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## The nexus between Academia and Public Administration Reforms

**Chair:**  
**Dr. James Nkata**  
Uganda Management Institute,  
Uganda

**Panelist:**  
**Prof. Dr. Michiel de Vries**  
Radboud University, the Netherlands

**Panelist:**  
**Dr. Gerald Kagambirwe Karyeija**  
Uganda Management Institute, Uganda

**Panelist:**  
**Prof. Dr. Rose Kwatampora**  
Uganda Management Institute, Uganda

Public administrators all over the world are re-evaluating the role of the public service to improve the well-being of citizens within their jurisdiction. In order for this to be realized, the challenges of globalization, economic crises, impact of global markets, communication, technology, demographic changes, migration, political democratization, and climate change have to be dealt with.

This calls for layered and complex public administration reforms for a more responsive, efficient, effective, reliable, accountable, agile and resilient bureaucracy. Such reforms should be evidence-based and this is where universities, school and institutes of governance come in. They have a critical role to play through education, training, research, collaborations, innovations, capacity building, advocacy, monitoring, evaluation, consultancy and community service to inform reforms that can transform society. These knowledge hubs shape public administration reforms hence improving the delivery of public services.



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## Corruption, Ethics and Culture in Public Administration

Chair:

**Ms. Jeta Tela-Shema**

chief of cabinet of the Minister of Internal Affairs  
Republic of Kosova

Panelist:

**Mr. Blerim Sallahu**

DEPUTY Minister of Justice, Republic of Kosova

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Michiel de Vries**

Radboud University, the Netherlands

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Lamia Moubayed**

President of Institute of Finance Basil Fuleihan, Vice-chair,  
United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration, Lebanon

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Bekim Baliqi**

University of Prishtina, Republic of Kosova

Corruption is not a new phenomenon and is a term that has many meanings. Tiihonen argues that corruption “is commonly understood to be bribery, and accepting a bribe, and other unjustified influence, by giving and receiving benefits. A usual list of corrupt acts includes bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money, and embezzlement” (2003, p.5). Corruption is a phenomenon which undermines public governance and principles of responsible management, and therefore citizens’ life quality and well-being as well as their trust in public officials and institutions. Among others, effective enforcement of public values, institutional ethics and personal honesty and integrity inculcation are a means of containing corruption within acceptable limits (Caiden, 2001).

In the last decades, governments and international institutions and organizations have drafted and formally adopted standards of professional conduct, ethics codes and charters for individuals holding public office (CNFPT and IASIA, 2018). For instance, in 2001 the European Union has adopted “The European Code for Good Administrative Behavior”, and then in 2012, “The Public service principles for the EU civil service” through the European Ombudsman; similarly in 2013 the United Nations have adopted the “Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, International Civil Service Commission”, and in 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals where Goal 16 focuses on institutions and several of its targets encouraging the fight against corruption and building effective and transparent institutions which serve the citizens. Adopting legal frameworks and “soft laws” in the form of behavior standards at national and international level is crucial. Nevertheless, greater attention must be given to the implementation, monitoring and improvement processes.

Recent developments in politics at international level demonstrate that trust in government has declined. In many developing and developed countries public institutions are perceived as a corrupt environment. In this regard, public institutions must regain citizens’ trust by delivering high quality services and by upholding their high professional standards that include high ethical standards in their professional behavior.



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## Transforming Kosovo's Public Administration into an Agile and Resilient Administration

Chair:

**Ms. Fitore Metbala**

Advisor to the Minister of Internal Affairs of  
Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Ms. Mimoza Kusari Lila**

Member of Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Anneli Temmes**

Former Director General of HAUS Finnish Institute  
of Public Management

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Drechsler**

TaITech, University College London, and Harvard University

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Michiel de Vries**

Radboud University, the Netherlands

The democratization and sustainable development of institutions in post-conflict countries is a long-haul process and requires extensive and well-coordinated efforts. Given how fragile postconflict environments are, reconstructing and strengthening public administration is one of the key components in post-conflict recovery. But there is a catch – the focus only on stability might create rigid institutions which do not favor innovation, key reforms and governance improvements. In addition, “one-size-fits-all” models are not a solution, so that countries should therefore adapt, if not develop, models to their own context. A key example for such processes is Kosovo.

The Republic of Kosovo went through war during the late 1990s and re-created its institutions less than two decades ago. As in many other post-conflict countries, public administration reform in Kosovo predominantly was guided by external bodies. Nevertheless, major issues remain to be tackled. The appropriateness and implementation of legislation remains a major issue, as well as the enshrinement of good governance principles such as meritocracy, effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

To tackle these issues, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has put forward a new strategy on public administration reforms, a new strategy on e-governance, and two major laws to address the structural problems within the public administration, the recruitment processes, the ability of human resources to face new and abrupt challenges, the compensation of public officials, and many other aspects. The Republic of Kosovo is focused at creating an agile-stable public administration that is able to respond to its challenges and citizens' needs. Feedback from international and national actors has generated a highly interesting and internationally indicative discursive space.

In light of this, the panelists will, inter alia, discuss the importance of establishing institutions that are agile, yet stable, while focusing on Kosovo's journey in reforming public administration, the overall process and obstacles of how to make it, and the need for strategic change that has led to ongoing legislative reforms, as well as expected results and possible obstacles.



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## How to Build Tomorrow's National School of Public Administration?

Chair:

**Prof. Dr. Alexandre A. Gomide**

Director of Department for Advanced Studies,  
National School of Public Administration (Enap), Brazil

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Drechsler**

TalTech, University College London, and Harvard University

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Michiel de Vries**

Radboud University, the Netherlands

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Anneli Temmes**

Former Director General of HAUS Finnish Institute  
of Public Management

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Arben Hajrullahu**

University of Prishtina, Kosova

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Alketa Peci**

Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brazil/Albania

There cannot be a performant and agile public administration without a broad investment in education, training and updating of knowledge for the benefit of the civil servants and their managers. The quality of public services is equal to the price of this strategic investment. The Government of Kosova has taken the decision to transform the Kosova Institute for Public Administration in a proper National School, which could cover together the functions of education, trainings, research and in-house consulting. That is a high ambition which still needs to be structured and developed. To this end, the Government has created an Advisory Board with renowned international and national experts and who are accompanying the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosova in the process of establishing the Kosova National School of Public Administration.



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## Professionalism and the Public sector: Creating joint initiatives between Universities and the Public Administration

Chair:

**Prof. Dr. Mario Thomas Vassallo**

Head, Department of Public Policy Faculty of Economics,  
Management and Accountancy University of Malta, Malta

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Anneli Temmes**

Former Director General of HAUS Finnish Institute  
of Public Management

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Alexandre A. Gomide**

Director of Department for Advanced Studies,  
National School of Public Administration (Enap), Brazil

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Arben Hajrullahu**

University of Prishtina, Republic of Kosova

Panelist:

**Ms. Lule Isufi**

Acting Executive Director of the Kosova Institute  
for Public Administration

The panel can analyse how Universities and Public Administration can work together in order to: (i) co-create, run and evaluate tailor made under and post graduate academic courses specifically designed to Public Officers (ii) produce scientific research on various aspects related to Public Administration (iii) bridge the gap between the world of academia and the Public Service. Senior Public Officers - Public Administration of Kosovo Kosovo academics specialising in Public Management + Political Science + Governance + Public Policy.



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## Renovating public service and administration: A Management perspective

Chair:

**Dr. Jean-Pierre Neveu**

Ph.D. Institution: Institut d'Administration des  
Entreprises - Université de Pau & des Pays de  
l'Adour

Panelist:

**Dr. Camille Ricaud**

Ph.D. Institution: Institut Universitaire de  
Technologie - Université de Pau & des Pays de l'Adour

Panelist:

**Prof. dr. Alketa Peci**

Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brazil/Albania

Panelist:

**Dr. Stephane Coillard**

Ph.D. Institution: Institut d'Administration des  
Entreprises - Université de Pau & des Pays de l'Adour

The panel proposes a managerial perspective on issues relating to the implementation of changes in public administration. In doing so, it focuses on three specific challenges from the standpoint of constructive initiatives and policies. These include: - Preventive management of deviant behaviors: The case of workplace corruption - Hospital culture put to the test of New Public Management - Public and social action for handicapped and disabled citizens.



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## Gender Mainstreaming in Public Policy and Budgeting

Chair:

**Ms. Vlora Spanca**

Auditor General, National Audit of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Ms. Ermira Lubani**

Gender Responsive Budgeting-Regional  
Programme Specialist Europe & Central  
Asia Regional Office, UN Women

Panelist:

**Mr. Mehmet Mehmeti**

PhD. in Public Administration and Professor at the  
Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences,  
Southeast European University, North Macedonia

Panelist:

**Ms. Edi Gusia**

Acting Executive Director, Agency for Gender Equality,  
Office of the Prime Minister, Government of the  
Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Mr. Gentian Opre**

Director of Budget Analysis and Programming Department,  
Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania

Panelists will share their views from a gender perspective on Kosovo Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2027 and Action Plan 2022-2024 for PARS 2022-2027. Also, they will exchange their insights on recent developments on the inclusion of gender mainstreaming into the Public Administration Reform, including Gender Responsive Budgeting and Public Procurement policies.

### The questions which it will attempt to answer:

- What is the role of public services in public administration on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls?
- What is the perspective on the need to ensure the availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adequate quality of public services in respect on gender equality?
- Data is essential in identifying trends and shape targeted an efficient policy response. What is the level of women's participation in respective public policies of public administration? What about women in senior management positions in public institutions?
- What can be done to increase the equal and full participation of women, including young women, in public administration at all levels? Please share examples of good practices.
- There are many barriers to women's full and equal participation in public administration and leadership. For example, women in public administration often face sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Do women in public administration in your country face sexual harassment and/or gender-based violence? What are other barriers hindering women's equal participation in leadership and decision-making roles in your country?





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## How can Bureaucracy Become a Vector of Innovation?

Chair:

**Ms. Marta Gazideda**

UNDP

Panelist:

**Inita Pauloviča**

PAR Expert Competency Framework and Learning Roadmap for Public Sector Innovation in Latvia (former Deputy Director of the State Chancellery and the National Coordinator of the Open Government Partnership)

Panelist:

**Ms. Valeriya Ionan**

Deputy Minister for Eurointegration  
Minister Digital Transformation of Ukraine

Panelist:

**Patrick Duong**

Global Lead Governance for Public Goods and Services  
Bureau of Policy and Programme Support, UNDP

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Eduardo Araral**

Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National  
University of Singapore

Panelist:

**Mr. Patrick Duong**

Global Lead, Governance for Public Goods  
and Services, Bureau of Policy and Programme  
Support, UNDP

The fourth industrial revolution (cyber-physical systems) and advancement in the development of new technologies such as AI, robotics, machine learning, IOT, has the potential to contribute towards the advancement of public sector capabilities. Nowadays governments around the world are using existing and emerging technologies to improve how they meet the needs of citizens, striving for digitalization of services, cutting the red tape and closing doors for corruption in the delivery of public services. In the recent years we have witnessed a gradual shift from one-stop-shops where citizens can receive many public services under one roof, to an online space enabling the public to get services without physically visiting the government buildings. The most recent example of how digitization benefits people, even in times of crisis, is that of Ukraine. Since the start of the war the digitization of services was adapted to address new challenges for both people, the government, and businesses, confirming that political leadership, innovation, and investment in people and technology go hand in hand. While Latvia's example also corroborates the importance of the whole of society transformation, Singapore's example demonstrates how governance and entrepreneurial thinking, driven by design thinking, drives citizen-centred services and economic prosperity. At the same time, with the expansion of automation and machine learning in the public sector, one should also consider the future of jobs and what are the skillsets which will be necessary for the future civil servant. And it is crucial to ensure that no one is left behind or excluded by a shift to digital and online services. At the same time, a well-functioning bureaucracy – one which is capable of adapting to and responds to innovation, if not drive it - should also operate transparently and with a sense of integrity.

Mechanisms which ensure data privacy, qualitative and timely service delivery, reduce transactional costs for both institutions and users, but also which deter from other forms of integrity violations, should be an integral part of these transformative processes.



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## An Agile Administration for European Integration

Chair:

**Prof. Dr. Lamia Moubayed**

President, Institute of Finance Basil Fuleihan,  
and Vice-chair of United Nations Committee  
of Experts on Public Administration, Lebanon

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Besnik Bislimi**

First Deputy Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Ms. Liza Gashi**

Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora,  
Republic of Kosovo

Though a key component of the Cluster 1 of the European integration process, the public administration reform cannot be a rigid "ticking the box" process.

Even the principles that guide the evaluation of such reforms remain questionable among the European Union Member States, as they don't share a common model of public administration. Therefore the panel could cover the specific challenges of the RAP in Kosovo, but also put forward the following question in order to share the practises with other countries: how can we identify and implement the most suitable RAP with the characteristics of the governance and society of a defined country? As a young State, has Kosovo a better chance to catch the best approach to reform its public administration, or is such process obligatorily related to a long tradition of State-building?



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## Equality of Rights and quality of Public Services through the lences of Accessibility

Chair:

**Ms. Loreta Elshani**

Panelist:

**Ms. Elvana Shala**

Ambassador of Goodwill for Kosovo, International  
Human Rights Commission, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Mr. Habit Hajredini**

Director of the Office of Good Governance,  
Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Mr. Halil Kurmehaj**

Legal Adviser to Deputy Prime Minister Besnik Bislimi,  
Republic of Kosovo

An agile administration is also committed to comply with the principles and objectives of equality and non-discrimination. A new national strategy for persons with disabilities and for the first time a specific draft regulation are both under drafting, and together with the framework of the new Law on Public Officials all these documents provide already a set of tangible norms and even procedures of employment of persons with disabilities. Thus, new elements and approach demonstrate a renewed commitment in order to address the issues of accessibility to public services and institutions and of employment in the public administration. Nevertheless, are the envisaged new legal provisions sufficient? What are and what could be the obstacles to implement them properly? What are the lessons from other States' public administration?



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## Local Governance Reforms

Chair:

**Dr. Arbresha Loxha**

Executive Director of GLPS

Panelist:

**Mr. Elbert Krasniqi**

Minister of Local Government Administration,  
Republic of Kosova

Panelist:

**Prof. Dr. Michiel de Vries**

Radboud University, the Netherlands

Panelist:

**Mr. Besnik Tahiri**

Member of Parliament of the Republic of Kosova

- Legal Framework – Reform and Advancement
- Review and update of existing legislation, ensuring alignment with contemporary dynamics and best practices as successful models. Laws, administrative guidelines, and other legal acts issued by MAPL.
- Advancement of administrative guidelines into laws to establish effective mechanisms for transparency, accountability, and efficient monitoring.

### Investment in Capacity Building

- Internal reorganization of MAPL to ensure an effective, professional, and integrity-driven public administration – Internal Regulation of MAPL.
- Investment in ongoing training for the administration and local levels, promoting professionalism and effectiveness in achieving objectives.

### Regional and International Collaboration

- Kosovo's membership in OGP – the membership process in OGP LOCAL for municipalities in the Republic of Kosovo.
- Collaboration and partnership with donors. Performance grant for municipalities.
- Successful practices and models of cross-border cooperation between Kosovo, Albania, Montenegro, and Macedonia.
- Citizen engagement in border areas through projects, influencing citizens' lives, and encouraging change based on creating a new culture of collaboration.

### Digital Transformation

- Digitization of public services at the local level.
- E-Municipalities.

### Challenges and the Future Path

- Changes, advancements, and supplementation of LVL (Law on Local Self-Government).
- Establishment of an academy for local governance.
- Smart Cities initiative for intelligent urban development.



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## Shaping Effective Governance: Advancing Strategic Planning Systems in Public Administration

Chair:

**Ms. Vera Rexhepi-Leci**

Senior Policy Planning Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Mr. Peter Vagi**

Senior Policy Advisor, Public Service and Accountability, OECD/SIGMA, France

Panelist:

**Ms. Mari-Liis Sööt**

Strategy Director, Government Office of Estonia

Panelist:

**Mr. Hamit Qeriqi**

PHD Candidate on Strategic Planning, University of Ljubljana, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Mr. Vedat Sagonjeva**

Director of Strategic Planning Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Kosovo

In the path towards EU membership, Kosovo as a potential candidate country, needs to ensure quality policy planning, affordable and financially sustainable, in line with EU policies and standards. A better policy planning is significant to ensure the quality of public services, social inclusion, and economic competitiveness. In order to explore further these requirements, the panel will focus on recent developments in the area of strategic planning, combining theoretical knowledge with practical experiences. At first, the panel discussions will focus on deliberating requirements for an effective policy development and coordination system, especially when it comes to managing overarching processes, such as preparing for the European Integration. In order to look at the effectiveness of strategic planning, the panel discussion will explore organizational aspects in different countries, stakeholder management, performance management system, and implementation styles. This will be combined with discussions on the role of technology and data in strategic planning and data-driven approaches in modern strategic planning.

### Key Questions

- What are the requirements for effective strategic planning?
- How can government leverage from the role of technology and data in strategic planning?
- How can governments install discipline into how planning takes place, and how the management mechanisms ensure that what is planned gets implemented and will be monitored and reported on?
- What are the key determinants, as studied and discussed in academic discourse, that impact the effectiveness of strategic planning in the public sector, and how can policymakers leverage these determinants to improve strategic planning outcomes?



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## The multiplicity of structures and as an obstacle to effective and accountable power - Rationalization of Agencies as a process and opportunity

Chair:

**Mr. Genti Xhaxhiu**

ReSPA

Panelist:

**Mr. Valon Ramadani**

Member of Parliament, Head of Commission on Local Governance, Public Administration, Regional Development and Media, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Mr. Peter Vagi**

Senior Policy Advisor – Public Service and Accountability, OECD/SIGMA

Panelist:

**Mr. Edmir Sejdiu**

Head of Division – MIA. Chairman of the Working Group for the Action Plan for Rationalization of the Agencies, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Mr. Naser Shamolli**

Group for Legal and Political Studies, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Mr. Visar Rushiti**

Democracy Plus, Republic of Kosovo

This panel will discuss the structures and organization of the state administration, such as the large number of agencies and the lack of proper treatment. The difficulties that create such ambiguity in the clear and proper functioning of the state administration, as well as in the execution of services and governance through accountability and transparency.

### Key Questions

- Often evaluations and reports highlight that the public administration is overburdened and many structures have been created, taking account of accountability, evaluation of effectiveness and professionalism. What is the government doing in this regard?
- You are working on a process that aims to make decisions, processes, and services run faster. What exactly does this process involve? What will be the benefits for citizens and businesses from this process and from more effective administration?



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## Public sector Innovation

Chair:

**Ms. Venera Aqifi**

GIZ Kosova

Panelist:

**Ms. Mari-Liis Sööt**

Director of Strategy, Estonian Prime  
Minister's Office

t

**Mr. Florian Zabel**

Senior Advisor at GIZ Egypt

Panelist:

**Ms. Vanessa Sabelski**

GIZ Kosova

GIZ Kosovo is organising a panel addressing the public sector innovation elements on three levels. This is not an exhaustive list, but nevertheless helps to organise the discussion from different angles. The discussion aims to identify some key elements that the participants of the conference can take along for consideration.

The first approach is to look at the co-creation and co-delivery with stakeholders, identifying the main challenges related to leaving the comfort-zone of doing business as usual and tapping the potential of shared ideas and expertise.

The second approach is to study the knowledge transfer, an especially relevant topic in the development co-operation or integration with international organisations. Adopting solutions from other countries and organisations provides opportunities, while at the same time unchallenged application embeds the risks of ending up with unsuitable results.

The third approach is to discuss the preconditions related to the necessary capacities in the organisations on the track to embrace innovation.

Cultural elements, incentives, processes and skills need to be in place for making credible progress beyond slogans.



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## Streamlining Governance: E-Governance and Administrative Burden Reduction

Chair:

**Prof. dr. Lamia Moubayed**

President, Institute of Finance Basil Fuleihan,  
and Vice-chair of United Nations Committee  
of Experts of Public Administration, Lebanon

Panelist:

**Mr. Lulezon Jagxhiu**

Advisor to the Prime Minister on Information  
Technology/CTO, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Mr. Kushtrim Canolli**

Coordinator for Administrative Burden Process,  
Republic of Kosovo

Reforms on e-governance and administrative burden reduction in Kosovo comes as a timely and crucial initiative aimed at addressing the evolving needs of modern governance. In an increasingly digitized world, governments must adapt and streamline their administrative processes to better serve their citizens. E-governance leverages technology to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accessibility in public services. This panel would explore strategies and best practices for implementing e-governance solutions, focusing on user-centric design, data security, and the digital divide. Additionally, it would delve into administrative burden reduction, a vital aspect of reform, by examining ways to simplify bureaucracy, eliminate redundant procedures, and optimize resource allocation. Through informed discussions, the panel would seek to pave the way for more responsive and citizen-centric public administration systems that harness the power of technology to meet the challenges of Kosovo's public administration.

1. What approach has Government to bridge the digital divide and ensure that e-governance benefits all segments of society, including marginalized and underserved communities?
2. Which are the best examples, case studies or best practices from different regions or countries that demonstrate effective e-governance which reflected Kosovo's vision for e-governance?
3. How can e-governance technologies be effectively implemented to reduce administrative burdens for citizens and businesses?
4. What are the key challenges and barriers in Kosovo to achieving administrative burden reduction through e-governance, and how can they be overcome?
5. How can Government ensure the security and privacy of data in e-governance systems while also making them accessible and user-friendly?
6. How can e-governance contribute to greater transparency and accountability in government processes?
7. What role does user-centric design play in the success of reducing administrative burdens?
8. Which is the solution that will make a balance between reducing administrative burdens through digitalization and ensuring accessibility for individuals who may not have access to digital tools or skills?
9. What policy, regulatory changes and mechanisms are needed to support the widespread adoption of e-governance solutions for administrative burden reduction?





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## Ministerial Plenary session Public administration reform, digitalization and cybersecurity

Chair:

**Alketa Peci**

Fundacao Getulio Vargas, United Nations Committee  
of Experts of Public Administration, Brazil/Albania

Panelist:

**Mr. Xhelal Sveçla**

Minister of Internal Affairs, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Ms. Liza Gashi**

Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, Republic of Kosovo

Panelist:

**Ms. Elisa Spiropali**

Minister of State for Relations with the Parliament, Albania

The European integration process englobes public administration reform as one of its main pillars. All Western Balkans states, being engaged in the process of integration, have committed to implement reforms that will transform their public administration into modern administration, able to deliver high quality and timely services.

When talking about transformative processes, it is challenging to not mention technology and digitalization. Technology has nowadays its own space within our public administration and has become a means to accompany civil servants in completing their tasks of, amongst others, service delivery.

Digitalization of public services and administrative procedures is taking place in almost every country of the Western Balkans, copying the path undertaken by other countries in the last decade. From the freshening up of websites, through the digitalization of back-office procedures and civil status documents, to the management of grants and subsidies and recruitment processes, digitalization is now considered together with public administration reform as a key pillar of state modernization.

Digitalization also plays a key role in diplomacy. By using technology, social media and online communication, digital diplomacy serves to conduct activities such as fostering international relations, shaping public opinion but also communicating with a wider international audience, all this in real time.

Yet, the more digital the more vulnerable to potential attacks from criminal groups which are in their turn getting more and more sophisticated. The cyber-attacks in Albania and Montenegro, but also to some extent in Kosovo and North Macedonia, have shown that digitalization should go hand in hand with cybersecurity reinforcements. The legislation must be up to date to protect in first place, and to pursue criminal groups when attacks occurred. Human capacity and physical infrastructure are also important factors that cannot and should not be neglected when digitalizing and working in creating a safe cyberspace.



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The panelists will discuss the best practices in the Western Balkans, including the following:

- The EU integration and public administration reform process
- The level of preparation in terms of legislative framework for digitalization and its operational and infrastructure development
- The level of preparation to offer a safe cybersecurity to citizens, businesses, and institutions
- The biggest opportunities and challenges in the process of digitalization and cybersecurity
- The use of digitalization in diplomacy and connection with the diaspora  
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