

ACADEMY OF POLITICAL STUDIES

**ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT
2012 - 2013**

CONTENTS

I. APS at a glance.....	3
Values, aims activities.....	3
Participants of the ASPS Programme 2012-2013.....	4
Strategic development and sustainability.....	7
II. ASPS National Programme 2012-2013.....	10
ASPS National Courses.....	10
ASPS Seminars.....	13
<i>Module I Political institutions and Democracy</i>	13
<i>Module II Good Governance and Development</i>	14
Participants' essays.....	15
Meetings with senior national and foreign politicians.....	15
III. APS activities at national level.....	16
Local government officials training programme.....	17
Election assistance - First-time voters' education.....	19
IV. Cooperation at the regional level.....	20
Network of the Council of Europe School of Political Studies.....	20
Regional Project "Regional Academy for Democracy"	20
Regional Project "Public Dialogue on the Sustainable Use of Energy".....	22
Strasbourg World Forum for Democracy.....	24
 ANNEX I List of ASPS 2012-2013 participants	
ANNEX II List of ASPS lecturers and experts	
ANNEX III List of RAD programme participants	
ANNEX IV APS partners	

I. APS AT A GLANCE

A. Values, Aims, Activities

A leadership training programme promoting democratic values

The Academy of Political Studies is a non-profit non-governmental organisation founded in 2009 to implement the programme of Albanian School of Political Studies (ASPS). The ASPS is a programme established in the wider framework of the Network of Council of Europe Schools of Political Studies whose main objective is to contribute to fostering a democratic culture throughout Europe. In Albania the programme seeks to encourage the emergence of a new community of young political and civic leaders dedicated to implement a democratic model of governance and development. The ASPS thus aims to promote a political culture embodying the values of pluralism, tolerance and open dialogue.

Since 2010 the ASPS programme is implemented largely through financial support from the Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania (SCO-A). The Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania (SCO-A) initiated its support to the APS in January 2011 for a two-year term. Its contribution is going to conclude by December 2012 (hereafter Phase I). The follow-up phase is conceived as follow up support to the APS mission and will contribute to its long-term sustainability.

In 2012-2013 the APS continued to benefit from the strategic and financial support provided by the Council of Europe to the Network of the School of Political Studies

The ASPS alumni network – drivers for change

The ASPS takes pride on seven generations of alumni - representatives of political parties, public service, civil society, academia and media who have attended the programme since its launch in 2007, propagating the APS values and contributing to the achievement of its mission on an everyday basis in different public domains.

Public involvement through partnerships

In the course of recent years, the APS has continuously expanded its scope of activities. In 2012-2013 the APS continued to implement a number of initiatives intended to enhance awareness and interaction of different public actors in a number of fields such as local democracy, elections and energy efficiency. In this context the APS has placed an increased focus on building synergies and partnerships with national and international actors such as the Training Institute of Public Administration, Central Election Commission, Ministry of Education, municipalities, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) etc. Public initiatives also provide excellent opportunities for the involvement of the ASPS alumni.

[Image –The participants of the School of Political Studies 2012 - 2013 academic year in the Council of Europe headquarter in Strasbourg]

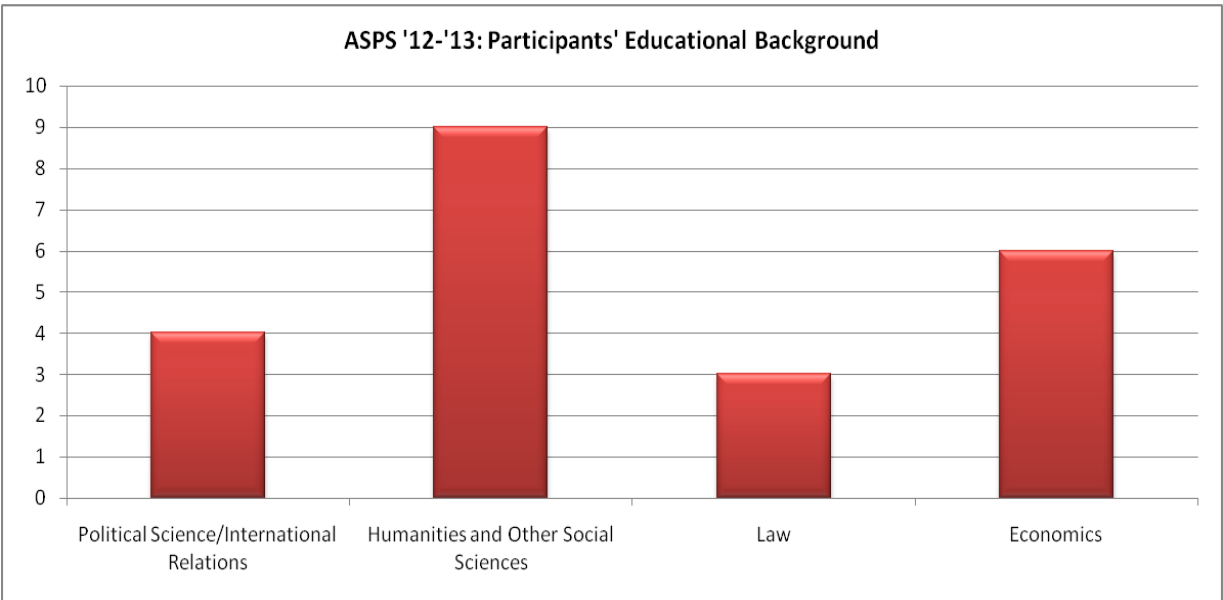
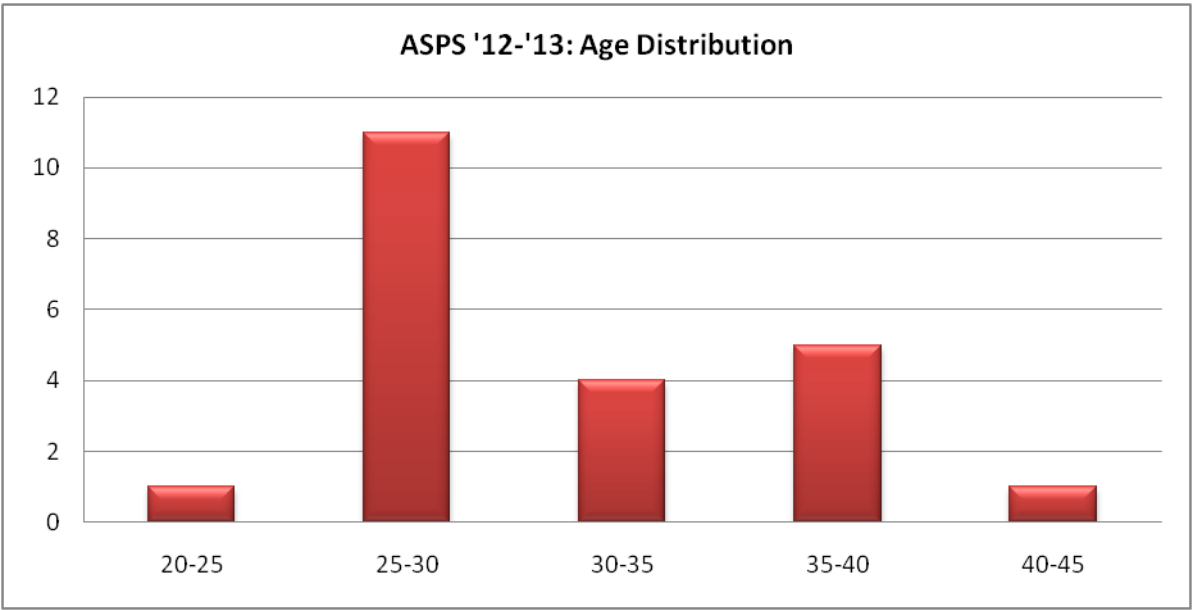


B. Selection process and participants of the ASPS Programme 2011-2012

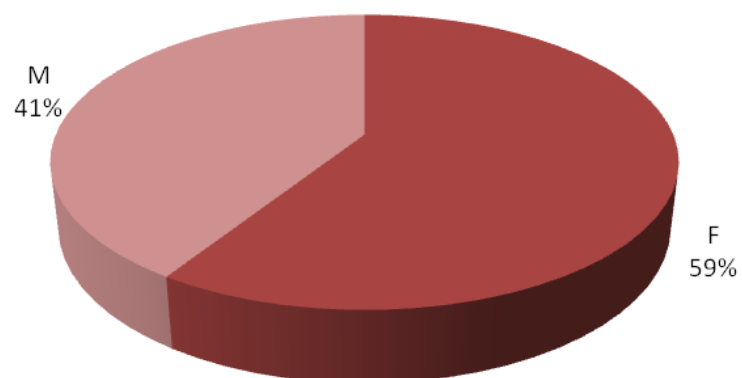
On 15 October 2012, the Academy of Political Studies launched the call for applications for the programme of the Albanian School of Political Studies 2012-2013. The Academy received around 90 applications from candidates representing a variety of political and public life domains – political parties, public administration, media, local self-government, civil society, the judiciary, international organisations and academia, with public administration and civil society as top categories. An increase in the number of applications representing civil society was observed from 2010.

Over 50 applications were pre-selected for an interview and a written test which were held from 12 - 19 December 2011 and were conducted by a board comprised of the Director of the ASPS Programme, the Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Tirana, and two representatives of the ASPS Alumni network. On the basis of interview and test results, 20 persons were selected to participate in the programme. Two other participants from the “network of women in politics” were added to the group as a joint cooperation between ASP and the Decentralization and Local Development Program (DLDP), also financed by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania.

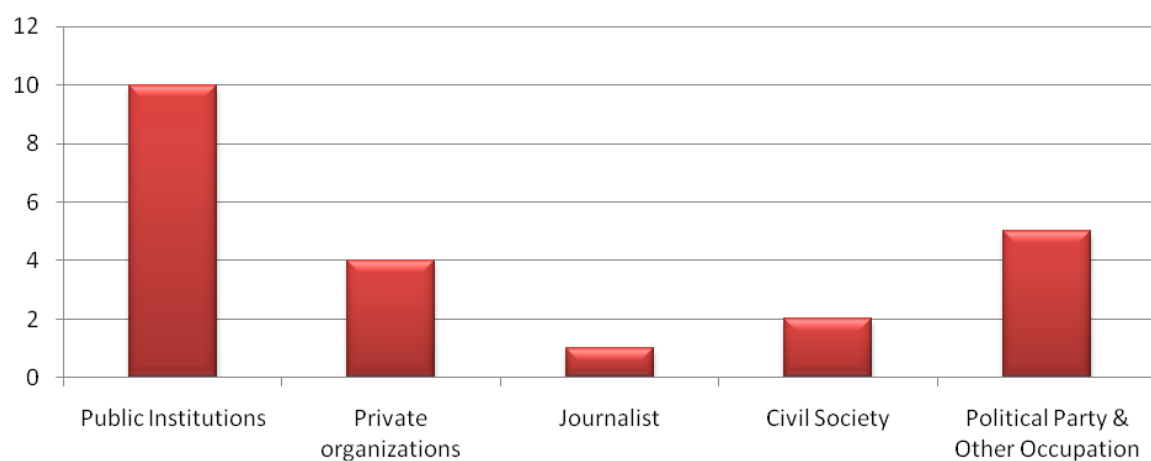
In selecting the candidates in accordance with established criteria, the APS also sought to observe a balanced representation from political parties, different professional backgrounds as well as encourage participation of women, youth and vulnerable groups (see graphs 1-4 for more detailed information).



ASPS '12-'13: Gender Distribution



ASPS '12-'13: Participants' Public Involvement



C. Strategic development and sustainability

With the expansion and diversification of its programme in the course of past years the APS has been facing the need for a more strategic approach to sustainability through cooperation and enhanced institutional capacities. These two objectives lie at the core of the APS development strategy for 2013 and beyond. Activity-based cooperation with domestic partners in Albania as well as other Council of Europe Schools of Political Studies has proven effective in ensuring a greater impact. In 2013 the APS continued to explore cooperation possibilities with other international partners with the specific aim of reviewing and improving its training and project methodology. SCO-A support in this regard has proven essential.

In line with this mid-term strategy and the Council of Europe's Directorate of Policy Planning's objective, the Academy of Political Studies, paid a special attention to the ASPS alumni network on 2012-2013. Seven generations of young leaders are actually certificated (over 200 alumni) and thanks to partnerships with Schools of Political Studies in the region as well as co-operation with other local partners, the ASPS alumni have participated in various local, regional and international activities. In frame of offering a communication channel between the Council of Europe and the alumni, to maintain links with them and to draw on them as a source of expertise and as active multipliers in the dissemination of standards and practices developed by the Council of Europe, this network should be more connect and effective

1. The first enlarged alumni network meeting, Tirane, 19 December 2013

Seven generations of young leaders certified by the Albanian School of Political Studies met on 19th December at Tirana International Hotel, in an event organised in cooperation with the Council of Europe Office and the Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania. This event was part of a wider action of the Network of Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe, to utilise the expertise and contribution of its resourceful alumni network in their respective countries and abroad. The purpose of the event was to provide an opportunity for exchange among various generations of the Academy as well as define mechanisms of their future cooperation with the School.

The event was addressed by Mr. Marco Leidekker, the head of the CoE office in Albania, who, inter alia, emphasised the importance that the CoE attaches to the network of schools of political studies, and in particular its alumni network as active multipliers in democratic transformations processes in Albania. Participant alumni acknowledged the importance of this meeting and their commitment to foster the network through their respective expertise and active involvement in the Academy's various programmes.

The publication of the first *ASPS alumni magazine* was thought as an additional promotional tool for the alumni network and also to show the career of ASPS alumni. A first draft of the magazine was presented during the event of 19 December showing the career of VIP alumni and also their personal quotes about the school experience and her values.

The magazine consists on a publication of 16 pages and printed in 500 copies and will be distributed not only to the alumni, but also will serve as a promotion for the ASPS programme. With the aim to update the information, the magazine could be published in an annual basis.

[Image –The participants on the alumni event on December 2013, part of the ASPS alumni network 2007 - 2013]



2. New APS web portal

The increased visibility of the programmes implemented by the APS is an important tool for his sustainable development. One of the most important promotional aspect during 2012-2013 was the revamping of the existing web portal of the APS. The new website www.asp.al, provide detailed information and outlines the main lines of action and programmes of the APS in partnership with other national and international institutions. The wider visibility of the programmes was also ensured through an active daily communication through APS profiles in social media platforms as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

3. Memorandums of Understanding and new cooperation

With the aim to strengthening his activity and cooperation on national level, the APS has signed four new Memorandums of Understandings (MoU) on 2012- 2013. The first MoU signed in December 2012 ensured the cooperation between the APS, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and the Central Elections Commission (CEC) in the frame of Council of Europe support to parliamentary elections of 23 June 2013.

In January 2013, a joint MoU between ASP and the *Decentralization and Local Development Program (DLDP)*, also financed by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania, ensured the cooperation for the training of two participants from the “Albanian network of women in politics” in the ASPS programme.

In frame of strengthening the national action on the Public Dialogue on the sustainable use of energy, the APS signed also in October 2013 a MoU with ‘*Ecomovement*’, a network of 41 Albanian NGOs, working together since 2004 on environmental issues. The MoU will ensure the cooperation between the ASP and these local NGOs on increasing the knowledge and experience and also joint actions on energy and environmental issues.

On 3 December 2013, the APS and the Diplomatic Academy of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed the MoU, in the presence of the minister, Mr. Ditmir Bushati and the Head of Directorate General of Programmes in the Council of Europe, Ms. Verena Taylor. This

memorandum will ensure the cooperation between both academies on the trainings programs and organizations of joint activities.

[Image – ASP executive Director, Mr. Erjon Tase and the Director of Diplomatic Academy, Ms. Anila Bitri, signing the MoU between two organizations]



II. ASPS NATIONAL PROGRAMME 2012-2013

The Albanian School of Political Studies is the core activity of the APS. It focuses on knowledge transfer, training and generation of new ideas for change for young politicians, public administrators and civil society leaders in a number of areas such as good governance at the central and local levels, public policy development, political communication, EU integration etc.

The core programme is composed of national courses, which take place outside Tirana as well as a series of seminars on various topics pertaining to theoretical and practical aspects of politics. Seminars combine a theoretical approach with case studies from Albanian context and other countries. Each session is carefully designed, taking into account the participants' professional background, needs and interests and in a way, which challenges unitary mentality and fosters co-operative spirit and team work. Upon completion of the programme, participants are required to submit a final essay.

Meetings and exchange of views with senior national and foreign politicians are regularly organised in the framework of the programme.

A. ASPS National Courses

1. “Political Parties and elections”, Pogradec, 22-24 February 2013

Keynote speakers: Mr. Kastriot Islami, MP and Member of the Albanian delegation to PACE; Mr. Oerd Bylykbashi, Chief of Cabinet, Council of Ministers and electoral reform expert; Mr. Afrim Krasniqi, political scientist and former adviser of the President of Albania; Mr Alban Bala, PR practitioner, Founder of the Albanian Institute of Public of Relations; Dr. Blendi Kajsu, Political Scientist;

The course started with an *Introduction to political communication; theoretical aspects– a brief presentation on contemporary approaches to political communication*, by Mr Alban Bala, PR practitioner, Founder of the Albanian Institute of Public of Relations. Mr. Blendi Kajsu, PHD and Political Scientist, provided a presentation on the *concept and relevance of political ideologies* followed by a discussion on the extent of state regulation of the market and society, with a specific view to the recent research of OSFA–Soros on the Albanian political leaders discourse.

Comparative view of the electoral systems, the chronology of elections and their related concerns since the establishment of the Albanian state with particular focus over the last 20 years, were provided by two of the best Albanian experts, Mr Kastriot Islami, MP and Member of the Albanian delegation to PACE and Mr. Oerd Bylykbashi, Chief of Cabinet, Council of Ministers and electoral reform expert. The participants discussed the practical implementation of the electoral code and especially in the focus of the upcoming elections of 23 June. The ASPS provided also a copy of the new electoral code for each of the participants.

Mr. Afrim Krasniqi, political scientist and former adviser of the President of Albania, addressed the topic of *internal democracy in the Albanian political system*. The comparison between the internal democracy best practices with the current practice of Albanian political parties, created the practical approach to the topic. The topics covered by this course were carefully selected and put in a logic order to complement and support each other.

2. “Leadership and political communication”, Gjirokaster, 12-14 April 2013

Keynote speakers: Mr Ian Marquardt, Partner at Loftus/Marquardt Political Campaign Consultants (Bulgaria); Dr. Frank Prochaska, Chair of Management Emeritus, Colorado Technical University, USA;

The course was composed of two sessions, each following a specific aim and methodology. The first part consisted in presentations and exercises on communication techniques and PR technologies used in political discourse and speech-making, political campaigning and elections etc. The session *Challenges of communication for campaigns and governments* explained political communication *strategies* on the basis of two case-studies involving Bulgaria and Kosovo. Mr. Ian Marquardt, an expert in political campaigns in USA and different countries in the region, was able to deliver a practical approach to the situation in Albania. Participant's received concrete guidance and training on communication techniques through two special workshops *Creating a Message and Delivering a Message*, which focused on rules to create and build a winning written/verbal political message, through addressing a variety of aspects such as language, symbols, argumentation and efficiency vs. ethical standards.

The second module, *Leadership for Leaders*, was conducted by Dr. Frank Prochaska and was designed as a comprehensive leadership exercise with the aim of developing new conceptual foundations on effective democratic leadership and change. Participants were able to work on improving the necessary skills for managing change processes through interactive problem-solving exercises targeting individual and team strengths, leadership profiles, effective team building etc. Upon completion of the training participants received a certificate from Pro System Intl. and Colorado Technical University.

[Image - ASPS participants work in teams assisted by Mr Frank Porchaska, Chair of Management Emeritus, Colorado Technical University, USA]





3. “Albania and the trends of European integration” - Durres, 10 – 12 May 2013

*Keynote speakers: Ms. **Majlinda Bregu**, minister of Integration; Mr. **Ditmir Bushati**, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Integration; Mr. **Adrian Civici**, President of the European University of Tirana; Mr. **Hubert Petit**, French diplomat and an ex-member of EU delegation mission staff in Tirana (France)*

The course objective was to provide the participants with substantial knowledge on the EU and the European integration process, in order to help them better understand Albania's challenges in its path towards the EU. In the first session, *EU enlargement policy: an overview from Albania*, Mr. Ditmir Bushati provided an overview of Albania's path towards the EU and explained the pre-accession mechanism together with the requirements for the EU candidate status. Participants then discussed the impact of political developments on the country's EU integration process. The minister of Integration, Ms. Majlinda Bregu was invited to the course to conduct a dialogue with participants about the current progress of the integration process. The discussions focused on the delays which Albania is facing as a result of the lack of political dialogue. At this purpose, for further understand the topic of “*political dialogue*”, was offered to the participants a special approach from the memories of the guest lecturer Mr. Hubert Petit. His book still not published in Albania, named “Coffee-Dialog”, revealed for the first time the behind the scenes part of negotiations between Albanian politicians and the role played by European diplomacy in the period 2007-2008. The last session addressed the economic crisis in the EU and the consequences it may causes to the process of integration. The key speaker Mr. Adrian Civici, provided a wide panorama of the Global and Euro Crisis, but meanwhile stressed the fact that EU integration

remains a priority for the Albanian economic development. In order to establish ties between different generations of the school, school alumni were invited to attend and moderate the seminars and workshops during the course.

This course took place during the "European Week", following a series of promotional events on European Union integration. The discussions between the schools participants and the minister, Ms. Bregu, was broadcasted by "Ora News" television and also the event was published on the official website of the Ministry of Integration.

B. ASPS Seminars

Apart from the national courses the ASPS 2012-2013 national programme comprised 6 seminars structured in three modules. The seminars constitute short informative and interactive sessions on a specific topic intended to provide the participant with the necessary knowledge level for participation in the national courses and workshops and the writing of the final essay.

[Image – Mr Xhezair Zaganjori, Chairman of the Supreme Court of Albania during the seminar “Division of powers in the contemporary states”]



Module I - Political power, institutions and democracy

1. “Organisation and functions of political parties in a democratic system”, Tirane, 9 February 2013

*Keynote speaker: Mr **Afrim Krasniqi**, Political scientist and Adviser on Institutional Relations to the President of Albania;*

The seminar focused on the role and functions of political parties as the main actors of political process. The seminar also analysed the Albanian political party system and its influence on the democratic transition and consolidation processes. Various aspects of political parties were debated including political party leadership and financing of political parties.

2. “Division of powers in the contemporary states: Drawing the line between State and Political Power”, Tirane, 9 mars 2013

*Keynote speaker: Mr **Xhezair Zaganjori**, Chairman of the Supreme Court of Albania and lecturer of international public and human rights law in the Public University of Tirana*

The separation of powers as an essential pre-condition for the existence of rule of law was the starting point for this seminar which analysed the existing constitutional mechanisms guaranteeing the implementation of separation of powers and problems of co-habitation of legislative, executive and judiciary powers and independence of the judiciary in Albania. The participants expressed interest for the thematic due to the practical approach through the examination of some real decisions of Constitutional and Supreme Court.

Module II Good Governance and Development

3. “Sustainable development, energy and environment”, Tirane, 20 September 2013

*Keynote speaker: **Mr. Ismail Beka**, deputy director of GIZ Albania*

The seminar was part of professional expertise which will help participants on essay writing process on Sustainable development policies in Albania topic. The aim of the seminar was to study the connection between energy, environment and sustainable development in a time when environmental and energy efficiency issues are now high in the political agenda in many countries and their presence in the public discussions in Albania is increasing. The seminar introduced some of the latest approaches and key international mechanisms of environment protection and energy efficiency.

4. “The financial crisis: implications for national and global governance”, Tirane, 22 November 2013

*Keynote speaker: Mr. **Ardian Haçkaj**, assistant professor of “College of Europe”, Bruges - Belgium*

Discussions centered around the origin and causes of the financial crisis, its impact on the free-market paradigm and neoliberal ideology, including international financial regimes and organization such as IMF, as well as the measures undertaken by the governments to cope with its economic, political and social effects. Participants shared their opinions and questions about the new tax reform of Albanian Government and the need for a new model of development for Albania.

5. “Academic and essay writing”, Tirane, 5 and 15 July 2013

*Keynote speaker: Mr **Bernard Zeneli**, Manager of the UNDP “Brain gain” program in Albania, ASP curricula adviser*

Two specific trainings on academic and essay writing process was conducted under the guidance of the general coordinator for the essay writing exercise, Mr. Bernard Zeneli.

Participants were explained the techniques and elements of style for argumentative and analytical writing. The ASPS programme includes specific training on academic and essay writing which is delivered in parallel to the essay writing process.

C. Participants Essays

Upon completion of the programme participants are required to submit a final essay/paper on a subject of their choice, which should be related to the thematic of the programme. Three broad subjects were identified and proposed for 2013:

- *Sustainable development policies in Albania*
- *Institutions and functional democracy in Albania*
- *Political Parties and Elections in Albania*

Participants' essays are important research tools that are used by participants and/or alumni in APS public discussions and advocacy initiatives in relevant fields. In 2013, seven essays were selected to be part collection of papers on good governance that will be published by the APS.

D. Meetings with national and foreign decision-makers

While politicians and other leading public figures are regularly invited as lecturers in the framework of ASPS programme, specific meetings and exchange of views with senior decision-makers on current policy-making issues constitute an important part of the ASPS programme. They are part of the APS wider efforts to facilitate discussion between different groups on matters of public importance as well as increase the role of the APS, through participants and alumni, in informing the policy-making process in various areas.

On 23 January 2014, the APS jointly with the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a meeting with with two senior officials of the Council of Europe, Ms. Claudia Luciani and Mr. Alfonso Zardi. The debate focused on the importance of technological development in the last decade, emphasizing the control and accountability measures to avoid abuse and manipulation of opinion. The topic follows the questions and conclusions of the "Strasbourg World Democracy Forum 2013". The event was honoured by the presence of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alqi Puli, who stressed the importance of technological revolution in increasing the transparency of the public and local institutions.

[Image – The participants of ASPS programme discussing with two senior officials of the Council of Europe, Ms. Claudia Luciani and Mr. Alfonso Zardi]



III. APS ACTIVITIES AND COOPERATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

A. Local Government Officials Training Programme

Following the successful result of past year, APS continued in 2013 the implementation of the training programme for local government officials. This time the programme was supported from OSFA-Soros Albania and again implemented in cooperation with the Training Institute of Public Administration (TIPA). The programme comprises a series of 3 national courses focusing on local governance and public policies; relations between citizens and other local stakeholders with LGUs, leadership and management skills, the role of regional and local authorities in citizens' daily lives, strengthen capacities and access to EU programmes and other aspects of the European integration process.

Participants of the training were 20 mayors and members of local administration, representing municipalities of second and third level, which necessity further training and experience for their staff.

Through expanding to the local level knowledge transfer practices based on the peer-to-peer approach the APS ensures a greater and more focused outreach of its objectives and impact. The trainings are expected to contribute to further improvement of good governance practices at the local level. The full training cycle consists of three 2-day training sessions and includes study visits in local government units to encourage peer-to-peer dialogue at local level and dissemination of best practices. The programme was implemented in cooperation with the Training Institute of Public Administration. Upon completion of training a certificate was issued jointly by the APS and TIPA.

[Image The expert Ms Albana Dhimitri on the first course of LGU training programme]



1. **"Decision-making and staff management at local level", Durres, 15–16 February 2013**

Participation: 20 local elected representatives and members of municipal administrations from Ballsh, Patos, Puke, Rrogozhine, Bulqize, Çorovode, Belsh, Rreshen, Kucove, Vore, and Shijak.

*Trainers: Ms **Albana Dhimitri**, Executive Director of Institute of Public and Private Policies and former Deputy Mayor of Tirana Municipality; Ms **Afrida Domnori**, Director of Local Finances in the Ministry of Interior; Mr **Erind Kraja**, expert on local government; Mr **Alban Bala**, PR Practitioner*

Participants had the opportunity to learn about the local decision-making and citizens' participation experience in local budgeting through the examples of budgetary policy practices of in the Tirana Municipality and several other municipalities. Central government financial support for local government units as well as procedures for receiving central government grants as well as recent legal *Guidelines for collection of local revenues* were explained during the second session. The participants discussed concerns related to distribution of grants, including lack of information. The third session focused on *Staff management and conflict resolution*. Presentations and on the later subject proved particularly valuable to the participants who discussed conflict management situations in relationships with other municipalities or respective city councils. Several examples of conflict management in the context of inter-municipal cooperation over water supply in some municipalities were discussed as good practices.

Building good and proper relationships with the community with the aim to secure public confidence in the work of the local government unit was the fourth major topic of this course. The importance of public hearings was underlined and solutions of *Creating communication bridges* with citizens on specific initiatives were discussed. The session concluded with guidelines on implementation of public relations campaigns as well as building and enhancing the local leadership image.

[Image – Upon completion of training a certificate is issued jointly by the APS and TIPA]



2. "Local governance and sustainable development at local level", Durres, 4-6 April 2013

Participation: 20 local elected representatives and members of municipal administrations from Ballsh, Patos, Puke, Rrogozhine, Bulqize, Çorovode, Belsh, Rreshen, Kucove, Vore, and Shijak.

*Trainers: Mr **Ismail Beka**, GIZ Albania; Ms **Alba Dakoli Wilson**, Executive Director of Foundation of Local Autonomy and Governance – FLAG; Mr **Enea Hoti**, local territorial reform expert, Institute for Democracy and Mediation; Ms **Vasilika Vjero**, expert; Ms **Ogerta Manastirliu**, expert.*

The training started with a session on *Sustainable Development and Territory Management* during which participants explored different regional development strategies based on the experiences of GIZ in developing tourism strategies in rural areas and projects for the local efficiency use of energy. In this context, a comparative analysis of Albanian and European experiences was conducted.

The following session focused on issues related to co-operation between local self-government units to improve the delivery of public services and notably on good practices of inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) in different regions in Albania. Participants were also provided with the Council of Europe guidelines and toolkit for IMC, prepared in framework of the project "*Reinforcing Local and Regional Government Structures in Albania*".

The last two sessions had as their central topic the process of local strategic development planning and included an overview of the different government instruments for harmonization of the national and local strategies of development.

3. "Application for the European Union funds at local level", Durres, 30 May-1 June 2013

Participation: 20 local elected representatives and members of municipal administrations from Ballsh, Patos, Puke, Rrogozhine, Bulqize, Çorovode, Belsh, Rreshen, Kucove, Vore, and Shijak.

*Trainers: Ms **Greta Rakaj**, Head of the Regional Cooperation Unit, Ministry of Integration; Ms **Jolanda Trebicka**, “Euro Partners Development”*

A presentation on *EU funding and application possibilities* introduced the participants with the available funding options for local governments under the National and Cross-Border Cooperation Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance. LGU representatives were informed about the government bodies that they can address to identify funding sources as well as procedures for applying.

The second part of the training session *Writing a project proposal – Budgeting - Goals - Action Plan* was designed as a practical exercise for the participants. An expert was invited to explain the stages of an EU application: project proposal writing, project management, reporting and evaluation. A light workshop was conducted to train the participants on developing project ideas and proposals.

B. Electoral Assistance - First Time Voters Awareness-Raising Campaign

The First Time Voters Awareness-Raising Campaign was implemented in partnership with the Council of Europe during the period November 2012 – May 2013, in the frame of Council of Europe support to parliamentary elections of 23 June 2013. It constitutes one of the main components of the Council Europe Action Plan to support general elections in Albania building on successful results of the CoE assistance to last local elections in Albania in 2011. The campaign was carried out in close partnership and coordination with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and the Central Elections Commission (CEC).

[Image - The chairwoman of the CEC, Mrs. Lefterije Lleshi, during her visit in the election simulation exercise in Mullet village, near Tirana]



The campaign was implemented through several stages. In the first stage in cooperation with MoES, the APS identified and trained 15 trainers representing 13 Regional Education Directorates in the country. During the second stage, 200 teachers were trained with the aim to expand the awareness campaign in all 384 high schools of Albania and primarily outreach all first time voters part of Albanian education system (Matura students).

In addition APS provided the curricula and materials for a general information class on democracy, active citizenship and elections reaching a target of about 35,000 young voters. The third stage was organised during the second and third week of May 2013. This class took the format of a mock election exercise. In each high school was improvised a polling stations, including the ballot paper, commissioners, observers, ballot box, secret booth, journalists, guard, voter's lists, etc. The aim of this exercise was to simulate and experience the voting process in respect to all the criteria and provisions of the electoral code. APS has established a partnership agreement with the Central Election Commission which provides, inter alia, for close cooperation and contribution in lectures as well as with materials, such as the donation of 400 ballot boxes to target secondary schools.

In a similar vein, the APS made available a civic education web portal www.zgjedhjet.asp.al addressing young people with regard to election education and democracy in a wider sense. Practical exercises and a series of tests offered valuable information for the first time voters and also the young people in general. A special link to the website was placed at the CEC portal. This educational platform will be available even at the end of the election, thus constituting a resourceful reference for the sustainability of the young voters education. As regards the programme visibility media played a crucial role to promote the activities of the programme and in particular key messages related to democratic elections. APS paid particular attention to involve its wide network of media contacts and alumni who contributed in the success of the action.

Overall, the awareness programme for first time voters proved to be an effective tool to reach out not only first time voters but also their peers and families and thus contribute to a higher turnout in elections and other democratic processes in the country. The concept and principles of intervention matches perfectly with the foundations and objectives of the Academy of Political Studies, thus increasing the potential for success and sustainability.

IV. COOPERATION AT REGIONAL LEVEL

The APS considers regional cooperation an important tool to support the political, economic and social reforms in the region, through inclusive public dialogue, awareness-raising and exchange of good practices. The APS alumni are regularly involved in regional NSPS programmes.

Since its formation the APS is a member of the Network of the Schools of Political Studies (NSPS) created by the Council of Europe in 2005 in order to strengthen the ties amongst Schools and between the Council of Europe and the Schools. The Network supports the development of horizontal ties between the Schools, particularly at bilateral, regional and inter-regional levels. It also facilitates opportunities for the Schools to work on partnership projects and joint initiatives.

During 2012-2013, the APS continued to work together with other members of the Network of the Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe in two running regional programs and also contributed to the preparation of newest regional activities.

A. Regional Academy for Democracy

The regional project “Regional Academy for Democracy -Shaping the European Future of the Balkans - Building a New Political Culture and Political Elite”, is a unique initiative in political capacity building in the Western Balkans, supported by the European Commission and implemented by seven civil society organisations, members of the Network of Schools of Political Studies operating under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Throughout 2013, 50 participants from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia have taken part in a series of highly interactive seminars and study visits aiming to enhance their knowledge, mutual understanding and confidence in regional cooperation.

APS contributed to the selection and ensured the participation of the Albanian group on the first academic year of RAD. This programme is another possibility for the APS and its alumni network to support the political, economic and social reforms in the region, through inclusive public dialogue, awareness-raising and exchange of good practices.

Meanwhile, in 9-12 November 2013, the APS organised in Durres, the fourth seminar entitled “The Role of International Organizations in the Western Balkans”. The seminar was officially opened by Albanian Foreign Affairs minister, Mr. Ditmir Bushati and Mr. Ivan Vejvoda, Vice President of the German Marshall Fund, as RAD Dean. The certifications were signed by the secretary general of the CoE, Mr. Thorbjorn Jagland and the European Commissioner for Enlargement, Mr. Stefan Fule, who awarded personally the certificates to the participants in Albania.

RAD will have a duration of 3 years and is supported by the European Union, through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). (More details about the RAD participants on the annex 3).

[Image – The Regional Academy for Democracy participants in a family picture with Mr. Stefan Fule during the certification ceremony in Tirane]



B. Regional Project “Public Dialogue on the Sustainable Use of Energy in South-East Europe”

Since 2011 the APS is an implementation partner of the regional project “Public dialogue in a sustainable use of energy in the South East Europe” financed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project is carried out jointly with 6 other Schools from Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, BiH and Kosovo. On 13 May 2013, APS participated in the regional conference “*Successful approaches for a new Energy Future in South East Europe*” held in Zagreb, and ensured participation of a high level of representatives from Albanian parliament and other institutions at this event.

1. “Seminar for journalist on sustainable use of energy”, Durres, 29-30 May 2013

A two-day seminar for journalists, covering economic issues in Albanian media, was organized on 29-30 May 2013, in Durres. The aim of the seminar was to provide the participants with substantial knowledge on the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy topic, in order to help them better understand Albania’s challenges in the path towards the 20:20:20 objectives. Three experts introduced the journalists on the actual legislative situation and its implementation on these sector. Their presentations created the ground for discussions between participants and served as a possibility for their personal awareness but at the same moment as a special tool for further transmit this information to the public in general. In the second day of the seminar, the journalists visited a farm in Marikaj village, near Durres, where the energy efficiency measures are applied in practice. The journalist welcomed this special opportunity and their impressions were very positive.

2. “Two roundtables with local authorities and stakeholders”, Gjirokaster and Fier, November 2013

In November 2013, the APS started a series of activities with local stakeholders in two regions of Albania, in order to create the grounds for a public discussion on the matter. The first roundtable took place on 1 November 2013 on Gjirokaster region at the premises of hotel “Çajupi”. About 15 participants from the high level of municipality staff, prefecture, council of the city, local business organizations, local NGO-s and media, were informed about the new law on Energy Efficiency and the measures that this law imposes to the local authorities on their municipal development agenda and daily work.

The second roundtable was organized on 6 December 2013 in Fier region at the premises of hotel “Fieri”, with the participation of the local stakeholders of the region (about 12 participants). One the most interesting topic of this roundtable was the presentation for the first time of some finds and results from the Sustainable Energy Action Plan - SEAP for Tirana city.

3. National roundtable “Public Dialogue on Energy Efficiency legislation”, Tirane, 11 December 2013

In regards of the 23 June 2013 elections, a new majority and government got in power in Albania. Thanks to the continued contacts of the APS within the members of Parliament in both political parties, the communications and contacts with the new majority continued to be in the adequate level. With the aim to give a new start to the EE legislations and law implementations on this topic, the APS organised in Tirana, on 11 December 2013, a national activity entitled “*Energy legislation - The need for a new start*”, in the format of a roundtable gathering all the institutional, parliamentarian and expertise actors, with the aim to give a new start to the energy legislation in light of the new government. About 35

participants from ministry of Energy and Industry, MPs, experts from NGOs, universities and media, discussed about the EE and RES legislation and situation in Albania. The suggestions about the creation of the National Fund and other details of the draft law, paused since 2012, served as the major material for the future parliamentary hearing, planned on Spring 2014.

The general awareness on the Energy Efficiency topic on a wider range of public was ensured through different approaches. The APS managed the realization of an informative publication on Energy Efficiency measures. This publication was printed in 5.000 copies and distributed during the activities in the regions. The same awareness raising material was transformed also in a roll-up format, 10 of which were printed and used as part of the promotional tools of the moving exhibition structure that was temporarily installed in the main squares of three cities during the roundtables event. Meanwhile, a short movie on energy efficiency was realized. The documentary presents the best practices on the EE and RES topic in Albania. This movie was broadcasted in the national public television TVSH and also in "Scan TV", focused on the economical issues. All the activities received broad national and local media coverage.

[Image – The national roundtable organised in Tirana region brought together all prominent stakeholders on legislative and energy sector]





C. IPA Cross Border Programme Albania – Macedonia

Thanks to the experience of School of Political Studies regional network, the APS and the Macedonian school, called “Center for Research and Policy Making” (CRPM), jointly applied in the European Union IPA Cross Border Programme call for application 2013. The project “Initiative to Enhance Public Dialogue on Sustainable Use of Energy” was approved and he started to be implemented on December 2013. The APS is a lead partner in this project which aims to increase cooperation between the municipalities of Bitola and Kicevo in Macedonia, and Pogradec and Korca in Albania; thus, contributes to improving the implementation of already planned targets and speed up the progress of our country to full membership in the EU.

The project will further strengthen cooperation between Albanian and Macedonian municipalities and will create the premises through the establishment of Local and Regional Platforms for Action, an example to be replicated in other regions as well. The project is funded by the European Union and the total duration of the action is 18 months.

D. Strasbourg World Forum for Democracy

On 26-30 November 2013, about 22 participants of the Albanian School of Political Studies attended the Strasbourg World Forum of Democracy 2013, a major event organised by the Council of Europe on an annual basis. Among the keynote speakers addressing the forum were Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, *Mr Stefan SCHENNACH, Member of Parliament, Austria, Mr Mikhail FEDOTOV, Advisor to the President of the Russian Federation* Ms Mary KALDOR, Professor of Global Governance at the London School of Economics etc.

The WFD’s central topic “*Re-wiring Democracy: connecting institutions and citizens in the digital age*” and sub-thematic sessions provided a genuine platform for discussions and

exchanges of experience between public figures, political and academic experts, national and European parliamentarians and local elected representatives alongside civil society activists, bloggers and members of the public with the aim of identifying possible answers to challenges arising in today's societies.

The World Forum for Democracy reviewed the potential of Internet-based democracy applications to restore citizens' trust by making government more open and transparent and to increase motivation for political participation by shifting power from structures and organisations (parties, NGOs, trade unions, traditional media) to individuals and ad-hoc groups. However, technological developments in the field of democracy raise a number of concerns: Liquid democracy needs to be framed by a common understanding of democracy in general, for example about which subjects should be decided by public referendums and which areas should be reserved to representative institutions and processes.

These were amongst topics that were debated by about 1500 participants from 120 countries together with 200 experts, including participants from all nineteen Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe.

The World Forum for Democracy also serves as a major venue for establishing contacts and networking between politicians, experts, media and civil society activists contributing to future involvement and cooperation activities at regional and other levels.

[Image – All nineteen Schools of Political Studies of the Council of Europe gathered in the Hemicycle during the WFD 2013]



[Image - The SG Mr. Thorbjorn Jagland awarding the certificates to the Albanian School during the WFD 2013]



ANNEX I

List of ASPS 2012-2013 Participants

<i>No</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
1	Elda Gjoka	Founder&CEO, Genuine Effect company
2	Edlira Nasi	Admin Officer, Antea Cement, Fushe Kruje / Harvard graduated
3	Fatmir Konja	President of the Republic, Assistant

4	Blerina Doracaj	Legal & Procurement Officer, Mountain Areas Development Agency / activist of SP political party
5	Albana Hasanaj	Specialist, Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA)
6	Sabina Juka	Expert, Council of ministers
7	Arti Cicolli	IT Director, Presidency
8	Oltion Pengu	Local Consultant, Council of Ministers
9	Armand Metani	General Manager, Milifar shpk / activist of LSI political party
10	Basir Collaku	Adviser and Spokeman, Ministry of Education and Science
11	Ervis Rahmani	Lecturer, Kristal University / Specialist, Ministry of Integration / activist of SP political party
12	Klementina Cenkollari	Journalist, Ora News
13	Eneida Ahmeti	Advocate, Shala Law Firm / activist of AKZ political party
14	Valbona Lasku	Office Manager, BBC Tirana
15	Julian Llupo	Economist, Albanian Competition Authority
16	Sentiljana Barzezi	Specialist, CEZ / activist of FRD political party
17	Erand Nebo	Leasing Dep, Societe General Bank
18	Jugert Jorgo	Officer, State Protocol Dep, Min of Foreign Affairs
19	Jonito Bregasi	Controller at Air Traffic / activist of LSI political party
20	Florenca Korbi	Project Manager, Albanian Association of Municipalities
21	Enkeleda Basha	Tribunal assistant, Shkodra District court / activist of LSI political party
22	Amela Zaganjori	Teacher / activist of DP political party

ANNEX II

List of ASPS lecturers and experts

No	Name	Occupation / Professional carrier
	Albanian School of Political Studies Programme	
1	Ms Majlinda Bregu	Minister of European Integration of Albania
2	Mr Ditmir Bushati	MP and Chairman of the European Integration parliamentary committee
3	Mr Kastriot Islami	MP and Member of the Albanian delegation to PACE
4	Mr Xhezair Zaganjori	Chairman of the Supreme Court of Albania and lecturer of international public and human rights law in the Public University of Tirana
5	Mr Oerd Bylykbashi	Chief of Cabinet, Office of Prime minister of Albania
6	Mr Adrian Civici	Rector of European University of Tirana and member of the Supervisory Council of the Bank of Albania
7	Mr Afrim Krasniqi	Scientist and Adviser on Institutional Relations to the President of Albania
8	Mr Alban Bala	PR practitioner, Founder of the Albanian Institute of Public of Relations
9	Mr Bernard Zeneli	Director, Brain Gain Programme
10	Mr Ismail Beka	Expert, deputy director of GIZ Albania
11	Mr Blendi Kajsiu	PHD, Political Scientist
12	Mr Ardian Haçkaj	Deputy Minister of Interior in charge of local self-government
13	Mr Ian Marquardt	Partner at Loftus/Marquardt Political Campaign Consultants
14	Dr Frank Prochaska	Chair of Management Emeritus, Colorado Technical University, USA
15	Mr Hubert Petit	French diplomat, France

Local Government Officials Training Programme		
16	Ms Afrida Domnori	Director of Local Finances in the Ministry of Interior
17	Ms Greta Rakaj	Head of the Regional Cooperation Unit, Ministry of Integration
18	Ms Albana Dhimitri	Executive Director of Institute of Public and Private Policies and former Deputy Mayor of Tirana Municipality

19	Ms Jolanda Trebicka	Expert, partner of “Euro Partners Development”
20	Ms Alba Dakoli Wilson	Executive Director of Foundation of Local Autonomy and Governance – FLAG
21	Mr Ismail Beka	Expert, Deputy director of GIZ Albania
22	Mr Erind Kraja	Expert on local government
23	Ms Vasilika Vjero	Expert on local government
24	Ms Ogerta Manastirliu	Expert on local government
25	Mr Alban Bala	PR practitioner, Founder of the Albanian Institute of Public of Relations
26	Mr Enea Hoti	Expert, Institute for Democracy and Mediation

ANNEX III

List of RAD participants from Albania

<i>No</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
1	Mr. Arbër Kadia (Alumnus)	Member of high committee of Youth Forum of Democratic Party / Director of National Culture Agency
2	Mr. Qamil Dika (Alumnus)	Chairman of National Student Council / Deputy Director of Health Care Insurance Institute
3	Mrs. Elisa Spiropali	Chairman of Youth Forum of Socialist Party
4	Mr. Ervin Mete	Chairman of the political party “G99”
5	Mrs. Edlira Gjoni (Alumna)	Founder member of political party FRD, publisher
6	Mr. Edvin Kulluri	Secretary General, Ministry of Defense
7	Mr. Sokol Bega (Alumnus)	Political assistant, OSCE mission in Albania

Local coordinator of the group: Mr. **Rezart Xhelo**, alumnus of 2011-2012 academic year

ANNEX IV - APS partners

- Council of Europe
- Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania SCO-A
- German International Cooperation - GIZ
- European Commission
- Institution of the President of the Republic of Albania
- Albanian Ministry of Education and Science
- Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Central Elections Commission
- Training Institute of Public Administration