy
39	Jo-Ann Sneddon	Programme Officer Europe, Westminster Foundation for Democracy
40	Emil Atanasovski	Programme manager Western Balkans, Westminster Foundation for Democracy
41	Marija Kostovska	Programme administrator and finance assistant Western Balkans, Westminster Foundation for Democracy