

in-touch

Public Administration International

Newsletter



Regional parliamentary co-operation in the Western Balkans

Franklin de Vrieze, PAI Associate Consultant

We are currently implementing a project with the European Commission to prepare a study on regional parliamentary co-operation in the Western Balkans. As part of this study our consultant, Franklin De Vrieze, has visited all parliaments of the Western Balkans as well as a number of regional Parliamentary Assemblies. Of particular relevance was the inaugural session of the new Parliamentary Assembly for the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEE CP) in Bucharest, held from 9 to 11 May 2014. It brought together the parliaments from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey, as well as the Assembly of Kosovo. The Parliamentary Assembly was set up with the aim of institutionalising the Parliamentary Dimension of the SEE CP. Several Speakers of Parliament stressed the political momentum gained by this regional initiative, and the political will to make it into an inclusive, functioning institution.

The new Parliamentary Assembly has now adopted its Rules of Procedure and its work plan for the next year. It created three General Committees dealing with:

- Economy, Infrastructure and Energy (Committee 1)
- Justice, Home Affairs and Security Cooperation (Committee 2)
- Social Development, Education, Research and Science (Committee 3).



Franklin de Vrieze (left of picture) in Istanbul with Hasan Baytekin, Deputy Secretary General of PABSEC

During the first year, the General Committees will be chaired by senior parliamentarians from Bulgaria (Committee 1), Turkey (Committee 2) and Romania (Committee 3). In the coming year, the SEECPPA will decide on the establishment, location and budget of the Secretariat of the new Parliamentary Assembly. In July, Franklin, accompanied by Isilay Aktas, our Project Manager, visited the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) in Istanbul. This

visit enabled us to get a better understanding of the procedural functioning, institutionalization and institutional authority of the PABSEC. Several parliaments from the Western Balkans and South East Europe are active members of PABSEC. The final version of our study on Parliamentary Cooperation will be ready to be submitted to the EC by the end of October.

PAI trainers go to Tanzania

Claire Cameron, Director

This summer we have been working with the Uongozi Institute (the African Institute for Leadership and Sustainable Development), Tanzania, to design and pilot three new training modules to add to the Institute's portfolio of courses for senior leaders. The topics are:

- Joined-up Government – led by Professor Sue Richards, with Professor Gelase Mutahaba and Peter Obala
- Leveraging Technology for e-Services Delivery – led by Dr Gianluca Misuraca, with Constantine Bitwayiki
- Effective Communications – led by Stephen Gethins, with Michael Wod-Awat Olworo

Our trainers made initial scoping visits to Dar es Salaam in June to discuss with key staff at the Institute the aims and content of the pilot modules, the target audience, the training approach and logistics. They then prepared the three modules and the training materials, including facilitators' and



Stephen and Michael with participants and representatives of the Uongozi Institute

participants' handbooks. In August and September all three modules were delivered to lively and enthusiastic audiences. Their feedback and comments from Uongozi Institute staff enabled us to review and refine the

modules so that they can be repeated in the future. This was a very welcome collaboration with the Institute and we would be delighted to work with them again.

Crisis communication in Trinidad and Tobago

Ken Horner, PAI Associate Consultant

For many years PAI has run a one week 'Crisis Communications in Government' study programme in London. It has been well attended by participants from many countries. This popular programme can also be tailored to suit the specific needs of different countries and organisations. At the request of the Humanities Department of the University of the Southern Caribbean, I recently went to Trinidad and Tobago to run a two-day conference on 'Crisis Communication: Transforming Public

Relations Crises into Opportunities.' The conference was held at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Centre in Port of Spain and the host for the event was Dr Jacobs Brown, Dean of the Faculty. Over a hundred people attended, grouped in teams of between four and eight people, representing Government Ministries, industry and private companies, all with an interest in image, reputation and communication management during and following a disaster or a crisis. Sessions included

presentations by local experts and myself, interspersed with a series of exercises. Participation by the delegates was dynamic and well informed, with world shattering events (the loss of two Malaysian civilian aircraft, the second being shot down part way through the first day of the conference), providing a sombre but thought-provoking reminder of the importance of the topic for our conference.

Revising the social development legislative framework in St Kitts and Nevis

Slava Gromlyuk, Director

Following recommendations from the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and with funding from the European Union, the Government of St Kitts and Nevis has embarked on a process of social protection reform. One of these reform measures was the revision of the legislative framework to improve the integration and implementation of social protection policies and programmes relevant to the current and future needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population. This work was carried out by one of our associate consultants, Barbara Vargas, a legal expert, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs and the Ministry of Sustainable Development.



Beautiful St Kitts

This successful collaboration resulted in a revised Act on social protection to provide the framework for a modern social assistance programme focussing on the specific needs of the poor and the disabled. This Act has been

approved by the Cabinet and this has triggered the release of EU funds to enhance the competitiveness of St Kitts and Nevis and promote the economic diversification of sugar-dependant countries.

Country analysis of the art and culture sector in Pakistan

Dr June Taboroff, PAI Associate Consultant

Pakistan makes headlines for its religious militants, widespread terrorism, mega-cities of Karachi and Lahore, and failing economy. Yet it is also known for its vibrant culture, from music to visual arts.

"Pakistan's ...claim to fame, other than political fluctuation between democratically elected governments and military rule, is fast developing Islamic fundamentalism along with a boom in underground music and the fashion industry..." Fresh! Catalogue 2014

The Government of Denmark's new development programme (2013-2016) intends to examine how culture and the arts can contribute to its overall objective to alleviate poverty through stabilization and peace building,

improved livelihoods and service delivery, as well as through strengthened democratization, human rights and gender equality. The overall Danish approach is rights-based, with attention to freedom of expression, access, and cultural diversity and aims to promote intercultural dialogue and understanding between Denmark and Pakistan.

PAI was commissioned by Danida (the Danish International Development Agency) to conduct a comprehensive country analysis of the art and culture sector in Pakistan that will serve as the basis for the formulation of the new culture programme for the period of 2015-2016, and present suggestions on feasible modalities for implementation. Not only is the country context

challenging – security issues in the border provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and Balochistan which are of particular interest to the Danes, weak institutions, lack of sector data – but devolution has generally resulted in less attention to culture by government.

As leader of the PAI team, I travelled to Islamabad in September to present the results of the country analysis and hold a stakeholder Round Table at the Embassy of Denmark. Representatives of the major donors and Pakistani culture institutions shared their views and broadly validated the findings and recommendations while the Ambassador voiced his support for the culture programme.

Public Service Commission workshop in Barbados

Barry Forrester, PAI Associate Consultant

Each November, PAI offers a week-long study programme in London which looks at the role of Public Service Commissions in the context of efforts being made by many countries to improve the effectiveness of their Civil Services. A particular request by one country resulted, additionally, in a special version of the programme not only being delivered this year in March – but in Barbados!

The Barbados Government had initiated a review of their Public Service legislation and was keen to be informed in their work by a workshop that looked at the issues and introduced them to some possible options.

So it was that I, a PAI Associate Consultant with extensive experience of HR management in the UK Civil Service and of independent regulation of the Civil Service, was despatched to Barbados for a week. There I engaged with a large group of participants which included a number of Permanent Secretaries, Commissioners from the Public Service Commission, the Police Service Commission and the Judicial and Legal Service Commission, and other senior officials in a range of related issues. These included: recruitment and promotion systems; the use of competencies to support the selection,



Barry with the participants in the PSC workshop in Barbados

development and assessment of staff; different models of independent regulation of the public service; and steps to encourage the maintenance of high ethical standards.

It was a real privilege to be asked to be involved in the early stages of the Barbados Government's thinking on developing the effectiveness of its Public

Service. Every country is different, of course, not least in terms of history, culture, size and political framework. But there is also much that is common between countries, and there is always scope for learning from each other's experiences. It was great to visit Barbados too – and so very different to running the annual study programme in wintry London each November!

New projects

We are very pleased to have won two new interesting projects. One is in Pakistan and is to undertake an assessment of the culture sector, funded by Danida (the Danish International Development Agency).

The second new project is the delivery of ten workshops on mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment into the design of European Community funded programmes. These workshops will be

conducted for staff working in the EU delegations in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan and also in the EU headquarters in Brussels.